

BARBARA KNUTSON

A FEW TEACHING IDEAS USING BARBARA KNUTSON'S BOOKS

Folktales:

LOVE AND ROAST CHICKEN: A trickster tale from the Andes
Carolrhoda Books. Hardcover 1-57505-657-7

HOW THE GUINEA FOWL GOT HER SPOTS: A Swahili tale of friendship
Carolrhoda Books. Hardcover 0-87614-416-4, Paperback 0-87614-537-3

WHY THE CRAB HAS NO HEAD (A Creation Tale from Zaire)
Carolrhoda Books. Hardcover 0-87614-322-2, Paperback 0-87614-489-X

SUNGURA AND LEOPARD: A Swahili Trickster Tale
Little, Brown and Co. Hardcover 0-316-50010-0 (out of print)



- Separate the trickster tales from the *pourquoi* (why) tales. Could a story be both?
- Look at the borders that Barbara Knutson drew in her African folktales (see also *Colors of Ghana*). What kinds of things do they show? Do they tell more about the story (e.g. why does the border show a snake hunting birds on the page where Leopard is angry at Sungura?)? Where do the designs come from? Draw your own border for a story you've written, and put in some hints about what your story is about or how the characters feel or where the story takes place.
- Write a trickster tale with animals from your own country, or based on studies of other places/cultures. Notice that tricksters are often small animals who use their brains instead of their muscles to get what they want. Sometimes they get caught and have to use more tricks to get away again!
- Write a *pourquoi* tale with animals from your own country, or based on studies of other places/cultures. *Pourquoi* tales can also tell about other parts of nature, e.g. Why does the moon wax and wane every month? Why is the ocean salty? For a challenge, try to write a story that explains two things, e.g. why do cats purr *and* nap so much?
- Barbara Knutson's African folktales are illustrated in scratchboard. Try some scratchboard on your own (great for night or underwater scenes!).

Non-fiction:

CINCO DE MAYO

by Linda Lowery, Carolrhoda Books. Hardcover 1-57505-654-2, Paperback 1-57505-764-6

DAY OF THE DEAD

by Linda Lowery, Carolrhoda Books. Hardcover 0-87614-914-X, Paperback 1-57505-581-3

KWANZAA KARAMU

by April Brady, Carolrhoda Books. Hardcover 0-87614-842-9, Paperback 0-87614-633-7 (Out of print)

COLORS OF GHANA

by Holly Littlefield, Carolrhoda Books. Hardcover 1-57505-354-3, Paperback 1-57505-374-8

COUNT YOUR WAY THROUGH AFRICA

by Jim Haskins, Carolrhoda Books. Hardcover 0-87614-347-8, Paperback 0-87614-514-4

HANNA'S COLD WINTER

by Trish Marx, Carolrhoda Books. Hardcover 0-87614-772-4 (Out of print)

- Rewrite the colors or counting book to tell about your own town/state/country or a place you have been learning about (a country or a biome: rainforest/desert/ocean).
- Make your ideas into your own book or make a class Big Book. If each person or group makes part of an accordion book you can put them all together into an accordion that reaches all the way around the room.
- *Hanna's Cold Winter* is about people in Budapest saving their zoo's hippos during World War II. Write your own story (fiction or non-fiction) about people/a person taking care of animals in danger.
- Try some of the crafts or recipes in *Kwanzaa Karamu*.
- *Day of the Dead* tells about making displays or altars on November 1st or 2nd to remember those who have died who have been important to you. They could even be made to honor people you've never met. Use a box to make your own small display with pictures and flowers and items that remind you of someone special.

Ideas for both folktales and non-fiction:

- List Barbara Knutson's books as you read them. List fiction and non-fiction titles.
- Vote for your favorite books and graph the class results.
- Read Barbara Knutson's biographical information and compare/contrast with yourself. Make an intersecting circle diagram.
- On a world map, find the countries where Barbara Knutson's book ideas originated. Find them again on a globe.