

Lesson: Creating a River Soundscape

Objective: Students read *A River Ran Wild* and re-tell the story using a soundscape.

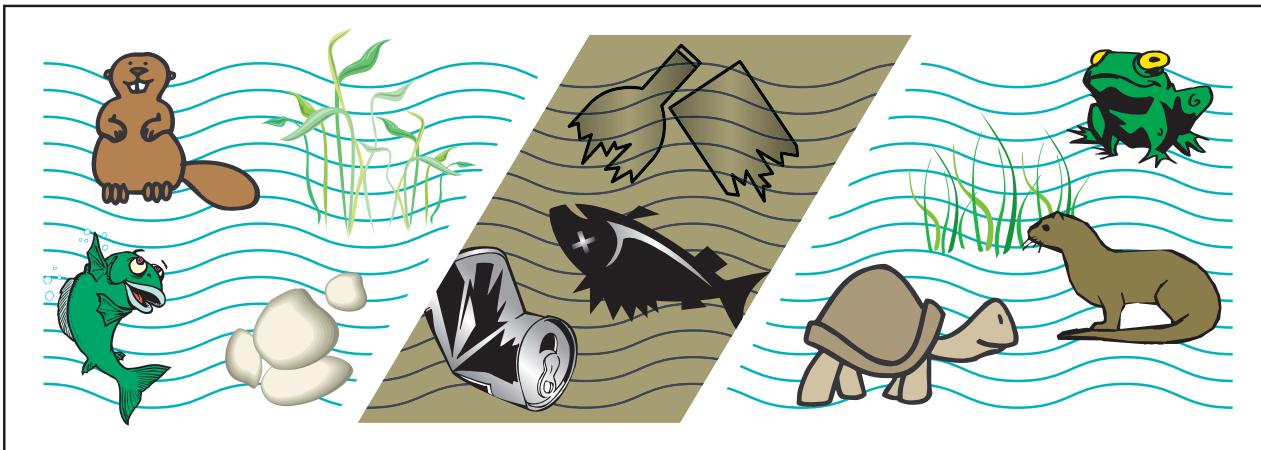
Materials:

- Large piece of fabric
- Assorted percussion instruments 
- Sound sources from the classroom
- Construction paper
- A River Ran Wild* by Lynne Cherry

Procedure:

I. Reading and Representing

- ◆ Place a large piece of fabric (or butcher paper) on the floor in an open area of the classroom. Set out construction paper and percussion instruments on a nearby table.
- ◆ Read the first six pages of text in *A River Ran Wild*.
- ◆ Ask students to visualize something in the river that is described in the story. Without speaking, students tear construction paper into a shape to represent what they are thinking of (a beaver, fish, turtle, sand, etc.).
- ◆ Place the torn items on the fabric.
- ◆ Show students the assortment of percussion instruments. Point out other sound sources around the classroom (things that can be tapped or shaken). Ask students to find some sound to represent the item they have placed on the fabric.
- ◆ Have a student “conduct” the soundscape by moving a stick (or ruler) over the arrangements on the fabric. Students play their instruments as the stick passes over.



II. Building and Layering

- ◆ Read the next five pages and repeat the process described above. Ask students to think of the item they placed on the fabric and what would have happened to it as the river became polluted. What kind of sounds would symbolize the plants and animals dying? How would the sound of the river change as it becomes filled with pulp and dyes?
- ◆ Add new textures and colors on to the fabric to symbolize the polluting of the river (torn newspaper, crushed pop cans, dark colors of construction paper torn into shapes of the garbage that has been tossed into the river).
- ◆ Have a student conduct the altered soundscape. Students substitute new sounds (vocal and instrumental) to portray the slow death of the river.

Teacher Tip:

You may prefer to use butcher paper for the soundscape as this allows a greater degree of permanence. Glue down the items on the first soundscape so that they are fixed, then add and remove the items of the polluted river in sequence with the story.