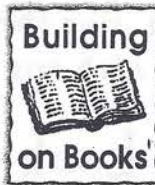
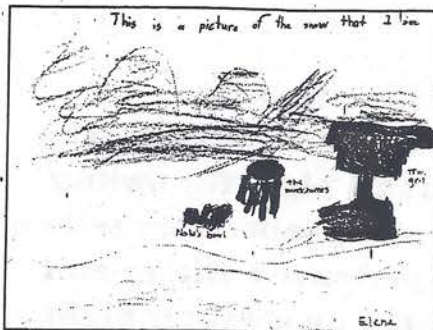


An Art Lesson

Materials

- * drawing paper
- * pencils
- * colored pencils



How did John Schoenherr create pictures that make you feel like you're in the woods on a cold night? Not only was the setting for the story right outside his windows at home, but he had years of drawings and photographs to use as reference. Invite students to discover how they can strengthen their own realistic drawings with this exploration.

- 1 Think of something outside the classroom—maybe a walkway, a cluster of trees, or a flowerpot.
- 2 Ask students to use their imagination to draw pictures of the scene you describe.
- 3 When students are finished, take fresh paper and pencils outside and allow them to draw the same scene again—this time studying the actual scene first.
- 4 Let students compare pictures. How is the second picture different from the first? Which is more realistic?

For students who want to do more with realistic drawings, share *Drawing From Nature* by Jim Arnosky (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1987). From noticing how birds' beaks are joined to their heads to learning how to make trees whose branches reach for the light, this book will inspire children to take a new look at nature.

Evocative watercolors in *Owl Moon* capture the cold of the winter night, the stillness of the woods. Vivid language lets us listen as the father calls out—whoo-who-who-who-who-whooooo—and the echo comes back.

Realistic stories like this often appeal to children who find it easy to place themselves in the story and relate to characters' feelings and experiences, making meaningful connections between the book and their own lives. Organize book groups to explore realistic fiction. (See page 6.) A sampling of favorite realistic children's books follows.

- * *Mirette on the High Wire* by Emily Arnold McCully (Putnam, 1992) (See page 92.)
- * *Seven Kisses in a Row* by Patricia MacLachlin (HarperCollins, 1983)
- * *Stevie* by John Steptoe (HarperCollins, 1969)
- * *Island Boy* by Barbara Cooney (Viking, 1988)

LANGUAGE ARTS LINKS

Book Talk

Word Watch: A Poetic Touch

And when their voices
faded away
it was as quiet as a
dream.

Owl Moon is rich with poetic language. Reread the passage shown here and ask:

"What does 'as quiet as a dream' mean to you?"

Explain that writers sometimes use the words *like* and *as* to make comparisons.

Reread the story and have children listen for other similes, for example, "The trees stood still as giant statues."

Let children revisit stories they've written to see if there are places they've used similes or would like to try them.

My favorite quiet time is
going to the walking
dunes at Montauk ^{beach}. You
can hear the ocean, and
you can hear the birds.
It makes me feel
peaceful as an angel.

Francesca
8 yrs. old

After reading, invite students to think about how the words and pictures combine to create the mood in this story.

- * Why do you think *Owl Moon* is a good title for this story?
- * How is the story like a poem?
- * Why do you think the father and child are pictured so small in many of the illustrations?
- * Why do you think the illustrator filled the page at the end with the owl?
- * What are some ways in which the words and illustrations make this story seem real to you?

Follow That Sound

Fine-tune students' listening skills with an owling game. Begin by inviting one student to be the owl. While the others cover their eyes, have the owl hide. Let students take turns calling the owl (whoo-who-who-who-who-whoooooo), awaiting its response. Can students follow the sound to locate the owl? For a variation, let one child sit facing away from the others. While one child in the group makes an owl sound, have the child facing away try to guess which classmate is the "owl."

Writer's Corner: Quiet Times Together

"If you go owling you have to be quiet, that's what Pa always says." In *Owl Moon*, both pictures and text help readers feel the quiet of the woods, broken now and then by a train whistle, the crunch of snow, and the sound of a great horned owl.

What special quiet times do your students and their families share? Curling up with a parent and a book? Playing a board game together? Watching the stars at night? Invite each student to share a favorite quiet-time activity (this could be with a parent, older sibling, grandparent, babysitter, and so on). Then have them write about and illustrate it. Encourage children to use words and pictures to create a sense of peacefulness in their stories like that found in *Owl Moon*.

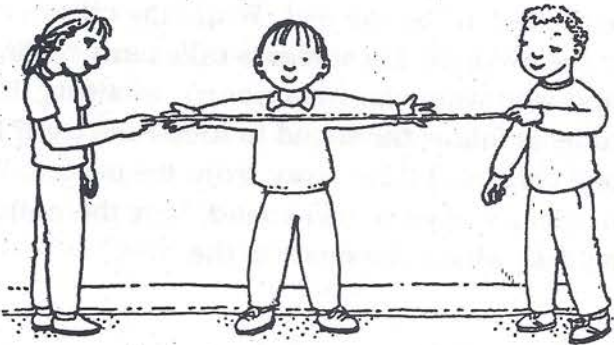
STORY EXTENSIONS

Science/Language Arts: All About Owls

Owls intrigue children, who from an early age love to call out like these creatures. Use this natural interest to inspire a class book. Find a focus by completing a KWL chart, recording what children know (K) and what they want to learn (W). Assign children to groups to research questions. Let them report their findings by creating pages for a class book, using the template on page 82 to make owl-shaped pages. Punch holes above the ears and tie pages together with yarn. Complete the KWL chart by filling in what students learned (L).

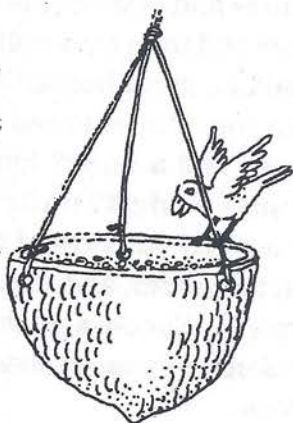
Math/Science: Wide Wide Wings

How wide is an owl's wingspan? Research the wingspans of owls and other birds. (For example, the American white pelican has a wingspan of about nine feet, the peregrine falcon about three feet.) Have children cut yarn or string to represent the width of each, (taping labels on strings). Then let them team up to compare the wingspans with their own arm spans. What bird comes closest to a match? Follow up by brainstorming ways to organize the strings (for example, by size order, bigger than my arm span/smaller than my arm span/the same as my arm span, and so on).



Science: Bird-Watching Walk

Take bird-watching walks with your students. First, use a field guide book to research birds that are native to your area. Let students make bird-spotting sheets to bring with them, drawing pictures of the birds and recording descriptive details. As they bird-watch, encourage students to record places they spot the birds, the sounds they make, and so on.



*Feed the birds! Hang
coconut halves filled with
bird seed from a tree.
Watch to see who visits.
What do they eat?*

All About Owls

