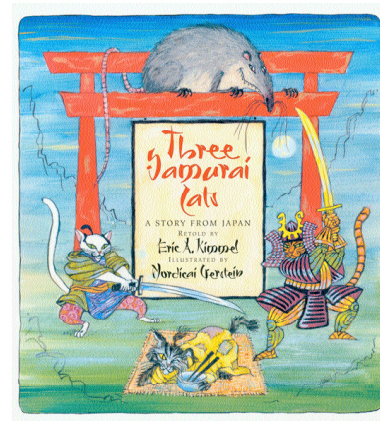


**IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES TO USE WITH
THREE SAMURAI CATS**
BY ERIC A. KIMMEL, ILLUSTRATED BY MORDICAI GERSTEIN
Ideas and Activities created by Karen Antikajian



Before Reading:

1. Have students complete the anticipation guide.

Answers are: F, T, F, T, T, F, T, T, F, T, F, T, T, F.

2. Give some background information about Samurai Warriors especially emphasizing such things as physical training, studying, loyalty, self-control, and having the right attitude. Explain about the importance of their two swords and the distinctive haircut. See attached information sheet.

During Reading:

1. Point out the author's use of threes (see page of Writing Techniques): The rat laughed at traps. He ignored poison. He even attacked the guard dogs. Also: three Samurai techniques (karigane, shimotawatari, and ryo kuruma. Look for other writing techniques that make the text interesting.

2. Make a list of Japanese words and their meanings.

After Reading:

1. Compare Samurai Warriors with Knights.

2. Using a Venn Diagram, compare the third samurai with either the first or the second.

3. Use the attached page (Real or Make-Believe?) to compare things that could be true or could happen with those that are purely fictional or fantasy.

4. Make a list of some of the vocabulary words and discuss possible meanings, such as: savage, barbarous, humiliated, shadowboxing, sheathed, decipit, taunted, fury, opponent, underestimate. Let each student choose five words (from this list or the book) to list on the New Vocabulary sheet included in this packet. Let students share their lists with others.

5. Use the Vocabulary Matching sheet from this packet to review vocabulary.

6. Let partners discuss the different ways the three samurai handled the rat. Have them think about how the samurai's different methods might apply to a bullying situation on the playground. Combine into groups of four and share ideas.

7. Have students write a version of this story from the rat's point of view. Challenge them to see how many of the new vocabulary words and Japanese terms they can include in their stories.

8. Read *The Meanest Thing to Say* by Bill Cosby. Is teasing with words considered bullying or does it have to be physical? How did Little Bill solve his problem?

9. Have students form small groups and create a bullying situation (something that might happen in class or on the playground) They need to brainstorm ways this might be solved and then create a way to act it out for the rest of the class. Each group can perform for the others. After they perform,

class members can suggest other ways the problem might be solved (if they can think of alternatives).

10. Read some books about Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks. Discuss how they handled themselves in racist situations and were proponents of nonviolence.

11. Notice the illustrations. Compare Gerstein's style with more traditional books about samurai or knights. Notice the rat's expressions, the consternation of the daimyo, and the disinterested look of the docho. Notice how the illustrator shows distance when the daimyo rides to the shrine by having him ride down and back up.

12. Have students work in pairs and pretend they are the castle daimyo who is in great need of a samurai warrior. He needs to post a request (ad) for a samurai in the village square and send it to all the shrines. He must write a description of the kind of samurai he wants and the tasks this samurai must perform. He needs to describe the terrible problem he is having that the samurai must solve. It should be something different than what was in the story.

Other Related Books

Martin's Big Words by Doreen Rappaport and Illustrated by Bryan Collier

My Brother Martin by Christine King Farris and Illustrated by Chris Soentpiet

How to Be a Samurai Warrior by Fiona Macdonald and Illustrated by John James

If a Bus Could Talk: the Story of Rosa Parks Written and Illustrated by Faith Ringgold

The Inch-High Samurai by Ralph F. McCarthy and Illustrated by Shiro Kasamatsu (chapter – similar to Tom Thumb)

Rosa by Nikki Giovanni and Illustrated by Bryan Collier

Sam Samurai by Jon Scieszka and Illustrated by Adam McCauley (chapter)

The Samurai Warriors Written and Illustrated by Philip Steele