



#9568

BALLOON FARM

DISNEY EDUCATIONAL PRODUCTIONS, 1998

Grade Levels: 4-7

90 minutes

DESCRIPTION

Harvey Potter comes to drought-stricken Waterston and gives the people hope when he mysteriously grows a crop of balloons. Based on the book "Harvey Potter's Balloon Farm" by Jerkin Nolan.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: Language Arts Reading

- ★ Standard: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts
 - Benchmark: Knows the defining characteristics of a variety of literary forms and genres (e.g., fairy tales, folk tales, fiction, nonfiction, myths, poems, fables, fantasies, historical fiction, biographies, autobiographies, chapter books) (See Instructional Goals #1 and 2.)

Subject Area: History - Historical Understanding

- ★ Standard: Understands the historical perspective
 - Benchmark: Understands that specific individuals had a great impact on history (See Instructional Goal #3.)

Subject Area: Economics

- ★ Standard: Understands characteristics of different economic systems, economic institutions, and economic incentives
 - Benchmark: Understands that all societies have developed various economic systems in order to allocate their resources to produce and distribute goods and services and there are advantages and disadvantages to each type of system (See Instructional Goal #4.)
 - Benchmark: Understands that the hope of earning profit (i.e., the difference between revenues and the costs of producing or selling a good or service) is the incentive that persuades entrepreneurs and business firms to take the risks of producing goods and services to sell. (See Instructional Goal #5.)

Subject Area: Geography - Human Systems

- ★ Standard: Understands the patterns of human settlement and their causes
 - Benchmark: Knows the similarities and differences in various settlement patterns of the world (e.g., agricultural settlement types such as plantations, subsistence farming, truck-farming communities; urban settlement types such as port cities, governmental centers, single-industry cities, planned cities) (See Instructional Goal #6.)

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To present a modern day fairy tale.
2. To identify which characters, events, and factors are fantasy and which are realistic.
3. To recognize how the efforts of a single individual can make a difference in overcoming hardship.
4. To depict the relationship among goods, services, and resources.
5. To emphasize the importance of hope.
6. To introduce farm life, plant growth, and the natural elements necessary to ensure growth.

VOCABULARY

- | | |
|----------------|----------|
| 1. drought | 5. hope |
| 2. foreclosure | 6. crop |
| 3. farm | 7. seed |
| 4. mortgage | 8. alien |

BEFORE SHOWING

1. Discuss farming.
2. What kind of crops might be grown on a farm?
3. How would drought effect farming?
4. What would happen if farmers cannot grow crops to sell?
5. List ways that newcomers to a town might be treated. Discuss how they might feel.

AFTER SHOWING

► Discussion Items and Questions

1. How does Willow Johnson feel about Harvey Potter's balloon farm? How do the rest of the people feel?
2. Why does Harvey Potter grow a crop of balloons during the Waterston drought?
3. How do the people in Waterston treat Weezil Mayfield? What makes him so contrary?
4. How do the townspeople react when the mayor asks everyone to conserve water?
5. Why are Willow's friends suspicious of Harvey Potter?
6. Why do you think that the townspeople bought the balloons even though most of them didn't have much money?
7. Why did the mayor of Waterston give Harvey Potter a key to the city?
8. What happens to everyone in Waterston when they lose hope in the balloons and let them all go?
9. What does Harvey mean after the foreclosure when he said, "You don't realize what you've got"?
10. Why does Willow try to get the townspeople to believe in balloons again?
11. How did Harvey Potter's balloons help the farmers of Waterston?
12. How does Weezil Mayfield get Harvey's balloons to rain on his farm fields?
13. What happened to the town of Waterston after Harvey Potter left?

► Applications and Activities

1. Read and discuss *Balloon Farm* by Jerdine Nolen (Harold) or the fairy tale *Jack in the Beanstalk*. Compare the written stories and the video. Consider using a Venn diagram.

2. Determine the elements of fantasy in the video. List other elements that could have been used. Write a synopsis of a more fantastic version of the story using one or more of these elements.
3. Evaluate if Harvey Potter was a hero. Consider the following quotes of him from the video.
 - a. "You've got to use what you have."
 - b. "It isn't always what you see. It's what you believe."
 - c. "He didn't ask you why you weren't this or that. He just let a person be."
4. Write an entry in Willow's journal for one of the following days.
 - a. the day she met Harvey
 - b. the day she watched Harvey planting
 - c. the day she saw the balloon crop
 - d. the day she planted her own crop
5. Grow plants with small pots or planting flats with clean potting soil and seeds. Consider using quick-growing seeds such as grass seed (rye, wheat, barley) and vegetables (radishes, lettuce, carrots).
 - a. Experiment to demonstrate the importance of water. Mark some plants to not receive water. Monitor growth of the watered and not watered plants.
 - b. Experiment to demonstrate the importance of sunlight. Cover some plants. Compare growth of covered and uncovered plants.
6. Brainstorm ways to conserve water.
7. Research farming, agriculture, farm life, seeds, or weather conditions.
8. Visit a local farm or take a cyber-field trip to one of the following family farms.
 - a. Russell E. Koeller Family Farm <http://www.koeller.com>
 - b. Towers at Wilcox Family Farms <http://www.wilcoxfarms.com/>

RELATED RESOURCES



- [The Red Balloon #7992](#)
- [Balloons #3568](#)

World Wide Web

The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.



- **THE KID'S AG PAGE** <http://www.agr.state.il.us/kidspage/index.html>

A subsection of the Illinois Department of Agriculture, this kid-friendly page has information on all aspects of farming and includes links to additional on-line resources.

- **UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR KIDS**

<http://www.usda.gov/news/usdakids/index.html>

This fully searchable site includes backyard conservation, history of agriculture, 4-H, weather, interactive games, and lots of related Web sites.



The Smithsonian Institution's Natural Partners Initiative Presents...

Seeds of Change Garden

- **SEEDS OF CHANGE GARDEN AT THE SMITHSONIAN MUSEUM**

<http://www.mnh.si.edu/garden/welcome.html>

This Web site includes a history of food production world wide, tips for modern gardeners, and information about modern farming.

- **STORIES, FOLKLORE, AND FAIRY TALES**

<http://www.cln.org/themes/fairytales.html>

Students and teachers will find information and content to help them learn about fairy tales. There are also links to related lesson plans.

- **THE JERDINE NOLEN HOMEPAGE**

JERDINE NOLEN.com

<http://www.geocities.com/jerdinenolen/index.html>

This site includes biographical and contact information about the author, a list of all her books, downloadable bookmarks, and an interactive page for students to respond to creative questions about her stories.

