



Storm Song

a teacher's guide

Created by marcie colleen

Nancy Viau, Author

Storm Song

Nancy Viau thinks thunderstorms are fascinating (and a little scary), and she enjoys watching them from a cozy spot inside her New Jersey home. Viau prefers, however, to be outdoors and on storm-free days she can be found hiking and biking in the country, swimming in the ocean, or gazing up at the stars. Viau is also the author of *City Street Beat*, *Look What I Can Do!*, and *Samantha Hansen Has Rocks in Her Head*. Find out more at www.nancyviau.com.

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Storm Song

Olivier Genoux (Gynux) is the illustrator of the *Digger the Dinosaur* series by Rebecca Dotlich. He is also the author/illustrator of *21 Histoires de Pirates* published in the French language.

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Marcie is a former teacher with a Bachelor's degree in English Education from Oswego State and a Masters degree in Educational Theater from NYU. She can remember being scared and diving into her parents' bed during thunderstorms. Now she lives in Brooklyn, NYC and she loves listening to the echoes as thunder bounces off the tall buildings in the summertime.

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How To Use This Guide

This classroom guide for *Storm Song* is designed for students in preschool through second grade.

It offers activities to help teachers integrate *Storm Song* into English language arts (ELA) and science curricula. Art and drama are used as teaching tools throughout the guide.

All activities were created in conjunction with the Common Core and relevant New Jersey content standards in ELA, math, science, social studies, art, and drama.

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English Language Arts

Reading Comprehension

Before reading *Storm Song*, show entire book. Help students identify the basic parts of a picture book: front cover, back cover, title page, author, illustrator, spine, jacket flap.

- Looking at the front cover, who is the author? What is her job?
- Who is the illustrator? What is his job?
- What do you think the book will be about?
- Why do you think the three children are looking out the window?
- What clues to the rest of the story are found in the first few illustrations?
- Have you ever watched a storm? What are some things you have seen?

After the students read or listen to *Storm Song*, ask:

- What are the children doing when the storm starts? What is the dog doing?
- How do the children and the dog feel about the storm?
- What do the children do after the first lightning strike?
- What happens when the lights go out?
- What does the family do while they wait for the storm to pass?
- How do you know the storm is over?
- How do you think the children feel at this time?
- Why is “still” a good word to end this story?

Take a closer look at the illustrations.

- What are the first indications of a storm in the beginning pages?
- Search for the dog on each page spread. If the dog had a “thought bubble” over his head, what would it say?
- How does the illustrator show us the storm is coming to an end?

As a class, read *Thunder Cake* by Patricia Polacco.

- How is this story similar to *Storm Song*?
- Where does the little girl hide from the storm?
- Why does the grandma tell the little girl to start counting when she sees lightning?
- What are some of the ingredients for the cake? What is the secret ingredient?
- Name some of the things that the little girl says she is scared of in the story.
- Write about a time when you were afraid of something and what you did to overcome your fear or write about a time when you did something brave.
- Use the recipe at the end of the book to make thunder cake.

Other Books About Storms

Like a Hundred Drums by Annette Griessman

The Rain Came Down by David Shannon

Franklin and The Thunderstorm by Paulette Bourgeois

Just a Thunderstorm by Gina Mayer and Mercer Mayer

Thunder Doesn't Scare Me! by Lynea Bowdish

Flash, Crash, Rumble, and Roll by Franklyn M. Branley

The Way the Storm Stops by Michelle Meadows

Onomatopoeia

Raindrops beat a steady sound—

Tat. Tat. Tap. Pitter, pat, POUND!

Onomatopoeia is the imitation of a sound using a word. Discuss why an author may choose to use onomatopoeia in place of regular words in a story. Have students identify onomatopoeia in *Storm Song* and discuss how these words bring the story to life. Here are some activities that can be used to reinforce onomatopoeia.

Zip! Zap! Boing! Game

- Start with the class sitting in a circle.

- One player points to another player on their right or left and says, "Zip!" That player turns to the next player in the circle, points to them, and says, "Zip!" Thus, the "Zip!" is passed around the circle in one direction.
- At any time, the next player can say, "Zap!" to the person pointing. Now, the player who said "Zip!" must change the direction of the pointing and the game continues in that direction.
- However, the person who receives the "Zip!" or "Zap!" may elect to yell, "Boing!" and point to anywhere in the circle. That new player resumes by saying, "Zip!" and going in the direction of their choice.
- Once players have gotten the hang of the game, try it using the onomatopoeia from *Storm Song*.

