



DIARY OF A FLY

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By Doreen Cronin, illustrated by Harry Bliss

Ages: 4-8

Themes: Insects, Friends, Humor, Empathy, Diaries, Heroes

Running Time: 9 minutes

SUMMARY

In this witty and entertaining movie, students will discover that the dreams of a fly may not be very much different from their own. The fly goes to school, has to share space with her 327 brothers and sisters, and hangs out with her friends Spider and Worm. She also eats regurgitated food, can see in all directions at once, and can land upside down. Fly is convinced that these qualities will make her a great superhero. Spider is not so sure. Her friend, Worm, however, encourages her to stay true to her dreams.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will compare and contrast flies and other insects.
- Students will compare and contrast their own lives with the fly's life.
- Students will learn about the lifecycle of a fly.
- Students will write a daily diary.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Use a video, power point presentation, slide show, or overhead photographs to introduce students to the lifecycle of a fly. After the presentation, make a lifecycle matching game. On index cards, draw the stages of a fly's lifecycle. On separate cards, write simple sentences that describe each picture. Attach pieces of Velcro to the back of each card. Then, draw a large circular flowchart on a piece of poster board or chart paper. For each stage of the lifecycle, draw a space for the picture card and description card. Attach a piece of Velcro in each spot, so that the index cards can be stuck onto the appropriate parts. To play:

- Students turn all cards upside down.
- The first student selects a card, he or she reads or shows it to the group and together they decide where to place it on the lifecycle chart.
- The process is repeated, each student taking a turn, until the lifecycle chart is complete with picture and description cards matching in the correct spaces.

Bring in examples of fictional or real diaries to read aloud

to the students. They can range from light and humorous (Diary of a Worm, Diary of a Spider, Diary of a Wombat) to more mature and serious (Diary of Anne Frank, Elizabeth's Jamestown Diary, Virginia's Civil War Diary). Discuss with students the purpose of keeping a diary. Record the students' ideas on chart paper. Discuss the differences in tone and voice between different diaries. Finally, give students an assignment to keep their own daily diaries for at least one week. Encourage them to write honestly and thoughtfully. Young children can keep a pictorial diary and/or have parents or guardians scribe for them. At the end of the week, set aside a time for students to share entries from their diaries, if they wish.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Discuss the similarities and differences between flies and other insects. Start by identifying the body parts that all insects have (head, thorax, abdomen). Next, choose one or two specific insects to compare and contrast with a fly.

Guiding questions:

- Can the insect fly?
- Where does it live?
- What does it eat?
- How does it develop?
- Does it have any enemies?

Show students large photos of the insects to help them as they answer. Encourage the students to make educated guesses based on what they see in the pictures and what they have observed in their lives. As students generate answers, refine them as necessary (such as providing the scientific names for the body parts). Record the differences on a graphic organizer such as a T-chart or Venn Diagram. Older students can follow along and fill in their own graphic organizer as you model.

Discuss with students how the fly's life parallels their own lives in many ways. A Venn Diagram would be a useful graphic organizer for this discussion. Alternatively, the students' thoughts can be organized on lists entitled, "My life is like Fly's life because..." and "My life is not like Fly's life because..." Guiding questions:

- What parts of Fly's school are like your school? What parts are different?
- Do any of Fly's friends or family remind you of your friends or family? Why or why not?

- What kinds of problems or concerns does Fly have in her life that you also have? What does Fly worry about that you don't? What do you worry about that Fly doesn't?
- Do you have dreams for yourself, like Fly's dream of being a superhero? What are your dreams? How do your friends encourage or discourage you?

Fly dreams of being a superhero because she has special and unusual characteristics, such as being able to walk on walls, land upside down, and see in all different directions at once. Her friend Spider discourages her. In the end, Worm says: "The world needs all kinds of heroes." What does Worm mean by this? Discuss heroes with the class. Guiding questions:

- What qualities make a person a hero?
- Can ordinary people be heroes?
- Who are some heroes that you can think of?
- What actions would make a person a hero?

Conclude the discussion by having students think of one person that they consider to be a hero. This could be a famous person or someone the student knows personally. The student should draw a picture of this person and write 2-3 sentences about why he/she considers the person a hero. Display the students' work on a board entitled, "Our Heroes."

Using Diary of a Fly as inspiration, create a class book, "Diary of a _____". The class will vote on an animal to write an imaginary diary for. First, spend several days reading aloud to the class and showing them pictures of the animal and its habitat. Then, have each child think of and create a diary page to add to the book. The page should have 1-3 sentences and a picture on it. Put the pages together and bind them as a book. Keep it in your classroom as a text that students will enjoy reading on their own and sharing with their friends and parents.

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