

Snake and Lizard

Joy Cowley and Gavin Bishop

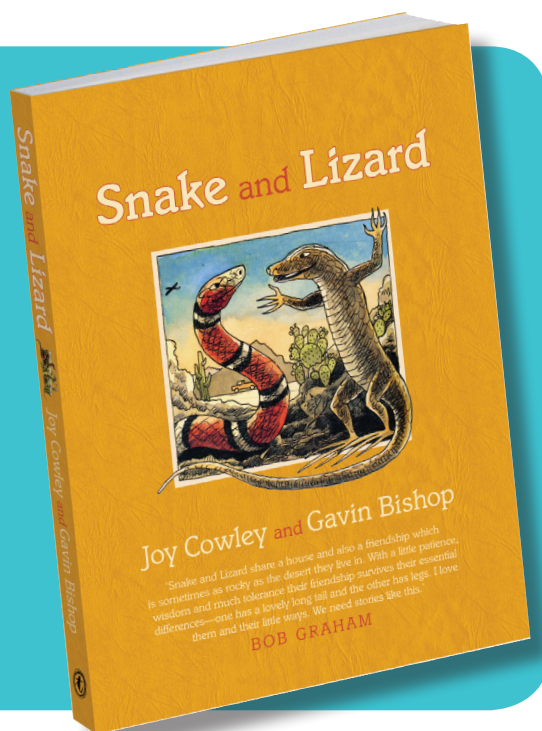
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Recommended for Primary

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Synopsis

Written by Joy Cowley with illustrations by Gavin Bishop, this novel for children is rather a series of stories featuring an inseparable, argumentative (as only true friends can be) pair of friends—Snake and Lizard. Snake is graceful and calm, and Lizard lively and enthusiastic. As they embark on a series of adventures they begin to see past their differences to form a wonderful friendship.

Loveable and foolish, Snake and Lizard's funny stories are ideal to read aloud, and suitable for children particularly from lower to middle primary. Snake and Lizard comprises 15 short stories, each with a lesson at its heart. Children will relate to the humorous and entertaining tales and the overarching themes of tolerance and acceptance. With classic illustrations and simple language, these stories are reminiscent of Aesop's fables. They offer children a smooth transition from typical picture-story books to their first chapter 'novels'.

Snake and Lizard began to laugh, gently at first, and then so strongly that they were rolling round the floor with the hiccups.

When they'd stopped, Lizard said, 'Oh Snake! What an adventure!'

Snake's stomach was aching with laughter. 'I don't know why we argue like we do,' she said.

'It's because we're so different,' said Lizard. 'But oh Snake, you are still my best friend.'

'And you are mine, dear Lizard,' said Snake.

Praise

Snake and Lizard was winner of the biggest children's literature prize in New Zealand—the 2008 NZ Post Children's Book of the Year award. The judges said, 'This timeless look at two feisty (and forgiving) best mates utterly beguiled the judges with its assured writing, sharp humour and gentle, unforced observations on the nature of friendship. Both witty and wise these timeless stories are an utter joy. They make you laugh, sigh and read all over again...Gavin Bishop's exquisitely detailed illustrations add another rich dimension to both the book's characters and its American South West setting.'

Snake and Lizard has also been awarded a White Raven by the International Youth Library, given to 250 notable children's books published internationally each year.

'Utterly pleasurable to read.' Kate de Goldi, *Radio New Zealand*

'Snake and Lizard share a house and also a friendship...I love them and their little ways. We need stories like this.' Bob Graham

Author Information

Joy Cowley is one of New Zealand's best-loved children's authors. She has won several awards for her books, including the NZ Post Children's Book of the Year, twice, and the Margaret Mahy Medal. Joy lives in Wellington, New Zealand, but spends much of her time in the Marlborough Sounds.

Gavin Bishop was born in Invercargill, New Zealand. He has illustrated several award-winning children's books, and has exhibited his art overseas and in New Zealand. As well as writing and illustrating books, he writes for theatre and television.

