

VOYAGE TO THE BUNNY PLANET

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By Rosemary Wells

Ages: 3-8

Themes: Family, Dreams, Wishes, Imagination, Good and Bad Days

Running Time: 19 minutes

SUMMARY

"Far beyond the moon and stars, twenty light-years south of Mars, spins the gentle Bunny Planet, and the Bunny Queen is Janet." So goes the rhyme that takes young bunnies from days that are sad, lonely, and grumpy, to days that should have been. Claire gets whisked from a day of boring math and baloney sandwiches to a lovely bowl of first tomato soup. Robert escapes his arguing aunt and uncle, and boisterous cousins, to a peaceful spot in the forest. Felix finds relief from a sick day in a warm and cozy day with his father. The Bunny Planet is a sanctuary for all young bunnies who have lost their ways in a very bad day.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will make text-to-self connections.
- Students will write in a group a story about their own imaginary experiences on the Bunny Planet.
- Students will create models of the Bunny Planet, as they imagine it.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Teach students about text-to-self connections. Tell students that excellent readers make connections between their books (texts) and experiences in their own lives. By making connections, students gain a deeper understanding of the texts. Teach students a hand movement that they can use when they are reading or listening to a story and they make a text-to-self connection. (1) Put their hands together in the shape of a book. (2) Point their two index fingers towards their chests. (3) Clasp their hands together to show a connection. Ask students to share experiences of a terrible day that they have had. Guiding questions:

- Have you ever had a day that you just wanted to end?
- Why? What happened?
- Did the day ever get better?

- What kinds of things happened to make the day get better?

After students have shared their experiences, tell them that they are going to watch a movie about some young bunnies who each have some very bad days. Encourage them to watch and listen for experiences that they can connect with. When they see or hear a connection, remind them to make the text-to-self connection hand signal.

Elicit students' background knowledge about planets and the solar system. Guiding questions:

- What is a planet?
 - What planet do we live on?
 - How many planets are there in our solar system?
 - Can you name other planets in our solar system?
 - What do planets look like? What are they made out of?
 - Are there any planets that are beyond our solar system?
- Tell students that they are going to watch a movie about a planet far, far away, called the Bunny Planet. Ask:
- Do you think that the Bunny Planet is real? Why or why not?
 - What do you think that it is like on the Bunny Planet?
- Encourage students to think about their responses as they watch the movie.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Revisit students' text-to-self connections. Ask:

- Does anyone have any connections with any of the bunnies in the movie?
- Has anyone ever wished that they could go off to another place during a really bad day?
- What are other reasons that someone might need a visit to the Bunny Planet?

Ask students: What would it be like if you visited the Bunny Planet? Where would Queen Janet take you? Guide students through the writing process, by creating a shared writing piece.

1) Students brainstorm ideas about what they would do if they visited the Bunny Planet. Write the students' ideas in a web or on a list. Encourage students to share as many ideas as they can think of. It doesn't matter at this stage whether or not the ideas connect.

2) Use their web or list to choose the idea that the students like the best. This can be done by a vote, or the teacher can choose the strongest idea. Using that idea, create an outline with the students. Since it is a story, the outline should be created in chronological order, using the key words first, then, next, finally. Encourage all students to contribute ideas to the outline.

3) Use the outline to fill in details and strong vocabulary, creating a story. Scribe the story on large chart paper, so that students can see how the ideas get transformed into complete sentences.

4) Conclude by giving each student a copy of the story. Have students illustrate each page.

Ask students: What do you think the Bunny Planet looks like? How big is it? What color is it? What is it made out of? Are there any special features on the Bunny Planet? Use balloons and paper mache and guide students through the process of covering the balloons with paper mache, to create a model of the planet. While the paper mache dries, students can draw pictures of mountains, forests, lakes, streams, and any other features that they imagine to be on the Bunny Planet. Encourage students to all draw a picture of Queen Janet's palace. After the paper mache has fully dried and hardened, students can paint the outside of the planet. Then, they can glue the features they made on the outside. When the Bunny Planets are finished and dry, string them up around the classroom. Tell students that they are a reminder of a place that they can go in their imaginations when they are having a bad day.

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