

Footprints: Environment and the Way We Live

Lesson Plan for *Death of a Legend*

By Andrea Burke, secondary school teacher
Conseil scolaire acadien provincial, Meteghan River, Nova Scotia

Overall Objective

For centuries, wolves have been misrepresented as violent and vicious animals, especially in children's books. Students will learn how literature, oral tradition and media can distort our view of nature.

Grade Level

Advanced 9–12 and beyond. This unit can be adapted to younger grades and different courses of study in various Canadian provinces and territories.

Content Areas

English
Language Arts
Media Studies
Citizenship
Science
Geography

Content Items Used

Death of a Legend, 1971 (49 min 30 s)

NB: Content items can be viewed online free of charge at <www.nfb.ca/footprints>.

Materials Required

Access to a computer lab, Internet connection, flip chart or whiteboard, drawing paper, pencils, crayons and/or markers.

Summary

The students will learn about wolves and explore cultural bias toward these animals.

Introduction Activity (20–30 minutes)

Students will focus on how wolves have been represented in literature and media and discuss how negative stereotypes have had an adverse effect on wolf populations.

Step 1: Distribute drawing paper and ask students to draw a wolf. They can do this activity in groups.

Step 2: Have volunteers show their drawings to the class. You can tape some of the drawings to the whiteboard.

Step 3: Brainstorm words or phrases that come to mind when we think of wolves. Write these words around the drawings.

Step 4: Talk about where the students' ideas of wolves come from. They will probably mention fairy tales such as *Little Red Riding Hood*, *The Three Little Pigs*, *Beauty and the Beast*, etc.

NOTE: This step is related to Activity 3, "Once upon a wolf..."

Step 5: Discuss how negative representation in literature and media may affect efforts to conserve and protect wolf populations.

ACTIVITY 1: Humans and wolves (80–90 minutes)

Step 1: Before viewing the documentary, write the title on the board, *Death of a Legend*. Ask:

1. What do you think the film will be about?
2. How do you think humans have affected wolf populations throughout the ages?

Step 2: View the film. Ask students to focus on interactions between humans and wolves.

Step 3: After the film, distribute **Handout 1** and have students write answers to the questions.

ACTIVITY 2: Becoming an expert on wolves (60–80 minutes)

To learn more about wolves, students will divide up into groups and research various topics: society/hierarchy, hunting behaviour, wolf species in Canada, historical perceptions of wolves, and factors that threaten wolf populations. Handouts 2–6 in the Appendix can be used for this activity. If possible, print each handout on a different colour paper

Step 1: The students form groups. Each member of a group should have a copy of the same handout.

Step 2: Using the library or the Internet, students complete the information sheets.

Step 3: The students form new groups in which there is at least one representative from each of the original groups. Students share the information they learned about wolves.

ACTIVITY 3: Once upon a time, there was a wolf... (60–90 minutes)

Remind the class how wolves have been represented as child-eating beasts in literature. Here students will have a chance to rewrite the story.

Step 1: In groups or individually, students compose a story for children where the wolf is portrayed more positively.

Step 2: Students illustrate their stories with their own drawings or computer graphics.

Step 3: Students can combine their illustrated stories to make a book.

Step 4 (optional): Encourage students to read their story aloud to a child.

Evaluation Rubrics

See the Appendix. These rubrics were prepared using the free Internet tool Rubistar. (www.rubistar.4teachers.org)

References and Resources

International Wolf Center: www.wolf.org

Wolf Trust: www.wolftrust.org.uk/status.html

Wolves Ontario! Welcome to Earthroots' Wolves Ontario! Project
www.wolvesontario.org/wolves/pukaskwa.shtml

Handout 2

Become a wolf expert: research society/hierarchy.

Handout 3

Become an expert on wolves' hunting behaviour.

Handout 4

Become an expert on wolf species in Canada.

Handout 5

Become a wolf expert: research the historical perceptions of wolves.

Handout 6

Become a wolf expert: research factors that threaten wolf populations.

Evaluation rubric: Once upon a time, there was a wolf... (Story writing)

CATEGORY	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Needs Improvement
Focus on Assigned Topic	The entire story is related to the topic and helps the reader to understand much more about the topic.	Most of the story is related to the topic. The story wanders off at one point, but the reader can still learn something about the topic.	Some of the story is related to the topic, but the reader does not learn much about the topic.	No attempt has been made to relate the story to the topic.
Creativity	The story contains many creative details that contribute to the reader's enjoyment. The author has really used his/her imagination.	The story contains a few creative details that contribute to the reader's enjoyment. The author has used his/her imagination.	The story contains a few creative details, but they distract from the story. The author has tried to use his/her imagination.	There is little evidence of creativity in the story. The author does not seem to have used much imagination.
Requirements	All of the written requirements (number of pages, use of graphics, etc.) were met.	Almost all (about 90%) of the written requirements were met.	Most (about 75%) of the written requirements were met, but several were not.	Many requirements were not met.
Writing Process	Student devotes a lot of time and effort to the process: prewriting, drafting, reviewing, and editing. Works hard to make the story wonderful.	Student devotes sufficient time and effort to the process: prewriting, drafting, reviewing, and editing. Works and gets the job done.	Student devotes some time and effort to the process but was not very thorough. Does enough to get by.	Student devotes little time and effort to the writing process. Doesn't seem to care.
Spelling and Punctuation	There are no spelling or punctuation errors in the final draft. Character and place names that the author invented are spelled consistently throughout.	There is one spelling or punctuation error in the final draft.	There are 2 to 3 spelling and punctuation errors in the final draft.	The final draft has more than 3 spelling and punctuation errors.
Illustrations	Original illustrations are detailed, attractive, creative and relate to the text on the page.	Original illustrations are somewhat detailed, attractive and relate to the text on the page.	Original illustrations relate to the text on the page.	Illustrations are not present OR they are not original.

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