Author Interview

Accolades haven't exactly been thin on the ground for author Joy Cowley over the course of her long career so you could forgive her for being a bit blasé about the latest one to land in her lap. But actually she sounds thrilled that her children's novel, *Snake and Lizard* has just won the NZ Post Book of the Year prize, in the annual Children and Young Adults Literary Awards. 'I feel delighted,' says the 72-year-old writer, 'although I do also feel a little for other authors who probably wish people like me and Margaret Mahy would drop off our perches! But I'm particularly pleased about this one because it's my husband's favourite of all my books. He likes it because *Snake and Lizard* are based on him and me.'

The book is a collection of gently moralistic tales about two very different creatures learning about the give and take of friendship. Lizard can be a bit excitable rather like Joy, while Snake is calmer and more sensible like Terry, her husband of 20 years. Together they adventure round the desert finding out about life and each other. Cowley says she and her husband don't argue quite so much as their fictional counterparts. 'But we're very different. He's a slow, gentle man and I tend to be on the go and energetic. We compliment each other. He's the part of me that's missing and I'm that for him.'

Now a great grandmother, Cowley stays in touch with how children are thinking and is careful not to make her stories too didactic. 'Lots of adults write serious message books for children but when they come home from work feeling tired they don't tune to an improving documentary, they choose an entertaining sitcom instead,' she points out. 'I think sometimes we expect more from children than we do from ourselves.' Cowley's award-winning book, with its beautiful illustrations by Gavin Bishop, has the feel of a classic tale that will be read by children for generations. 'Throughout children's fiction there are friends who have to find a way to friendship through their differences,' says Cowley, 'like Winnie the Pooh and Piglet or Mole and Ratty in *Wind in the Willows*.' So it seems like *Snake and Lizard* are in good company.

*This is an edited excerpt from an interview with Nicky Pellegrino, which ran in the New Zealand paper *The Herald on Sunday* on May 25 2008, and reproduced with the author and paper's approval.

CHAPTER SUMMARY, CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS and ACTIVITIES

Heads and Tails

Summary

Snake and Lizard meet for the first time. Snake is sunbathing on a warm patch of earth when Lizard appears, wanting to get by. They argue about whether it

is Snake's tail blocking the path, or Snake's body. Snake says Lizard is envious of her length. Lizard says you can never trust a creature with no legs. But then they admit that they are both a little envious of what the other has, and overcoming their physical prejudices, settle in for a long chat.

Class Discussion

Why was Snake offended when Lizard called her body her tail? Why did Snake put Lizard down? How did they stop the situation from getting worse? How did they apologise to each other without actually saying 'sorry'?

Creative Writing: Point of View Story

Imagine you are Snake. What are you thinking or feeling? Rewrite the story, but just from Snake's point of view. How do you see things? Now swap and write from Lizard's point of view.

Creative Writing: Dialogue

Imagine what Snake and Lizard would have talked about after Lizard decides to stay to sunbathe beside Snake. Think about all the questions they might ask, having only just met each other. Write down their conversation.

Biology: Facts

In groups, write a list of facts that you know about snakes and lizards. Now check these facts using the library or the internet. See whether you can find five to ten more facts to add to the list. Now discuss as a class to make one long list.

Art: Collage

Use found objects from the schoolyard to create the desert landscape from the book. Use leaves, bark, sand, dirt, twigs, etc. to glue onto card to create your desert scene. Think of the different colours and textures you'd like to bring to the collage. Use the illustration from the cover of the book as a starting point.

Drama: Introductions

Find a partner and decide who will be Snake and who will be Lizard. Now, introduce yourselves to each other. Think of ten questions to ask each other. Remember how each character behaved in the story. Think of how you might stand (or sit), what sort of voice you might have, what sort of body language you might use.

Down By the River

Summary

Lizard finds Snake by the river, unable to talk properly because she has a frog in her throat. Lizard jumps to dislodge the frog by slapping Snake on the back. Snake gets her voice back but loses her supper!

Class Discussion

Why is this story funny? Did Lizard act too soon? Should Lizard have asked whether Snake needed help first? Was Lizard's initial instinct a good one? Was Snake upset to have lost her supper? Did Snake see the amusing side?

