Book Reviews

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the science reflector
SUMMER 2008
VOLUME 37, NUMBER 2

The following book reviews were written by NCSTA members and teachers. We hope to make this an ongoing feature in The Science Reflector. If you are an author who has a book you would like reviewed or a teacher who would like to write a review, please contact Beth Harris.

This issue we have books especially for elementary school teachers!

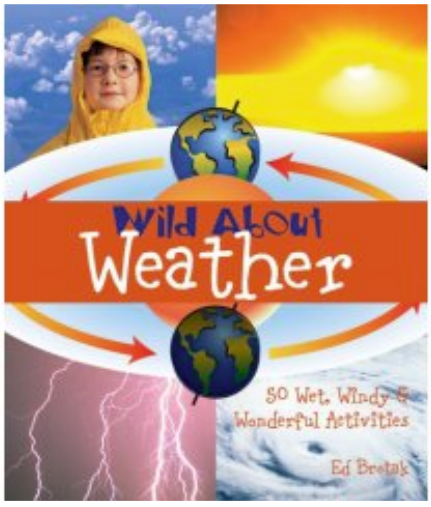
Wild about Weather

Yikes! Wow! Yuck! Fun Experiments for your First Science Fair

Using Science Notebooks in Elementary Classrooms

For more reviews and correlated activities check out the Science Literature Database from UNC-Wilmington.

Wild About Weather: 50 Wet, Windy & Wonderful Activities
Ed Brotak , published by Lark Books, 2005,
ISBN 1579907490 or 978-1579907495



"Wild About Weather: 50 Wet, Windy & Wonderful Activities" by Ed Brotak is a wonderfully engaging book that students and teachers alike will enjoy! The major theme throughout the book is sending students on adventures to learn more about the weather. It is a non-fiction book, but is written in such a way that it captivates readers by introducing important weather concepts and presenting simple activities and experiments that are appropriate for home or school. Students will soon believe they have been sent on a very important mission of exploring weather phenomenon and reporting back to you!

"Wild About Weather" includes a table of contents complete with an interesting chapter title and even a brief summary of what's in store for the reader in that chapter. Each description grabs the reader's attention and promises excitement in the turn of a page. For example, Chapter 7 is "Weather With An Attitude" which is described with: "Create some lightning in a jar and a storm in a lasagna pan. See the scary insides of tornadoes and hurricanes. Become a storm tracker from the safety of your living room, and, yes, indeed, more." The only downside is trying to decide which chapter to go to first!

Each chapter has an introduction as well as answers to common questions children might have about the weather. There are fun, simple activities and projects with each chapter that includes a materials needed list (which, thankfully, involves everyday items), as well as step-by-step instructions that are easy for students to follow. The book easily explains weather concepts through straightforward description and activities. There are introductions to important weather instruments along with the procedure for making and using them at home. Several critical science concepts from our NC Standard Course of Study are covered throughout the content of the book, including: wind chill factors, layers of the atmosphere, storms, clouds, etc. There are copy masters at the back of the book, which are helpful to teachers intending to use the book with their class, as well as a weather log and hurricane-tracking chart. There is also a helpful index and glossary at the back.

"Wild About Weather" is a colorful, attractive book that includes a variety of pictures that captivate the reader's

attention and lead them to ask questions about what is included in the book. The language is simple enough for children to read and learn on their own. The entire book includes photographs of children observing the weather and creating exciting experiments to perform their own tests of weather phenomenon. Students will stay involved in what they are reading with the use of fascinating myths, lore, and legends that have been used for centuries to explain why certain events happen during storms. It is appropriate for elementary level students, or for those older science students who are struggling with weather concepts.

One thing that I found particularly helpful with this book is its overall ease of understanding. It is a book that I could use to teach my fifth grade classroom, or I could recommend to my students to read at home. I have already taken some of the information to share with my students, and they have enjoyed the activities the author suggested. They have learned so much about the weather in such a short time, and they had fun while learning! This book creates learners who are engaged, active participants throughout each lesson. I thoroughly recommend this book to any educator or parent who wants to entice children to learn more about the weather. I would also recommend it to anyone who wants to get children excited about reading non-fiction books. This is a really great book to show children that reading to learn can be fun!

Joanna Kinlaw Cole
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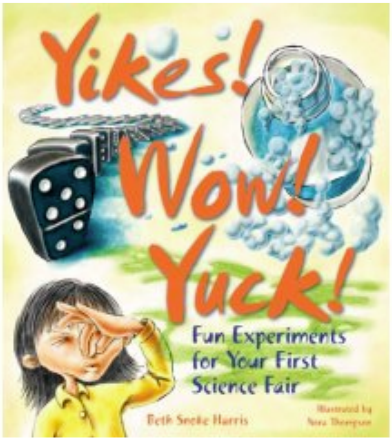
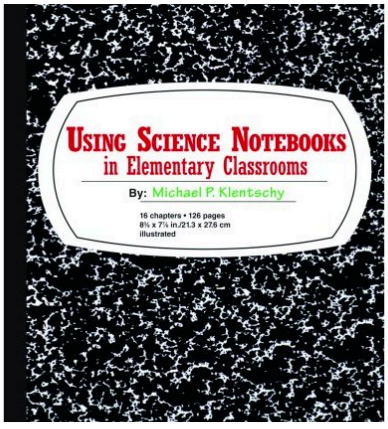
Yikes! Wow! Yuck! Fun Experiments for Your First Science Fair
Elizabeth Snoke Harris , Lark Books, 2008,
ISBN 1579909302 or 978-1579909307
Author's website: http://www.seven-oaks.net/science



For anybody that has participated in a science fair, you know what a daunting experience it can be. Besides deciding what experiment to do, you have to create a presentation. That's why I like this book. Not only does it give you great experiments that the kids will enjoy doing, but it also explains how to put together a great presentation, which I often feel is the hardest part. The author not only tells you how to display the work, but also helps with information on creating tables and graphs that explain your results. This is a great resource even if you don't use one of her experiments. I also love the experiments and would use them in the classroom. Why wait for a science fair to do Exploding Soda or make Ooze!

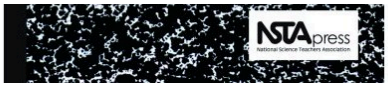
Karen Mills
2nd Grade Teacher
Eastway Elementary School

Using Science Notebooks in Elementary Classrooms
Michael Klentschy , NSTA, 2008,
ISBN 978-1-93353-103-8



Many of us have learned the systematic research-based approach to using student science notebooks from Dr. Michael Klentschy. Now we can read his new book, Using Science Notebooks in the Elementary Classrooms, to further extend or reinforce our understanding of this powerful tool for classroom science instruction. This work is relevant for the teachers who currently use science notebooks as well as the teachers who wish to start using science notebooks as part of science instruction. Student work samples are provided to help both categories of teachers develop skills and strategies to apply in their classrooms. Helping English language learners, through scaffolds, sentence starters, visual aids, and

graphic organizers is discussed with research citations to show how this group's language fluency and writing proficiency increases using this instructional tool. Opportunities to determine how we will know if students have learned the concepts presented in instruction are included, as well as classroom-tested ways for providing feedback to students.



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The Science Reflector
Newsletter of the North Carolina Science Teachers Association
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