Classroom Connection

The Pier at the End of the World

The Pier at the End of the World
Hardcover, $17.95
9” x 10”, 36 pages, color illustrations
Children/Nature; Grades 2-5

Summary

- A gorgeous book for future scientists.
- Both lyrical and scientifically accurate, the story follows a day in the life of the denizens lurking in the cold, tide-swept waters beneath a remote pier on the shore of a northern sea.
- Stunning underwater photos of a wolffish munching a live sea urchin, a hermit crab switching shells, a sea slug arming itself with stinging cells stolen from an anemone, a starfish thrusting its stomach through its mouth to digest its prey, exotic-looking basket stars straining the water for food, a 35-pound hundred-year-old lobster guarding his domain, and other exotic creatures take us from dawn to darkness.
- Colorful panoramic paintings of the bigger picture, including the eyes of nighttime predators and the creatures who are among the missing the following morning.

Discussion Questions

- What animals have you seen when near/on the ocean?
- Why is it more difficult to see fish in the cold Maine ocean water than in the warmer oceans?
- What do animals that live in the ocean eat?
- How did the photographer get photos of the animals living under the pier?
- Who is at the apex or top of the food chain beneath the pier?
- How do soft sea animals protect themselves from their predators?
- Why do some sea animals have exoskeletons?
- How does a bivalve eat?
- Why does a hermit crab borrow discarded shells from other sea creatures?
- Why are the lobster’s claws two different sizes?
More Information

Activities

- **STUDENT GROUPS: Trading Information**: This strategy requires additional books on different biomes or animals. Student pairs receive and read their book, decide what is most interesting and then team with another pair of students to share what they learned. Afterward, the student quads develop a Venn diagram on chart paper that compares and contrasts the biomes/animals.

* **READ ALOUD: Class Experts**: This requires some preparation on the part of chosen students, but pays off big dividends when students identify gaps in their own knowledge and research to fill those gaps. A pair or a group of students are designated as ‘experts’ and read the book before a lesson. These ‘experts’ each choose (or are assigned) specific organisms they find most interesting and do additional research. When the book is read, the experts provide additional information to the class about the organism they researched.

* **Anticipation Guide (AG)**: This strategy requires a bit of preparation from the teacher, but can easily be used over and over again with different students. An AG is used before reading to activate students' prior knowledge and build curiosity about a new topic. Before reading a selection, students respond to several statements that challenge or support their preconceived ideas about key concepts in the text. This strategy stimulates students' interest in a topic and sets a purpose for reading. Revisiting the anticipation guide after reading is important to evaluate how well students understood the material and to correct misconceptions if any. This strategy engages all students in the exploration of new information by challenging them to critically think about what they know or think they know about a topic, thereby setting a purpose to the reading, even for those students who initially may not be engaged by the topic! More information and specific instructions on this wonderful method of instruction is available on the NSTA website or you can simply do a web search using the term ‘Anticipation Guide’.