Sounds of the Seasons

- As a class, create the sounds of a thunderstorm, from beginning to end:
 - Snap fingers.
 - Pound floor. (Thunder rumbling.)
 - Clap hands together in an irregular cadence.
 - Slap hands on legs. (Flick light switches on and off or turn flashlights on and off to represent lightning.)
 - Stomp feet.
 - Slap your hands on your legs and stomp your feet. (Height of the storm.)
 - Stomp feet.
 - Slap hands on legs. (Flick lights or flashlights less frequently.)
 - Clap hands together in an irregular cadence. (A little softer now.)
 - Pound floor, a few times.
 - Snap fingers. (Quietly and slowly.)
 - Open palms. (Be still.)
- Now, do the exact same thing, only substitute motions with onomatopoeia.

- Additional Activity: Choose a different type of weather. For example: A sunny day with birds chirping, a mower vrooming, kids in a pool splishing and splashing.
- Additional Activity: Play Soundscape Charades by performing 3 sounds and letting the class guess the weather.

Scat Singing, The Jazz of Language

In *Storm Song*, onomatopoeia is used to mimic the sounds of a thunderstorm. Scat Singing is when a jazz singer substitutes nonsense syllables for the words of a song and makes his voice the musical instrument.

Here are a few activities to introduce scat singing.

Wah-Wah Words

The box below contains common "scat words" that can be introduced.

dooby	bip	wap	scoo	shooby	wooby
bop	wop	diddley	skiddley	scooby	bum
	doo	dat	wah		

- Review the above words using echo and response.
- Add a rhythm.
- Have students create more words to add to the list above. This can be done by changing the prefix. For example: skiddley/diddley or bop/wop.

A Stormy Scat Poem

- Using the scat words in the above box, plus the extra words generated by the class, complete the following poem:

When a big storm's a'coming and you feel afraid,

Just _____ - _____ - _____ - _____ - _____ - _____

If you feel like hiding, take a deep breath and say

_____ - _____ - _____ - _____ - _____ - _____!

Books that Introduce Scat Singing and Jazz

When Louis Armstrong Taught Me by Muriel Harris Weinstein

Skit-Scat Raggedy Cat: Ella Fitzgerald by Roxane Orgill

Charlie Parker Played Be Bop by Christopher Raschka

The Jazz Fly by Matthew Gollub

This Jazz Man by Karen Ehrhardt

Before John Was a Jazz Giant: A Song of John Coltrane by Carole Boston Weatherford

Science

Lightning

Lightning glare ignites the dark—

Flash. Flash. Flare.

Sparkle, spike, SPARK!

Lightning is all about static electricity. Lightning is created when negative charges in clouds (electrons) are attracted to the positive charges (protons) on the ground.

Experiment #1

- Call students up five at a time and conduct the following experiment. Allow each student to feel the small shock, if he/she wishes to.

MATERIALS:

aluminum pie pan, small piece of wool fabric, Styrofoam plate, pencil with a new eraser, and a metal thumbtack

PROCESS:

Push thumbtack through center of aluminum pie pan from bottom.

Push eraser end of pencil into thumbtack.

Put Styrofoam plate upside-down on a table. Quickly, rub the underneath of plate with wool for a couple of minutes.

Pick up aluminum pan using pencil as a handle and place it on top of upside-down Styrofoam plate.

Touch aluminum pan with finger. Feel a small shock. If nothing happens, try rubbing Styrofoam plate again.

Additional activity: Repeat experiment with the lights off to see a spark.

Experiment #2

- Conduct this experiment in the front of the room with the lights off. Children can participate in the experiment, but a teacher must always hold the light bulb.

MATERIALS:

balloon, hair, and fluorescent light bulb

PROCESS:

Blow up balloon.

Rub balloon on hair for a few seconds to build up static electricity.

Hold balloon near end of fluorescent light bulb. The bulb will light up because the electrical charge will jump to bulb when balloon touches it.

One Mississippi, Two Mississippi

Teach students how to tell how far away a storm is by counting the number of seconds between the time lightning strikes and thunder is heard. It takes five seconds for the sound of thunder to go one mile.

- Simulate lightning by flashing the lights on and off to represent lightning.
- Count to five slowly. (One Mississippi, Two Mississippi, etc.)
- Yell, "Boom!" or crash cymbals together to represent thunder.
- Explain that this indicates the storm is one mile away.
- Ask students to figure out how many seconds would indicate that the storm is 2, 3, or 4 miles away.
- Create follow-up word problems to reinforce the concept. For example: If there were 25 seconds between lightning and thunder, how far away is the storm?

Thunder

Thunder claps outside the door—

Boom. Boom. Bang! Rumble, rap, ROAR!

Thunder is caused when hot air pushes against cold air making vibrations. These vibrations travel through the air bouncing off the clouds and ground causing thunder.

Experiment

- Students can try this experiment with supervision.