Creative Writing: News Report

Write a news report on this story, or one that you make up. The headline of the report is 'Lizard Saves the Day'.

English: Onomatopoeia (Sounds)

Onomatopoeia refers to a word (or group of words) that imitates the sound it is describing—the word is named and spelt as it sounds. When Snake has a frog in her throat she says 'Ga-runch! Ga-runch!'. Think of words that you have heard in conversation or seen in books that also imitate the sound it is describing. Perhaps start with animal sounds, for example, a frog: ribbit, croak; a dog: woof, bark etc. Move on to other words you might come across everyday: zip, splash, bang etc. Make a list of all the words the class has come up with.

Music: Sounds

Use the list of words comprised in the English exercise above to create a musical piece. Assign words (or a number of words) to groups of two or three students. Also assign someone to keep the beat by clapping or banging a drum. Point to the words on the board that you want to hear. Now conduct your orchestra!

Art: Animated Book

On a small square of paper draw a simple, quick picture of a snake with frog in its throat. Trace this picture onto another square of paper the same size, only this time position the frog slightly out of Snake's mouth. Repeat this process approximately ten times, so that you have ten pictures of the same Snake but with the position of the frog changing slightly each time. Colour in your pictures. Staple the pages together and flick through this animated book, watching the frog fly from Snake's mouth!

The Picnic

Summary

Lizard packs a lunch of insects to share with Snake. Snake dislikes Lizard's choice of food, and his bad table manners. This angers Lizard. Snake finds herself some fresh hens' eggs for lunch instead. She gulps them down whole, two at a time. Now Lizard is disgusted. 'No biting! No chewing! You can't talk about table manners!' Snake, fattened with eggs, needs Lizard's help to exit the henhouse. 'Why should I?' asks Lizard. 'Because you are my friend,' Snake replies.

Class Discussion

Why did Snake feel she had the right to comment on Lizard's table manners? Why did Lizard take offence when he saw Snake eat? Should they have thought about their comments before they made them? Should they have thought of their manners before they ate? Did each assume that they were right? How did they resolve the situation? What makes a friend?

English: Friendship

In the story Lizard asks why he should help Snake and Snake replies, 'Because you are my friend'. What does friendship mean to you? How should friendships make you feel? Write down ten words that you relate to friendship. Look 'friendship' up in a dictionary and write down the meaning. Did any of your words appear?

Think of other stories that have good friendships at the core. Does Snake and Lizard's friendship remind you of any other characters seen in books or films or cartoons? Think Winnie the Pooh and Piglet, or Mole and Ratty from *Wind in the Willows*. Make a list. Brainstorm in groups.

Creative Writing: Picnic

Imagine you take Snake and Lizard on a picnic with you. Where would you go? What would you pack for lunch? What would onlookers think? What adventures would you have? Write a story about it.

Creative Writing: Like/Don't Like

Lizard doesn't like eggs. Snake doesn't like insects. Neither like being judged for their behaviour. Create two columns. In the left column write a list of things you like and in the right column create a list of things that you don't like. Don't think about it too much, just write the first things that come to mind.

SOSE: Food

How do you eat your food? What utensils do you use to eat your food? Do you sit at a table for dinner? What sorts of food do you eat? What do you eat on special occasions? What might these special occasions be? In a pair, discuss the answers to these questions. Do you have different customs? Do you agree on some basic table manners? Discuss the answers as a class.

Art: Food Prints

Cut an apple in half and dip the cut side into paint. Now press it onto paper to make a print. Experiment with different colours. Experiment with overlapping prints. Prints could be decorated further with glitter, ink, found objects etc.

Taking Down Walls

Summary

Snake and Lizard live in separate holes beside each other. They decide to move in together but each thinks their hole is better than the other. They solve this problem by removing the adjoining wall to create one big hole. Whilst removing the wall, Lizard accidentally drops a stone on Snake's tail. He apologises but Snake doesn't say 'that's okay'. Lizard tells Snake that he should do so—'you shouldn't try to make me feel bad, just because you feel bad.' Then Snake accidentally drops a rock on Lizard's foot...

