

I, CROCODILE

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by Fred Marcellino (HarperCollins)

Themes: Animals, Environment, Fantasy,

Geography

Grade Level: K–5

Running Time: 10 minutes

SUMMARY

When Napoleon invades Egypt, he loads up on souvenirs: temples, obelisks, mummies—and Le Fantastique Crocodile Egyptien, a live crocodile. This story relives Napoleon’s invasion from the crocodile’s point of view. With droll humor, the crocodile tells the sad story of his cruel and abrupt departure from his paradise on a mudbank by the Nile, his beastly ocean voyage and his humiliating transportation to a fountain in a park in Paris — what amounts to a fancy bathtub. For a while he’s all the rage, but when the crocodile fashion fades, he escapes into the Paris sewers. At the end, he’s dining on fashionable Parisians. This tale is based on an anonymous satire from 19th century France, and the wry text and drawings reflect the spirit of the original.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will watch and hear a funny animal story that is also a satire.
- Children will compare the behavior of animals in a story to the behavior of people.
- Children will identify and describe visual details about the early 19th century.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Ask children what a crocodile is and ask them to list what they know about crocodiles. Use a globe

to locate the Nile River in Egypt, one habitat of the crocodile. Explain that this story takes place about 200 years ago in France, at a time when the army and navy of France invaded Egypt. Locate France on the globe as well, and trace the route between the Nile and Paris. Alert children to listen for the name of an important leader of France. He and the crocodile are the two main characters in the story.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Ask students to recall details from the story about exactly where it took place (on the Nile River in Egypt and in Paris, France) and when (starting August 17, 1799). Then have them share memories of the pictures: how the people dressed, how they traveled and how they amused themselves. Have children compare how the crocodile lived in Egypt to how he lived in Paris. Ask them to name Napoleon and recall the specific acts of Napoleon that changed the crocodile’s life. Discuss which character was worse, the crocodile or Napoleon.

Ask children to recall ways in which the crocodile acted like a real crocodile (eating other animals, sunning himself) and ways in which he acted like a person (basking in admiration, showing off, understanding human talk). Remind them of other stories they know in which animals take on human speech and behavior. Encourage children to write and illustrate their own fantasy stories, plays, poems and songs about animals who act like people. Arrange an all-animal revue and perform it for another class.

To reinforce the idea of using humor in stories, hold a crocodile joke contest. Or expand the rules to include jokes about any animal that lives in Egypt and cartoons as well as spoken jokes.

Use the pictures in the program to connect the story to American history. With younger students, compare costumes with those of early 19th century Americans. Have older children research and report on acts by Napoleon that directly affected the United States, especially the Louisiana Purchase and the War of 1812. Use a history atlas and timeline.

Connect the story to science by having children research and report on crocodiles. Visit an actual zoo or Internet site to watch crocodiles in action. Older children can report on the habitats of crocodiles and the current environmental threats to crocodiles.

Other videos and films about animals who act like people available from Weston Woods include:
THE AMAZING BONE by William Steig
CHATO’S KITCHEN by Gary Soto, ill. by Susan Guevara
CHICKEN LITTLE by Steven Kellogg
THE COW WHO FELL IN THE CANAL, by Phyllis Krasilovsky, ill. by Peter Spier
OFFICER BUCKLE AND GLORIA by Peggy Rathmann

Other videos and films about animal habitats from Weston Woods include:
ANTARCTIC ANTICS by Judy Sierra, ill. By Jose Aruego & Ariane Dewey
RIKKI-TIKKI-TAVI by Rudyard Kipling, ill. by Jerry Pinkney

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POSSUM MAGIC

POSSUM MAGIC

by Mem Fox, illustrated by Julie Vivas
(Gulliver Books, Harcourt Brace)

