

Collaborating with your teachers, Red Clover Style

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Getting teachers into it: Many teachers have a goal for collegiality in their IPDPs and are looking for opportunities to work with other teachers in their school. Further, many schools have action plans which include such goals as spreading reading across the curriculum and increasing technology in the classroom. Participating in all or part of a school Red Clover project is a great way to help meet those goals. Be aware that some teachers simply don't want to or don't have the time to participate. But for those who are willing to take it on, below are some strategies that might entice teachers to participate.

Make it easy

Encourage teachers to integrate the books into existing units. I am familiar with the units my teachers teach. If I can, I find a Red Clover book that integrates with an existing unit. They might not use a Red Clover Book every year, but if they find one that works for them, they might use it every time they do the unit.

Introduce the books to the teachers. I know some schools do an event like "Books and Bagels", but it's hard for me to get teachers to come to the library for something scheduled. I put out emails to teachers with brief synopses of the books, and nag a little. Alternatively, I'll hand a teacher a book and say, "you know, this will fit right in with your _____ unit. Will you use it?"

Offer a quick and dirty project they can do that features the book. If they don't have to work hard to come up with something to do with the book, they are more likely to use it. I have some of those based on this year's books to come later. Also look in your Red Clover manual. There's a bunch of awesome ideas and read-a-likes in there.

You can lead a teacher to a book but you can't make her use it. Last year, every teacher except one promised to use a Red Clover Book in their classes and give me a product from it. About ¾ did use one of the books. I am still waiting for the product from some of them. I know they did the project. Some teachers just run out of year. It happens. Let it go, flow with the force.

I would suggest using resources available through the school for collaboration. I usually get a grant for an Artist in Residence to do a school wide project. Last year I hired a terrific artist to do a project based on "Bubble Trouble".

If at all possible, buy a second set of the books, so there isn't a bottle neck waiting for a copy of a book to use.

Start small

The first year I tried this I teamed with the third grade teacher and an artist in residence to do bird drawings based on "Pale Male". The following year I brought in the art teacher who did projects based on other books throughout the school. Last year the Kindergarten, first and second grade math teacher,

the third grade teacher, the fifth grade teacher, the art teacher and the physical education teacher all did projects.

Use technology

Most kids are interested in it and it is a good way to pull older kids into the Red Clovers. Teachers are encouraged to use it in the classroom, so really it's a win-win. Some technology ideas that I have tried for Red Clover Books are:

Blogs

Set up a central place for student work and teacher projects based on the books. I used a blog. That way anyone could look at the projects. This also made clear to anyone who looked at it that the work was part of the Red Clover Project. When I started the thread on the blog, I used a tag of "Red Clover" and any time I put something up on a specific book, I added a tag of the book. That way it is easy to search the blog and find everything that was submitted on that book. Having a central place also made it easier to see what other classes were doing and made the project more of a school-wide thing. If you want to see what I did with my blog, you can look at www.cavendishlibrary.org/blog

Prezis

Prezis are a recent discovery of mine; they are much less complicated than Powerpoint and take less time than book trailers. They are animated and you can imbed YouTube videos in them. How slick is that? If you don't have a lot of time to work with the kids, or like me you see them only one time a week and don't want the project to drag out to the end of time, a Prezi is a good project. They are also easy to imbed in a website or blog. This is great way to expose older children to Red Clover Books. Students and teachers can get free memberships to Prezi. Go to Prezi.com to sign up. Be aware that each student will need his or her own e-mail account. I had to have the tech person at our school set up special accounts so the kids could sign up.

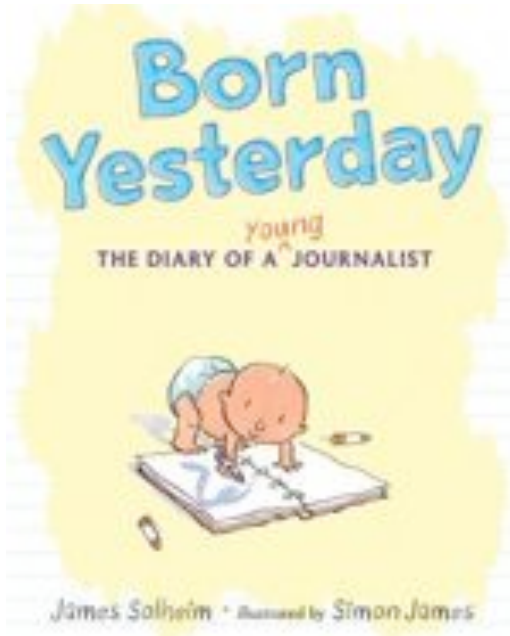
Book trailers

I've tried doing these with sixth grade students, and frankly they've been a flop. If you have a block of time, the equipment needed and lots of tech help they are awesome. I think they'd work well for older kids. If you have the time, equipment and tech help go for it!