Class Discussion

What are the three key lessons from this story? What problem did Snake and Lizard solve in this story? Why is it important to apologise? Why is it important to acknowledge an apology? Discuss the saying, 'treat others as you'd like to be treated'. How does the saying, 'do as I say, not as I do' relate to this story? Why is this story funny/surprising?

English: Problem Solving

Research other children's books for stories that include problem solving. Read these samples as a class. Discuss the different types of language used in each book. Discuss how the words convey the story. How does each book make you feel?

Creative Writing: Yes/No

In this story Lizard and Snake both say no to each other. What is it like when someone says 'no' to you? How do you feel? What are the different ways you might respond? Think of a time you wanted to do something and someone said no to you. Write a story about it.

Drama: Acting It Out

In pairs, act out the story of Snake and Lizard taking down the wall. Take turns to play each character. Experiment with different tones of voice—serious, joking, light-hearted, hurt, sad. How does this change the play, even though the words stay the same?

Art: Rubbings

Snake and Lizard dismantle the stone and sand wall that divides their home. Place small stones, rocks, bark, leaves, etc. beneath a sheet of paper. Create a landscape by rubbing charcoal or pencils over these objects. Experiment with different shapes, textures and colours. Experiment with abstract patterns or use the objects to form pictures.

In the Garden

Summary

Snake and Lizard are sunbathing in a vegetable garden. A woman comes by to weed. 'Here comes that horrible human thing,' says Snake. Lizard tells Snake that she shouldn't call anyone names. Snake says it's okay to do so because the woman screamed at Snake. Lizard explains that she screams because she's scared. He tells Snake that all creatures need kindness. When Snake next meets the woman, he tries to be kind by kissing her! Of course, she screams...

Class Discussion

Why is this story funny? What is Lizard trying to teach Snake? Why is it important to be kind? Why is it important to accept the differences in others?

Creative Writing: Point of View Story

Imagine you are Snake. What are you thinking or feeling? How do you expect the woman to react? Rewrite the story, from Snake's point of view. How do you see things? Now write the story from the woman's point of view.

Creative Writing: Dialogue

Imagine you were the woman weeding the vegetable garden. Think what she'd tell her friends about the incident. Write a phone conversation between the woman and one of her friends.

Drama: Telephones

Use your telephone dialogue as a script for a short play. In pairs, act out your dialogues in front of the class. Think of facial expressions, tone of voice, hand actions, etc.

SOSE: Gardens

Snake and Lizard were sunbathing in a vegetable garden. Have you seen a vegetable garden? Are vegetables grown at your home or perhaps in a neighbour's or friend's garden? Are there vegetables grown at school? Do you have a favourite vegetable?

What do you like about it? Do you know how and where it is best grown? Do you know when it is in season? Use the Internet or the library to research five facts on your chosen vegetable. Research children's books that include stories about or pictures of vegetables. How many can you find?

The Bad Mood

Summary

Snake is quietly sunbathing. Lizard thinks that because she's quiet, she MUST be in a bad mood. Although she is in fact quite happy, Lizard can't believe it and endeavours to make her feel better and in so doing, puts Snake in a bad mood.

Class Discussion

What does this story teach us? Why did Snake descend into a bad mood? How can we tell how people are feeling? Can we always rely on these indicators?

English: Feelings

Divide a sheet of paper in two. On the left side write a list of all the different feelings or emotions you can think of. Now, write the opposite feeling on the right side. Look up five of your words in a dictionary and write down their meaning.

Creative Writing: Feelings

Imagine a time when you've been in a particularly bad or good mood. Write a story about this time. You could be the main character, or you could use Snake and/or Lizard as your characters and see what they might do...

Drama: Mirroring

In pairs, face each other and take turns to copy the actions and facial expressions of the other person. What is this like? Do you prefer to be the leader or the follower? Is it easier when the leader does slow or fast actions? Try adding words and sounds.