Themes: Animals, Fantasy, Nature, Geography

Grade Level: K--5

Running Time: 8 minutes

SUMMARY

Using bush magic, Grandma Poss has made her granddaughter Hush invisible, a trait that's handy for sliding down kangaroos and avoiding snakes. But when Hush wants to see herself, reversing the magic is not so easy. Grandma remembers that the spell came from human food, so the two possums take a bicycle tour of Australia, looking for the exact foods that will make Hush reappear. The funny story, bursts of rhyme and magical pictures draw children's imaginations to Australia, where the real foods that people eat sound as exotic as wombats and kookaburras.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will watch and listen to a fantasy story about animals in Australia.
- Children will identify some Australian animals, place names and popular foods.
- Children will distinguish between real and fantasy elements in a work of fiction.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Start by defining the word "possum," by showing children the cover of the video. Ask

students to identify the part of the title that shows it's an imaginary story. Then explain that this imaginary story is set in a real place, Australia. Locate Australia on a map or globe, and ask students to share what they already know about Australia, especially the names of Australian animals. Encourage them to watch for these animals as they view the program.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Divide students into three teams, one each for the animals, place names and foods of Australia. Each team should make a list of questions from their category. Teams then take turns testing each other's recall of details. For example, the animals team might ask, "What animal did Grandma Poss turn blue?"

Connect the story to a nature or science lesson by having students look up opossums in nature encyclopedias, books about animals, or animal-related web sites. Have them share what they learn through bulletin boards, posters and class reports.

Connect the story to both literature and American history by collecting and sharing other folk tales about opossums. (Look for folk-tales from the United States, Mexico, Central and South America, from Native American, African American and European American traditions.) Discuss the real elements of possum behavior, such as faking death to avoid it, that

appear in the folk stories.

Connect the story to geography by comparing the map at the end of the program with other, more detailed maps of Australia. Have students do library research about places in Australia or contact the Australian cities in the story by means of the Internet. Children should report their discoveries to the class.

Ask students to think of and list American food names that might sound funny to someone from Australia. For example, what are hot dogs? cheese fries? patty melts? subs? Encourage students to write funny stories and poems featuring names of foods.

Other videos and films about fantasy animals available from Weston Woods include:
ANTARCTIC ANTICS by Judy Sierra, ill. by Jose Aruego and Ariane Dewey
SYLVESTER AND THE MAGIC PEBBLE by William Steig

Other related videos and films from Weston Woods include:
WILFRID GORDON McDONALD PARTRIDGE by Mem Fox, ill. by Julie Vivas
TRUMPET VIDEO VISITS MEM FOX

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HOT HIPPO

HOT HIPPO

by Mwenye Hadithi, ill. by Adrienne Kennaway

Themes: African Culture/Animals

Grade Level: PreK – 3

Running time: 6 minutes

SUMMARY

HOT HIPPO is set in Africa and involves a hippo who is hot on land and yearns to live in the river with the fish. Hippo approaches Ngai, who is the god of "everything and everywhere," to ask if he might make his home in the river. Ngai agrees to allow Hippo to live in the river. But Hippo must promise not to eat the fish or hide their bones. And he must come out of the water at night and eat grass so that Ngai can see that he is not eating the fish in the darkness. Hippo agrees and runs to the river. When Hippo jumps into the water he sinks to the bottom. Hippo cannot swim! However, he solves the problem by holding his breath and running along the river's bottom. And from that day forward, Hippo enjoys the refreshing river and keeps his promise to Ngai.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will learn about animals of Africa
- Children will explore African culture
- Children will investigate animal habitats

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book HOT HIPPO with children. Talk with children about the climate of Africa. Locate it on the map. Show children illustrations and photographs of the types of clothing Africans wear to suit the climate. Discuss the work and customs of African people. Encourage children to think about the ways Africans might manage the intense heat as they go about their daily lives. Then show children pictures of the animals

that inhabit African regions. Have children talk about places where they may have seen some of these animals.

Talk with children about the ways warm weather affects them. Ask:

- What kinds of clothing do you wear in the summertime?
- What kinds of things do you like to do in warm weather?
- What do you do to cool off when you feel hot?

