

Bug-Eat-Bug World

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Introduction:

These activities are based on *How to Walk an Ant* by Cindy Derby, Roaring Brook Press (Macmillan) (2019) and are designed to be used in a children's classroom. The class will read *How to Walk an Ant* together, and then have several activities to complete as a supplement to the story. First, the students will re-enact the story, creating their own costumes and voices for the characters. Then, a long-term class project will begin as the students will care for and observe their own classroom ant farm. Additional activities will also be included to build on reading comprehension and creative writing skills.

Our activities are heavily influenced by the content of the book. The students will be playing the roles of characters from the book and witnesses to the events that take place in the story. They will be loosely reenacting the story and considering additional details that may have been left up to the reader. The ant farm activity builds on the book's introduction to ants and gives the students a hands-on opportunity to see the insects on a much deeper and intimate level. The other supplemental lessons are directly related to the story and creating their own.

Ideas and Outlines

1) Production of a play, followed by news cast or interviews:

After reading, discussing, and exploring the story through a live version, students can be encouraged to think about what if this story took place in their area as a real event? What might that look like?

1. Presentation/development method

a. While rehearsing the story, have the students stay in character to answer open ended questions about what is going on in the story. Chime in when guidance is needed, including additional or corrective information. This is meant to be an engaging and creative exercise.

2. How might they hear about it?

a. The students will have their own ideas.

b. Suggestions can be made:

i. They hear about the funeral.

ii. They hear about the tangled ants and ladybugs.

iii. They hear about the sharing of ice cream cones

3. Additional post show news cast

i. Discuss what a news cast is and how this is an important way to find out about events.

ii. Discuss how a news cast leads to follow up stories and interviews.

4. From this discussion, the students can be guided to come up with a series of short news stories or interviews.

a. Each part can be very brief and different students can be the primary figure in different parts. This way each student can have an active role.

b. Keeping the lines short and interactions brief may be important depending on the age group.

c. Suggestions for news coverage:

- On the scene coverage: showing some part of the Breaking News
- Interviews with the ants, lady bugs – could have several of these and they don't have to agree on their views
- Interviews with bystanders
- Interview with Amariyah, the expert ant walker and the girl who is walking the lady bugs (She isn't named in the book. So, students can give her a name.)
- Interview with funeral director
- Interview with Ice Cream Vendor

4 . Students develop interview questions by using imagination and

- a. Character development
- b. Costume development
- c. Character representation

4. Important skills that can be gained

- a. understanding what news is, how it is reported
- b. creative work on making up the lines and costumes
- c. understanding different points of view of the same event – what happened, why, and why/how it is important
- d. teamwork and assigning/agreeing to particular roles (being a team member)

