
ALISTAIR IN OUTER SPACE

Author: Marilyn Sadler
Illustrator: Roger Bollen
Publisher: Prentice-Hall

THEME:

We can travel to far and exotic lands, meet new people, and explore wondrous adventures by discovering our neighborhood library.

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

Alistair is on his way to return his library books when he is captured in a spaceship by two creatures called Goots. LeVar introduces viewers to the world through the use of the library and visits the Library of Congress where he checks out a book and then explores some of the more unusual areas including the map room, the film collection, and the rare book conservation section. An animated Conan the Librarian shows a reluctant reader how to get a library card.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

Before viewing the program, ask the class to name items other than books that can be found at a library. List their ideas on the board. Add to the list after the students have watched the program.

Recall from the program ways in which Alistair was very responsible with his library books. Discuss other ways in which the students can care for library books and why it is important to do so.

Discuss with students how maps and globes are useful.

Talk about science fiction as a type of literature. How does it differ from other types of stories?

CURRICULUM EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Children are generally fascinated with maps. Gather a collection of all sorts of maps, including world maps, U.S. maps, state maps, city maps, and town maps, as well as atlases, globes, and internet map resources. Allow students to explore the maps and discuss what they notice. Ask them what types of information appear on maps and how map symbols and keys function. Have them locate their own city or town and state, as well as places they have visited and places they would like to visit.

If there is a printing press in town that prints books, arrange a field trip for the class. If not, take the students to visit a small printing company to view how presses work.

Arrange a field trip to the main branch of a public library or a university library. Have the librarian show the class the various departments, including government documents, maps, music, video and software, reference materials, etc., and talk about how people use the different materials.

If there is a local library within walking distance of the school, take a class walk there and arrange for all students who do not have library cards to get one. Have the students who do have library cards bring theirs to school. Take a class picture of everyone holding up their library card. Post the picture on the classroom door and let the students think of an appropriate caption for it.

Have the students draw pictures of themselves holding their favorite book. These books might be in the classroom library or books they bring from home. The library media specialist can also help them locate the books, so they have a copy to look at while they draw the pictures. (An alternative to this activity is to take photographs of the students holding a copy of their favorite book.) Bind the pages into a book and have students share their pages, telling why they chose their particular book. Loan the book to the school library and eventually place it in the classroom library.

Have the class cover the news of Alistair's experience with the Goots. Divide the class into television, radio, and newspaper groups and have them develop the questions they would ask Alistair as soon as he arrived back into town. Each group will need to decide how they will report the event. Allow groups time to dramatize or share their news reports. This is a good opportunity to discuss the five W's of reporting a news article.

Give the students construction paper cut in strips that measure 3 x 8 inches and have them design a bookmark featuring a favorite book character. Place all the finished bookmarks in a box in the classroom so that whenever students need one, they can borrow from the class collection.

Organize the class into small groups and have each group make their own version of a Goot. Provide all sorts of materials, including boxes of different sizes, film canisters, glitter, aluminum foil, pipe cleaners, egg cartons, styrofoam, yarn and string, different types of paper, buttons and fabric trims, cloth scraps, cardboard rolls, etc. Since the Goots are a group project, encourage the students to make their creatures fairly large.

Make organizing the classroom library a class project. Have the students decide how the books will be organized (e.g., by topic, author, series, etc.). If

there is a checkout system, allow the students to decide how it will be handled and take the responsibility for checking out the books. Also make the students responsible for putting the books in their proper places at the end of the day.

RELATED THEMES:

UFOs
space travel
using reference materials

RELATED READING RAINBOW PROGRAMS:

Program #1 — Tight Times
Program #25 — Perfect The Pig
Program #100 — June 29, 1999
Program #124 — Someplace Else

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Marilyn Sadler has worked as a high school teacher, an advertising copywriter, a comic strip artist, and an animator. She is the author of several picture books, including **Reading Rainbow** feature book, *Alistair's Time Machine*, which continues the adventures of Alistair.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR:

Roger Bollen is the creator of the syndicated comic strips, "Funny Business," "Animal Crackers," and "Catfish." He has collaborated with Marilyn Sadler on several other books for young children.

BOOKS REVIEWED BY CHILDREN:

CHECK IT OUT! THE BOOK ABOUT LIBRARIES
by Gail Gibbons (Harcourt Brace)

COMMANDER TOAD Series
by Jane Yolen, illus. by Bruce Degen (Coward-McCann)

MAPS AND GLOBES
by Jack Knowlton, illus. by Harriett Barton

SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKLIST:

RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT, MAMA AND ME
by Cari Best, illus. by Niki Daly (Orchard)

SOPHIE AND SAMMY'S LIBRARY SLEEPOVER
by Judith Caseley (Greenwillow)

MY PLACE IN SPACE
by Robin & Sally Hirst, illus. by Roland Harvey & Joe Levine (Orchard)

ONCE INSIDE THE LIBRARY
by Barbara A. Huff, illus. by Iris Van Rynbach (Little, Brown)

MY HOMETOWN LIBRARY
by William Jaspersohn (Houghton Mifflin)

LOOKING DOWN
by Steve Jenkins (Houghton Mifflin)

BLAST OFF TO EARTH: A LOOK AT GEOGRAPHY
by Loreen Leedy (Holiday House)

TOMÁS AND THE LIBRARY LADY
by Pat Mora, illus. by Raul Colón (Knopf)

THE INSIDE-OUTSIDE BOOK OF LIBRARIES
by Julie Cummins, illus. by Roxie Munro (Dutton)

THE LIBRARY
by Sarah Stewart, illus. by David Small (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)

LIBRARY LIL
by Suzanne Williams, illus. by Steven Kellogg (Dial)