Other ideas and possible unit connections:

Keep in mind that there are other ideas in the Red Clover manual.

Born Yesterday:



Possible unit connections- diaries, writing, point of view, cartooning

The baby has an interesting idea of what Kindergarten is like. Have students compare their real Kindergarten class to the one described in the book.

Read a picture book from a dog's point of view, such as the "Carl" books. Or for older kids, do a read aloud from Bruce Cameron's A Dog's Purpose.

How would Foofy tell this story?

Write a diary page of a day in the life of a baby.

Look at other books that pair cartoon art with text such as the Diary of a Wimpy Kid series.

Mirror, Mirror

Possible unit connections - poetry, fairy tales, symmetry in art, reader's theatre

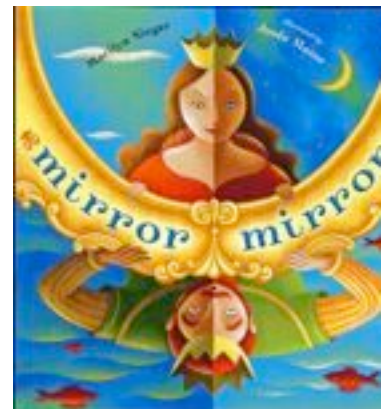
Use a part of a fairy tale unit and make sure that younger kids have read the stories on which the verses are based.

Do a reader's theatre or choral reading, like Joyful Noise

Do symmetrical paintings.

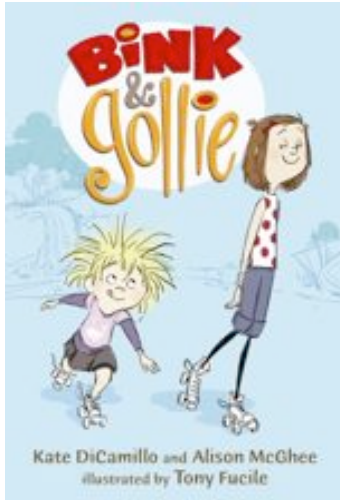
Of course, write reversible verses.

I do poetry cubes and two inch square pieces of work with my 6th grade poetry unit. This would make a great face of a cube with two symmetrical twinchies.



Bink and Gollie

Possible unit connections: mapping, friendship, opposites, shopping/money, animal care



This is a great vocabulary builder.

Many different places are mentioned in the book. It's perfect for a quick mapping activity.

There are some great art ideas such as sock collages, or decorating socks with fabric markers.

This would tie in nicely for a shopping/money/making change unit.

Compare and contrast the main characters.

I would also hand this to my guidance counselor- friendship, getting along, and empathy

Use as a springboard for a discussion about a class pet, or taking care of pets, or more specifically, goldfish.

I Know Here

Possible unit connections: Mapping, Canada, hydroelectric power, wild animals, communities

Have students compare/contrast the way they live to the way the girl in the story lives- school, house etc.

The artist in the book paints, then scratches in detail. Do paintings with this technique.

Paint a landscape.

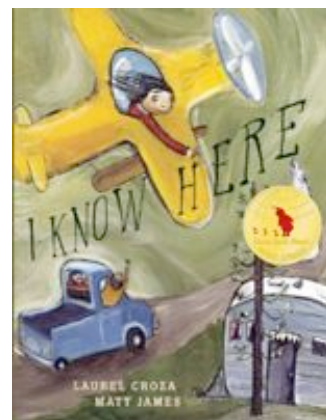
Make a scrap book page of your home.

Map the places mentioned in the book.

