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Reviews

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REVIEWS

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Who's Afraid of the Dark? by Muriel Stanek, ill. by Helen Cogancherry Albert Whitman, 1980. 29pp.

One of the most common fears of childhood is being afraid of the dark. Muriel Stanek has written an excellent story for elementary-age readers about a young boy, Kenny, who is afraid of the dark. Kenny's family is understanding and supportive, but his friends make fun of him. Finally, the grandfather buys Kenny a small flashlight to help him overcome his fear of the dark. The line-drawings enhance the story. Teachers may want to read this story aloud to the class as an effective discussion starter.

Grandpa and Me Together. by Susan Goldman, ill. by author, Albert Whitman, 1980. 29 pp. \$5.95. Ages 4-7.

Katherine and Grandpa are great friends, and their friendship is described in this book. The story tells about some of the things Katherine and her Grandpa do together when she goes to visit him. The author depicts a loving, close relationship between family members. Young readers would enjoy either having the story read aloud or reading the story independently. Goldman's illustrations are simple but effective in adding to the enchantment of this book.

Cousins are Special. by Susan Goldman, ill. by author, Albert Whitman. 1980. 30 pp. \$5.50. Ages 4-7.

Families are important and special to young children and this delightful story tells of the fun two cousins have when one goes to visit the other. Relatives and family relationships can be confusing to some youngsters at times. However, this short story will help primary-age children to better understand the special ties family members have with each other. The author has done an excellent job illustrating her own story. This book can be used to read-aloud or may be read independently by early readers. It is a nice companion story to *Grandpa and Me Together*. Both books are excellent resources for use in a teaching unit about families.

She's Not My Real Mother. by Judith Vigna, ill. by author, Albert Whitman, 1980. 30 pp.

The topic of divorce, remarriage, and step-parents is a sensitive, contemporary issue. Vigna presents a story of a young boy who visits his father and step-mother. As the story begins, the boy does not like his father's new wife. One day he goes with HER to the Ice Show and he pretends to get lost in the stadium. Suddenly the boy discovers he really is lost and becomes very frightened. When his step-mother finds him, he is so glad to see her his feelings about HER begin to become more positive. Many young readers will be able to identify with the boy and his feelings. The step-mother should have been given a name in the story, rather than referring to HER. The illustrations contribute to the mood and message of the story.

Behind the Scenes Series. by Don and Barbara Fenton, Ed. by Howard Schroeder. Crestwood House, 1980.

This series of five books describes the activities which take place behind the scenes in various communication or recreational areas. The complete series consists of the following books:

Behind the Sports Scene
 Behind the Newspaper Scene
 Behind the Television Scene
 Behind the Radio Scene
 Behind the Circus Scene

Each book tells about the key people and their job. In addition, the books describe the activities which occur behind the scenes to run a baseball club. Create a television program, put on a circus, etc. The books are illustrated with excellent black/white and color photographs. The text seems appropriate for elementary readers, and is interesting and easy to understand. Each book has some specialized vocabulary for the specific topic of the book. This series is an excellent resource for teachers and would be most useful for instructional units.

The Reading Activities Handbook. by Wilma H. Miller, 476 pp. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980. \$14.95.

The Reading Activities Handbook is a useful, new collection of teaching ideas and activity sheets to implement strategies and competencies presented in the reading program. The ideas and activities cover a range of difficulty and interest levels for children in the first through eighth grades. Miller presents over four hundred teaching suggestions and more than one hundred reproducible activity sheets.

The first section of the *Reading Activities Handbook* contains checklists for competencies at various reading levels, along with a brief discussion of diagnostic-prescriptive teaching of reading. Each item on the checklist is keyed to the appropriate reading activity in the handbook. The nine remaining sections emphasize a specific area in reading. These areas include the following: Sight Word Recognition, Phonic Analysis, Structural or Morphemic Analysis, Contexture Analysis, Literal Comprehension, Interpretive Comprehension, Critical Reading, Creative Reading, and Study Skills. Each of these sections is structured in the same way. First, the general competency is briefly described, then, the teaching suggestions are presented according to grade level; thirdly, the activity sheets for each grade level are presented; and finally, a list of commercial materials and games is included.

Many times it is difficult for classroom teachers or reading specialists to find good resources for ideas, as well as meaningful activities for their students. Miller has written a handbook which has many useful and appropriate suggestions for reading educators. Among the most noteworthy activities are those relating to Contexture Analysis, Critical Reading, and Creative Reading. Teachers can use the ideas of the author to develop additional activities for their students. The *Reading Activities Handbook* is the type of resource material which is suitable, practical and very useful.