

IVAN: THE REMARKABLE TRUE STORY OF THE SHOPPING MALL GORILLA

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Ages: 4-8; Grades: PreK-3
Themes: Animals and Pets, Tolerance and Respect
Runtime: 8 minutes

NEW! COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.9 Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SUMMARY

Captured as a baby, Ivan the gorilla was used to attract people to a shopping mall. He lived in captivity, in a small cage in the mall, for twenty-seven years. During that time, people watched Ivan grow. The people began to think about how lonely Ivan's life was, and how unfair it was to keep him caged and alone. They signed petitions and began to advocate for the gentle animal who could not advocate for himself. This moving true story will spark children's interest and show them the power of many voices joining together for a cause.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will use clues in the movie to make inferences about characters.
- Students will form an opinion and write an essay defending their position.
- Students will share facts about gorillas and their habitat.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Activate students' knowledge about gorillas. Guiding questions:

- What kind of environment do gorillas live in?
- What kinds of foods do gorillas eat?
- Where on the earth do gorillas live?
- How do gorillas interact with each other?

Consider showing students a short informational video about gorillas, or reading aloud an informational book. Tell students that they are going to see a movie about a gorilla who was captured as a baby and removed from his home in Africa. Encourage students to watch and listen for the ways that the gorilla's life changed when he was removed from his habitat.

Tell students that we learn about characters by what they do. Introduce the movie and tell students to pay special attention to the things that different characters do, such as: the person who bought and displayed Ivan, Ivan, and the people who advocated for Ivan. Consider giving the students a graphic organizer to record their ideas on:

	Does	I infer that this character is...
Poachers		
Ivan		
Ivan's advocates		

Return to the organizer after viewing the movie to guide a discussion about the characters' traits.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Common Core Connection Activities:

Return to the character traits chart that students worked on during the movie. Have students compare their list with a partner's. After students have had some time to compare lists, ask various students to share something that both partners had written down. Record the students' responses on a group organizer. Then ask students to share something that their partner had written, but they had not. Foster discussion with the following questions:

- Do you agree with _____'s response? Why or why not?
- What does _____'s response tell you about the character?

Encourage students to actively listen to each other and build on each other's answers. The following discussion frames may be helpful:

- *I agree/disagree with _____ because...*
- *I'd like to elaborate on _____'s comment...*
- *I understand what _____ is saying, however...*
- *_____ 's comment supports the idea that...*

Wrap-up the discussion by having students draw a picture of one of the characters and write one sentence describing him/her using the frame: *(The character) is _____ because in the movie s/he (does) _____.*

Read aloud and/or show an informational video about gorillas to the students.

Suggested resources:

- *Gorillas*, by Seymour Simon
- *Gorillas*, by Dan Ashton
- *Looking for Miza* by Juliana Hatkoff and Isabella Hatkoff
- *Gorillas*, by Ina Feliz
- http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/angered_species/great_apes/gorillas/?src=footer
- <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/> - Search "gorillas"

As you read, encourage students to listen for a new and interesting fact that they learned about gorillas or their habitat, and to draw a picture or write a sentence about what they learned. Give students an opportunity to share their facts after reading. Scribe these on a class chart entitled, "Facts About Gorillas and Their Habitat." Reread the chart aloud with the class. Culminate the read aloud by having each student draw a gorilla (or providing a blackline master) and having them write one of the facts from the class chart on the penguin's body. Then glue the gorillas on Africa on a large world map for a classroom display.

Lead a discussion with students about the ethics of keeping wild animals captive.

Guiding questions:

- What do you think of Ivan's story? How does it make you feel?
- Based on the story, why did the man who bought Ivan and Burma want them?
- What was different about Ivan's life after he was taken from his habitat and family? Was his life mostly better or mostly worse? Use details from the text to support your answer.
- What was Ivan's home like in the mall? How could his keeper have made his home more natural?
- Why did people begin to get upset about Ivan's treatment? What did they do to express their anger?
- What caused Ivan's situation to change? How was Zoo Atlanta a better place for him than the shopping mall?
- Is it ever appropriate to keep animals in captivity? Why or why not?

After the discussion, guide students in writing an argumentative essay in response to the following question: **Do you believe that wild animals should be kept in captivity? Why or why not?**

MORE WILD ANIMAL STORIES FROM WESTON WOODS:

- **Giraffes Can't Dance** – written by Giles Andreae, illustrated by Guy Parker-Rees
- **Good Night, Gorilla** – by Peggy Rathmann
- **Happy Lion** – written by Louise Fatio, illustrated by Roger Duvoisin
- **Lion and the Mouse** – by Jerry Pinkney
- **Me...Jane** – by Patrick McDonnell
- **Wild About Books** – written by Judy Sierra, illustrated by Marc Brown

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