Explain to children that this story is a fable. It is one person's account of why hippos swim in water. A fable explains why something real actually happens. Make up a story about why the zebra has stripes and others the children can think of...(why is the sky blue, etc.)

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about what happened to Hippo when he first jumped into the river. Ask:

- Why do you think Hippo sank to the bottom?
- Do you think a giraffe would sink? An elephant? A bumblebee? A butterfly?

Then provide a basin of water and a variety of objects that children can use for sink and float experiments. Have children sort the objects into two groups, those that sink and those that do not. Help children investigate the properties of the objects in both groups that determine whether they will sink or float.

Discuss the god Ngai and the help he gave to Hippo. Then ask:

- If there were several gods for everything and you could ask a god a favor, what would it be?
- Why would you want this?

Σ What would you do once you had your wish?

Help children create short stories about the favors they asked for and the gods that granted them. Have the children listen closely to the films African music. As they work on their projects, play some background music for inspiration.

Have the children change the story. What would happen if Hippo ate one fish? What might the god Ngai do to him for punishment?

Have children take turns pantomiming the movements and behaviors of various animals. As children imitate the animals, have others in the group try to identify the animals being imitated. Encourage children in the group to ask questions of the 'animals' such as:

- Where do you live?
- What do you eat?
- How do you care for your babies?

Provide the children with materials for a collage that are all different colors and textures. Have them create a scene from HOT HIPPO, in the water or on land.

Other videos and films about African culture available from Weston Woods include:

MUFARO'S BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS by John Steptoe

A STORY – A STORY by Gail E. Haley

THE VILLAGE OF ROUND AND SQUARE HOUSES by Ann Grifalconi

WHY MOSQUITOES BUZZ IN PEOPLE'S EARS by Verna Aardema, ill. by Leo & Diane Dillon

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TIKKI TIKKI TEMBO

Tikki Tikki Tembo

by Arkene Mosel (Holt)

Themes: Chinese Culture/Folktales

Grade Level: K-2

Running Time: 9 minutes, iconographic

Summary

Tikki Tikki Tembo is the Chinese folktale of a little boy with a very long name. Tikki Tikki tembo-no sa rembo-chari bari ruchi-pip prti pembo was the first son of a woman who gave her first-born a very long name, and her second son, the short name of Chang.

One day, Chang falls into the well. Tikki Tikki Tembo runs to his mother for help. Shortly, an old man with a ladder helps Chang out of the well. The next time, Tikki Tikki Tembo falls into the well. Chang runs for help. However, it takes so long for Chang to say Tikki Tikki Tembo's full name to describe what happened that it is a long while before Chang's brother is recovered from the well.

Tikki Tikki Tembo's recovery is long, and the lesson learned is to give one's children short names instead of great long names.

Objectives

- Children will learn about Chinese culture
- Children will explore family relationships
- Children will enjoy a well-known Chinese folktale

Before Viewing Activities

Share the book Tikki Tikki Tembo with children.

Then ask:

How do you think Tikki Tikki Tembo and his brother Chang felt about one another?
How can you tell?

Talk with children about Chinese culture. Use your school library for references and photographs. Invite a Chinese guest to share his/her customs and traditions with the class. Later, have children investigate Chinese New Year's celebrations. Then have a Chinese New Year's celebration in your own classroom.

Have children think of rhyming names that

they can give to one another. Encourage children to try and base the names on the special characteristics of their classmates. For example, if the child enjoys dancing, he/she might be given the name "Prancer-Dancer." Print children's new rhyming names on name tags and give children the option of wearing them throughout the day.

After Viewing Activities

Use a large barrel or other large, round container to represent a well in the classroom. Place an object in the "well." Describe the object, without naming it, to children. The child who identifies the object will take it out of the well and choose another object to put into the well. This child will describe the object, without naming it, to the class. The game continues in this manner.

Supply a large sheet of kraft paper and markers. Have children use the paper and markers to draw a large map.

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