Activity: Ant Farm

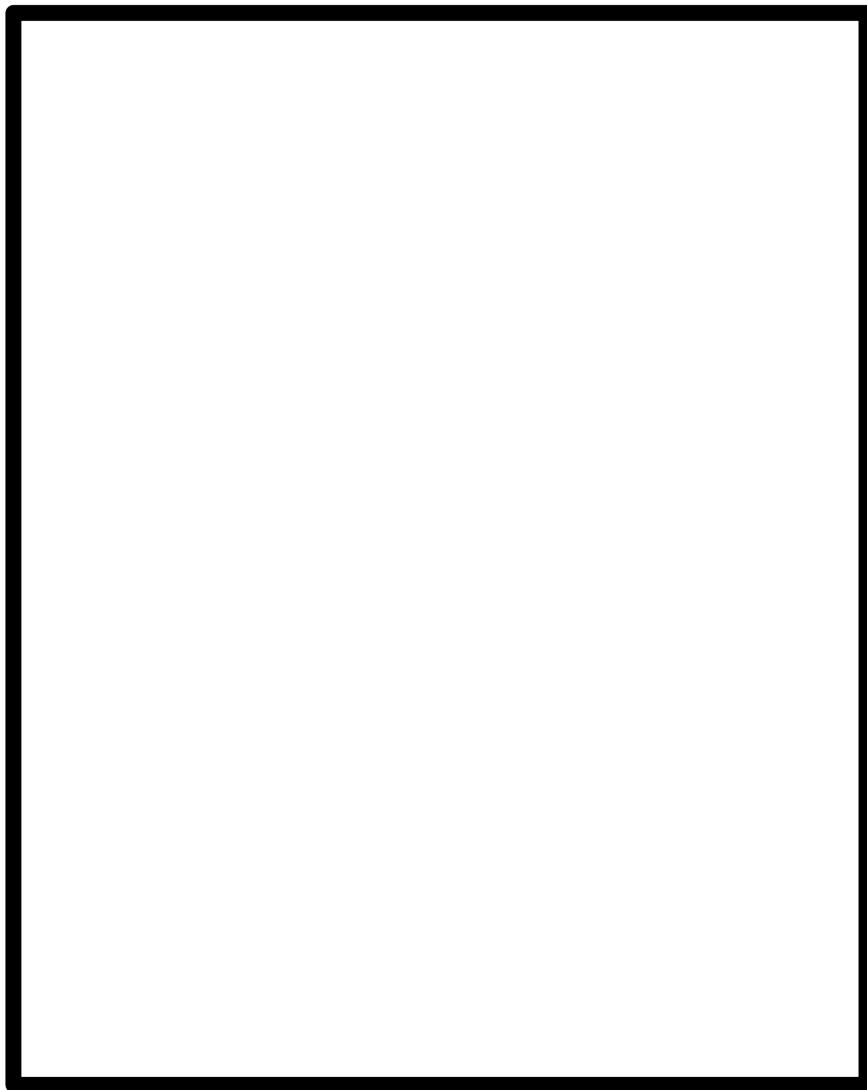
1. The class starting an ant farm may be a fun and educational follow-up to continue thinking about ants.
 - a. The Nature Gift Store (<https://www.nature-gifts.com/shop/ant-farms/>) is a possible source for various ant farms, information, and supplies. BioQuip also has small, kid-friendly ant farms available, if we wanted to suggest two potential resources for classrooms.
 - i. They supply harvester ants; these are large ants and can be seen readily, so easy to observe. They are not supplying a queen, so it is not a whole colony which means the ant farm will last several months.
2. Students can use this time to investigate and observe the ants, how they live in a colony, and how they differ from other insects.
 - a. Students can learn to make observations of the ants.
 - b. Students can write up lab or observational reports, which can be used as a lesson or for creative writing, drawing, etc.
 - c. Pairs of students or small groups can be responsible for checking the ants, making some observations, and sharing with the class each day.
3. Lots of possible teaching points here:
 - a. How to work together to care for something; responsibility.
 - b. Making reports: oral and/or written
 - c. Putting information together from different reports; written summary.
 - i. Could include counts – how many ants, other measurements
 - ii. Drawings and/or photos
 - iii. In conclusion, the students could write their own ant book.
 - iv. Interactions between ants

Sample Lesson Plan

- I. Big Question
 - A. Before reading the book as a class, ask the students to consider how they could walk an ant. Discuss their ideas briefly but tell them to keep that question in mind throughout the story.
 - B. After finishing the book, revisit the question and discuss how their thoughts on walking ants may have changed and why. Engaging the students to keep a particular thought in mind while reading through the story will help them keep their attention on what is happening and how the story plays out. When building and strengthening comprehension skills, this is important.
- II. Story Elements
 - A. Characters - WHO is in the story.
 - B. Setting - WHERE and WHEN does the story take place.
 - C. Problem and Solution - WHAT is happening to the characters in the story, or what are they trying to figure out and how is it resolved. Breaking every story down into these simple elements is helpful to young readers, as they begin to retain more from stories they read and hear. Assigning simple and consistent W's to each of the different elements helps the students recall what each particular element is asking for.
- III. Summary
 - A. As a class, or in small groups, make sure that the students are able to recall specific details from the beginning, middle, and end of the story.
- IV. Creating Writing
 - A. Challenge the students to choose their own insect species to walk and draw a picture of themselves and their chosen insects.
 - B. Using the picture as inspiration, have them develop writing ideas for 'how they would learn/master walking their insect' using a 4-Square pre-writing model. The first square helps the students develop their topic sentence that will begin their story. The next two develop the events of the story, and the final is the conclusion. Students are not required to use complete sentences in pre-writing. They can doodle ideas and keywords in each square. The purpose of this step is just to have them organize their ideas and plan their sentences/story.
 - C. Finally, have the students write a short story (~4 COMPLETE sentences) using their pre-writing model
 - D. (Diagram attached)

How to Walk _____

In the space below, draw yourself walking an insect or insects of your own:



| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| <p>What happened: _____</p> <p>Where and When: _____</p> <p>Who: _____</p> | <p>First:</p> |
| <p>Next:</p> | <p>Last/Conclusion:</p> |

Utilizing your pre-writing ideas, put your story into COMPLETE sentences below:

Activity: Story Based Production

“How to Walk an Ant”

On Stage Production: Script taken from original story, can be edited or altered or followed up with ideas listed in original outline

Characters (in order of appearance)

- Amariyah (ant walker)
- Dog
- Gnome
- Goldfish
- Ants (10-15)
- Anteater
- Lady Bug Walker
- Ladybugs (3)

Props

(Oversized and over-exaggerated for stage presence and at ant scale)

- Candy cane
- Sticks/ leaves
- Yellow yarn/ red yarn
- Ice creams
- Popsicle stick tombstones
- Fake nail
- Signs
 - “Steps 1-9”
 - “Head”
 - “Thorax”
 - “Abdomen”

Curtain

Amariyah at center

Amariyah: My name is Amariyah and I am an expert walker. No, I don't mean I walk perfect, I mean I walk things.

(Dog enters with yarn leash attached, tries to hand leash to Am.)

Amariyah: (shakes head) NOT dogs.

(Dog exits. Gnome enters with leash yarn attached, tries to hand leash to Am.)

Amariyah: (shakes head) NOT fancy little gnomes.

(Gnome shrugs and exits. Goldfish enters with yarn leash attached, tries to hand leash to Am.)

Amariyah: (shakes head) And NOT goldfish. My specialty is...

(Goldfish exits. Enter three ants with yarn leashes, which Am. gladly accepts)

Amariyah: And today I will share my expertise with my very own nine-step guide!

(Ant enters holding "Step One" sign. Other Ants enter with candy cane, trees, sticks, etc.)

Amariyah: (looking at objects and Ants) The first step is to find an ant! They can be found on trees, water fountains, or even abandoned candy canes!

Ant: Don't forget to look left and right when crossing ant highways!

Amariyah: (catches Ant on candy cane) Got ya!

(Sign carrying Ant switches to "Step Two" sign)

Amariyah: Step two is to politely introduce yourself. Don't be too antsy. Ants can smell fear with their ANTennae! (To Ant) Hello, Sir Ant, my name is... (Ant turns away, Am. follows) Hey again! I'm gonna walk you, and you're gonna like it! (Ant exits stage) BUT I'M A PROFFESIONAL!

(Sign Ant switches to "Step Three")

Amariyah: Step three is to gain their trust! Make a bridge using sticks, leaves, or your grandma's fake nail, which can be found in the couch.

Ant: (being poked at by Am.) A good rule is not to stab the ant!

(Sign Ant switches to "Step Four." Ants holding signs saying "Head," "Thorax," and "Abdomen" in the shape of arrows come on stage)

Amariyah: Step Four is to prepare the leash. (Begins tying bow on Ant, Anatomy sign holding ants point to appropriate ant body part) Tie the smallest bow in the universe then secure between the ant's thorax and head.

(Ant holding sign switches to "Step Five")

Amariyah: Step Five is to make a goal! Walking to the ice cream truck is an excellent goal. The estimated ant travel time is 35.7 minutes.

Ant Eater: (enters stage) Stay on a designated path! There may be dangers!

(Ant holding sign switches to "Step Six")

Amariyah: Step six is to control the leash. If your ant takes a wrong turn, shorten the leash by four centimeters (Ant wanders and interacts with various characters and objects on stage) Really, Ant? Wow...

(Ant holding sign switches to “Step Seven”)

Amariyah: Step seven is practice, practice, practice! Reward the ant with a lick of the candy cane every 7 centimeters (Ant licks candy cane, many more Ants appear on stage) Be sure to watch your back!

(Many more ants appear and Am. begins tying leashes on them. Sign Ant switches to “Step Eight”)

Amariyah: Step eight (frantically leashing ants who are scurrying around stage) when you encounter a colony of ants repeat steps two through seven three thousand and twenty-eight times. But whatever you do...

(Enter ladybugs with red leashes, also scurrying and beginning to tangle the ants’ yellow leashes. Enter Lady Bug Walker)

Amariyah: Don’t get...

Everyone on stage: TANGLED!!

(Dramatic pause)

Amariyah: You squished my ant!

Lady Bug Walker: You squished my ladybug!

(Both pout)

Amariyah: Wanna get ice cream and then have a funeral?

(Ants clear stage, ice cream appears. Sign Ant switches to “Step Nine”)

Amariyah: Step nine is to celebrate when you reach your goal.

(Applause and bows. Popsicle tombstones are brought out as encore. Discussion and questions about walking ants is encouraged)