



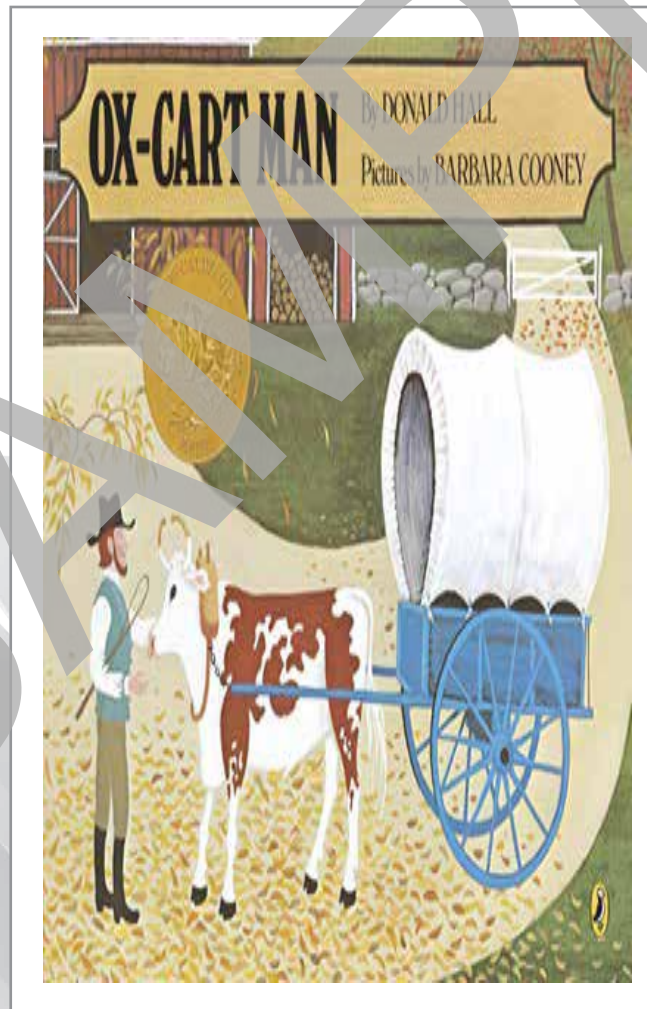
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES K-3

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Ox-Cart Man

Barbara Cooney



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Ox-Cart Man

Barbara Cooney

TEACHER GUIDE

NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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Skills and Strategies

Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing

Literary Elements

Characterization, story
elements

Writing

Narrative

Thinking

Brainstorming

Vocabulary

Alphabetical order

Listening/Speaking

Discussion

Summary of *Ox-Cart Man*

This story describes the day-to-day life of an early nineteenth century New England farm family throughout the changing seasons. As winter approaches, the father of the family takes the goods to market that the family members have been working on throughout the year. He returns with something special for each, and the process starts anew.

About the Author

Donald Hall was born September 29, 1928, in New Haven, Connecticut. He attended Philips Exeter Academy, 1944-47; Harvard University, B.A. 1951; Oxford University, B. Lit., 1953; attended Stanford University, 1953-54. He has been a professor, an editorial consultant for a publisher, an editor of books, an author of poetry books, plays, and an author of books for children and textbooks for adults. Hall started to write poetry at the age of fourteen. Although he acts occasionally, he stays with the lecture circuit, an indulgence he is naturally quite fond of, for it allows him to play the role of the poet and actor at the same time.

On the writing of prose, Hall has given this advice: "A writer must become honest in the expression of himself, which means that he must know himself. It means learning the real names of feelings." With regard to the story of *Ox-Cart Man*, he has said: "I heard the story from my cousin Paul Fenton, my grandfather's nephew. Paul told me he had heard it when he was a boy from an old man who told him that he had heard it when he was a boy, from an old man who told him that he had heard it when he was a boy, from an old man. It is always told as a true story, and I believe it. I was thrilled with it, thinking of man's past life described in cyclical fashion, dying in order to be born again, as if human beings could be perennial plants." Hall wrote *Ox-Cart Man* first as a poem for the *New Yorker*.

About the Illustrator

Barbara Cooney was born August 6, 1917, in Brooklyn, New York. Her childhood was spent on Long Island where she attended Great Neck Preparatory School. She also attended Briarcliff School; Smith College; and the Art Students League, New York.

Barbara Cooney says of her childhood, "My mother painted pictures for fun, so her children did, too. That's how it all began."

