

Aunt Flossie's Hats and Crab Cakes Later

Book by Elizabeth Fitzgerald Howard

Unit study by Ami Brainerd

Geography: Maryland

Find Maryland on a map. How far is Maryland from your home? Discuss Maryland with your student. Maryland was the 7th state in the United States becoming a state on April 28, 1788. The capital is Annapolis and the largest city is Baltimore. It is on the east coast of the U.S. and major industries include farming (corn, soybeans, tobacco, poultry and dairy products), mining (coal), steel products, communications equipment, and fishing (crabs and oysters).

Social Studies: Memories

Aunt Flossie shares her memories with her nieces as she shares her hats. Do you have any memories (pictures, mementos, journals, etc.) that you can share with your student? You may want to arrange a visit with grandma, an aunt, or another family member in which you go to share memories of times past. I know my grandma has tons of pictures from her mom's family as well as her dad's. She also has old quilts to share. This would be a great experience for your student.

You can also discuss the importance of preserving memories with your student. Why do we want to have something to hand down to the next generation? This would be a good time to allow your student to start a small scrapbook. You may want to scrap one event or an entire season (or even an entire year) together. What a treasure that will be to hand down to your grandchildren someday!

Human Relationships: Hospitality

Hospitality is kindness in welcoming guests or strangers. The girls are greeted warmly by Aunt Flossie. She says, "Come in, Susan. Come in, Sarah. Have some tea. Have some cookies. Later we can get some crab cakes!" How do we react when someone knocks on our door? Are we willing and ready to give them a welcome and offer them something to eat and or drink? We should be hospitable to those who come to visit us. Can you and your student make a list of special kindnesses to give to those who visit your home?

History: Hat Fashion

No one is sure when hats were first invented. Hats vary widely in material and

style, depending on climate and customs. The three main reasons people wear hats are protection, communication, and decoration.

1. Protection

- shade from the sun (Mexican sombrero)
- extra warmth in the winter (fur or wool hats)
- from injury (football helmet, construction hard hat)

2. Communication

- communicate occupation (state trooper, firefighter)
- communicate position (king, bishop, etc.)
- communicate religious belief or affiliation

3. Decoration

- accessory for an outfit
- tradition

During the 1900s, hat styles varied more than ever before. In the 1920s women wore a drooping, bell shaped hat called a cloche, In the 1930s, they wore a harlequin hat which had a wide upturned brim. Many different hats were donned in the 1940s and 1950s, but in the 1960s hats became less popular.

Some hats to research:

1200s German headdress and cap

1400s *hennin*

1600s European Cavalier Hat

1700s Gainsborough

1800s American top hat, American poke bonnet

Greece-- *pelos*

Scotland-- *tam-o'-shanter*

Persian turban

Language Arts: Sensory Details

Good writers use images in their writing. An image is a concrete representation of a sensory experience or an object. Images allow the reader to experience the story--to see, to feel, to hear, to taste, and to smell. Elizabeth Fitzgerald Howard has used lots of sensory details (imagery) in her writing.

Examples:

Sight- a stiff black [hat] with bright red ribbons (also touch)

A soft brown [hat] with silver buttons (also touch)

A red one with a furry pompom (also touch)

Smell - just a little smoky smell now

Touch- wooly winter hat, sort of green (also sight)

This hat is just one smooth soft rose

Sound-horses hooves clattering

buglers bugling

drummers drumming

What other examples can your student find in the story? The next time you give your student a writing assignment, you may want to require that he include some sensory details.

Math: Large numbers (a trillion!)

A great book that helps with the understanding of large numbers (and about how small things add up) is *One Grain of Rice* by Demi. I highly recommend reading this book as a go-along as you discuss large numbers. Other possible go-alongs-- *Can You Count to a Googol?* by Robert E. Wells and *How Much, How Many, How Far, How Heavy, How Long, How Tall is 1000?* by Helen Holan.

Science: Buoyancy and Boats

"your favorite best Sunday hat just floated by like a boat"

Boat Buoyancy Experiment

Materials Needed: Container, Water, Ball of Clay, Pennies (optional)

Procedure:

1. Fill the container with water
2. Ask your student what will happen if you drop the clay into the container
3. Drop it in. Ask your student why he thinks the blob of clay sank.
4. Give a ball of clay to your student. Tell him to make his clay into a shape that will float.
5. Encourage your student to keep trying until he gets a shape that floats. How many different shapes float?
6. For extra fun, use pennies. Count how many pennies (passengers/cargo) their

clay boat can hold before it sinks. Can the boat be modified to hold more pennies?

Explanation:

After your student has had success, discuss the different boats he created. Explain that boats with higher sides trap more air inside and float better.

Science: Wind

"the wind came and blew away my favorite best Sunday hat"

Air is a fluid which moves in circuits, powered by unequal heating of large masses of air. As the Earth's surface is warmed differentially, the air above these surfaces absorbs different amounts of heat. Warmer air rises while cool air sinks which creates the environment for flowing air movement. Winds flow across parallels of latitude, taking heat from equatorial regions to polar regions. This equalizing process causes wind and is of major importance in determining the environments for life on land, global as well as local weather patterns, and a clean, inexpensive source of energy for humans.

