Further reading, reproducibles, and resources to make your Winter Family Literacy Night a success

Activities
Iditaread: Race to Read Winter Delights
(Science & Social Studies)

• Kids like to hear staff members and their current and past teachers read aloud. Take advantage of this by holding read-alouds throughout the evening. In advance, select and set aside a variety of winter books for teachers to read to students and their families. Try to include some of these highly reviewed titles:
  2. *How Do You Know When It’s Winter* by Ruth Owen.
  4. *It’s Snowing! It’s Snowing! Winter Poems* by Jack Prelutsky.*
  5. *Kiana’s Iditarod* by Shelley Gill.

• After you’ve gathered the books you wish to be read aloud, bookmark the website http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iditarod_Trail_Sled_Dog_Race

• Generate a schedule of staff guest readers for 15-minute read alouds.

• Contact guest readers to let them choose which book they want to read. Remind them they need to bring their book at their assigned time, then return it to the library.

• Post the schedule at the school’s entrance on the night of the event. Outside the specific areas/rooms where the readings will be held, post a list with the title of the book, the name of the guest reader, and the time of the reading.

Activity

1. Display the bookmarked Wikipedia website about the Iditarod. Say this rhyme and give a brief history of the first Iditarod.

   Way off in Alaska, a long, long time ago,
   A team of dogs pulled on a sled to go and go and go.
   It was an urgent job in terrible weather,
   But as a team they raced together
   To deliver medicine in time
   To those whose lives were on the line.
2. Share the fact that good books are like wonderful medicine to make our brains healthy and happy, and that guest staff readers will race to read as many good books as they can about Winter Wonders this evening.

3. Introduce the guest reader.

4. If time allows, solicit questions and comments for discussion.

**Snowriffic Crafts: Make ‘n’ Take (Art & Science)**

This activity can easily be multiple activities, with each room having a different craft. How many you do depends on your access to materials and the number of people available to staff the rooms.

- In advance, review the directions for the various winter crafts listed below.


3. Kaboose.com, do keyword searches for each craft and click on the link for directions that include a materials’ list.

   - **Mitten and Snowflake Wall Hanging.** Recommended read aloud: *The Mitten: a Ukrainian Folk Tale* by Jan Brett.
   - **Mosaic Penguin.** Recommended read aloud: *Antarctic Antics: A Book of Penguin Poems* by Judy Sierra.
   - **Snowy Handprint.** Recommended read aloud: *Winter Trees* by Carole Gerber.

- Decide how many rooms you want.
- Gather the materials and make a sample of each craft item. Place the sample and the materials in a tray/container for delivery to that room. Be sure to include newspapers to protect tables.
- Gather winter poetry or snow books including those listed with crafts and/or these recommended titles:
  - *It’s Snowing! It’s Snowing! Winter Poems* by Jack Prelutsky.
  - *Winter Eyes* by Douglas Florian.
- When it is time to make the crafts with students:
  1. Say this little rhyme
     *Snowriffic fun for everyone, a craft to make-and-take,
      A winter poem, a crafting storm of snowy little flakes.*
  2. Display the craft sample and read aloud the winter poem or “picture read” a snow book.
  3. Give directions for making the craft.
  4. Distribute materials.
  5. Monitor the time to stop at five minutes before the end of the session to allow time for crafters to clean their areas before the next group arrives.

**Winter Wishes: A Blizzard of Books**

With budget cuts a near-constant problem for most educators, you may wish to do this activity to supplement your budget. I would also advertise this in advance on any flyers that go home and/or the school newsletter.

- In advance:
  1. Make a variety of snowflakes large enough to serve as a backing for a book cover.
  2. Copy, cut, paste, and print out your wish list book jacket covers from a book vendor’s website. Use individual sheets of paper for printing each one separately and glue the covers individually onto the snowflakes. Write the cost of the book somewhere on the snowflake, too.
  3. Write a bulletin board-size blurb explaining the need to purchase more books for the library with winter themes. Title it, “Winter Wishes: A Blizzard of Books.”
  4. Use the snowflakes and blurb to make a bulletin board display in or adjacent to the library.

- Activity
  1. When making the announcement to signal the end of each 30-minute activity, also take a few seconds to tell families about the library’s need for book donations. Tell them where the Winter Wishes: A Blizzard of Books bulletin board is, and let them
know they can pick a snowflake, put a monetary donation with it, and give it to a designated person and location during the evening. You may also want to have them write their kids’ names on the snowflake so you can announce the donation and put a bookplate inside the book to recognize their generosity.

