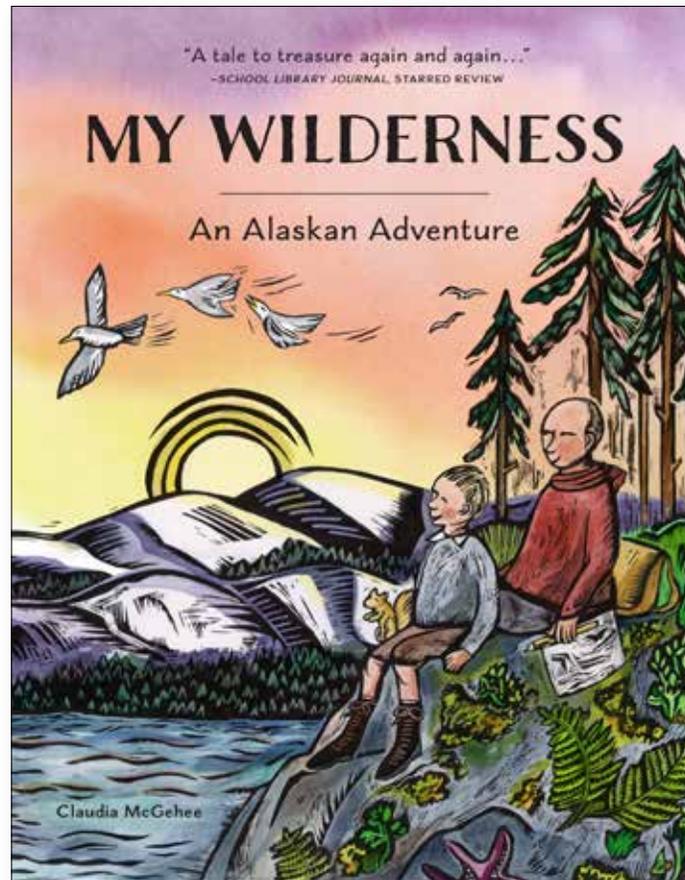


The discussions and activities in this guide align with Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts for Grades K–5.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Written by Julie Fry, EdM, NBCT



MY WILDERNESS

An Alaskan Adventure

Written and Illustrated by Claudia McGehee

BEFORE THE STORY . . .

1. Ask students what “wilderness” means to them. Suggest they look closely at the word for clues that might lend meaning. Have students use the Think-Pair-Share language strategy with a partner to articulate their thoughts. After 2 to 3 minutes, have students share in a larger group either their ideas or their partner’s, recording them on a chart or in a list. Come back to this chart after the guided reading and pinpoint the most accurate description or meaning of the word “wilderness.” (SL.K-5.1, SL.K-5.4, SL.K-5.6)
2. Show students a map of the United States. Point out New York (where the story begins), Seattle, and then Alaska, narrowing in on Seward and Fox Island. Ask students to think about how New York and Fox Island are the same or different. Have students share out loud in complete sentences. Give scaffolding assistance to English Language Learners with phrases like “I think New York might be . . . whereas Fox Island might be . . .” and “I think . . . in contrast to . . .” (SL.K-5.1, SL.K-5.4, SL.K-5.6)
3. Ask students to share with a partner about a time when they thought they were on an adventure. When they finish speaking, have them pass off the question to their partner asking, “How about you?” After they have finished sharing their individual stories, lead into the book with, “Today we are going to follow a young boy, Rocky, on his adventure in the wilderness.” (SL.K-5.1, SL.K-5.4, SL.K-5.6)



