

HENRY HIKES TO FITCHBURG

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by D.B. Johnson (Houghton Mifflin)
Themes: Environment, History, Literature, Nature
Grade Level: K - 4
Running Time: 10 minutes

SUMMARY

This story about two bear friends was inspired by a passage in *Walden*, by Henry David Thoreau. Henry and his friend have two different approaches to travel, and two different philosophies of life. While his friend does odd jobs to earn the 90-cent train fare, Henry travels on foot, enjoying the beauty of nature as he goes. The brightly colored pictures are in simple, modern style that evokes the charm of early American folk painting. The words are minimal; the pictures are full of enchanting detail. Younger children will especially enjoy counting along as Henry and his friend add up the cents and miles. Older children will appreciate the last page, "About Henry," a factual account of Thoreau and the source of the story.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will watch and listen to an imaginative adaptation of a true story.
- Children will describe the sights, sounds and activities of a walk in nature.
- Children will compare and evaluate two methods of reaching the same goal.
- Children will be introduced to Henry David Thoreau.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Show students the cover, and ask them to discuss the title and art. With younger students, discuss what Henry might see on a hike. Then ask students to find a clue about some other way to travel, besides walking. After they have found the railroad tracks, alert them to compare the difference between walking and going by train as they enjoy the story.

With older students, relate the opening discussion more directly to Thoreau. Inform students that although Henry is a bear, he's based on a real person named Henry. Based on clues from the cover, ask students to guess where and when the real Henry lived. Ask them to stay alert for clues to who, what, where, when and why as they enjoy the story.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

To encourage children to express the feelings evoked by the program, ask them to look back at the story from the points of view of both Henry and his friend. Have students share opinions as to which bear made the better choice. Ask students who support Henry to remember what he saw and experienced on his hike. Ask students who support Henry's friend to remember what work got done as he earned his 90 cents.

Connect the story to science and the environment by reviewing the pictures in detail. With younger students, have students list the people, animals and things they see in the towns with the people, plants, and animals they see on Henry's hike. With older students, ask students to compare details from the story and pictures

with what they would see today if they walked from town to town.

Connect the story to art, history and the environment by having students draw a mural of the landscape in the book and then to fill the landscape with objects they would find today.

Connect the story to writing by having students compose stories, poems, plays or songs from the viewpoints of the animals Henry meets on his hike.

Connect the story to math by having students write story problems about Henry's hike (distance in miles) and Henry's friend's work (addition to 90). Encourage students to write other story problems from an imaginary hike of their own.

Connect the story to American history and literature by having students research the biographies of Henry David Thoreau, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Bronson Alcott.

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