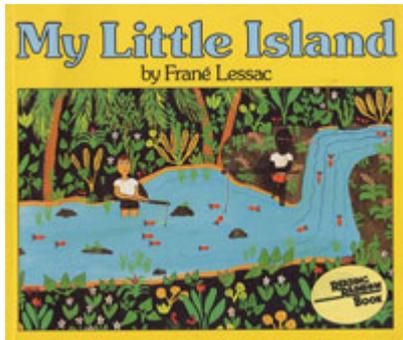


Teachers' Notes

My Little Island



Activities | Science | Social Studies

ACTIVITIES

Theme

Learning to appreciate and experience another culture is a real adventure.

Topics For Discussion

Invite students to share a vacation experience. Where did they go? What did they do there? What was the most interesting, exciting, or favorite part of the trip? (This discussion can be adapted for "wish" vacations-trips that students would like to take.)

The narrator in the story invited his friend Lucca to go to the island where he was born. Discuss what made this trip so special for both boys.

Discuss with students where they enjoy going with a special friend when they have the opportunity to invite, or be invited to accompany, a friend on an outing.

Have students compare and contrast the market experience in the story with their own shopping excursions.

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Curriculum Extension Activities

Invite students to imagine that an out-of-town friend their own age is coming for a visit for three days and that they are in charge of showing that person around. Have students plan the sightseeing and activities for their friend. Give students a 12 x 18 sheet of drawing paper that can be divided into three sections. Label the sections: Day 1, Day 2, and Day 3. In each section, have them draw and label the local attractions they will visit and events they will take part in. Provide time for students to share their guests' itineraries.

Make a large outline of the island in the story on a piece of bulletin board paper that is long enough so that several students can work at it at the same time. (Ask students to recall what it looks like from the air—a giant green turtle.) As a class, make decisions about where to place the areas of the island that the narrator and his friend Lucca visit and lightly demarcate these places. Working in small cooperative groups, have students reproduce these areas of the island. They will need to decide where to put the mountains, the volcano, the village, the "rainbow" houses, the school, the carnival, etc. Both the book and program will give them many ideas for what to put in each site, but they also may wish to consult additional sources for information about rain forests, seashores, marketplaces, and other areas. One group of students may take the responsibility for painting or coloring the ocean and the background of the island and for making a map key. Because many students may potentially want to work on the map at the same time, have them create what they want to include in their area away from the map and add it later.

Locate a market that sells unusual fruits, such as those that grow in tropical climates, and purchase a sampling. Have a tasting party with these fruits. Have students examine the skins as well as the insides. Which have edible skins? Discuss the textures. Are they sweet or tart? Compare and contrast these fruits to types of fruit with which students are more familiar.

Have students find information about some of the plants and animals mentioned in the story and record interesting facts on paper along with an illustration. Post their findings around the edges of the island map from the above activity.

View other Reading Rainbow programs that show the vibrancy of different types of communities. Encourage students to notice not only the qualities that make these communities unique, but also the characteristics that they share. Possible programs include: Borreguita and the Coyote (Mexican-American

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community), Liang and the Magic Paintbrush (New York's Chinatown), Legend of the Indian Paintbrush (Taos Pueblo, New Mexico), The Milk Makers (farm), The Wonderful Towers of Watts (Watts area of Los Angeles), The Lotus Seed (Vietnam, Yemen, Russia, South Africa), Alejandro's Gift (southwestern U.S. desert), and others.

Listen to some calypso and reggae music. What instruments do the students hear? Do the rhythms remind them of other types of music? Clap hands or snap fingers to the beat. Push the desks back and invite students to move according to the way the music makes them feel.

LeVar traveled to Montserrat by airplane. Brainstorm other ways in which people might travel to an island. After students have considered the logical possibilities, invite them to use their imaginations and think of creative ways to travel to an island.

Since the filming of this Reading Rainbow program, the volcano on the island of Montserrat has erupted. Have students research volcanoes. Where are other active volcanoes located in or near the United States? Enlist the aid of the library media specialist in locating information about the Montserrat volcano.

Locate the Caribbean Sea on a map. Find the island of Montserrat. Look at the names of other Caribbean islands. What names do the students recognize? Based on what they see on the map, ask them to define "island."

Supplementary booklist

FLAM BOYAN

by Arnold Adoff, illus. by Karen Barbour (Harcourt Brace)

THE CALYPSO ALPHABET

by John Agard, illus. by Jennifer Bent (Henry Holt)

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A CARIBBEAN DOZEN: POEMS FROM CARIBBEAN POETS

edited by John Agard & Grace Nichols, illus. by Cathy Felstead (Candlewick)

CARIBBEAN CARNIVAL: SONGS OF THE WEST INDIES

by Irving Burgie, illus. by Frane Lessac (Tambourine)

A CARIBBEAN COUNTING BOOK

compiled by Faustin Charles, illus. by Roberta Arenson (Houghton Mifflin)

ISLA

by Arthur Dorros, illus. by Elisa Kleven (Dutton)

I HAVE NEWS: RHYMES FROM THE CARIBBEAN

by Walter Jekyll, illus. by Jacqueline Mair (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard)

CARIBBEAN CANVAS

by Frane Lessac (Lippincott)

EMERALD BLUE

by Ann Marie Linden, illus. by Katherine Doyle (Atheneum)

ONE SMILING GRANDMA

by Ann Marie Linden, illus. by Lynne Russell (Dial)

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Science

A Little Little Island

Key Words

island, land forms

Concept

An island is a mountain or other piece of land surrounded by water.

