



Activity One - Cottonmouth Moccasins

Cottonmouth moccasins play a large roll in this novel. Despite the fact that they are a very dangerous, poisonous reptile, Mullet Fingers uses them to further his purposes at the construction site.



This semi-aquatic snake is also known as the cottonmouth water moccasin. This snake is a pit viper and is in the same general family as the Copperhead and the Rattler. They have large, triangular heads with a dark line through the eye, oval pupils, and large jowls due to the venom glands. The cottonmouth is a large snake, typically 24 - 48 inches in length (61 - 122 cm). Their coloration is highly variable: they can be beautifully marked with dark crossbands on a brown and yellow ground color or completely brown or black.

Snakes make great villains in many books, movies and television programs, but they are simply creatures that are interested in surviving in a world where so many other creatures seem to be their enemies (i.e. people).

Consider this...

Did you know that the cottonmouth water moccasin is the only poisonous water snake in North America?

On the Internet or in your school library investigate this fascinating snake. Research at least five additional, interesting facts about the cottonmouth water moccasin. Your facts can pertain to its appearance, habitat, diet, or other information that you found of interest.

Your report should be at least a half-page in length.

NAME: _____



Activity Two - Montana / Florida

Two states of the United States were very important in Roy's life – the state where he used to live – Montana – and his new home in Florida.



As Roy mentions in the novel, these two states are very different. **Montana** is located in the west and is famous for its mountains ("Montana" is Spanish for "mountains"), ranching, wheat farming, tourism, and its badlands. **Florida**, on the other hand, is located in the southeast and although it is also renowned as a tourist hotspot, it is famous as well for its warm climate, sandy beaches, and alligators.

Although both of these states are the destinations of thousands of tourists every year, their politicians and business people would like to attract even more vacationers.

These state leaders would like you to design a travel brochure that will be sent out to thousands of travel agencies world-wide.

Your task is to design such a brochure to help out the people of one of these states.

You may wish to first investigate the format and appearance of such brochures. Then using your imagination, prepare a brochure for the state, complete with pictures, data and information that will appeal to the average tourist interested in visiting this beautiful region. You may have to use your research skills to fill in some of the "blanks" when it comes to the particulars.

The Internet may be an invaluable source in researching this topic.



Activity Three - The Burrowing Owl

Central to the novel is a colony of burrowing owls which inhabit the site upon which the Mother Paula Pancake House is to be built. Roy, Mullet Fingers and Beatrice go to extraordinary lengths to protect these tiny creatures, enlisting the help of Roy's dad, Mr. Ryan and other adults - even the actress portraying Mother Paula.



What then, is there about the burrowing owl that could attract the attention and passion of so many people?

Scientists have recognized the fact that the numbers of burrowing owls in North America have been declining. This is due to a number of factors, including: too many predators, not enough burrows, and loss of grasslands.

Your task is to investigate the burrowing owl (using references from your school library or the Internet) and write a brief report (approximately one-half page in length) on this species. You may wish to include one or more of the following subtopics:

- appearance
- diet
- where this species is found (habitat)
- ways of protecting the species

Consider this...

The burrowing owl looks like a short, fat owl on stilts.

*"I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls."
The Bible*



Activity Four - Your Very Own Pancake House!

The construction of Mother Paula's 469th family style restaurant is central to the plot of Hoot. The author does not reveal too much regarding the menu or services offered by this popular chain except for the fact that their menu will include licorice pancakes.

It would probably be a lot of fun to be a restaurant owner – and a lot of work! Much thought would have to go into the facility, layout of the restaurant, staff, hours of business, furnishings and supplies . . . Putting together a suitable menu would no doubt require a lot of creativity and knowledge of the tastes of potential customers. (Most Pancake Houses, for instance, offer more than just pancakes on their menu.)

Your task will be to put some creative energy into planning a menu for your very own pancake restaurant. A good starting point might be to take a look at a few sample menus of similar restaurants in your area (or on the Internet).

You should consider categories such as:

- drinks
- breakfast items
- lunch items
- entrees (for dinner)
- desserts

*As a child my family's **menu** consisted
of two choices: take it or leave it.
Buddy Hackett*

You should also give some thought to prices for each item.

Make your menu as neat and presentable as possible. It should include an attractive cover and two pages inside. Doing it on a computer would be a good idea. You might consider including a suitable graphic or two.

NAME: _____



Activity Five - An Alternate Ending

This activity can be done individually or in small groups.

The conclusion of **Hoot** is quite effective as the author does an admirable job of piecing together a number of loose ends. It does leave the reader wondering how Roy's relationship with Beatrice and her brother might develop; what might happen with regard to Beatrice's parents; will Dana show up to cause trouble again?

What, though, if the author had not tied things up so nicely at the end? What if the issue of the burrowing owls was still not resolved? What if Dana had not been recaptured? What if Mullet Fingers had completely disappeared from sight?

Although we will never know the answers to these questions, you will be given the opportunity of putting your imagination to work in coming up with what might have happened if the author's imagination had worked its way in an entirely different direction.

If working with a group, brainstorm possible alternative endings to the novel. Remember to consider all of the principal characters. From your list of ideas choose one ending to present to the class. Write a detailed synopsis of your alternate conclusion presenting as much detail as possible. After presenting it to the class, you may wish to get their input as to additional changes that might be made to further improve your alternative ending.

Have fun!

NAME: _____



Activity Six - The Everglades

“There are no other Everglades in the world. They are, they have always been, one of the unique regions of the earth; remote, never wholly known. Nothing anywhere else is like them.” (Marjory S. Douglas)

In **Hoot**, Roy’s dad takes him on an excursion into the Everglades. This region in southern Florida is a subtropical wetland, mainly accessible by boat or hovercraft.

Marjory Stoneman Douglas (who gave us the above quote) has called it “River of Grass”. This region is comprised of marshes, cypress swamps, mangrove forests of the Ten Thousand Islands.

It is an area boasting primarily a marine environment including such creatures as alligators, turtles, snakes (such as the Burmese python), the giant land crab, as well as a multitude of birds and insects.

Many tourists enjoy taking tours of the Everglades every year – and some are even brave enough to explore this region. Your task is to prepare a **Survivor’s Guide** for these hardy adventurers.

Using resources from your school library, or the Internet, investigate the fascinating region, then prepare a report (at least a half-page in length) with critical information needed for people planning to take a hike or a boat trip into the Everglades. You may wish to include appropriate clothing, equipment, areas to avoid (animals to avoid) etc. You may wish to include as well appropriate diagrams or pictures.
