



Books to Treasure

Epossumondas

Written by Coleen Salley and illustrated by Janet Sevens
(Lesson submitted by Criss Smith, LMS @ Lee Elementary)

This lesson can be adapted for other grades.

Second Grade OK PASS: Reading/Literature standards 3, 5, 6 and 7;
Visual Literacy Standard 7

Reading/Literature Connection

1. Let the children know that Epossumondas is a story based on an old folktale from Louisiana. Epossumondas is an opossum who is his mama's and his auntie's "sweet little patootie."
2. As you read the story aloud, encourage the children to say mama's refrain with you. After reading about the cake and the butter, pause in your reading and see if the children can predict what Epossumondas will do with the puppy, the bread, and the pies.
3. The teacher should read the author's note ahead of time, and be ready to share the information with the class. Tell the class that this story is called a noodlehead story and many countries have noodlehead stories in their folklore. See if children can infer the meaning of the term by asking these questions.
 - **After thinking about what Epossumondas does in the story, what do you think a noodlehead is?**
 - **Can you think of another story book character who acts like a noodlehead?** (Amelia Bedelia)
4. The animal characters in this story are from the southeastern part of the United States.
 - **With the exception of the alligator, which animal character doesn't live in Oklahoma? (Nutria)**
 - **What is a nutria?How can we learn more about it?**
 - What clues do they get by looking at the illustration of a nutria? Make a list of other information they would like to learn about this animal.
 - Ask the children how they would find the answers to their questions. Write down their suggestions.

- **Your library media specialist can help you with this information literacy standard of choosing the right source.** This would give the LMS an opportunity to talk about books in the reference section of the library and the online databases that can be used for such research. If the LMS knows about the question ahead of time, s/he could share the very best source available in your library media center.
- Allow students time to find the answers to their questions.

Visual Literacy Connection

Janet Stevens used the author of this story as her model for Epossumondas's mama. To see photos of the author, Coleen Salley, go to this site

<http://www.coleensalley.com/about.htm>

- Look at photos of Ms. Salley, and compare them to the illustrations of Mama. This character is also in **To Market, To Market**.

Life skill: Common Sense

- **If Epossumondas had used common sense, how would he have carried home cake, butter, bread, and a puppy?**