

Interdisciplinary Ideas

LANGUAGE ARTS

1. With a partner, draw a plan for an ideal playground. Then revise your drawing to make it accessible for children with physical disabilities. Write a paragraph describing your revised drawing.
2. Write a tornado poem describing sounds and sights you hear and see during a storm. First make a class list of noise words from the story, such as "boom" and "Crad-aack!" Then make a list of storm nouns, such as rain and lightning. Choose words from the lists to create lines for your poem.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Research information about the Special Olympics, wheelchair races, and wheelchair basketball. Find out about the Canadian who circles the globe in a wheelchair to benefit people with special needs. (Keyword: Richard Hansen)

SCIENCE

Research tornadoes. Find weather indicators preceding a tornado. Compare a meteorologist's indicators with non-scientific indicators, such as those mentioned in the story (bunions hurting, cows lying down). Learn about barometric pressure.*

ART

1. Create a background for publishing your poem (Language Arts #2) by drawing a tornado with pencil or colored chalk, similar to Mark Mohr's illustration in *The Storm*.
 2. Find information about artists who have physical disabilities. Try out some ways they draw or paint.
- * Visit www.heartwoodethics.org and choose Teaching Heartwood, Culture Keys, for more on the history, culture, and geography of this book.

The Storm

Mark Harshman
1995
New York: Cobblehill Books

COURAGE

USA
Realistic Fiction
Reading Time: 16 minutes

CONCEPTS

Courage
Bravery
Fortitude
Respect

SUMMARY

Excitement builds in this story of a boy's strength in the face of danger. Jonathan, confined to a wheelchair, embraces the core of courage within to protect the family's horses during a tornado. This episode of courage helps him accept being different in the eyes of others. Vibrant watercolors capture the emotions of the story.

OBJECTIVES

The student will be able to define and discuss courage, bravery, fortitude, and respect as they apply to this story.
The student will gain awareness of difficulties faced by people with physical challenges.

After the Story

The Storm

DISCUSSION

1. Was the tornado the first time Jonathan needed to be brave? Discuss his accident and hospitalization, acceptance of the wheelchair, and going to school each day, where others may have viewed him as different. Why were these things difficult?
2. Think of Jonathan during the storm. Discuss the many ways he showed courage. Where did his courage come from (e.g., love for the horses)?
3. Recall the accident and Jonathan's dreaded flashbacks. How might his flashbacks be different now? Talk about how an experience of overcoming fear can build courage.
4. Think of times when you were afraid. How did you show courage? How are fear and courage related?

ACTIVITIES

1. Find Indiana, USA, on the world map.
2. In groups of three or four, prepare a poster with two columns. In one, list times Jonathan showed courage. In the other, list times group members showed courage. Post and share with the class.
3. Refer to Discussion #4. Think of other natural disasters where people might need to show courage. Describe what they might do.
4. Write a personal narrative about a time you or someone you know performed a heroic act. The heroic act may be a small act of courage. Explain the importance of that experience to you.
5. Invite a person in a wheelchair to visit the classroom to tell how he or she handles challenges.

JOURNAL

1. In your journal write a personal narrative about an experience you had during a bad storm or tornado. Describe how you felt, what you did, who was with you, and who showed courage.
2. Write about how you would want to be treated by classmates and friends if you had to use a wheelchair.

HOME CONNECTION

At home, retell *The Storm* and ask someone in your family to describe a time he or she was afraid but found courage. Write it down to share at school.

VOCABULARY

flashbacks
therapist
tornado watch

fractured
 bunions
chaff