

Go Fish by Mary Stolz

Book Information

Mary Stolz, Go Fish
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Book Level: 4.4
Interest Level: LG

After spending the day fishing in the Gulf of Mexico with Grandfather, eight-year-old Thomas has a quiet evening on the porch hearing more about his African heritage.

Topics: Family Life, Grandparents; People, African American; READNOW - Demco Media Turtleback Books, Demco Media - Read Now Grades 4-6; Recommended Reading, California Recommended Lit., English, 3-5; Sports/Recreation, Fishing

Main Characters

Donny Thomas's friend

Grandfather a wise and patient man who loves his grandson

Thomas a lively boy who appreciates his grandfather and his life by the sea

Vocabulary

bivalves shellfish such as oysters or clams, having a shell consisting of two valves hinged at one side

coquinas small marine clams used for broth or chowder

skink a small lizard with small scales

Synopsis

Thomas lives with his grandfather on the Gulf of Mexico in Florida. He tries to get Grandfather's attention, but Grandfather is interested in reading his book. Thomas wonders about the past while thinking about dinosaurs, fossils, and his ancestors. He finally gets Grandfather's attention by telling him it's snowing, and Grandfather suggests they go fishing.

Thomas is impatient while they fish, but Grandfather encourages him to be quiet, and Thomas is rewarded by catching a big trout.

They return home and cook a nice dinner, play cards, and retire to the porch, where Grandfather tells Thomas an African story.

At the end of the evening, Thomas goes to bed and happily thinks about his past, present, and future.

Open-Ended Questions

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

Initial Understanding

Why is Thomas "tongue-tied with wonder" when he looks at the fossil fish?

He is amazed at the ancientness of the fossil. He knows the fossil represents life fifty million years before his birth.

Literary Analysis

Thomas is sometimes a restless boy. He becomes impatient when his grandfather reads and when he is waiting for the fish to bite. Have there been times when you have felt restless? Give examples and describe how you dealt with your restlessness?

Answers will vary.

Inferential Comprehension

Do you know anyone who compares to Grandfather? How is that person like him?

Grandfather is wise, loving, patient, independent, and organized.

Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for

Go Fish

by

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Constructing Meaning

Grandfather and Thomas live in Florida on the Gulf side. Would you like to live there? Why?

Some students will say they would enjoy living in a warm climate near the ocean. Fishing, playing on the beach, and collecting shells might be reasons cited for living there. Others might say they wouldn't care for the climate and that they would be frightened of hurricanes. Some might say they would miss snow.

playing the card game, "Go Fish." Separate the class into small groups, and teach them how to play the game. Prizes with a fish theme like fish erasers, pencils decorated with fish, or small bags of fish crackers might be awarded to the winners of the game.

Teachable Skills

Recognizing Setting Thomas and his grandfather live in Florida on the Gulf of Mexico. When they spend the morning fishing the Gulf waters, they see a variety of ocean life. References are made to crabs, sea snakes, cockroaches, glass minnows, coquinas, herons, jellyfish, pelicans, porpoises, blowfish, flounder, ladyfish, and speckled trout. Provide books on ocean life for students to research the above animals. Assign each student an animal to draw, color, and cut out. On a classroom wall, create a mural with their ocean animals.

Understanding Hist./Cultural Factors Before bedtime, Grandfather tells Thomas a story about the African country of Benin and the Yoruba tribe who had the cult of ibeji. To enhance children's awareness and appreciation of African culture, read and discuss some African folktales.

Responding to Literature Thomas is "nearly tongue-tied with wonder" whenever he looks at Grandfather's fossil fish. Explain how fossils are made and bring in a fossil sample for the students to examine.

Responding to Literature As a boy, Grandfather collected shells, stones, petrified wood, and even glass from beaches. Ask students to bring in any "beach treasures" they might have and exhibit them. Label the different types of shells and other items.

Responding to Literature After supper, Grandfather and Thomas have a good time