Art: Mood 1

Listen to music. Paint along, listening for different feelings and moods. Use different colours, patterns, shapes and lines to convey the differing sounds and moods.

Art: Mood 2

Choose colours and shapes to symbolise happy, free feelings and paint a picture. Now choose colours and shapes to represent frustrated, sad feelings and paint a picture. Try to guess which feelings are displayed in classmates' paintings. Are there any similarities in how you have painted these emotions? Are there differences in how you have painted these emotions?

The Adventure

Summary

Snake and Lizard are daytime creatures who sleep at night. But one night, Lizard starts to imagine what it would be like to be out in the dark. He and Snake stay up late telling stories, and then Lizard ventures outside. Snake reluctantly follows. Snake saves Lizard from the claws of an owl and they both rush back to safety underground.

Class Discussion

What makes you laugh in this story? What lessons do you think Lizard learns from this adventure?

Creative Writing: Night

Imagine you go out for an adventure at night. Think about what animals and creatures you might meet, where you would go, what you would pack. Your night-time adventure could take place anywhere, anytime. Be creative. Write a story about your adventure!

Drama: Follow the Leader

Snake, somewhat reluctantly, follows Lizard out into the night. Play 'follow the leader' with a partner or small group. Take turns to be the leader and to be led. Experiment with different ways of walking, running, skipping, slithering around the room. Think light/heavy, slow/fast, energetic/tired, happy/sad, brave/scared, etc.

Music: Twinkle Twinkle

Think of any songs with the words night, moon, star or sky in them. You could research songs from different eras by asking adults as well as children for suggestions. What do you think the lyrics mean? What is the song about? What sorts of feelings are expressed? Discuss your songs in a group and choose one to perform to the class. Use percussion instruments to enhance your performance.

Biology: Predators

In this story, Snake saves Lizard from the claws of an owl. Use the library or the internet to research ten facts about a predatory bird such as an owl, eagle, hawk, etc.

Art: Nightscape 1

On black card, use crayons or pastels to draw a night scene from Snake and Lizard.

Art: Nightscape 2

Create a two-dimensional nightscape from Snake and Lizard. Cut rocks, trees, insects, birds, lizards, snakes and other animals from coloured paper and glue to card. Use cardboard, wool, glitter, matchsticks, cellophane, etc. to add another dimension. Use these materials in different ways—scrunch paper, wind or frizz wool, twist cellophane, etc.

Surprise

Summary

Lizard finds an egg and takes it home for Snake as a surprise gift. However, the egg is not a hen's, rather a rattlesnake's, and by the time Snake arrives home the egg has hatched. Snake gets a horrid shock and the two spend the night hiding from the rattlesnake and from predators outside. It's not until the rattlesnake emerges in the morning looking for food, that they reclaim their hole. It's only then that they can laugh about the situation.

'I don't know why we argue like we do,' Snake said.

'It's because we're so different,' said Lizard. 'But oh Snake, you are still my best friend.'

'And you are mine, dear Lizard,' said Snake. 'Only do me a favour, please. No more surprises.'

Class Discussion

What was the funny side of this situation? Were Lizard's intentions good ones? How are Snake and Lizard different? What are their different characteristics?

Creative Writing: Rattlesnakes

Imagine you accidentally bring home a rattlesnake egg. Write a story about what happens!

Drama: News Flash

Use the events of your rattlesnake story to form a brief news story. Present your news flash to the class from the news desk or live on site.

Biology: Rattlesnakes

Rattlesnakes are known to be highly venomous. Approximately 30 species exist. Research rattlesnakes using the internet and the library and list ten facts. Discuss with the class to form a longer list of information.

Art: Nighttime Wrapping Paper

Snake and Lizard hide from predators in the night. Do you ever look at the sky at night? Create your own night-time wrapping paper by painting dark blue or black paint onto butcher's paper. You can water down the paint to create a lighter wash if you prefer. Now cut a potato in half and using scissors or a blunt knife, cut the shape of a moon and a star into each half. Use your potato stamps to decorate the butcher's paper.

