

Armadillo TattleTale

By HELEN KETTEMAN

Armadillo Tattletale is a type of story called a "PORQUOI" story. This story type explains WHY something is the way it is - in the case of Armadillo Tattletale, the story explains why the armadillo has small ears (This was the original title).

Creative Writing

There are many wonderful porquoi stories out there - my favorites are Rudyard Kipling's Just So Stories. This book is full of wonderful stories, like How the Camel Got His Hump, How the Elephant Got His Trunk, etc. Read as many of these as you can to the children. Note the LANGUAGE. Kipling uses wonderful language in his stories. You might want to talk about how language adds to a story. It's a great thing to get children thinking about WORDS and what they mean. An artist paints a picture using lines and color and form. An author paints a picture in a different way - with words. Get student to work on painting pictures with words

Playwriting

Have the children write and perform a play out of Armadillo Tattletale. Let them be creative - if they feel like adding something that's not in the story, encourage them to do so. A funny line - their own version of a "humongous hissyfit", whatever.

Write a porquoi story - After reading other porquoi stories, have the children write their own. You might start by collecting suggestions up on the board - How about, Why the Elephant is so large? Or why the Mouse is Small? Why the Rattlesnake has Rattles? Why Jalapeno Peppers are Hot? Even a more modern one - like Why Pizza is Round? or Why School Busses are Yellow? Brainstorm some ideas as to what these things might have been like BEFORE they ended up the way they are today.

If you're doing Why Mouse is Small, then ask what if Mouse used to be Huge? What would he have been like? Get students to start thinking about how Mouse might have acted that might not have been so good - would he have used his great size in some way that wasn't right? Since he is small today, ask students to brainstorm things that might have happened to make him become small. You can list many, many ideas on the board, and ask the students to choose one story and write about it.

Sometimes, just brainstorming with students gets them so EXCITED to write a story, they can hardly WAIT to start!!

Animals

The animals in Armadillo Tattletale are all indigenous to Texas. You could do a unit on Texas animals, tied in to ecology. What Texas animals are endangered?

Why? What can be done about it? What IS being done about it? How do animals adapt to their environment? You could also tie this story in to the study of animals in ANY state.