



Lesson Plan for *Mama is a Miner* by George Ella Lyon



Created by

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From *Mama is a Miner*

Watercolor paintings
by Peter Catalanotto

Lyon, George Ella. *Mama is a Miner*. Illus. Peter Catalanotto. New York: Orchard Books, 1994.

Introduction:

Mama is a Miner is an excellent example of late twentieth-century Appalachian literature. Lyon's book highlights a once traditional man's role, that of coal mining, being performed by a woman who is also a mother. The present day story line captures the attention and heart of the reader. The book will give students the opportunity to discuss traditional roles of women versus non-traditional roles. Students will further discuss how different regions and cultures share some of the same concerns and problems regarding working roles of men and women.

Grade Level: 6th

Subject: Language Arts

Time Frame: 2 to 3 days, 45 minutes each day

Learner Outcomes:

- The student will recall prior knowledge in generating class discussion.
- The student will utilize critical listening skills in comprehending what is read.
- The student will orally respond to book illustrations, draw conclusions, and make inferences.
- The student will respond to the story through writing.
- The student will research and explore the origin of mining.

Materials: Internet, library

Plot Summary:

A daughter describes her mother's job working as a miner in the coal fields of Appalachia.

Procedures:

- Before the story is read, a Know, Want to Know, Learned (KWL) reading strategy activity will occur. Students will state what they know about the book, brainstorming ideas from the cover, and then determine what they want to know about the book. After the book has been read, students will discuss what they have learned.
- A Words Alive (a comprehensive approach in studying unfamiliar words) study skills activity will involve the word *mining*. The student will guess the meaning of the word, look up the meaning in the dictionary, paraphrase the dictionary meaning, use the word in a sentence, and determine the prefix or suffix of the word and the etymology of the word.
- The teacher will then read the story while students actively engage in the listening process.
- While the story is being read, the teacher will show the visual images in order for students to make predictions, draw conclusions or make inferences.
- The students will respond to the reading in the form of a written journal response. The journal will center on their thoughts, impressions about the book, or how they would change the story.

Assignment:

- Students will conduct a research project on Appalachian mining. Students will have access to the Internet, library and additional resources on the computer. Students will be formed in small groups, and a visual presentation of their findings will become a part of an assessment for the group. Students may use technology, charts, graphs, poster board, etc. to present their findings on mining.
- Students who are curious and seek an additional challenge may interview someone who has worked in the coal mines and report on their interview.

Teacher Notes:

Social Studies Integration – Students can use reproductions of art, clips from films, drawings, diagrams, and models to report on the role of mining during the 20th century.

Closure:

Students will write a two-sentence summary of the book.

Assessment:

- Oral presentation
 - Teacher observation
 - Written research report 1 to 2 pages
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Additional AppLit Resources:

Index of AppLit Pages by Genre: Picture Books **AppLit Bibliography of Books by George Ella Lyon**

See Also:

George Ella Lyon's web site

George Ella Lyon web page (with photo and background)

Visiting Author.com, with pictures and more information on Lyon's books, her life, and booking author presentations.

Page on **George Ella Lyon** by Crystal Black, Virginia Tech Student (no longer online 4/12/08)

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