## Rhyme 'n Reason

## Character concept:

Developing *empathy*, the ability to "put yourself in another's shoes" and identify with the way others feel, helps us be kind and caring.

## Objective:

Students will demonstrate an understanding of how wild animals might feel in captivity.

#### Curriculum connection:

Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the structure, elements, and theme of poetry and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding. They will identify a regular beat and similarities of sounds in words in responding to rhythm and rhyme in poetry. (language arts)

### National standards addressed:

language arts/English (reading for perspective, applying knowledge, NL-ENG.K-12.1, 6)

#### Materials:

- copies of the poem "Where the Wild Things Shouldn't Be" (page 18)
- · pencils or pens
- highlighting markers (optional)

## **Activity:**

Students will read a poem that is written from the perspective of a wild animal kept as a pet and that has blank lines in place of certain words. They will use context clues, including the rhyme scheme, rhythm, and theme of the poem, to determine the missing words.

#### Procedure:

- 1. Distribute copies of "Where the Wild Things Shouldn't Be," one to each student. Tell them that this is a poem, written from an animal's point of view, that describes what it feels like for a wild animal to be kept as a pet.
- 2. Point out that seven words, represented by blank lines, are missing from the poem. Ask students to make educated guesses about which words are missing, based partly on the fact that this is a rhyming poem. Have them highlight or circle the words that will rhyme with the missing words. Give students several minutes to read the poem to themselves and fill in the missing words.
- 3. Call on volunteers to read the poem aloud, one verse at a time. Pause after each verse and ask students to guess the missing word in that verse. Have them explain their answers.
- 4. If no student guesses the word that is part of the original poem, engage the class in brainstorming other possibilities. (A classroom display alphabet is often helpful in exercises like these. Students can go through it, letter by letter, to guess rhyming words: air, bare, bear, care, dare, ere, fair, glare, hair, hare...)
- 5. If students still are unable to guess the correct word, reveal the answer. The missing words are as follows: chair, hot, play, run, all, there, me.
- 6. After the class has completed the poem, ask students to name some animals that people

commonly try to keep as pets. Answers will vary and may include skunks, raccoons, snakes, lizards, turtles, hedgehogs, and sugar gliders. Discuss as a group how wild animals might feel when they are kept as pets. Using cues from the poem, students may answer *lonely*, bored, angry, and sad.

7. Guide students in understanding that pets' needs and wild animals' needs are often different (pets need people; wild animals need each other and their habitats) and that the best way to be kind to wild animals is to let them live free.

Note to instructors: Some students in your class may already have backyard wildlife or exotic animals as pets. In those cases, it is important to note that wild animals who have come to depend on people must not be set free. Instead, their human caregivers need to learn as much as they can about providing those animals with the best possible care.

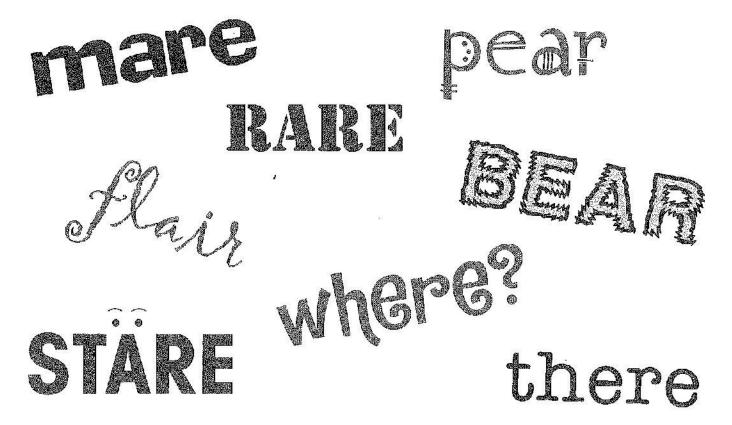
#### Extension:

Supplement this poetry exercise with "A Wild Lesson" (page 13), which includes a short story on the theme of wild animals as pets.

## Helpful Resource

As a reward for completing their poems, you may wish to give students each a 17" x 11" "Where the Wild Things Shouldn't Be" miniposter that they can color. Miniposters are available for 75¢ each, or 4/\$1, from NAHEE, P.O. Box 362, East Haddam, CT 06423, www.nahee.org.





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# Where the Wild Things Shouldn't Be

By Beverly Armstrong

