

Teaching News Is Elementary

April 1, 2016

Each week, this lesson will share some classroom activity ideas that use the newspaper or other NIE resources. You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some classrooms may be able to use this as a worksheet and others might need to ask and answer the questions in a class discussion.

Materials you will need for this lesson: The Seattle Times e-Edition, pencil, and paper.

Article: “So why do my folks think it’s funny?”

Page: NW Tuesday, B1

Date: Tuesday, March 29, 2016

Pre- Reading Discussion Questions:

Have you ever seen a snake? Have you ever touched a snake? How do you feel about snakes? If you think that snakes are scary, why do you think that you feel that way?

Vocabulary:

Read the following quotes and determine the meaning of the word based on how it’s used in the sentence:

“This is not your **typical** petting zoo with a couple goats and sheep. The Reptile Zoo just east of Monroe is home to large alligators, tortoises and lizards — and snakes not normally seen in Western Washington.”

Typical: normal for a person, thing, or group: average or usual

“That’s because there are no **venomous** snakes on this side of the Cascades.”

Venomous: Full of or containing venom, poisonous

“He often goes into the community, bringing a traveling **menagerie** of surprises.”

Menagerie: a collection of animals kept especially to be shown to the public

“You can see her large underside scales, called scutes. They’re used for **locomotion**. Petersen says, ‘Fear of snakes is a learned behavior — definitely learned.’”

Locomotion: the ability to move from place to place, or the act of doing so

Learned Behavior: behavior that is learned either from interacting with the world or by being taught

“About these **encounters**, Peterson says, ‘I want people to have a personal experience so they care more about them. They’re beautiful.’”

Encounters: an unexpected or casual meeting with someone or something

Journal Writing Prompts:

“The point is to educate, fascinate and remove fears many have of these creatures.”

What kind of things make you nervous? What kind of things make you afraid? Have you outgrown any fears while getting older? Have you developed any new fears as you have gotten older? What strategies do you use to try to deal with your fears?

Discussion Questions:

“Petersen says, ‘Fear of snakes is a learned behavior — definitely learned.’

... About these encounters, Peterson says, ‘I want people to have a personal experience so they care more about them. They’re beautiful.’”

Do you agree with Isaac Peterson – is fear of snakes something that people learn or is it a natural fear that people are born with? Why or why not? Is fear of snakes rational or irrational? Can it be both at the same time? Do you have any other fears that you think are learned? Do you think that learning about snakes will help people get over their fear of snakes? Why or why not?

Small Group Discussion and Activity:

Draw a picture of what you think fear would look like if you could see it. Does it look like a monster? Does it look like an insect or a snake? Does it have a shape at all? What color would it be? Would it be big or would it be small? How would it move? How would it sound? How would it act? After you have drawn a picture, use the ideas that you came up with to write a story or poem featuring “Fear” as one of the main characters.