MATERIALS:

brown paper lunch bag

PROCESS:

Fill the brown paper lunch bag by blowing into it.

Twist the open end to tightly close it.

With the free hand, quickly hit the bag.

- Explain that hitting the bag causes air inside the bag to compress so quickly that the pressure breaks the bag. The air continues to move forward in a wave. When the moving air reaches the students' ears, they hear the sound. Thunder is produced in a similar way. As lightning strikes, energy is given off that heats the air through which it passes. This air expands, producing waves of air called thunder.

The Water Cycle

Below are several activities to introduce and explore the water cycle.

Sponge Cloud

- Gather the following materials: One new/unused sponge for every child (cut into the shape of a cloud), and flat pans or containers filled with 1/2 inch of water.
- Give each child a sponge to hold. Tell them to pretend they are holding a cloud.
- Ask students to observe how the sponge/cloud feels, with a focus on whether it heavy or light. Ask: What comes out when the sponge is squeezed? (Air.)

- Instruct students to place the "cloud" gently in the water. Explain that because it is cold in the sky, the vapor turns to water (condenses) and fills up the sponge/cloud.

- Have children pick up their sponges. Ask:

How does the "cloud" feel now? Light or heavy? Warm or cold?

What happens to the water? (It should be dripping from the sponge as if raining.)

Why? (The cloud cannot hold all that water.)

What do we call it when water falls from the clouds because they are too heavy with water? (Rain!)

Where does the water go? (Falls into pan. Explain that the pan could be a stream, river, or ocean.)

Reinforce concept with a diagram of the water cycle.

Water Cycle Ballet

A great way to learn about the water cycle is for students to actually become the water cycle.

- Tell students they are going to act out what happens to a raindrop after it falls to the ground. Ask children to imagine that they are the raindrops.
- Have them circle slowly around the room, joining hands with other raindrops to form streams.
- Have the streams continue to circle around, connecting with other streams to form rivers.
- Have students/rivers move faster and faster, pretending to cascade over large rocks.
- As children move with more speed and bumpier motions, have them move their bodies and limbs up and down to show the current.
- After passing a designated spot, have the children become whirlpools, forming four-person circles and twirling here and there.

- Eventually, have all children hold hands and flow into the ocean, forming one large circle. Ask them to come together inside the circle with arms raised then flow backward with graceful arm movements. This represents the tides.
- Have the children turn into raindrops again.

I'm Evaporation; I'm Precipitation

- Invite students to choose partners.
- Have them stand side by side, then drop a pile of packing peanuts or cotton balls at their feet. Explain that the cotton balls represent a body of water.
- Have one student pick up the peanuts or balls one at a time and fill the cupped, outstretched hands of their partner. Here, the first student acts like evaporation, while the second simulates condensation and cloud formation.
- As they fill the hands, have them chant, "Evaporation!"
- As the first child continues to fill their partner's hand with peanuts or balls, it will become apparent that the "cloud" is too full. The student won't physically be able to hold all everything. Once the peanuts/cotton balls begin to overflow, invite students to open their hands, dropping them to the floor.
- As they fall, have them chant, "Precipitation!"
- Students exchange places and repeat the cycle.

Water Cycle Bracelets

- String colorful beads with students. These water cycle bracelets can help them remember the cycle. For example: The rain (light blue bead) falls on the grass (green bead). It forms puddles (dark blue). The sun comes out (yellow) and dries up or evaporates (clear bead) the puddles. The air is filled with moisture and this causes a cloud to form (white). The cycle repeats.

Classroom, Unplugged

A blackout can be scary for kids, but it can also be exciting. Here are some ways to introduce the concept of a blackout and have fun exploring life unplugged.

- Reread *Storm Song*, focusing on the moment the blackout occurs. Ask:
 Have you ever been in a blackout and what happened?
 What do the kids from *Storm Song* discover in the dark?

What kinds of things do they do during the blackout?

- Read John Rocco's *Blackout* (Hyperion, 2011)

Compare the first spread of the normal summer night with the spread of the city dark and quiet. What differences do you see?

What is each family member doing when the lights go out?

What doesn't work without electricity?

Why does it get hot and sticky inside?

Look at the spreads of the parties on the roof and the street. What are some things that people are doing?

- Brainstorm and create a list of fun things to do in a blackout. Use both *Blackout* and *Storm Song* for inspiration.
- Have a Scavenger Hunt to find things in the classroom that would not work if the electricity went out.
- Brainstorm a list of "Things That Would Work" and "Things That Wouldn't Work" and make a chart comparing these two lists.
- Totally unplug the classroom by turning off the lights, computer, and anything that requires electricity. Have a blackout party using items from the "Things That Would Work" list.