

FARRAR STRAUS GIROUX

Teachers' Guide

DAWN

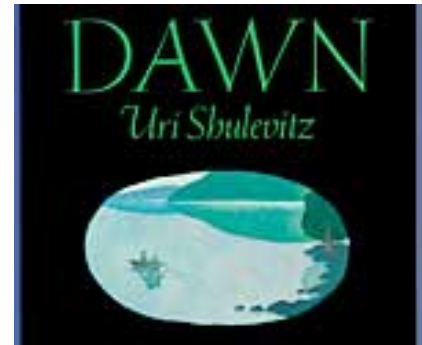
by Uri Shulevitz

Grade Level

Kindergarten–Grade 3

Themes

- Bodies of Water
- Water Cycle & Animals
- Landscape of Night/Day
- Camping/Boating
- Intergenerational Relationships



Introduction

A boy and his grandfather camp overnight by a lake. As dawn breaks, they row their boat into the middle of the lake to watch the new day begin.

Pre-Reading

- Have you ever camped out overnight?
- Have you ever been in a boat?
- Have you ever watched the sun come up?
- What is your favorite time of day?
- What do you think is the most quiet time of day?
- What do you like to do with your grandfather (or older relative or friend)?

Discussion

- Why is dawn a special time of day?
- With whom would you want to watch the sun rise?
- Does this book sound like a story or a poem? Why?
- What happens to the lake as the sun rises?
- What is evaporation?
- Why do you think some illustrations are larger than others? How does the author use the size of the illustration to focus on specific aspects of the setting? Why does he use a full-page spread to depict the dawning of the day?
- What senses did the author use when writing this book? (e.g., sight: seeing the moonlight; sound: hearing the bird call; touch: feeling the breeze; smell: smelling smoke from the fire)
- Describe the setting of *Dawn*. What body of water is part of the setting? (lake) Can you name other bodies of water? (e.g., pond, stream, river, sea, ocean)

Reading Across the Curriculum

Writing

Ask students to take an early-morning walk, either during class time or at home. Have students take along a small notepad to write down all they see, hear, smell, and feel. Following the walk, have students write a story or poem about their experience. Discuss Uri Shulevitz's style of writing, focusing on his use of sensory details and sparse text.

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Encourage students to emulate that style by including sensory details in their own story or poem, while using as few words as possible.

Discuss imagery. Have students reread *Dawn* to locate words or phrases that evoke the strongest images. Ask students to think about imagery when they write about their morning walk. (As a follow-up activity, you might ask students to go outside late in the evening and write about that experience, using words and details to evoke imagery.)

Have students share their stories and poems in small groups or with the whole class. Begin a class discussion about style of writing. Is it harder or easier to use fewer words in a text? Is it more natural to write narrative or poetry? Why? What elements of a text make it poetic?

Have students reread *Dawn*, paying close attention to the text. As a vocabulary-development activity, ask students to suggest synonyms that the author might have used to evoke the same mood. (For example, instead of “quiet,” students might suggest “peaceful” or “tranquil.” Instead of “Nothing moves,” they might suggest “Nothing stirs.”) Ask students to explain why they think the author chose the words he did.

Science

Reread the page that says: “Slowly, lazily, vapors start to rise.” Discuss how the water cycle occurs, emphasizing the three phases: evaporation, condensation, and precipitation. Have students design posters depicting the phases of the water cycle, labeling each phase and drawing arrows to show the circular process.

Ask students to list the animals mentioned in *Dawn* (i.e., *bat*, *frog*, *bird*). Have students suggest additional animals, generating a list of about twenty animals. Begin a discussion about nocturnal animals. Then have students divide their animal list into two categories, those that are nocturnal and those that are not. (*This activity can be adapted to address a specific curriculum topic. For example, students can generate a list of animals as suggested above, but instead focus on animal habitat. Students can divide their list into categories such as “animals that live near water” and “animals that live in the desert.” Design this activity to meet the goals of your curriculum.*)

Have students select an animal that interests them from the lists they have generated. Working individually, with partners or in small groups, have students conduct research and write a brief report about their animal. Reports should include information about the animal’s physical characteristics, behavioral patterns, habitat, diet, and reproduction. Encourage students to use a variety of sources, including books, magazines, and CD-ROMS. Students may design covers for their reports and, if appropriate, prepare a final copy on a word processor. Students should present their reports to the rest of their class, or to another class, to share the information they have gathered.

Begin a discussion about how night becomes day by asking students why night and day exist. Have students record individual explanations or create a class chart. Then explain that a twenty-four-hour day is the period of time it takes for the earth to make one complete turn on its axis. Demonstrate the relationship between the earth, the sun, and the moon. As a follow-up activity, students can create their own representations on paper or with materials (e.g., *Styrofoam balls*) to make three-dimensional models.

Social Studies

Discuss the relationship between the boy and his grandfather. Ask students to describe a special experience they have shared with a grandparent (or older relative or friend). Ask students to think about age differences. What can a young person offer to an older person? What can an older person offer to the young?

Following the discussion about relationships, students can complete one of these activities:

- Have students write a story about the experience they shared with a grandparent.
- Students can write a letter to a grandparent in which they recall their experience. (This can lead into a letter-writing unit in which students and their grandparent become pen pals.)
- Ask students to interview their grandparent. Prepare a guide for students, including an outline of information to be obtained from the interview and suggested questions.
- Have students create a family tree. It should extend at least to their great-grandparents. Keep in mind that more detailed family trees will require time and research on the part of the students.

Art

Ask students to close their eyes as you read *Dawn* aloud. After listening to the book, students should use watercolors to portray their own vision of sunrise and the moments leading up to it.

Students can create a large collage or mural depicting the water cycle. Materials such as tissue paper, aluminum foil, cotton, or fabric can be used to make the bodies of water, clouds, and rain.

Discuss the landscape portrayed in *Dawn* and list its elements (e.g., *lake, plant life, rocks, trees, mountains*). Have students create a representation of the landscape. They can paint a mural, or use clay to create a three-dimensional model of the setting.

Music

Present students with a variety of instruments, or provide them with materials to design their own instruments (e.g., *bells, brushes, sandpaper*). Ask students to create a musical representation of dawn. Would they use soft sounds only? One sound, or many sounds? Short, staccato sounds, or long-drawn-out sounds? High-pitched or low-pitched? Have students share their compositions in small groups or with the whole class.

Drama

With partners, have students practicing reading *Dawn* aloud. Encourage them to use their voice to portray the mood of the text. Students may wish to have one pantomime the text while a partner reads aloud.

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About the Author

Uri Shulevitz, recipient of the Caldecott Medal for *The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship* by Arthur Ransome, is also the author and illustrator of numerous books, including *Rain Rain Rivers* and two Caldecott Honor Books, *Snow* and *The Treasure*. He lives in New York City.

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Includes a biography of the author and additional information about his books.

Dawn

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**An ALA Notable Book
A Christopher Award Winner
An IRA-CBC Children's Choice**

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