Slightly more complex ideas:

Research one of the animals from the book

Learn about hydroelectric dams, forest fires and the ecology of Canada



A Pig Parade is a Terrible Idea

Possible unit connections - pigs, animal care, celebrations, fantasy stories, 100th day of school (we have a parade at our school)

Do two parades- one as a real pig and one as a “fake” pig

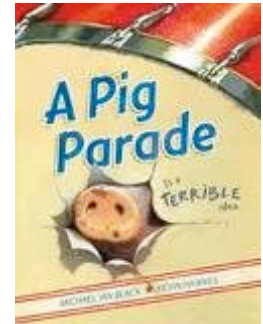
Do paper Marché pig balloons

Quick write- what would a panda parade be like

Design a pig float

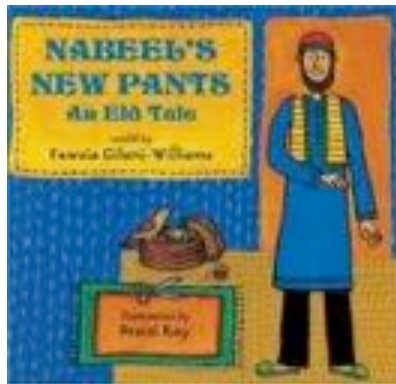
For a longer project and a tie in with art, build said float

Talk about why we have parades



Nabeel's New Pants

Possible unit connections - Muslim holidays, culture, celebrations, measurement



Have your students compare their clothing and house with Nabeel's.

Do a mosque painting

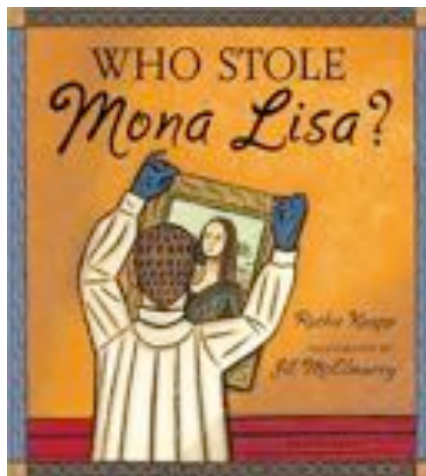
Cook some of the food mentioned in the book. This is great if you have flexibility in the kitchen and your lunch ladies will cook something like this for you.

Learn about Eid and Ramadan

Figure out how many inches were cut off Nabeel's pants

Who Stole the Mona Lisa

Possible unit connections - France, DaVinci, art history, portrait painting



What expressions do you see on Mona Lisa's face?

Practice writing backwards

Like in Born Yesterday the story is told from an unusual point of view. What would the story be like if it was told from DaVinci's or the thief's point of view?

Work with an art teacher to paint portraits

For older children, learn the technique of sfumato (blurred tones)

For older children, talk about being famous for being famous.

Mapping of Paris

Wonder Horse

Possible unit connections: animal husbandry, biographies, money, American history

Talk about treating animals with kindness

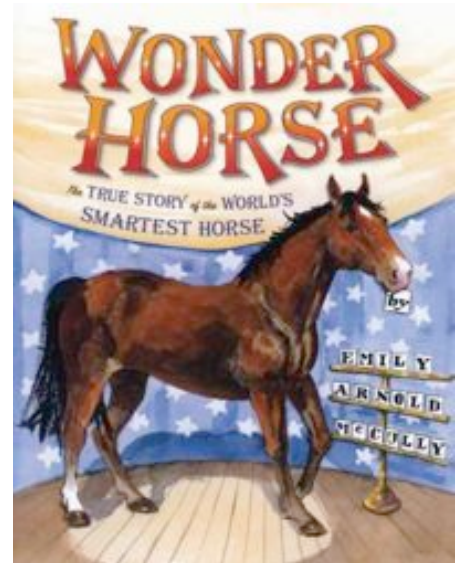
Have students spell out words with cards. Make it a race between teams

Compare dollar values now and in the book.

Slightly more complex

Learn about horses

Research Bill Key



Stand Straight, Ella Kate

Possible unit connections: Biography, measurement, money, empathy, American History



Compare the cost of items in Ella Kate's time to contemporary prices

How would it feel to be different, like Ella

Visit a Ripley's Odditorium

What are the different meanings of "stand Straight" in the book?

Have the children compare the size of their hands with the illustrations on the endpapers of the book (use the book [Actual Size](#))

Compare Ella's house to yours

For older children: Look at the book "Freaks"

Build a tower of kids 8'4" tall (have the kids lay down)

Art and Max

Possible unit connections: Art styles, books without words, Lizards, desert life

Write dialogue for Art and Max

Try working with the media used in the book: wire sculpture, blow painting, acrylic, and water color

Do a desert landscape

Slightly more complex:

Research the type of lizards seen in the book

