

Wolf Fact or Fiction?



Objective

Students read a variety of stories or books about wolves. They differentiate between fiction and nonfiction factual writing and compare the natural behavior of wolves to the kinds of things that wolves can do in fictional stories. They can then write their own fiction and nonfiction about wolves.

Materials

- internet or library access to fiction and nonfiction stories/books on wolves
- whiteboard or chalkboard
- paper and pens

Background

Wolves originally roamed over all the continents in the Northern Hemisphere. Unfortunately, many fictional fables, stories, and fairy tales portrayed wolves as big, evil killers. These false views of wolves contributed to the over-hunting and disappearance of wolves from much of their range. More recent nonfiction stories based on scientific studies on wolves show that wolves are very different animals from how they are portrayed in myths. One way to help wolves is by separating out what is fact from what is fiction.

Action

1. Explain to your students the difference between fiction (imaginary) and nonfiction (factual) stories.
2. Depending on the class level, select and read (or have the students read) a variety of both fiction and nonfiction stories about wolves. (Some reading suggestions are on the reading list on page 2.)
3. Discuss the wolves you have read about. Ask students to compare the real and imaginary wolves. What are the characteristics of the wolves you've read about in nonfiction stories? What are the characteristics of imaginary wolves? Are some characteristics common to both? On the board, generate a list of words that describe the real and imaginary wolves in your books. For older students draw a Venn diagram with characteristics in both the fiction and nonfiction stories in the overlapping area of the two circles.
4. Discuss how myths and stories portraying negative views of certain animals like wolves can actually harm wild populations of these animals.
5. Using the publication dates on the following page, discuss if some of the current/modern stories on wolves portray them in a more realistic manner. How can these shifting views help wolves?
6. Have each student write either a short fictional story or a nonfictional report about wolves based on what they've learned through the readings and discussion.



Reading List

Below are some suggested fiction and nonfiction reading materials. You can find these and other wolf-related stories online or in your school or public libraries.

Grey Wolf (Animals Under Threat) by Jill Bailey. 2005.

Face to Face with Wolves by Jim Brandenburg. 2010.

The Boy Who Cried Wolf (Aesop's Fables) published by William Caxton. 1484.

Weiner Wolf by Jeff Crosby. 2011.

The Wolves in the Walls by Neil Gaiman. 2005.

Look to the North: A Wolf Pup Diary by Jean Craighead George. 1998.

The Wolves are Back by Jean Craighead George. 2008.

The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids (Grimm's Fairy Tales) by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. 1812.

We are Wolves (Nature for Kids) by Molly Grooms. 2002.

When the Wolves Returned: Restoring Nature's Balance in Yellowstone by Dorothy Hinshaw Patent. 2008.

Walk with a Wolf: Read and Wonder by Janni Howker. 2002.

The Three Little Pigs by Joseph Jacobs. 1890.

The Life Cycle of a Wolf by Bobbie Kalman. 2002.

How to Ward off Wolves (How to Banish Fears) by Catherine Leblanc. 2013.

Wild, Wild Wolves by Joyce Milton. 2013.

Little Red Riding Hood by Charles Perrault. 1697.

Peter and the Wolf by Sergei Prokofiev. 1936.

The True Story of the Three Little Pigs by Jon Scieszka. 1996.

Honestly, Red Riding Hood was Rotten! The Story of Little Red Riding Hood as Told by the Wolf (The Other Side of the Story) by Trisha Speed Shaskan. 2011.

Arctic Wolves (Animals That Live in the Tundra) by Maeve T. Sisk. 2010.

What If There Were No Grey Wolves? A Book About the Temperate Forest Ecosystem (Food Chain Reactions) by Suzanne Slade. 2010.

The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig by Eugene Trivizas. 1993.

A Wolf Pup's Tale: The Story of Rugmo by Rachel Yu. 2013.