

Title: The Pattaconk Brook

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ISBN: 9780688119546

Group K-1 – Water Habitats: Survival and Adaptation

Potential Essential Question:

“How does where you live affect how you live and feel?”

Science Concepts:

- What do living things need to live and grow?
- Why do living things live where they do?
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Interdisciplinary Connections:

- Literacy: vocabulary, inventive spelling, visual imagery, rhyming
- Music – rhythmic and lyrical
- Social studies – memories; tale of friendship (“You like where you’re going. I like where I’m from.”); study of place
- Mapping
- Science – What happens when fresh water hits the sea; animal life

Invitations/Experiences:

- Preview the book by preparing an obstacle course outside or in the classroom representing the characters’ trip down the Pattaconk. Introduce some of the verbs from the book and demonstrate the action on the obstacle course. Invite the children to run the course one at a time, calling out the different actions as they go.
- Gather some of the plants and animals referred to in the book (while a snail may be possible to bring in, pictures will have to suffice for others!). Present them as they are introduced in the book and invite children to look, feel, touch when appropriate. After reading, invite children to **make collages** out of these natural materials. Better yet, if possible, bring the children to the water habitat they will be studying (see below) and allow them to gather their own materials for collage.
- As a class, **make a map of the brook** as presented in the book. Draw children’s attention to the strong visual imagery in the book and model creating a visual representation of one of the passages. If you have the materials, it would be powerful to use the natural materials described in the book (i.e. yellow and blue wildflowers, moss-covered rocks, ferns, etc.) to make 3-D models; if not, drawing will be fine. Invite children to work in pairs or small groups to represent a single section of the brook (i.e. one group would do the brook bank, another the downriver adventure, another the mud flats, etc.). A large piece of foam board would be ideal for working on, especially if children are gluing natural materials. Depending on children’s reading abilities, be prepared to offer children books or images to support their understanding of the plant or animal life described. When all groups have finished their project work, come together as a class and map out where the various sections belong in space. Allow each group to describe their work, thinking, and research as they place their section on the larger map. Scale may be a topic that arises during this discussion, and children may enjoy brainstorming how to represent longer sections of the river if all groups have been given foam board of the same size. You may want to offer a long piece of fabric to represent the water and invite children to run it through all the sections.
- **Visit a water habitat** – ideally, one that is close enough to your school to make numerous return visits. On one of your trips, invite children to work together to **record the sounds heard** through inventive spelling. (This would connect nicely with Writer’s Workshop lesson.) Encourage children to take risks

(recall Sherry's words to Sidney, "Whatever you put will be perfectly fine."). If you are able to devote significant time and resources to the water habitat study, you could select small (3'x3') sections of the river/pond/marsh that have particularly active plant and animal life. Demarcate the sections and invite children, working in assigned groups, to choose one section to investigate over several visits. Ask children to record their findings in notebooks, in photography, and, if appropriate, through sample-taking. This could again become a **mapping project** in which the children work together within their groups to find out about the plant and animal life in their sections, represent it through 3-D modelling (using Model Magic or construction with recycled materials, etc.), and present their findings to the whole class after the class collaborates to place their mapped out sections accurately to represent the larger water habitat. Writer's Workshop could focus on stories from the habitat and published pieces could be connected to the map as well.

- The book is rhythmic and lyrical. Invite the music teacher to collaborate with the class to **turn it** (or the sounds and sights recorded at the class water habitat) **into a song**.
- **Discuss the quotation, "You like where you're going. I like where I'm from."** Start by asking the children what they think it means. It might be about a personal journey; it might be about place. Depending on how you and the children interpret it and what your curricular goals are, it can be explored further in various ways. One way would be to invite children to bring in family photos, preferably ones that have stories behind them. In pairs, ask children to use the photos to tell stories about where they are from. On another occasion, ask children to create artifacts that represent a goal they have for themselves in the short or long term (i.e. a book for someone who wants to learn to read; a basketball for someone who wants to become better at basketball, etc.).

Local Resources:

- The **Pattaconk is actually in CT**. It runs along RT 148 in Chester.
http://www.ct.gov/deep/lib/deep/fishing/stockingmaps/pattaconk_brk_chester.pdf
- **Grannis Island**, tidal wetland that Quinnipiac Indians inhabited over the summers. **Selection of research** compiled by Jeanne Van Orman
<http://www.newhavenlandtrust.org/sites/newhavenlandtrust.org/files/QuinnipiacMeadowsGrannisIslandNativeAmericanUsages.pdf>
- **Brooksvale Park** in northern Hamden has a pond that is small and accessible enough to safely manage a class of children. It is teeming with tadpoles and newts in the spring, and a variety of birds feast here.