Art: Decorated Eggs

First shake the egg to break the yoke. With a pin, punch a hole in each end and carefully blow out the contents to leave the shell in tact. Use rubber bands or stickers as stencils to create patterns before dipping your egg into food dye. Dry on paper towel then remove stencils. Rub with olive oil for a glossy finish!

Ancestors

Summary

On a hot day Snake and Lizard tell stories of their ancestors; serpents and dragons. They get into a heated argument about whose ancestor is better. Lizard wishes he were a great big fiery dragon. Snake wishes she were a centipede because of all the legs. But they realise if that were the case they couldn't be friends, so they decide they like things as they are.

Class Discussion

What is an ancestor? Why were Snake and Lizard competing with stories of their ancestors? What makes a friendship? How do Snake and Lizard resolve their quarrels?

English/Art/SOSE: Family Tree

Do you know anything about your ancestors? Research your own family tree. Ask your siblings, parents, guardians, grandparents, uncles, aunts, friends, caregivers, etc. for any information they might have. On a large sheet of cardboard paint or draw a picture of a tree with as many branches as you need. Plot the various generations of your family along the branches. Decorate with photographs, pictures, etc.

Creative Writing: Ancestors

Imagine you were born in another time and another place; perhaps the time of your grandparents or your parents. Write a story about a day in their life. What would you eat? What would you wear? What would you do?

Secrets

Summary

Lizard tells Snake the worst thing he ever did—losing his brother; leaving him in a cactus shaped like a coyote's head and returning to find him gone. Sobbing at the memory, he asks Snake what was the worst thing she ever did. Snake decides not to tell Lizard that she's just discovered that she ATE his little brother. Instead she says, 'I hissed at my mother.'

Class Discussion

Why did Snake decide not to tell Lizard that she was the culprit? Did she make the right decision? Is it okay to keep secrets?

Creative Writing: Point of View Story

Imagine you are Lizard. What are you thinking or feeling? Rewrite the story, but just from Lizard's point of view. How do you see things? Now swap and write from Snake's point of view.

Biology/SOSE: Reptile Life

Snake and Lizard are both reptiles. Choose an Australian reptile eg: blue tongued Lizard, freshwater crocodile, saltwater crocodile, red-bellied black snake, etc. to research using books and the internet (teachers might like to give students a list of reptiles from which to choose). You might investigate characteristics of your chosen reptile, how they live, where they live, how they eat and hunt, etc.

English: Presentation

Present your findings from the research above to the class.

Money

Summary

Snake finds a ten cent coin and this inspires the pair to go into business; Snake selling cactus juice and Lizard corn cakes. They each set up a stall. Using the ten cent coin Lizard buys a cup of Snake's cactus juice. Then Snake buys one of Lizard's corn cakes, and so on and so forth. By the end of the day all of the cactus juice and the corn cakes are gone, but Snake and Lizard are no richer. 'Never mind,' said Snake. 'It's been a fun morning.'

Class Discussion

Why is this story funny? Why did they not make any money? Did it matter that they didn't make any money? How does trade work?

English: The Right Words

If you had a stall, what would you sell? How would you make it appealing? Make a list of words to describe your product. Check their spelling in a dictionary.

Drama/SOSE/Art: Stalls

In groups, set up your own stalls. Use matchsticks or bottle-tops as 'money' and create goods by painting cardboard, plastic bottles etc. Paint signs to let your 'customers' know what you're selling. Take turns to be the buyer and the seller.

Biology: Snakes and Lizards

Use the internet or the library to research what Lizards and Snakes really eat. Discuss your findings as a class.

Art: Eyes Closed Drawing

Snake and Lizard drink cactus juice and eat corn cakes. Close your eyes and imagine something you like to eat, for example, an apple. Using a pencil and paper, draw what you can see. Draw it completely with your eyes closed. Think of the leaves, the stalk, the skin, the pips, the core...Now open your eyes and see what you have drawn. Now add colour and patterns to make your very own apple essence artwork!

