

Hawk, I'm Your Brother by Byrd Baylor

Unit Study by Sharon Jacksack and Celia

Social Studies: Developing Compassion

Capturing wild animals not only causes immense suffering to the individual animals involved; it destroys natural ecologies and habitats and has the potential to put the survival of some species at risk. No matter how big the cage or for how long the bird may occasionally be let out, it is cruel to imprison these intelligent animals and deny them their most basic instinct: the freedom to spread their wings and fly. What basic lessons in compassion did Rudy Soto learn?

Social Studies: Multiculturalism

What do your kids know about America's first people? Many children's ideas about native peoples depict people as they lived hundreds of years ago. Rudy Soto did not live hundreds of years ago. How does his life compare to the other native peoples your student has learned about?

The book series *We Are Still Here* is an excellent way to bridge the culture as it existed hundreds of years ago to the culture today.

Social Studies: Dreams

Rudy had a dream that he wanted to achieve, that is, to fly. What dreams have you had? Have you achieved them? What has stopped you? How else might Rudy have fulfilled his dream of flying?

Language Arts: Poetic Prose

The prose poem is a method of writing that uses the form and rhythms of poetry, but with many of the conventions of prose. In poetry the basic unit of construction is the line; in the prose poem, as in prose, the basic unit of construction is the sentence. If you are a poet, working with poetic sentences and paragraphs can change your idea about what a poem is, revealing new rhythms and forms. If you are a fiction writer, working with the prose poem may help you work on style and inventive structures. Following a walk through the city or your neighborhood, record your daydream images and observations in a prose poem style as Ms.

Baylor does. Does it help you to see the ordinary in a new light?

Language Arts: Bird Words

Several words in the story relate to birds. Have your student make a list:

float
soar
flap
flutter
gliding
flying
hawk
wings
nest

Can your student add more words to the list that were not used in the story?
(beak, talons, feathers, raptor, etc.)

If there are any terms your student is unfamiliar with, look them up and record their definitions.

Language Arts: Cause and Effect

Make a chart showing various things that happen in the story and the effect.
Sample:

Cause	Effect
When Rudy met new people, he asked them if they could fly.	They laughed at him.
People laughed at Rudy.	Rudy quit asking if they could fly.
Rudy Soto thought maybe the birds of Santos Mountain had magic they would share with him, so he too could fly.	He stole a Red Tail Hawk.

Rudy wanted to please his hawk.	He tried to make the hawk happy by taking it out of the cage and going for walks, and allowing it to play in the water.
The hawk continued to pull at the string.	This let Rudy know it was unhappy, and he let the hawk go.

Language Arts: Read Aloud

An excellent series that goes along with this story would be the *My Side of the Mountain* books by Jean Craighead George.

Art: Space

In *Hawk, I'm Your Brother*, the illustrator, Peter Parnell, uses space to show the vastness of the Southwest, and the isolation of Rudy from the rest of society.

Space also shows the fantasy of flying contrasted with the reality of feet on the ground. The backgrounds in the illustrations are deliberately left plain. Investigate the use of space in art with your student. How have different artists interpreted this concept?

Look at some paintings and look for empty spaces. Draw your own picture. Instead of trying to fill the paper, leave it purposefully simple, with large parts left blank. How does the picture make you feel?

Art: Drawing Wildlife

The illustration of the hawk, in contrast to much of the book, is quite detailed. Look at a field guide or other reference book with photographs of the Red Tail Hawk. How does the illustration in *Hawk, I'm Your Brother* differ from the photograph? How are they the same?

Choose an animal and find some good photographs of it. Draw your chosen animal. Be sure to get lots of detail: texture of fur, scales or feathers; the shape of the nose or beak; the expression on your animal's face.

Science: Red-Tailed Hawk

The Red-Tailed Hawk is a carnivore (meat eater) that belongs to the category of birds known as raptors -- birds of prey. They have strong, hooked beaks; their feet have three toes pointed forward and one turned back; and their claws, or talons, are long, curved and very sharp. Prey is killed with the long talons and, if it is too large to swallow whole, it is torn to bite-sized pieces with the hawk's beak. Red-Tailed Hawks eat rodents such as mice, muskrats, and squirrels as well as snakes, moles, weasels, amphibians, and other birds (pigeons, quail, crows, ducks, woodpeckers, etc.).

The Red-tail is the most common hawk in North America. If you keep an eye out, you will probably see them sitting on fences or poles on the side of the road. Its preferred habitat is mixed forest and fields with high areas for perch sites. It can be found just about anywhere including deserts, grasslands, mountains, and even urban areas.

The red-tailed hawk is large and usually weighs between 2 and 4 pounds. It is about 19-23 inches long. As with most raptors, the female is nearly 1/3 larger than the male and may have a wingspan of 56 inches. This species shows a great deal of individual variation in plumage from brown to gray brown feathers with a white chest. The tail feathers that this bird is named for are red-brown and square-cut.

Science: Imprinting

Rudy captures a hawk as a chick and raises it, before he lets it go free. How can this affect a bird? Birds taken from the wild become imprinted on people and never learn the necessary skills to survive on their own in the wild. Once imprinted on humans, a bird will exhibit uncharacteristic behavior and will become socially unacceptable to wild members of its own species. Wild birds are able to sense an imprinted bird's lack of instincts, and this often results in physical harm to the imprinted bird, as wild populations will often attack the imprint. What should you do if you find a baby bird outside of its nest? How do scientists who are raising birds avoid imprinting on the chicks? How is imprinting used as a technique in falconry? Your local nature center is likely to have some birds that cannot be released into the wild because they have been imprinted. Talk to the ranger to find out more about the birds and this interesting subject. If you are lucky, you might be able to stroke the feathers of one of these magnificent birds.

Math: Counting

There are cactuses in nearly every illustration. Can your student count them all? How many different kinds are there? Your older student may enjoy making a graph of how many times different cactuses appear in the story.

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