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The Swing

Objective

- Students will use information from the poem to determine where the story takes place.

Materials

- a cloze copy of the poem (page 65)
- board or overhead space
- a highlighter and a pencil for each student

Before Reading

1. Ask the students to describe some of the “pleasantest” things they have ever done.
2. List responses on the board.
3. Ask students to explain why they like these activities so much. What feelings do they have while they participate? Why is it so much fun?
4. Tell students you are going to give them some clues. They have to guess where you are. Say, “I hear an engine roaring. I see green and brown patches, tiny roads and cars. I feel a little excited. Where am I?” (*up in an airplane*) “I hear children screaming. I see a merry-go-round, bumper cars, and a hot dog stand. I feel excited. Where am I?” (*on top of the Ferris wheel*) “I hear sirens and car horns. I see lots of roofs, tiny roads and cars. I feel so small. Where am I?” (*on the top of a tall building*) What do all these places have in common? (*They are up high and someone is looking down.*)
5. Have students look at the title and ask them the following question: “What will the poem be about?” Look for reasons why the narrator likes this activity so much.

During Reading

1. First read the poem to the students, emphasizing phrasing, pausing, expression, and rhythm.
2. Read the three stanzas of the poem together orally several times.
3. Divide the class into three groups. Assign each group one stanza of the poem. Have the groups read the stanzas in order while the others follow along. Start with group one for the first reading, group two for the second reading, and group three for the third reading. To conclude, ask for volunteers to read the poem individually.

After Reading

- What does the author like to do? Why does he like to do this? Highlight details that explain why he likes it so much. Are any of these reasons the same as the reasons you gave above? Name some feelings he might have as he swings so high in the air.
- Ask the students to pretend they are the narrator of the poem. As a class, write a What Am I? riddle, as if the narrator made it up. Put it on the board. Discuss and save.
- Circle the details that describe what the narrator saw when he was high in the swing. Do you think he is in the city or the country? How do you know? Describe how things look different to the narrator if he sits in the swing with his feet on the ground.

Reading Support

This poem adapts well to choral reading. Have the students read it together. Encourage them to read with good expression in a sing-song way. Ask for volunteers to read separate stanzas on their own.

The Swing

Robert Louis Stevenson

How do you like to go up in a swing,

Up in the air so blue?

Oh, I do think it the pleasantest _____

Ever a child can do!

Up in the air and over the wall,

Till I can see so wide,

Rivers and trees and cattle and _____

Over the countryside—

Till I look down on the garden green,

Down on the roof so brown—

Up in the air I go flying again,

Up in the air and _____!

