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LESSON PLANS K-1

What's for Breakfast?

Breakfast, though often eaten “on-the-go,” is one of the most important meals of the day. For children, especially, breakfast is extremely important, for it provides them with the energy they will need to begin their day and their learning at school. According to a study conducted in 2001, 42 percent of school-aged children skipped breakfast. These findings show that an alarming number of students begin the day without nourishment.

This lesson is designed to highlight breakfast as an ever important first meal. In this lesson, students will work together to “read” Pancakes for Breakfast, a wordless book which shows the sequence the main character follows in preparing her own breakfast. Students will then discuss the importance of breakfast as the first meal of the day. Students will be given the opportunity to talk about different items they eat for breakfast. They will also discuss choices highlighted by the teacher. Finally, students will write their own mini-book documenting the sequence they follow in preparing their breakfast.

I. LEARNING CONTEXT

Content Areas: Health/Nutrition
English Language Arts

Grade Level: K-1

NYS Learning Standards:

This learning experience incorporates the following English Language Arts Standards:

Standard 2 - Language for Literary Response and Expression

In the reading portion of this lesson, students will...

- “read” a wordless book
- recognize some features that distinguish the genre “wordless book” and use those features to aid comprehension
- use inference and deduction to understand the text
- present personal responses to the text

Standard 1 - Language for Information and Understanding

In the writing portion of this lesson, students will...

- present information clearly in “written” form (pictures)
- use chronological order to present information
- include relevant information and exclude extraneous material

Student Background: Students can succeed in this lesson regardless of their background or experiences.

II. PROCEDURE

Book Summary:

Pancakes for Breakfast is a wordless book by Tomie de Paola. It is written in the form of a cartoon with each page or cartoon section showing one step followed by a woman as she tries to make herself pancakes for breakfast. It shows the woman collecting the ingredients and making the batter. When the woman goes to borrow syrup from a neighbor, her pets run amok in the kitchen and her pancakes are ruined. In the end, she invites herself to partake in her neighbor's pancakes.

1. Show students Pancakes for Breakfast by Tomie de Paola. Flip through it briefly and let students notice that it has no words. Explain that a book of this sort is called a "wordless" book. Although it has no words, it still tells a great story.

2. "Read" Pancakes... aloud with students by showing them the pictures and letting them make up the story. Encourage students to look carefully at the pictures as they create their own words for the story. Talk with them about how the details in the pictures (rather than words) tell the story. Discuss the story with students as you go along or as you finish. Possible discussion questions include...

- What season is it?
- Who are the characters in the story?
- What does it mean when there is a bubble coming from the woman's head (thought bubble)?
- What ingredients does the woman put in her bowl?
- Where would these ingredients fit on the food guide pyramid?
- What are some problems the woman encounters and how does she solve them?
- How does the story end?
- How does Tomie de Paola use pictures to tell his story? (Discuss sequencing/chronological order.)

3. When the book discussion is complete, ask students to raise their hands if they had breakfast this morning. Let a few students share what they ate.

4. Explain to students that breakfast is one of the most important meals of the day. Ask students if they know why. Explain that breakfast is the first meal, the first chance for students to get nutrients in their bodies to get the energy they need for the day. Explain that it would be hard to think and learn in school if they felt hungry and tired and that is how they may feel if they don't eat breakfast. Explain, too, that it is important to think of the food guide pyramid when eating breakfast to make sure that breakfast foods are healthy and contribute to a balanced day of eating.

5. Ask more students to share what they eat for breakfast and let students tell any special breakfast stories or traditions they have (making waffles on the weekend, breakfast in bed, etc.). Highlight the variety of choices available for breakfast.

6. Explain to students that they will now write a story about their own breakfast in the style of Tomie de Paola's Pancakes for Breakfast. They will write a wordless book. Tell students they will draw a series of pictures telling the story of how they eat breakfast. (The number of pictures will vary by age level. Kindergarten students may draw 3-4 pictures while first graders might draw 4-6.) Explain that it is important when telling a story to include a beginning, middle, and an end – so their wordless books will have at least three pages/pictures.

7. Show students the paper they will use (plain white construction paper or copier paper) and model how they will write their story by writing one of your own. Think aloud first, talking about the things you do when you eat breakfast. For example, “I get cereal, milk, a bowl, and a spoon.” “I pour the cereal and milk in the bowl.” “I eat my cereal.” Then draw the three pictures matching one per page. When you are done writing, add a cover to your book writing a title and your name as the author. Staple the book together and “read” aloud to students by showing them one picture at a time.

8. Give students the paper and give them time to work on their stories. Students may need a few writing sessions to finish their stories.

9. As students finish writing, have them “read” their stories to you, by showing you the pictures and telling you about them. Use this conference as a chance to assess students’ understanding of beginning, middle, and end, as well as their understanding of the use of detail.

10. When all students are finished writing, let students share their cartoon stories with their classmates.

III. INSTRUCTIONAL/ENVIRONMENTAL MODIFICATIONS

bilingual students/
students with limited
English proficiency

pre-teach the story, letting students narrate in their own language;
pre-teach English words for items in the story’s pictures;
pre-teach English words for common breakfast foods and items

IV. TIME REQUIRED

preparation	a few minutes
lesson	30 minutes
writing/assessment	1-2 30 minute sessions

V. RESOURCES

- copy of Pancakes for Breakfast by Tomie de Paola (ISBN 0-15-670768-3)
- plain white drawing paper

VI. ASSESSMENT PLAN

Progress toward the ELA standards and performance indicators can be assessed by informal observation during the book discussion and by observation of students’ written work.

VII. REFLECTION

Breakfast is one of the most important meals of the day, for it gives children the healthy start they need to be able to think and learn. Because it is often eaten quickly, however, breakfast is often not given the attention it deserves. Hopefully, this lesson will highlight breakfast for students, making them more aware of the things they do at breakfast time and more aware of the variety of choices available for breakfast.

Note: Teachers are encouraged to share their reflections at cluster meetings and other collegial groups.