

Rhyme 'n Reason

Character concept:

Developing *empathy*, the ability to “put yourself in another’s shoes” and identify with the way others feel, helps us be kind and caring.

Objective:

Students will demonstrate an understanding of how wild animals might feel in captivity.

Curriculum connection:

Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the structure, elements, and theme of poetry and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding. They will identify a regular beat and similarities of sounds in words in responding to rhythm and rhyme in poetry. (language arts)

National standards addressed:

language arts/English (reading for perspective, applying knowledge, NL-ENG-K-12.1, 6)

Materials:

- copies of the poem “Where the Wild Things Shouldn’t Be” (page 18)
- pencils or pens
- highlighting markers (optional)

Activity:

Students will read a poem that is written from the perspective of a wild animal kept as a pet and that has blank lines in place of certain words. They will use context clues, including the rhyme scheme, rhythm, and theme of the poem, to determine the missing words.

Procedure:

1. Distribute copies of “Where the Wild Things Shouldn’t Be,” one to each student. Tell them that this is a poem, written from an animal’s point of view, that describes what it feels like for a wild animal to be kept as a pet.
2. Point out that seven words, represented by blank lines, are missing from the poem. Ask students to make educated guesses about which words are missing, based partly on the fact that this is a rhyming poem. Have them highlight or circle the words that will rhyme with the missing words. Give students several minutes to read the poem to themselves and fill in the missing words.
3. Call on volunteers to read the poem aloud, one verse at a time. Pause after each verse and ask students to guess the missing word in that verse. Have them explain their answers.
4. If no student guesses the word that is part of the original poem, engage the class in brainstorming other possibilities. (A classroom display alphabet is often helpful in exercises like these. Students can go through it, letter by letter, to guess rhyming words: *air, bare, bear, care, dare, ere, fair, glare, hair, hare...*)
5. If students still are unable to guess the correct word, reveal the answer. The missing words are as follows: *chair, hot, play, run, all, there, me.*
6. After the class has completed the poem, ask students to name some animals that people

Where the Wild Things Shouldn't Be

By Beverly Armstrong

How would you like to live in a cage
That was just about ten feet square,
With no toys to play with and nothing to do,
Just you and a bed and a _____?
Oh, sure, you'd be fed (the same thing each day)
You'd have water (unless they forgot)
And since you wouldn't be going outside,
You wouldn't get cold, or too _____.
But, oh, you'd be lonely, just sitting alone
With no one to talk to all day.
You'd remember the trees and the grass and the breeze,
The places where you used to _____.
You'd remember your friends, you'd remember the sky
And games and strawberries and sun,
And you'd know you could never go skating again
Or go swimming or ride bikes or _____.
You'd get mad and scream and throw things around;
You'd kick, and you'd pound on the wall.
And your owners would scold you and say to themselves,
"He isn't a nice pet at _____."
The more you got mad, the less they would like you,
The less they'd remember to care
About if you had water or if you got fed
Or if you were lonely in _____.
And then you would know what it's like to be kept
As a pet when you're meant to be free,
And you'd listen when wild things are trying to say,
"Please don't make a pet out of _____."

