

**Title:** Pastimes

**Grade Ranges:**

K-4

5-8

9-12

**Subject Tag:**

Language Arts: Literature: American Literature

Reading Skills

Writing Guides: Composition Writing

**Synopsis:**

Following a brief discussion on pastimes, read Jane Yolen's *Owl Moon* to students. After reading the story and holding a discussion of owling as a rural pastime, students will write and share responses to the story in order to expand comprehension either by documenting personal experiences or by describing *Owl Moon*'s figurative language, mood, or setting.

**Keywords:**

pastimes, owling, rural, figurative language, mood, setting, alliteration, onomatopoeia, narrative verse, climate, geography, community

**Body:**

1. Write "pastime" on the board. Define a pastime as "an activity that makes time pass pleasantly." Ask students about their pastimes. Make a list of these pastimes on the board.
2. Show *Owl Moon* to the students. Using the front and back covers (which show an adult and a child at night in wintry woods as a bird flies far from them), have students make predictions about the story and about the adult and the child's pastime.
3. Read *Owl Moon* aloud. Through your gestures, volume, and tone, draw students' attention to the story's intimate, serene mood. (As evidence of the mood, younger students may identify the dark, cool watercolors; older students may identify examples of alliteration and onomatopoeia.)
4. After reading, allow students to respond to the story in writing. (Younger students can write and illustrate narratives about pastimes they share with adults; older students can do the same, or describe the story's narrative verse, figurative language, or mood.)
5. Allow students to share their responses with the class.
6. Extend students' responses into a discussion about how climate and geography (or, for younger students, the weather where you live) often determines the pastimes they enjoy. Through writing, students can compare and contrast pastimes they enjoy with pastimes they might enjoy somewhere with a different climate. Older students can conduct research on other areas of the state, country, continent, or world.

7. Extend students' responses to *Owl Moon* through further study of birds in general or owls in particular. Owls, for example, are raptors: birds of prey that maintain a habitat's status quo by eating rodents. Younger students can imagine a world without owls; older students can continue media research on owls or conduct field surveys at school in search of birds native to the students' community.
8. Older students can continue a study of verse by comparing *Owl Moon* with Susan Jeffers's illustrated adaptation of Robert Frost's *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*. Discuss *Owl Moon* as an example of narrative verse and *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* as an example of lyrical verse.

**Features:**

- Contains special education tips
- Quick Activity (less than 30 minutes; story starter)
- Requires Internet access for students to complete

**Objectives:**

Students will generalize *Owl Moon*'s portrayal of pastimes to their personal experiences and understand the roles of literary elements in creating a response to literature. Students will respond to the text through listening, writing, and speaking.

**Standards:**

**NY: 1:** Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding. **2:** Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.

**NYC: E1c.** The student reads and comprehends informational materials to develop understanding and expertise and produces written or oral work that relates new information to prior knowledge and experience and extends ideas. **E1d.** The student reads aloud, accurately (in the range of 85-90%), familiar material of the quality and complexity illustrated in the sample reading list, and in a way that makes meaning clear to listeners. **E2c.** The student produces a narrative account (fictional or autobiographical). **A2a.** Make an oral presentation of project plans or findings to an appropriate audience.

**CT: 1. Reading and Responding.** Students will read and respond in individual, literal, critical and evaluative ways to literary, informational and persuasive texts. **4. Exploring and Responding To Texts.** Students will use the language arts to explore and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.

**NJ: 3.1:** All Students Will Speak For A Variety Of Real Purposes And Audiences. **3.2:** All Students Will Listen Actively In A Variety Of Situations To Information From A Variety Of Sources. **3.3:** All Students Will Write In Clear, Concise, Organized Language That Varies In Content And Form For Different Audiences And Purposes. **3.4:** All Students Will Read Various Materials And Texts With Comprehension And Critical Analysis.

**Prerequisite Skills:**

Basic listening skills

**Time Required:**

Two to five 45-minute periods

**Technology and Materials Needed:**

1. *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen
2. pencils
3. white paper or writers' notebooks
4. optional: Susan Jeffers's *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*

**Assessment Criteria:**

1. Can students connect the story to their own experiences?
2. Can students identify examples in the text that contribute to its mood?
3. Can students extend their responses to understand more about their environments?

**Recommended Lesson Plan Review Date:**

**Review Comments:**