Helpers

Summary

Lizard and Snake decide to become 'helpers'. While talking about their plans they get lost. A rabbit asks if they'd like directions. They turn down the offer of help, saying that they give help, not receive it. Then they fall into a river, and wonder why rabbit doesn't come to their rescue. They decide that in the future they will accept help when they need it.

Class Discussion

Why do Snake and Lizard turn down Rabbit's offer of help? Is it okay to ask for help? What do you think of the pair in this story?

Creative Writing: Point of View Story

Write this story from Rabbit's point of view. How do you feel? What do you see?

Drama/Art: Puppets

Paint a river on a long strip of cardboard. Prop it up on a table covered with cloth so that you can hide below while moving puppets along the river. Make simple animal puppets on pipe cleaners or ice-cream sticks. You could make characters from the story, or fish and birds. Now explore different ways of moving the puppets along the river—swimming, swooping, falling, jumping, etc. Make sounds to accompany the movement. If you have time, you could recreate the story, or make up a puppet play of your own.

Help!

Summary

A mouse comes to ask Lizard and Snake for help. While Lizard helps the mouse, Snake fantasises about eating it. Lizard sends the mouse to stay with relations. 'Poor little creature,' said Lizard. 'A big snake wanted to eat it. Can you imagine such a thing?'

Class Discussion

Why is this story funny? Did Lizard know what Snake was thinking? Did Lizard help the mouse with its original problem?

Creative Writing: Dialogue

Imagine the conversation Lizard might have had with the mouse. Write down what you think was said.

Drama: Acting It Out

In pairs, act out the conversation between Lizard and the mouse from the above exercise. Think of the different emotions you could express in each role.

Art: Hidden Creatures

The desert can be full of hidden creatures. Paint a desert scene from *Snake and Lizard* (based in Southern America) with lots of sand, rocks and cactus plants. Now, carefully cut out four or more three-sided flaps that can be lifted. On other pieces of paper, slightly larger than the flaps you have created, paint a series of desert creatures. Paste the creatures behind the desert flaps so that they can be mysteriously hidden or revealed.

Self-Help

Summary

Lizard and Snake go into business as counsellors, helping others to help themselves.

Class Discussion

Why is this story funny? How are all the animals interconnected? How does this represent life? Does this story make you think how your actions affect others?

English/SOSE

Have you ever helped someone with a problem? Cut a piece of card into ten squares. Think of five problems and write one per square. Now write down how you helped, or the solution to the problem on the remaining five squares—one solution per square. Mix up your cards and ask a partner to guess which solution fits with which problem. Now, play a game of memory. Divide your cards into two groups—problems and solutions. Turn them face down in two rows of five. Take turns to flip one square from the top row and one from the bottom row, when you have a match, remove the card and continue until you've matched all your pairs.

Art/Creative Writing/Biology: Wild Animals

Draw an outline of a lizard. Repeat it three or four times. Inside each outline, paint or draw a different pattern (red spots with blue squiggles, orange squares with pink dots). Look at scientific ways of identifying animals (you may have come across this already when looking at books on reptiles). Now, make up a scientific and a common name for each of your animals. Invent information on your animals. What sort of habitat do they live in, what do they eat, what noises do they make etc.

The River of Death

Summary

Skunk asks Lizard and Snake to help him cross the 'River of Death' to meet his true love on the other side.

Class Discussion

What do the animals mean by the 'river of death'? What are the monsters they refer to? How did Snake and Lizard help Skunk?

Creative Writing: News Report

Write a news report on this story, or one that you make up. The headline of the report is 'Skunk Survives River of Death'.

Creative Writing: A day with...

Imagine one or more of the characters from this book are tired of being in their world, and come to spend the day with you. Write a story about what happens when they leave their world and spend a day in yours. You could choose one of your favourite TV or movie characters if you prefer.

Art: Traffic

Draw a road on a long horizontal scroll of paper. Now add cars, bicycles, trucks and other vehicles. Roll it up so that almost all of the paper is on one roll, then gradually watch your traffic move.

Snake and Lizard

Final Class Discussion

Did you enjoy the stories in this book? What are the key messages or lessons that you remember?