Blizzard

AUTHOR: John Rocco
ILLUSTRATOR: John Rocco
PUBLISHER: Disney Hyperion
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ART MEDIUM: pencil, watercolor, and digital painting
GENRE: historical fiction
LIFESKILLS: courage, resourcefulness, perseverance, effort

SYNOPSIS: Based on the author’s true story, a boy braves the snow during the blizzard of 1978 to get food and supplies for his family and neighbors.

BOOKTALK: Imagine a snow day when school is canceled...but not just any snow day. It’s a BLIZZARD! In this book, one snow day turns into many snow days, and a boy must face the decision to brave the snow and help his neighbors and family.

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR: John Rocco

Author John Rocco was born and raised in Rhode Island, where his story Blizzard is set. He did not begin drawing seriously until he was nineteen years old. He lives in Los Angeles, California with his family.

Other books written by the author/illustrator:

Blackout
How to Train a Train
Percy Jackson’s Greek Gods
Percy Jackson’s Greek Heroes
Swim That Rock

CHALLENGING WORDS:
blizzard
quicksand
woodstove
explorers
cocoa
snowplows
subzero
igloo
tense
required
memorized
landmarks
neighbors
coffee
groceries
grateful
perilous
civilization
stir-crazy
survived

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why did the main character leave the house when they were snowed in?
2. How are snow days different from other days? Do you do anything special on snow days?
3. Blizzards are a type of severe weather. Can you think of any other kind of severe weather?
4. It was really brave for the boy to go out into the snow. Do you know other people in our community who help other people and do brave things every day? What do they do to help? What do you do to help other people?
5. Do you remember a time when there was a lot of snow and you could not go somewhere in the car? How did that make you feel?
6. What might happen in a blizzard? How would you stay safe?

ACTIVITIES WITH STANDARDS:

Research:

- Research the Blizzard of 1978 using the INSPIRE databases. Find three facts about blizzards and two interesting things about this specific blizzard.

Language Arts: K. RL. 2.1, 1. RL.2.1, 2.RL.2.1, 3.RL.2.1 With support, ask and answer questions about main topics and key details in a text heard or read.

Language Arts: K.RL.2.3, 1.RL.2.3, 2.RL.2.3, 3.RL.2.3 Identify important elements of the text (e.g., characters, settings, or events).

Language Arts: K.RV. 2.2 Identify and sort pictures of objects into categories (e.g., colors, shapes, opposites).

Language Arts: K.SL. 3.1, 1.SL.3.1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

Language Arts: 2.RL.4.2 Compare and contrast versions of the same stories from different authors, time periods, or cultures from around the world.
Science:

- Research what should be included in a winter storm survival kit. Also use suggestions from the book to determine what could be included, such as candles, peanut butter and pet food.
- Show students the opening page pictures with the boy and a yardstick. Have students divide a sheet of paper into three sections and draw the same image, first with no snow, then with snow falling, and in the last section, with what they think it would look like with four feet of snow.
- Have students research how much rain would make a foot of snow. Compare that amount to what it would cover as snow. If possible, collect snow, measure it, and then melt it to compare volume.
- Look up historical climate data. Compare the average winter snowfall of your town with the Blizzard of ‘78.

Science K.2.3 Describe in words and pictures the changes in weather from month to month and season to season.

Science 1.1.2 Characterize materials as solid or liquid, investigate their properties, record observations, and explain the choices to others based on evidence.

Science 2.1.1 Observe, describe and measure ways in which the properties of a sample of water change or stay the same as the water is heated or cooled and then transformed into different states.

Science 2.2.4 Ask questions about charted observations and graphed data. Identify the day-to-day patterns and cycles of weather. Understand seasonal time scales in terms of temperature and amounts of rainfall and snowfall.

Science 2.2.6 Learn about, report on and practice severe weather safety procedures.

Social Studies:

- Draw a map of your neighborhood showing how you would get from your house to the nearest store.
- Make a chart with five columns, numbered 1-5. Students find the days of the week in the book’s pictures that match each day. Underneath each column, in a group, students add words that summarize what they did on each day.
• Have the class participate in a discussion on how the weather changed the boy’s regular schedule and activities. Make a list of good changes and other changes that happened because of the blizzard.

  **Social Studies K.1.1** Compare children and families of today with those from the past.

  **Social Studies K.1.3** Identify and order events that takes place in a sequence.

  **Social Studies K.3.5** Describe and give examples of seasonal weather changes and illustrate how weather affects people and the environment.

  **Social Studies 1.1.1** Compare the way individuals in the community lived in the past with the way they live in the present.

  **Social Studies 1.1.8** Explain how clocks and calendars are used to measure time.

**RELATED INTERNET SITES:**

John Rocco’s website, including book trailer: [http://roccoart.com/a-blizzard-is-coming/](http://roccoart.com/a-blizzard-is-coming/)

John Rocco Talks About *Blizzard*: