

CROW CALL

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by Lois Lowry, illustrated by Bagram Ibatoulline

Ages: 7-11; Grades: 2-6

Running time: 18 minutes

Themes: Families, Feelings, Relationships, Growing Up

SUMMARY

When Liz's dad returns from WWII, she hardly knows him. But she feels protected in her large flannel hunting shirt that he had bought her before he left, and honored to be his hunting partner when he returns. As Liz gets reacquainted with her father, he discovers that her favorite food is cherry pie, and she discovers his sense of humor. The special relationship between father and daughter comes alive in this artful and poignant story that is sure to spark connections and appreciation among children and adults.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will use a model text and employ details to show, not tell, with their own writing.
- Students will make inferences.
- Students will make text-to-self and text-to-world connections.
- Students will create a mixed media piece of artwork and short narrative or description to accompany it.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Give a writing mini-lesson about how strong writers show, not tell details and characters' actions. Read aloud part of the book *Crow Call* that highlights descriptive language and paints a picture in the reader's mind. (Ex: *Grass, frozen after its summer softness, crunches under our feet; the air is sharp and supremely clear, free from the floating pollens of summer, and our words seem etched and breakable on the brittle stillness.*) Give students an example of how Lowry could have written the same passage, just telling the reader what the setting looked like. (Ex: *The grass was frozen and crunchy. The air was clear and cold. It was very still everywhere.*) Encourage students to watch and listen for other places in the movie where the

language helps the reader visualize the setting or characters. Revisit this lesson after viewing the movie when students write their own narrative or descriptive pieces.

Review that strong readers make connections with the text. Explain that readers can connect a text to their own lives (text-to-self) or to things that happen in the real world (text-to-world). Ask students for examples of connections that they have found with books that they're reading independently, or with books that the class has shared. Then, tell students that they're going to watch a movie about a special relationship between a father and a daughter. Encourage them to watch and listen for text-to-self or text-to-world connections that they can make. Stop the movie periodically to give students time to share their connections.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Give a mini-lesson on making inferences. Explain to students that when you make an inference, you use your own background knowledge together with clues in the text to draw conclusions about the characters, setting, or plot. Tell students that you're going to play part of the movie again and that they should look and listen for clues that tell them that the story took place in the past. Replay the beginning of the movie and pause it when Liz is sitting in the car with her father for the first time. Ask:

- Did you see anything that helped you realize that this took place in the past? (*old fashioned car, reference to the war*) Then, guide students through making other inferences about the characters, setting, and plot. Replay parts of the movie as necessary. Some ideas are:
- How does Liz feel about her father in the beginning of the story? How do you know? How does she feel at the end?
- What area of the country do they probably live in? What makes you think that?
- Why do you think that Liz's father doesn't shoot any crows that day?

Show students some of the illustrations from the book, or pause for different scenes in the movie to point out the

realistic characteristics of the drawings. Notice how the illustrations of the characters have a photographic quality. Ask students to bring in photographs of themselves and someone with whom they have a special relationship. Then, have students cut out the people from the photographs and illustrate a scene around them. Encourage them to include details that bring the picture to life. Revisit the writing lesson from the **Before Viewing Activity**. Tell students that they have created a visual representation of a time or place with a special person in their lives, now they are going to try to use the writing technique of showing, not telling to describe the scene or tell a story about it.

Guide students through a web-based author study on Lois Lowry. Her official website is: <http://www.loislowry.com/>. Here, students can access an annotated book list, biography, frequently asked questions, and information to contact her. Encourage students to broaden their searches as well. Collect some other books by Lowry and make them available in the classroom library for check out.

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