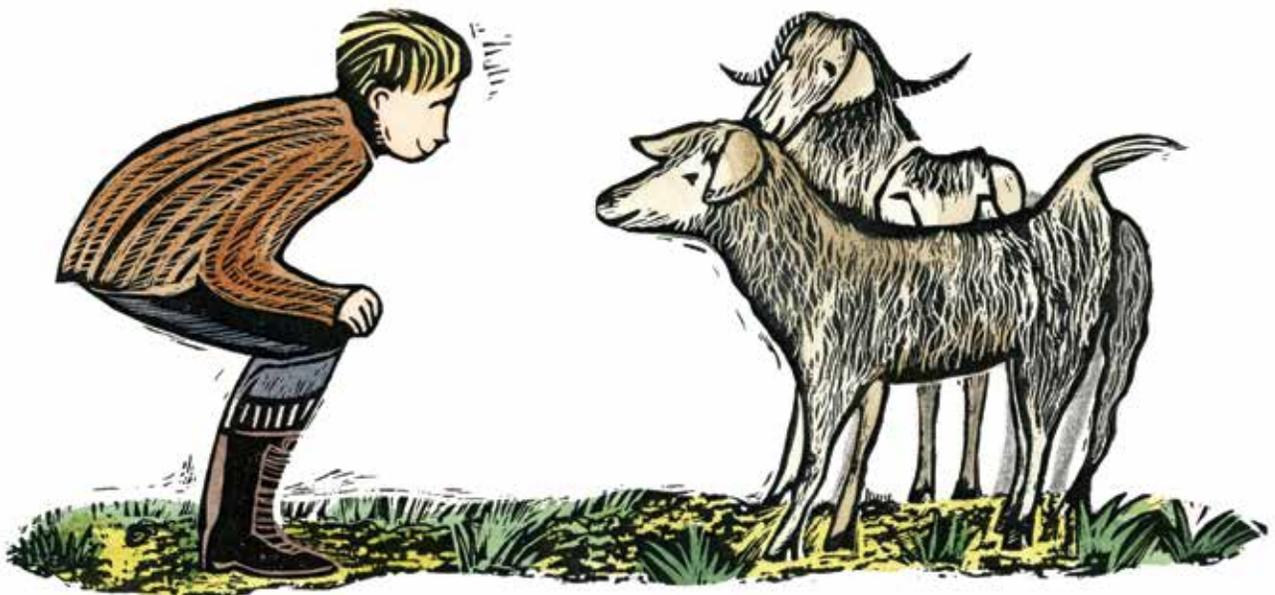
DURING THE STORY . . .

1. **While on page 4**, ask students to identify which word or phrase in the following sentence evokes feelings or appeals to the senses: “A few weeks later, we stepped off a steamship in Seward, an Alaskan seaport whose timbered walkways smiled their welcome.” (RL.K-5.4)

2. **After page 4**, ask students to use the illustration to determine which part of the journey the author chose to illustrate: the train to Seattle or the steamship to Seward. Ask students to identify details or clues that support their thinking. Have students identify characters in the illustration. (RL.K-5.3, RL.K-5.7)
3. **After page 5**, have students compare and contrast the experiences of Mr. Olson and those of Rocky's father. Use a Box and T-chart (*fig. 1*) to record their thinking. Add details about these two characters to the chart as you read through the story. (RL.K-5.3, RL.K-5.7, RL.K-5.9)

Similarities	<p>They are men.</p> <p>They want to live in the wilderness.</p>	
Differences	<p>Mr. Olson</p> <hr/> <p>Wears a hat</p> <p>May not be an artist</p> <p>Lives in the wilderness</p>	<p>Father</p> <hr/> <p>No hat</p> <p>He is an artist</p> <p>Is from New York City</p>

fig. 1



4. **After page 6**, ask students why it might be important to land a boat in a cove. (SL.K-5.1, SL.K-5.4, SL.K-5.6)
5. **After page 8**, discuss with students the sentence, “Olson said it took three or four hours to row there, give or take the winds.” Ask the question, “What does Olson mean by ‘give or take the winds?’” Lead students to infer how the wind could either make the trip longer or shorter depending on if it was pushing the boat from the front or behind. (RL.K-5.1)
6. **After page 8**, ask and discuss the question, “Why are they stuffing moss into the cracks in the cabin?” Lead students to infer how important it would be to get ready for the cold temperatures and winter winds. (RL.K-5.1)
7. **After page 11**, discuss with students how Squirrelie and Rocky might view the wilderness in different ways. Ask the students to think of what Squirrelie might think the big shadow was or if Squirrelie would be afraid of such a thing. (RL.K-5.6)
8. **While on page 13**, discuss why the author chose to write “smooth stones” and “bleached bones.” Identify this writing technique as *alliteration*. (RL.K-5.4)
9. **After page 16**, discuss how Rocky’s imagination led him away from reality yet back to reality again. Have students fill information from the story in a chart (*fig. 2*). If students require language support, show one or two words in each column or row, scaffolding their thinking. Have students cite where they found the information in the text. Discuss how Rocky responds to these challenges in the story. (RL.K-5.7, RL.K-5.3, W.K-5.8)

