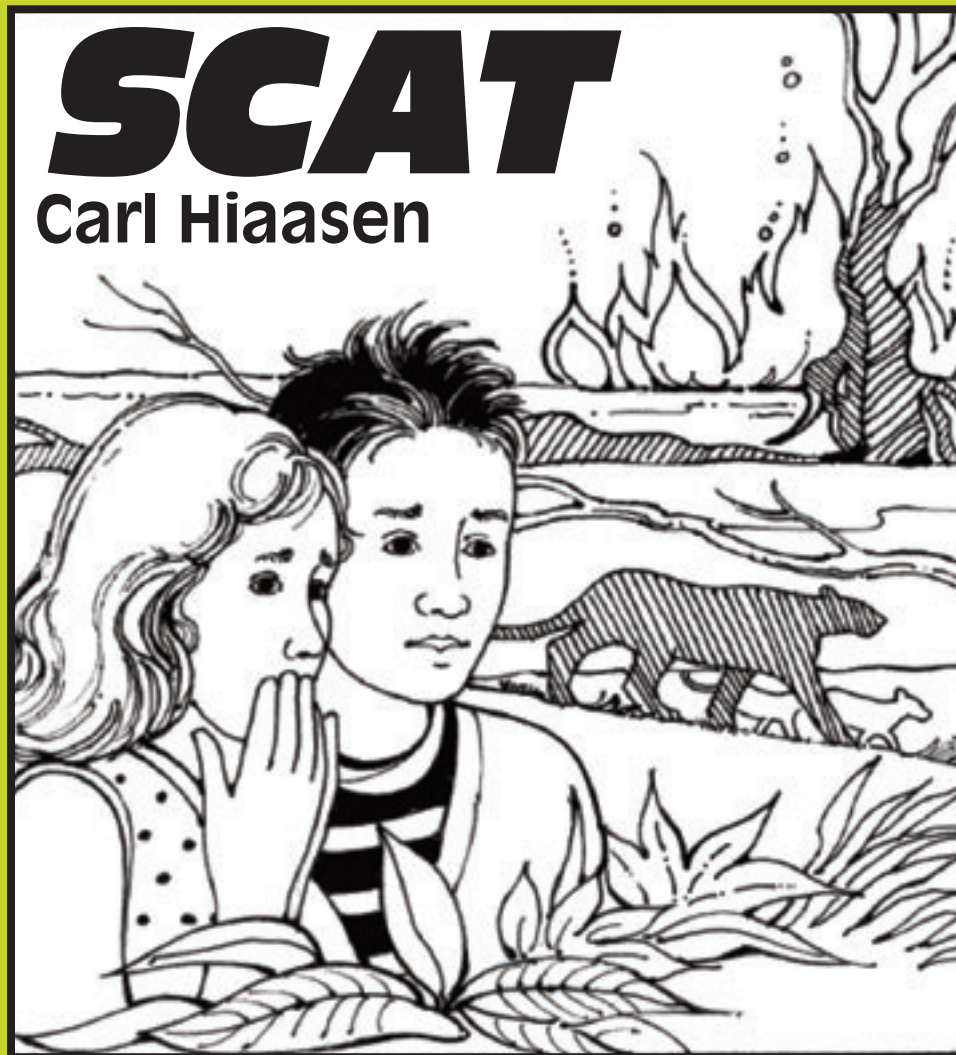


Novel•Ties



A Study Guide

Written By Estelle Kleinman

Edited by Joyce Friedland and Rikki Kessler

LEARNING LINKS

P.O. Box 326 • Cranbury • New Jersey 08512

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide to use in conjunction with the book *Scat* consists of lessons for guided reading. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel at its reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for reading development by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits, formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques, will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Everglades and Big Cypress Swamp

Sometimes called “The River of Grass,” the Everglades is a 50-mile-wide, slow-moving, shallow river in southern Florida. It extends from Lake Okeechobee on the north to Florida Bay on the south. Big Cypress Swamp, to the northwest, and Lake Okeechobee are the main sources of the Everglades’ water. Everglades National Park preserves the southern portion of the Everglades, covering 2,357 miles. It is the largest subtropical wilderness in the United States.

The freshwaters of the Big Cypress Swamp, essential to the health of the neighboring Everglades, support the rich marine estuaries along Florida’s southwest coast. Protecting over 729,000 acres of this vast swamp, Big Cypress National Preserve contains a mixture of tropical and temperate plant communities that are home to a variety of wildlife, including the Florida panther, the American crocodile, and the West Indian manatee. Since it is a national preserve and not a national park, Big Cypress permits activities which are not allowed in Everglades National Park, such as hunting, trapping and oil exploration.

The Florida Panther

Florida’s state animal, the Florida panther is a subspecies of the mountain lion with short, light brown fur and a white muzzle, chest, and stomach. It has a long tail with a slight crook in it. Males are between seven and eight feet long and weigh between 100 and 160 pounds. Females are about six feet long and weigh between 60 and 100 pounds.

The Florida panther’s range is limited to small areas in southern Florida, including the Everglades National Park and Big Cypress National Preserve. The animal once roamed large areas of the southeastern United States, but hunting and settlement severely hurt its population. In fact, it is estimated that there are currently only between 80 and 100 panthers left in Florida. The Florida panther is an endangered species protected by the federal and state governments. The big cat has been protected from legal hunting in Florida since 1958. It has been on the federal endangered species list since 1967 and on the state’s endangered list since 1973.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Preview the book by looking at the title and the author's name and by looking at the picture on the cover. What do you think this book will be about? Will it be serious, humorous, or both? When and where do you think it takes place? Have you read any other books by this author?
2. **Science Connection:** Read the Background Information on the Everglades and Big Cypress Swamp on page three of this study guide. Then do some additional research on your own. This information will help you appreciate the setting of this novel.
3. **Science Connection:** Read the Background Information on the Florida Panther on page three of this study guide and do some additional research. Then brainstorm with a small group of classmates to fill in the first two columns of a K-W-L chart, such as the one below. When you finish the book, return to the chart to complete the third column.

Florida Panther

What I Know -K-	What I Want to Learn -W-	What I Learned -L-

4. **Social Studies Connection:** Read the Background Information on the Second Iraq War on page four of this study guide and do some additional research. Then, with your classmates, discuss whether or not the invasion of Iraq was justified.
5. **Cooperative Learning Activity:** In a small cooperative learning group, discuss a project you might undertake with your classmates to help protect endangered species. You can get some ideas at the following Web site: www.endangeredspecies.com.
6. Find sites on the Internet or newspaper and magazine articles to help you understand oil drilling and usage in the United States. Then, with your classmates, debate whether wetlands like the Everglades should be exempt from oil drilling or if it should be allowed. Be sure to address the impact drilling will have on animals and their habits.
7. The novel mentions many plant and animal species that live around the Big Cypress Preserve. As you read, make two separate lists—one for plants and one for animals. Try to find pictures of the plants and animals. After you finish reading, you and your classmates may use these lists and pictures to create a bulletin board collage.