2. Thank them for their support.

Bibliography


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Aileen Kirkham is the author of Library Lessons for Little Ones and the intermediate Collaborative Bridges series (both from UpstartBooks); and articles for Library Media Connection and LibrarySparks. After 30 years as a school librarian and classroom teacher, she’s now a full-time educational consultant for staff development; professional storyteller; and program chair for the Houston chapter of the Society for Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators. She would like to dedicate this article to the memory of author and educator Bill Wallace, who knew the secret to writing for even the most reluctant readers. Visit Aileen at www.aileenkirkham.com or email akirkham4u@hotmail.com with the subject heading “LibrarySparks Reader.”
Black Bear Tracks
Beaver Tracks
Coyote Tracks
Bobcat Tracks
Mountain Lion Tracks
Gray Squirrel Tracks
Moose Tracks
Raccoon Tracks
Habitat
I live in woodland areas near lakes and rivers.

Body
Some of my notable body features are thick fur; short claws for climbing and digging; and a short, stubby tail.

Food
I am called an omnivore since I eat animals, insects, and parts of plants.

Babies
My babies are called cubs.

Interesting facts
I fish with my claws and teeth. I teach my cubs to climb trees to escape danger.
Name of Animal: Beaver

**Habitat**
I live in lakes and rivers in woodland areas.

**Body**
Some of my notable body features are webbed feet, a flat tail, and large front teeth.

**Food**
I am called an *herbivore* since I eat parts of plants—including tree bark!

**Babies**
My babies are called kits.

**Interesting facts**
I can hold my breath for up to 15 minutes. I build a lodge of sticks in the water for my home.
Name of Animal: Coyote

**Habitat**
I live in grasslands, woodlands, deserts, and near cities, too.

**Body**
My body size, shape, and characteristics are like a German Shepherd.

**Food**
I am called an *omnivore* since I eat animals, insects, and parts of plants.

**Babies**
My babies are called pups.

**Interesting facts**
I sometimes travel in packs like wolves do. I am most famous for howling.
Name of Animal: Bobcat

Habitat
I live in deserts, prairies, and woodlands, and have been seen near some cities.

Body
I am twice the size of a house cat. My fur is grayish brown with black streaks. My tail has a black tip. I look like I have a beard on the bottom part of my face.

Food
I am classified as a carnivore since I eat animals and insects.

Babies
My babies are called kittens.

Interesting facts
Even though I am in the wildcat family, the mountain lion (cougar, puma) can kill and eat me. My tail is the shortest in all the wildcat families.
Name of Animal: Mountain Lion (Cougar, Panther, Puma)

Habitat
I live in deserts, mountains, woodlands, and have been seen near some cities.

Body
My body is similar to that of a female African lion, and my coloring ranges from tan to reddish-brown, and even silvery-grey. I am nearly as big as a jaguar.

Food
I am called a carnivore since I eat animals and insects.

Babies
My babies are called kittens.

Interesting facts
I hold the Guinness record for having the most names for one animal. There are more than 40 names for me in the English language, alone.
Name of Animal: Gray Squirrel

Habitat
I live in woodlands areas, including those in and near cities.

Body
Some of my body features include tiny claws, short legs, and a bushy tail. I’m about the size of a rat and have sharp teeth like a rat, too.

Food
I am classified as an herbivore since I eat certain parts of plants including tree bark, and an insectivore since also I eat bugs.

Babies
My babies are called pups.

Interesting facts
I live in a nest, high up in the trees. I gnaw and chew almost anything—including parts of houses, metal, wires and nuts. I am part of the rodent family, which includes mice and rats.
Name of Animal: Moose

**Habitat**
I live in woodland and grassland areas with lakes and rivers.

**Body**
I have antlers, and the largest part of my antlers is called the palm. I walk on hooves.

**Food**
I am classified as an herbivore since I eat parts of plants.

**Babies**
My babies are called calves.

**Interesting facts**
Once, an author named Bill Wallace saw me fishing for plants to eat with my bottom stuck up in the air and my head underwater. He said when I came up, I had plants hanging between my antlers and looked pretty silly! His wife, Carol Wallace, was then inspired to write the book *Bub Moose*. 
Name of Animal: Raccoon

Habitat
I live grasslands and fields, and I can be near cities, too.

Body
I look like I am wearing a mask on my face. I have a long, bushy tail with black and white rings around it.

Food
I am classified as an omnivore since I eat animals, insects, and parts of plants.

Babies
My babies are called kits.

Interesting facts
Since I am a nocturnal animal, do not be surprised if you find me digging in your outside garbage can at night. One of my “sometimes” habits is dipping my food in water before I eat it.
Animal Track Challenge: What’s Stepping in the Snow? Find out with these books!


Beavers
Beau Beaver Goes to Town by Frances Bloxam. Down East, 2009.

Black Bears
**Bobcats**


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**Coyotes**


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**Gray Squirrel**

*Squirrel’s New Year’s Resolution* by Pat Miller. Albert Whitman, 2010.

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**Moose**

**Mountain Lion**


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**Raccoon**


*Raccoon’s Last Race: a Traditional Abenaki Story* by Joseph Bruchac. Dial, 2004