

Children's Literature Across the Curriculum Ideas

Created by students at the University of North Carolina Charlotte

Title: *Two Bad Ants*

Author: Chris Van Allsburg

Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988

Grade Level: K-4

Summary: The story is told from the perspective of the ants. A group of ants set out on an adventurous journey to get some delicious tasting crystals for their queen. Two bad ants desert their colony for a day. Their experience is dangerous and scary, thus convincing them to return to the safety of their colony.

Reading/Writing Connections

1. Create a story describing the adventure of an ant colony that explores a different room, such as the bathroom, laundry room, bedroom, or living room.
2. Stop reading the story after page 29 when the ants crawl in a dark corner and fall fast asleep. Have students create their own ending to the story.
3. Have students pick a scene from the story. Have them draw the scene and describe it first from the ants' perspective and second from a human perspective.

Vocabulary/Spelling

antennae	crystal	firefly	frightened	journey
march insect cricket	queen	scout	sparkling	stunned
treasure	underground	violently		

Communication Arts

1. Watch a video about ant colonies. Compare factual information with the story.
2. Pick out all of the adjectives the author uses in the story. Explore how students can use details like that when writing their own story.
3. Using the adjectives again. Have students close their eyes and listen as you read an adjective then have them write down the first thing they think of when they hear that word. Repeat with each adjective.

Library Connections

1. Have media specialist prepare a short presentation on ants. What types of books are available in the media center about ants?
2. Share other Chris Van Allsburg books. Teach students how to find them in the media center. Compare/Contrast his different books. *The Polar Express*, 1985 *The Stranger*, 1988; *Jumanji*, 1981 *The Widow's Broom*, 1992; *Just A Dream*, 1990; *The Wretched Stone*, 1991

Social Studies

1. Study ant colonies. How is an ant community the same as the human community? How is it different?

Mathematics

1. Study ants' size and shape. How much do they weigh? How much weight can they carry?
2. Have students pretend that the story took place at their house. Have them measure how far the ants traveled from the yard to the sugar. (Remember they could use a window)

Science

1. Read a non-fiction book about ants. Discuss whether Van Allsburg based his book on facts.
2. Have students write their own non-fiction book about ants.
3. Start an ant collection. Wrap the container in paper so it is dark. Observe and take notes about the ants at various times of the day.
4. Observe refined and brown sugar crystals under a microscope.

Cooking

1. Make ants on a log. (Celery sticks, peanut butter, and raisins)

Music

2. Teach students the song: *The Ants Go Marching*.