It's easy to think that an island is a clump of land floating on top of the water, but an island is a landmass that juts out of the water. All islands are part of the ocean floor, just as mountains are part of the landscape.

Materials

Oil-based modeling clay, tub, water, blue and green food coloring, paper, pencils, crayons.

1. Have students make a wide, cone-shaped tower from clay for this island model. The tower should be 3 or 4 inches tall.
2. Have them place their cone-shaped tower, which is like a mountain, on the bottom of the tub, which is like the ocean floor. Explain that the bottom of the ocean is not always flat, but that it is like land we see in other places on the earth-it has valleys and mountains.
3. Have students pour water into the tub until the water is about 2" deep. Color the water with several drops of blue and green food coloring. Ask them to describe their mountain now. (The mountain is sitting on the ocean floor: The bottom is covered by water, but the top is sticking out above the water-it has become an island.)
4. Ask students to make a side-view drawing of their island showing how it looks above and below the water level. They can make it a tropical island like Montserrat, by adding tropical plants and animals to their drawing.

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Wrapped In A Blanket Of Water

Key Words

islands, temperatures, water, air

Concept

Ocean water around islands changes temperature very slowly.

Many Caribbean islands, like Montserrat, have mild warm weather most of the year. One reason the weather stays fairly constant is that the Pacific Ocean, a very large body of water, surrounds the islands. Compared to the changeability of air temperature, ocean temperatures are very stable.

Materials

Clay model of an island in a tub of water (made in the A Little Little Island activity), two small thermometers, cool area such as a refrigerator or outside on a cold day, modeling clay, craft sticks, paper, and pencils.

1. Use the island model from the activity A Little Little Island, making sure that the water in the model is at room temperature before beginning.
2. Have students place one end of a craft stick into a large piece of clay, and attach the clay to the side of the tub of water. Using a rubber band or more clay, have them attach a thermometer to this craft stick.
3. Submerge a second thermometer in the water near the island. (The thermometer can be attached to the clay at the bottom of the island to keep it submerged, but don't insert it into the clay.)
4. After letting the model sit for about 10 minutes, have students record the temperatures on both thermometers. Then place the model in a cool location like a refrigerator or outside on a cold day. Ask students to predict what will happen to the temperatures on each of the two thermometers. Have them chart the temperatures every 10 minutes for an hour.
5. Compare the charted temperatures (the class can create a line graph showing the changes in the two temperatures over time), and discuss

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the differences. (The temperature of the water changed much more slowly than the temperature of the air. The same happens with the temperature of the ocean around small Caribbean islands such as Montserrat. It stays warm and changes very little, even over a year's time.)

6. Ask students what effect such a warm, large body of water might have on the climate of tropical islands. (It keeps the climate warm and more constant than the climate of a place not surrounded by a large body of water, such as a place far from the ocean.)

Social Studies

Description

A young boy takes his best friend to visit Montserrat, the Caribbean island where he was born. As LeVar tours this same beautiful island and visits the open market, we experience the many colors, sights and sounds of this tropical paradise, including the unique flowers, vegetables, fruits and music. Then LeVar joins islanders for a "mountain chicken" hunt.

Social Studies Concepts

- Culture
- Geography
- Transportation
- Family

Classroom Activities

Geography / Transportation

Before watching the video, have students brainstorm what they know about an island and record their ideas in a word web. Then find the word "island" in the dictionary or picture encyclopedia and add to the word web. Since an island is surrounded by water, list all possible means of transportation to and

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from as well as on an island. After viewing, invite students to suggest additional ideas for the web.

Geography

Using a world map or map that features the Caribbean, have students locate the island of Montserrat and then list all the islands surrounding it. Students can use self-stick notes to mark all the places the boys in the book visited.

Geography

Create or designate a hidden treasure and provide students with a map for finding it. Give them simple directions to follow and have them work in small groups using the map to locate the treasure. Then have the groups plan their own treasure hunt by designating a treasure and making their own map. Trade these among the groups so everyone can go treasure hunting again.

Directions for creating a treasure map

- Review basic map-making skills such as using a "bird's eye view" when drawing a map.
- Give the map reader clear directions. Mark the map with north, south, east and west so the map reader knows what direction to follow.
- Include landmarks.
- Clearly mark where the treasure is located.

Family / Geography

Have students form small discussion groups to talk about favorite family trips or vacations. Suggest that they tell where they traveled by using a map to show the place, and by using words to describe the area, such as a mountain, lake, seashore, forest, etc. Have them conclude their descriptions by sharing a high point of the trip.

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Culture

The two friends in *My Little Island* went on a vacation to the Caribbean. Discuss with students why this was such a special vacation. Where did the two friends go when they visited? What is the culture of the island like? How is life on this tropical island different and similar to life in your community? After reviewing the feature book with students, have them work with a partner to create a two-column chart. In one column have them list the similarities between an island home and theirs, and in the other column have them list the differences. Discuss which column has the most items.

Culture

If possible, invite a person with a Caribbean background to your classroom. Ask the visitor to discuss Caribbean culture and lifestyle. Encourage them to bring pictures, music, and other items that will help students understand the uniqueness of the culture.