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Activity One

Newspaper Article



Willy finds himself going from a regular 10-year-old boy to one of nine mushers taking part in the National Dogsled Race in Wyoming. The race is his only chance to make the \$500 he needs to save his sick grandfather's farm.

When Willy is just a hundred feet from the finish line, his dog, Searchlight, dies. It could have been a terrible end to a good story. However, Stone Fox ensures Willy's victory. Now, imagine you are a reporter. Your job is to write a news story about these incredible events.

Look up a news source online. Or, look at a local newspaper to help show you how to write a news story. The first sentence should be its own paragraph. It should sum up the who, what, when, where, why and how of the story. This sentence should hook the reader. It should make them want to continue reading the article.

From there, work in more details about the characters. These include Willy, Grandfather, Searchlight, and Stone Fox. Then, work in more details about the story behind Willy entering the race.

Your news article should include interviews with people who were in the crowd when Willy crashed. It should include interviews with others who can give more detail about Willy and Grandfather. Include quotes from these people by using your imagination to come up with what these people might say. Your news article should include as much detail as you can from the book.

The final product should be at least 400 words long. It should include all of the information above. It should also have:

- At least three interviews with quotes.
- An interview with Stone Fox about why he did what he did.
- Comment from someone who was in the crowd.
- Any interesting facts about the race.
- An interesting detail readers might otherwise not know.

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Activity Two

Book Review



A book review is meant to suggest to the reader whether or not they should see the film or read the book. It should detail the story. It shouldn't reveal too much about the plot. It shouldn't give away any of the twists or important events. It should tell who the main characters are. It should tell a little about their past and why it is important to the story. It should explain why characters are taking the actions they are.

In this activity, you will write a review of the book. You will either recommend or not recommend it to others.

The first paragraph of your review should introduce the title of the book and author. Include a short note about the author. This could include other books he or she has written. Use the first paragraph to set up early on whether you did or didn't like the book. Use descriptive language to accomplish this.

The next paragraph should include information about the overall story (Willy is a 10-year-old who just wants to farm potatoes. He respects his grandfather enough to save for college. This goal is put into question when his grandfather gets sick). Be sure to give the reader enough information to give an idea about the plot. Do not give too much information that could ruin the story.

The next paragraphs should go on to explain why you did or didn't enjoy *Stone Fox*. Here, you should give some real examples from the book. They should tell the reader why you feel the way you do about the book. For example, perhaps you thought there wasn't enough back-story. Or, maybe there was too much time devoted to back-story. Maybe you thought some things were too complicated. This is where you would detail all of those thoughts.

Your last paragraph should sum up your review and say again whether you would or wouldn't tell a friend to read the book.

Your review should be at least 400 words in length.

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Activity Three

An Alternate Ending



In the final chapter of *Stone Fox*, Willy approaches the finish line. As he does so, his dog Searchlight has a massive heart attack and dies instantly. It is suggested that Willy is still able to win the race and save Grandfather's farm thanks to Stone Fox. Even so, it's still a pretty sad end to the book. There's also no description of what happens after the race. Willy isn't able to speak to his grandfather. He isn't able to talk about what he did. He isn't able to talk about the death of Searchlight. Willy isn't able to thank Stone Fox for what he did. He isn't able to speak to the townspeople who didn't think he had a chance of winning.

Was this ending satisfying for you? If not, then this bonus activity is your chance to end the story your way. Imagine you are the author. You're thinking about ending *Stone Fox* a different way. You will be writing a different ending to the story.

Write down some notes to help guide you when you start to write. These notes should describe where you want to take the story in your ending. Maybe there is a twist you want to include. Maybe you just want Searchlight to live through the end of the race. It is all up to you.

Make sure your new ending is written in a style that matches the book. Make sure the story is ended in a new and different way.

Your ending should include:

- At least three returning characters.
- An interesting or exciting event.
- A new character.
- A conversation between Grandfather and Willy.

Your finished product should be at least one typed, double-spaced page in length (although it can be more).

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Activity Four

Game Day



Willy doesn't have a lot of time to play games. What with his grandfather ill and an entire crop to harvest by himself. He does get to have some fun with Searchlight. They race around town and eventually enter the National Dogsled Race.

Imagine you're a game designer. You want to design a new board game that will be based on Willy's story. The story itself is based on a story author John Reynolds Gardiner heard while he was visiting Idaho. It came from a Rocky Mountain legend. It was told to the author in 1974.

Think about what sorts of activities Willy would find interesting. Try to make a board game that he would like to play with his grandfather. You can use information from the book, the legend, or other sources to help inspire you. Try to come up with a unique new game. You can use some ideas from existing games to help craft your own.

The game should be playable by two to six players. It should have some sort of turn-based system. You can use dice, spinners, cards or anything else you might find in a typical board game. Try not to use anything too advanced (no internet or electronics). This board game should only use technology that was available in the time period depicted in *Stone Fox*.

This activity can be done in pairs or in larger groups. When you've finished your games, get into groups of six. Take turns playing a round of each of the games created by your fellow students.

Once you've had a chance to play each game, discuss as a class some of the most fun ideas.

Each game should include:

- Information from the book.
- Pieces that represent each player.
- A game board.
- Plenty of color and imagery from the story.

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Activity Five

The Race Route



Pulled on a sled behind his old dog, Searchlight, Willy zips around his Wyoming home. The five-mile route he takes every day is winding. But he and Searchlight know it so well, they're almost able to do it with their eyes closed.

In this bonus activity, you will use information from the book to envision what Willy's hometown looks like.

Go back through the book. Take notes of any scenery or visual information you can that will help you make a map of the town. Use a large piece of blank poster board. Use the information you took from the book. Make an overhead map of the town, including the race route. Be sure to include any of the structures mentioned in town. Where you don't have enough information, use your imagination.

If you want to, you can pull up some images of Wyoming landscapes to help you. You could also search for some aerial photos of towns. This will help inspire you or show you how most towns are designed.

Be sure to label your map with the race route. Include any other important sites that are mentioned in the book. This could be Grandfather's farm, the bank and the school. You can use a color code and a legend on your map. This will depict residential buildings, government buildings and so on.

Your map should include:

- Landmarks mentioned in the book.
- A legend with colors depicting different building types.
- A line indicating the race route.
- Detailed and colorful drawings.

Make sure you have some fun with your map.



Activity Six

A Memorable Scene

There are several memorable moments in *Stone Fox* that would lend themselves well to a movie or comic. In this bonus activity, you will imagine a specific scene from the book as if it were a painting. Take an important scene and a major action point. Turn it into a large drawing or painting that captures the moment.

For example, you could draw Stone Fox meeting Willy outside the Mayor's Office. You could draw Willy approaching the finish line near the end of the book. You could draw Willy and Searchlight as they harvest the potato crop together.

Use a large piece of blank white poster board for your drawing. Section off a portion at the bottom of the page. It should be big enough for you to write a detailed caption. This caption should tell what is happening in your drawing.

Once you've written your caption, begin drawing your event. When you've finished drawing, gather with the class. Discuss why you drew the scene you did. Why was it important or memorable to you? Don't worry about being the best artist. Do your best and have fun with it.

Your drawing should:

- Capture an important or exciting moment.
- Have some natural or scenic part.
- Have plenty of color.
- Include at least two characters.

