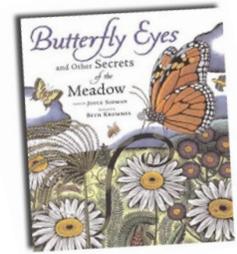


## Butterfly Eyes and Other Secrets of the Meadow

by Joyce Sidman



### Reader's Guide

*These suggestions are for grades 2-5.*

#### PREDICTIONS

Questions to ask before reading.

1. BUTTERFLY EYES is a book about creatures of the meadow. What do you think of when you hear the word "meadow"? Describe the picture in your mind: sights, smells, sounds.
2. Look closely at both the front and back covers of this book. Which plants and animals do you recognize? What other plants and animals might be in this book?
3. What is the time of day on the front cover? On the back cover? Why do you think the artist represented two different times of day?

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING ALOUD

BUTTERFLY EYES is essentially one long guessing game. The "riddle" poems come in pairs, and the two "answers" are on the pages immediately following.

1. Allow students to guess the subject of each poem before turning the page.
2. Ask students how they guessed what each poem was about. What hints does the author give in the poem? What hints does the artist give in the illustration?
3. After reading each nonfiction note, ask students what else they know about the plants/animals mentioned. Have they ever seen them? What have they observed?
4. Many of these poems rhyme, making them perfect for memorization. Have each student pick a favorite poem and memorize it, for recitation to the class. They could dress up or use props.

#### WRITING ACTIVITIES

##### "Riddle Poem"

1. Read "The Gray Ones" with students. Help them find clues from the poem that hint what the poem is about. Pick out descriptive phrases and metaphors.
2. Choose a different plant or animal to write about, perhaps part of a current science unit.
3. As a class, brainstorm descriptive words for your creature. Where does it live? What does it eat? Create metaphors for how it looks, moves, sounds.
4. Create a class riddle poem on a large pad or whiteboard. Use first person—"become" the creature! End with the phrase: What am I?

With my white crown of feathers  
I am queen of the pond.  
Perched on orange stilts,  
my neck poised  
like a still, blue snake . . .

5. For individual work, each student can pick his/her own subject, or they can work in pairs.
6. Have available nonfiction library books to help students focus on the looks and behavior of their animal/plant.
7. Schedule a sharing time so students can read their riddle poems aloud and guess each other's subjects.

### **"Letter Poem"**

1. Read "Letter to the Sun" and "Letter to the Rain." Discuss descriptive phrases used, and have your students pick out the "compliment" in each poem.
2. As a class, choose a natural object to write to: a plant, an animal, type of weather, a season. Brainstorm all the things your students love about that object—sights, smells, and sounds. Write a class "letter poem." ("Dear Spring, . . .") In your poem, include:
  - a compliment
  - a question
  - a wish
3. Have students choose a subject and write their own "letter poem." If possible, take your students outside to a natural area, and have them settle into a quiet place to write.

## **SCIENCE ACTIVITIES**

### **Endpaper I.D**

This is a good activity for introducing the use of field guides.

#### You will need:

- field guides for North American wildflowers, insects, mammals, and amphibians
- a copy of the book

Locate the colorful endpapers of BUTTERFLY EYES—the page that's glued to the cover, plus the adjoining page. Using field guides, direct a group of students to identify all the items pictured on those two pages. Another set of students can do the same with the center spread of the book. Have students indicate which organisms they might be able to find in their own neighborhoods.

### **Insect Collectors**

#### You will need:

- field guides to insects in your area
- bug collecting containers
- butterfly nets (optional)

1. After sharing BUTTERFLY EYES with your students, locate a nearby meadow during spring or fall months, and take your students there.
2. Divide them up into teams of three or four and assign them a small patch of meadow.
3. Have them collect as many insects as possible from that patch, and either identify them on the spot, or sketch them for future identification.
4. Later, have each team do research on their bugs and find out: their life cycle, what they eat, what eats them, and why they are important in the meadow.

5. Create an "Insects of Our Meadow" class book, using each team's report.

## **ART ACTIVITY**

Beth Krommes used a technique called "scratchboard" to create the art for this book. Her technique is complicated and painstaking, but here is a simplified version that is easy to do in the classroom.

### **Scratch-Art Animals**

You will need:

- white paper
- colored crayons
- black tempera paint & paintbrushes
- liquid dish soap
- paperclips

1. Have students completely color their paper in a thick layer of crayon, using any pattern they like—stripes, blotches, etc.
2. Add a drop of liquid soap to the black tempera paint (so it will stick to the crayon layer), and have your students paint a coat of black all over the top of the colorful crayon layer.
3. After the paint is dry, your students can lightly scratch an animal design into the black surface with a bent paperclip. The bright crayon colors will show beautifully through the black, and the effect will be that of scratchboard art.

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