fig. 2

What Rocky saw	What he imagined	What it really was
Shadow	Bear	Porcupine
Movement	Pirate ship	Whales
Wet and spongy	Wood troll	Goat

10. **After page 24**, discuss why Rocky didn’t imagine himself as a fictional character, such as a pirate or abominable snowman. Ask, “Can anyone be a ‘King of the Wilderness?’”
11. **After page 25**, have students discuss why they think Rocky is lonely. Challenge them with statements such as “He has [Father, Squirrelie, his imagination] with him.” Ask, “Do you think Father or Olson is lonely? Why or why not?” Discuss how the illustrator depicted the boy in the illustrations. What did she do to show the feeling of lonesomeness? (RL.K-5.6, RL.K-4.7)



12. After page 28, discuss what caused Father and Rocky to “not read or draw.”
13. After page 30, bring to note the sentence, “The gulls laughed at the sun.” Have students discuss why they think the author used the word *laughed*. Ask students to discuss why Rocky was listening while saying good-bye to the island. (RL.K-5.3, RL.K-5.4)

AFTER THE STORY . . .



1. Ask students to explain the overall structure of the story, describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action. Have students write a story summary to include a beginning, middle, and conclusion. (RL.K-5.5, W.K-5.2)
2. Invite the students to use alliteration, as noted on page 13, but use it in a short poem about something else in the book, such as Squirrelie, Father’s flute, a porcupine, an Alaskan storm, etc. (RL.K-5.4, W.K-5.3)
3. Discuss with the students the titles Father refers to at bedtime on page 18. Ask, “What kinds of books do you think these are?” and “Do you think they are about wildernesses?” Students may journal their thinking while conducting online research on these titles and/or the characters in them. (W.K-5.6, W. K-5.7)
4. Discuss the boots mentioned on page 22. Ask students if they have ever had to wear borrowed clothing. Ask, “What was it like?” “Were they embarrassed? Why?” “What would it have been like if Rocky refused to wear the ladies’ boots?” Have students illustrate their thinking on this topic and write about a time when they or another family member had to wear borrowed clothing. Challenge them to use alliteration when describing the clothing item. (W.K-5.3, RL.K-5.4)

5. Bring out the chart from Before the Story #1 on which students wrote what they thought wilderness is. Read through each description and give students time to process their thinking, deciding if their understanding may have changed after reading the story.
6. Go back to **page 26** and discuss why it was so important that Olson was there to help them. Ask, “Would it be easier to survive in a wilderness with or without people?” Challenge their thinking by reminding them about reality TV shows in which people go out in the wilderness and survive by eating unconventional food or making their own tools. Have students write a “survival manual” describing how to survive in the wilderness. (W.K-5.2)
7. As individuals or as a class, use the Internet to gather more information about wilderness to further understanding on topics such as wilderness conservation, including the Wilderness Act of 1964. Encourage students to take stances and express opinions on wilderness conservation. (W.K-5.1, W.K-5.5, W.K-5.6)



Note on referencing page numbers: To find the pages in the book referred to in this guide, use the title page as page 1.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS THIS GUIDE ALIGNS WITH:

Reading Standards for Literature K–5: RL.1, RL.3, RL.4, RL.5, RL.6, RL.7, RL.9

Writing Standards K–5: W.1, W.2, W.3, W.5, W.6, W.7, W.8

Speaking and Listening Standards K–5: SL.1, SL.4, SL.6

Visit the Common Core State Standards website to read about the individual standards:
www.corestandards.org/the-standards