For your younger student, you may want to check out the book *The Wind Blew* by Pat Hutchins. Then, discuss the wind and complete this activity (you need straws, paper, and paint) Talk about the book (*The Wind Blew*) and the items that were blown around. Lay out a piece of paper. Give your student a straw. Put two blobs of paint on the paper. Have your student blow through his straw to mix the colors and watch them move. After the child is finished, let the paint dry. If you want, cut out the items from the story *The Wind Blew* and string them together to make a mobile. Hang from the ceiling and watch them move when the wind blows through you window (or take them outside and let the wind blow them around). Adapted from abcteach.com

Windbag Experiment

Materials Needed:

Electric Fan

Paper Bags (you can decorate with weather stickers or markers, call it a windbag)
A variety of the following-- Ping Pong Ball, Cocktail Umbrella, Styrofoam Peanuts, Toothpick, Popsicle Stick, Index Card, Sand, Rock, Cotton Ball, Rubber band, Paper clip, Tissue Paper, Shoe, Construction Paper, Pipe Cleaner, Dixie Cup, String/Yarn, Paper Plate, Straw, etc.

Procedure:

After your student decorates his windbag, fill it with various items. Let your student investigate the items in the windbag and predict the effect of the wind on each object (how far will it go? Which item will be blown the farthest? Will all of the items be blown?). (They can write these on a chart or journal if you wish). After explorations and predictions are complete, turn on the fan and observe what happens. Tell your student to place one item in front of the fan at a time. Have your student record his observations, any patterns he sees, and any questions he thinks of as he observes. Here are some challenging questions you can use--Using wind, how far can you make one object go? How much sound can one object produce? How fast can one object go? How high can one object go? Can you perform these tasks using two or more objects?

Explanation:

Wind is air in motion, it has mass and, though extremely light, it has substance. A gallon of air is similar to a gallon of water, but the gallon of air is lighter. It has less mass than that of water because air is less dense. It is more diffuse. Like any other moving substance, whether it's a gallon of water plummeting over Niagara Falls or a car speeding down the highway, this moving air contains kinetic energy. This energy of motion gives wind its ability to make objects move. Different objects and combinations of objects move differently in the wind.

Conclusions:

1. What pattern does the student describe as he/she investigates the effects of wind on common objects? (Wind makes things move.)
2. What does this tell you about wind? (Wind is a form of energy.)

Examples from Everyday Life

Many seeds are moved by the wind: Seeds drift in the wind. This helps the seed to move away from the parent plant so that it can find enough space, light, and water to grow into a new plant (ex. maple seeds, dandelion seeds). Many animals ride the wind: pelicans, seagulls, hawks, turkey vultures, chimney swifts, etc. ride the thermal updrafts created by air being heated and rising.

What other examples can students think of that demonstrate the ability of wind to make things move?

--experiment adapted from The Franklin Institute

Science: Crabs and Terrapins (and exoskeletons)

The story mentions crabs and terrapins (fresh water turtles) both of which have exoskeletons. Some animals have endoskeletons and some have exoskeletons (and some have neither!). To determine whether or not your student has an endoskeleton or exoskeleton, tell him to touch his backbone and ask him if it's inside his body or if he wears it on the outside. He has an internal support system (an endoskeleton). However, crabs and turtles wear their support on the outside of their bodies, so they have exoskeletons to protect their bodies.

Art: Paint (pigment, binder, and solvent)

You may want to discuss the rich and vibrant illustrations James Ransome created for *Aunt Flossie's Hats* and the medium he used-- oil paint. Oil paint is a slow-drying paint made by mixing pigments in oil allowing the artist to work on fine details while the paint is still wet.

All paints are made from three basic ingredients: pigment, binder, and solvent. These ingredients as well as the surface to which the paint is applied, all affect the color seen. *Pigments* are finely ground, colored powders that form paint when mixed with a liquid. A *solvent* is the liquid that controls the thickness or thinness of the paint. The solvent for oil paint is turpentine. The *binder* is a liquid that holds together the grains of pigment in a form that can be spread over a surface. Linseed oil is the binder for oil paints making them glow even after they are dried unless they are mixed with too much turpentine (then they will dry to a dull finish).

Allow your student to experiment with oil paints on canvas. What effects are achieved when no turpentine is added? a little? a lot?

Another idea is to allow your student to make his own paint. He will need pigment, binder, and solvent. For pigment, have him collect different kinds of earth colors (dirt, clay, sand). Have him grind them in a mortar and pestle (they should be ground as finely as possible). It will still be a little gritty. For the binder, use one-part white glue to one-part water (the water acts as the solvent). Put a few spoons of pigment into a container and mix with some binder. Experiment with different proportions of pigment and binder (and even the solvent-- water).

One final idea is to allow your student to experiment with painting different types of paint (acrylic, oil, watercolor, and anything else you can find!) on different

surfaces (canvas, tile, thick paper, etc.). Try every paint on every surface. What difference does the surface make? Does the same paint look different on a different surface? Do different paints look different on the same surface? Which surface does your student like the best for acrylic? watercolor? oil?

Recipe--Crab Cakes

CRAB CAKES

1 lb. back fin crab meat

1 piece white bread (end crust preferred)

1 egg, beaten slightly

1 tsp. mustard

Pinch Old Bay seasoning

Pinch of parsley

Salt and pepper to taste

2 tbsp. Mayonnaise, or enough to hold cakes together without being wet.

Remove noticeable shells from crab meat. Finely grate bread over crab meat. Add egg. Add remaining

ingredients and mix gently. Form into 7 or 8 cakes. Fry in hot oil just covering bottom of pan

(preferably an iron skillet), turning once. Serves 3 to 4 people.

Just For Fun: Field Trip--Parade

Find out when your next local parade is and attend! Take some pictures to add to your scrapbook.

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