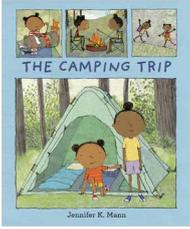




Walker Books Classroom Ideas



The Camping Trip

Jennifer K. Mann
ISBN 9781406393507
September 2020

*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

Ernestine has never been camping before, but she's sure it will be lots of fun... won't it?

My Aunt Jackie invited me to go camping with her and my cousin Samantha this weekend. I've never been camping before, but I know I will love it... Ernestine is beyond excited to go camping. She follows the packing list carefully (new sleeping bag! new flashlight! special snack mix made with Dad!) so she knows she is ready when the weekend arrives. But she quickly realizes that nothing could have prepared her for how hard it is to set up a tent, never mind fall asleep in it, or that swimming in a lake means that there will be fish ... eep! Will Ernestine be able to enjoy the wilderness, or will it prove to be a bit too far out of her comfort zone? In an energetic illustrated story about a first sleepover under the stars, acclaimed author-illustrated Jennifer K. Mann reminds us that opening your mind to new experiences, no matter how challenging, can lead to great memories (and a newfound taste for marshmallows).

Author/Illustrator Information:

Jennifer K. Mann was an architect before turning to children's books full time. She is the creator of the picture books *Josie's Lost Tooth*, *Sam and Jump*, *Two Speckled Eggs*, and *I Will Never Get a Star on Mrs Benson's Blackboard*. She and her family spend a week camping with friends every summer, always at the same campsite in a beautiful national park. They pack their rickety pick-up truck full of gear and dogs, put an old canoe on the roof, and spend the week hiking, exploring, swimming, paddling, cooking outside, telling stories, and sleeping in tents. Jennifer K. Mann lives on an island near Seattle, USA, with her husband, children, cats, dogs, and chickens.

How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

These notes are for:

- Primary years 1-3
- Ages 5-9

Key Learning Areas:

- English

Example of:

- Picture book
- Graphic novel

Themes/Ideas:

- Family
- Friendship
- New experiences



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Discussion Questions and Activities:

Before Reading

View the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

- The title of the book
- The author
- The illustrator
- The publisher
- The blurb.

What do you think the story might be about from looking at the title only? Do your ideas change after seeing the cover? Write your own story using the title *The Camping Trip*.

Exploring the Story

Who do you think the audience for this book is? Why?

Is *The Camping Trip* an imaginative, informative or persuasive text? How can you tell?

Have you been camping before? If so, how was your experience similar or different to Ernestine's? If not, would you like to? What part of camping would you most like to experience?

She's very excited to try camping, but at first Ernestine finds it takes her out of her comfort zone. How does she overcome the challenges? What's a new experience you found a bit more difficult than you'd thought, and how did you get through it? Why is it important to try new things, even if they scare us sometimes?

Why is Foxy important to Ernestine? Do you have a special toy or object at home? Write a sentence about why it's special to you.

In what ways do Samantha and Aunt Jackie support Ernestine? Do you think it is important to look out for your family and friends when they feel scared or uncomfortable? Why or why not?

The Camping Trip is told in first person, from Ernestine's perspective. Why do you think Jennifer Mann told the story this way? How might the story be different if it was told in third person, or from Jackie or Sam's perspective?

Exploring the Illustrations

Choose one of the spreads and have a class discussion about the following:

- How do you think Ernestine is feeling? What clues might there be in the pictures?
- Is there a main colour in this spread? How does it make you feel?
- Do the colours change from spread to spread? Why might that be?
- Do the pictures take up the whole page, or are they framed?

How do the illustrations add to the story? How would the story be different if there were no illustrations?

Jennifer Mann has used a variety of textures in the illustrations. What texture/s can you identify, and why do you think she might have chosen it/them?

Sometimes we see moments where Ernestine is thinking back to a memory (swimming, walking to school). How are they presented differently to the rest of the story? Why do you think Jennifer Mann has chosen to do this?

The Camping Trip is told in a graphic style format. Compare *The Camping Trip* to another picture book in your library that's not told in a graphic style. How are the two books similar or different? Why do you think Jennifer Mann chose this style for *The Camping Trip*?

In most graphic novels (and comics), there is usually a white space between the panels called the gutter. Consider the difference between large and small panels, square and irregular shapes and full page illustrations. Copy a graphic-novel style page of *The Camping Trip*, cut out the frames and arrange them on a piece of paper with a smaller gutter between each frame and then with a larger gutter. What difference does this make to our reading?