

Curriculum Guide for *The Snow Blew Inn*

by Dian Curtis Regan



"A joyous look at generosity and hospitality as a snowstorm packs the Snow Blew Inn." ~ Kirkus

Summary: Emma can't wait to have a sleepover with her cousin Abby! But snow is falling outside the Snow Blew Inn where Emma's Mama is working and Emma is waiting. Stranded travelers arrive seeking shelter, and soon the inn is packed. Emma even gives up her own room for the Fox family.

About the Author: Dian Curtis Regan, author of over 50 books, wrote the first draft of this story while vacationing at a hotel in Tennessee. It would be many drafts and many years later, however, before *The Snow Blew Inn* became a published book.

"This fun read-aloud could be used to illustrate hospitality and compassion. It is a welcome addition to most collections—especially where seasonal books are in high demand." ~ School Library Journal

Reading Connections

***Before Reading:* Increase background knowledge.**

Make text-self connections. Ask, "Have you experienced a bad storm? What happened?" Discuss the disruption of routines and travel plans. (If you live in an area where snow is rare or nonexistent, tap students' knowledge of snowstorms.)

Consider pairing *The Snow Blew Inn* with these books:

Snow by Cynthia Rylant, illustrated by Lauren Stringer (Harcourt, 2008)

Snow Day by Komako Sakai (Arthur Levine Books, 2009)

Storm is Coming by Heather Tekavec, illustrated by Margaret Spengler (Dial, 2002)

During Reading: Use Critical Thinking Skills

Practice the use of context and picture clues: Pause when you come to lesser-known words or phrases and encourage students to determine their meaning from the context or illustrations. For example:

Snow is coming to the **Snow Blew Inn**. (Discuss the meaning of *inn* and the pun in the name.)

Emma hangs up a **banner** she painted all by herself.

Mama **makes the rounds** with extra blankets and firewood.

Emma hangs the No **Vacancy** sign.

After dinner, guests gather in the **parlor**.

She and Mama settle into **makeshift beds** in the parlor.

Sleep, Little Bear, in your cozy **lair**.

After Reading: Discuss

- Why did so many unexpected guests show up at the inn?
- How is this night at the inn different from others?
- What are some of the feelings Emma experiences over the night? Why? How do you think she feels at the end?
- Why does Emma need to eat by herself?
- What makes Emma invite the Fox family inside?
- Why is Mama proud of Emma?
- What do you think this means: "Popcorn with extra butter makes a hard floor seem softer."

Response to literature: Journal

Invite students to make text-self connections and write about them in their reading response journals. You might give them the option of answering one of the following questions:

Have you ever stayed at a hotel or inn? How was your experience the same as Abby's? How was it different?

Like Emma, have you ever given something up for another? What was your experience? Did it make you happy or sad?

Writing Connections

Traits: *The Snow Blew Inn* makes an excellent mentor text. Use this story to model:

Ideas: Sensory Words: Tell students that authors such as Ms. Regan help readers to imagine the story through the use of sensory words. Draw a three-column chart on the board or easel pad and label the columns as seen below. Then reread *The Snow Blew Inn* and ask students to stop you when they hear sensory words. (Note that there isn't a column for sight. Most writing is so visual that students would stop you at every word.)

Hear	Touch or Feel	Smell and Taste
<i>Cries</i>	<i>Frosty</i>	<i>Stew</i>
<i>Hushes</i>	<i>Cold</i>	<i>Popcorn with</i>
<i>Wails</i>	<i>Hungry</i>	<i>butter</i>
<i>Shh-shh</i>	<i>Shiver</i>	
<i>Howls</i>	<i>Fire</i>	
<i>Splattering</i>		
<i>Taps</i>		

Word choice: Vivid Verbs: Discuss the effectiveness of strong verbs in writing. Use this sentence from the story as a model: *Outside, wind hushes and the night grows calm.* Suggest students rewrite the sentence with blander verbs: *Outside, the wind stopped and the night was calmer.* Discuss the difference between the two sentences. Then collect other lively, descriptive verbs used in the story:

Boiling

Howls

Squeeze

Bundles

Tracking

Fetches

Splattering

Settle

Puns: The names of inns and food establishments have had a long history of containing puns. Help students understand that a pun is a deliberate confusion of words to create humor. Have students survey friends and family members to create a list that may include:

Dew Drop Inn

Barge Inn

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Lettuce Entertain You

If exploring wordplay, read Dian Curtis Regan's *Barnyard Slam* as well -- a very punny tale!

Voice: Repetition: Authors often use a deliberate repetition of words to create voice. Point out occasions when the author repeats words and ask students to surmise the intended effect.

"Not yet, not yet," calls Mr. Owl. "Storm, storm!" And: Mr. Owl taps on the window. "Here! Here!"(Similar to an owl's call: *hoo-hoo.*)

Snow begins to fall as guests arrive. And arrive. And arrive. And: "The Snow Blew Inn is full, full, full," Mama says as the guests settle in for the night. (Repetition allows the reader to experience the unusual profusion of guests.)

Conventions: R-Controlled Vowels, Compound Words: Have students use post-its to find examples of both.

R-Controlled Vowels (in addition to *her*)

<i>Dark</i>	<i>Arrive</i>	<i>Parlor</i>	<i>Squirrel</i>	<i>Popcorn</i>
<i>Storm</i>	<i>Serves</i>	<i>Father</i>	<i>Blizzard</i>	<i>Floor</i>
<i>Winter</i>	<i>Travelers</i>	<i>Grandmother</i>	<i>More</i>	<i>Softer</i>
<i>Banner</i>	<i>Supper</i>	<i>Shiver</i>	<i>Butter</i>	<i>Sleepover</i>

Compound Words:

<i>Snowcat</i>	<i>Upstairs</i>	<i>Firewood</i>	<i>Grandpapa</i>
<i>Windowpane</i>	<i>Sleepover</i>	<i>Grandmother</i>	<i>Snowflakes</i>
<i>Outside</i>	<i>Makeshift</i>	<i>Popcorn</i>	

Genres: *The Snow Blew Inn* is a lovely springboard for invitations or thank you notes.

Write an invitation or thank you note: Together compose an invitation from Emma to Abby inviting her to a birthday party, or a thank you note from The Fox Family to Emma and her Mama. Discuss the purpose of each of these formats and the information that would be included. How does the tone of an invitation (informational) differ from a thank you note (expressive)?

Curriculum Connections

Science, Technology, and Art

Emma observes the frost on the windowpane. Explore crystals with your students. Read *Snowflake Bentley* by Jacqueline Briggs Martin, illustrated by Mary Azarian (Houghton, 1998). Examine Bentley's actual photographs of snowflakes at <http://snowflakebentley.com>.

Invite students to use wax or pastel crayons to draw winter scenes on dark construction paper. Then using a mixture of equal parts Epsom salt and boiling water (microwave), encourage students to paint "snow" over their scenes. Post the pictures on the wall and watch sparkly crystals form over time!

Music

Sing Father Bear's Song!

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Jennifer Richard Jacobson received her master's in education from Harvard Graduate School of Education. She has taught preschool through sixth grade and has served as Curriculum Coordinator, Head of Studies, or Language Arts Specialist in several new England schools. As a continuing author-in-residence and educational consultant, Jennifer has worked with thousands of teachers and administrators to help students reach their highest potential. She is the author of *No More "I'm Done!" Fostering Independent Writers in the Primary Grades* as well as many books for young readers including the award-winning *Small as an Elephant*, *Winnie at her Best*, and the popular *Andy Shane* series.