A leaflet published about her by the University of Southern Mississippi states: "Ideas for her books just happen; some texts take reworking. But she works on her pictures until they are as perfect as she can get them. Her work, which includes photography, is interrelated with her life. Her books are gay, entertaining and true to life as she sees it. Is it any wonder that children young and old enjoy books by Barbara Cooney?"

In 1975, the University of Southern Mississippi presented her with their Children's Collection Medallion for outstanding contributions in the field of children's books. She also received the Smith College Medal in 1976. She received the Caldecott Medal in 1958 for *Chanticleer and the Fox*, and in 1980 for *Ox-Cart Man*.

The Caldecott Medal

The Caldecott Medal, named for Randolph Caldecott, is awarded annually by the American Library Association to the illustrator of the most distinguished American picture book for children. Randolph Caldecott, an English illustrator, was born in Chester, England, March 22, 1846. He died in St. Augustine, Florida, February 12, 1886. He had a great talent, and loved horses, dogs, and everything that belonged to the English countryside. His drawings were noted for their freshness, boldness, and gaiety. He thought long and seriously before putting pen to paper. He said, "The fewer the lines, the less error committed!"

Although Caldecott and his wife never had children of their own, he had many children as friends. It was for children that he did the work for which he will probably be longest remembered and best loved.

Introductory Activities

Initiating Activity

The Cart: These are some of the things that the Ox-Cart Man took to Portsmouth to sell: wool, shawl, mittens, candles, birch brooms, potatoes, apples, honey, honeycombs, turnips, cabbages, maple sugar, goose feathers, linen. Collect as many of the items as you can before starting this activity. When ready to begin, place the items around the room, hanging some mobile-style.

After the children gather in a group, draw their attention to the cart on the bulletin board. Ask them if they know what that is, what it is used for, discuss its use at present, if any. How are goods taken from place to place to be sold at the present time? Can anyone think of when something like the cart would have been used? Who might have used it?

Teach the children the song that follows, and discuss with them things that could be put into the cart and taken somewhere to be sold, as the blanks are filled in. (Sung to the tune of "She'll Be Comin' Round The Mountain." See Bibliography, Beall-Sing-alongs.)

Oh, I have some things in the cart to sell,

Oh, I have some things in the cart to sell.

They are piled to the top,

Just tell me when to stop.

Oh, I have some things in the cart to sell.

I have _____ and _____ to sell.

I have _____ and _____ to sell.

You will like what you see.

Won't you buy something from me?

Oh, I have some things in the cart to sell.

Ask for volunteers to make illustrations of the items that were suggested, and place them on the bulletin board around the cart.

Bulletin Board Idea

The Cart: Cover the bulletin board with plain background paper. Make a large paper replica of the cart that appears in the cover illustration of the book, and put it on the bulletin board.

Section Two: Pages 13-20, From “He sold the bag of wool.” through “...wintergreen peppermint candies.”

Vocabulary

yoke (20)

harness (20)

wintergreen (20)

Vocabulary Activity

How many words can be made by the children from the letters in the word wintergreen? Make a list, and put it on display. Add to it as additional words are thought of as time goes by. (*Here are some: winter, green, rent, went, gent, in, win, tin, grin, wit, it, grit, tern, twig, wig, rig.*)

Discussion Questions and Activities

1. What does the man sell? (*Pages 13-20, Check off the things from the list made previously. Add to the list the wooden box, the barrel, the bag, the cart, the ox, the yoke, and harness.*) Is there anything that the author forgot to mention that was packed, but not mentioned as being sold? (*the linen*) What must we assume?
2. What does the man buy for his daughter? (*Page 20, He buys his daughter an embroidery needle.*)
3. What does the man purchase for his son? (*Page 20, He purchases a Barlow knife, for carving birch brooms.*)
4. What does the man purchase for the whole family? (*Page 20, He buys two pounds of wintergreen peppermint candies, and a kettle to hang over the fire.*)

Post-reading Activities

1. Bring in an embroidery needle and a Barlow knife, if possible, for the children to see.
2. Teach those wishing to learn how to embroider. You may wish to search out older volunteers from the local senior citizen center to help the children with this project.
3. Bring in some wintergreen peppermint candies for the children to taste. Why do you think that this would be such a special treat to the family?

Section Three: Pages 21-37, From “Then he walked home,” through “...dropping feathers as soft as clouds.”

Vocabulary

tucked (21)

stitching (25)

whittling (25)

planks (28)

squawked (37)

Vocabulary Activity

Do the word search puzzle. (See Supplementary Activities.) Some additional things to do with the word search words:

1. Put the words in alphabetical order.
2. Define three of the words.
3. Use three of the words, not previously defined, in sentences. Illustrate one of the sentences.
4. Use as many of the words as you can in an original story.