

SYLVESTER & ARNOLD TEACHER'S NOTES

WRITTEN BY DAVID BEDFORD
ILLUSTRATED BY TOM JELLETT
PUBLISHED BY LITTLE HARE, 2013

Synopsis

Sylvester and Arnold are two big, tough crocs. They spend all day making sure everyone else in the swamp knows just how tough they are. Because their swamp is big and wide they have never met, until one day when they run straight into each other. They each try to prove that they are the toughest croc in the swamp. However, they are soon stopped in their tracks by Betty the Bad – the biggest, meanest croc of all! Betty throws Sylvester and Arnold into the swamp and completely takes over chasing away all the other animals.

Sylvester and Arnold are so afraid of Betty they decide to move to a new swamp. They wait until night time to move because they are so afraid of her. Because it is so dark when Betty sees them leaving she doesn't recognise them and mistakes them for a big, scary monster. She is so scared she runs around screaming for help and eventually falls into the swamp. She doesn't look so scary anymore and Sylvester and Arnold decide to help her out. From that day on they become best friends. Even though they are still big, tough crocs they are always happy and friendly when they play with each other.

Themes

- Bullying
- Compassion
- Appearances

Comprehension

In what ways are Sylvester and Arnold big, tough crocs? What kind of clothes do they wear and what kind of things do they do?

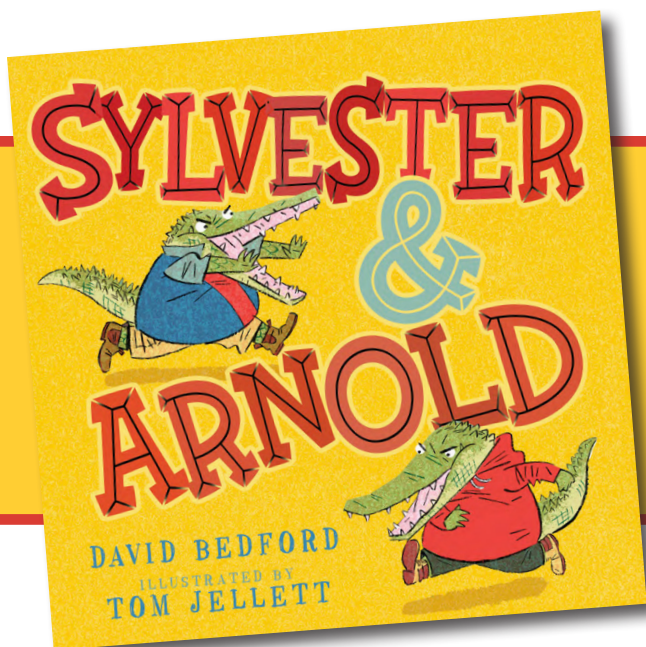
Why have Sylvester and Arnold never met before?

What happens when Sylvester and Arnold bump into each other?

How do they try to prove to each other that they are the toughest croc in the swamp?

Who is Betty the Bad?

How do Sylvester and Arnold react when they meet Betty?



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Comprehension

Why is Betty so scared when she sees Sylvester and Arnold at night time?

Why do Sylvester and Arnold decide to help Betty?

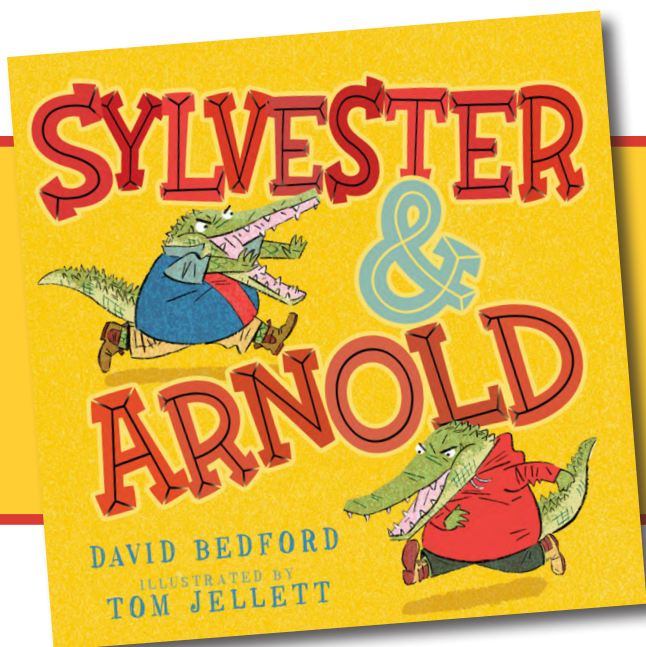
Why are they all best friends at the end of the story?

What does the happy ending tell us about how we should treat others?

What lessons do you think the crocs have learnt by the end of the story?

Activities

1. Even though the author tells us that Sylvester and Arnold are big tough crocs we also know this because of the illustrations. Talk with the class about how the illustrations make the crocs look tough and scary. Discuss why the author might have chosen to use crocodiles. Talk about what other kinds of animals you might use to represent 'toughness'. Get the students to draw an animal of their choice looking tough and then write a short paragraph describing how they made their chosen animal look tough.
2. As a class look only at the illustrations and list down all the different emotions you can recognise throughout the book, such as angry, scared, surprised etc. Talk about why you can recognise each emotion without looking at the text. After this discussion get each student to divide an A4 sheet into four different sections and label each with an emotion or characteristic, such as happy, angry, excited and surprised. Get students to look through magazines and newspapers and cut out images of people they think represent each emotion and paste them in the relevant section. Put the students into groups and let them present their work to each other and discuss why they think the images they chose represent a certain emotion. Does everyone agree? If not, why?
3. Talk to the class about bullying. Using the text as a guide, talk about why and how people might be bullies. Even though Betty was mean to Sylvester and Arnold they decide to be nice to her when she is scared, talk with the class about why this is so important. Also talk to the class about other ways to deal with bullying. After this discussion, get the students to form groups and come up with a situation where someone is being bullied and how they might resolve the problem. Get the groups to create role plays based upon their situation and then perform them to the class.



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Activities

4. Get students to research real crocodiles and find answers to the following questions: Where do they live? What do they eat? How long do they live for? Also get them to each find out three other interesting facts about crocodiles. Once they have all finished, get the students to present their interesting facts to the class so students can add any facts they didn't have to their own list.
5. In the book the crocs live in a swamp. Based on the previous research, talk about why crocodiles live in swamps and let this lead into a discussion about habitats. Once you have spoken to students about habitats get them to each choose an animal and research their habitat. Then get students to create a poster based on their research, including facts, images and diagrams. Make sure they explain all the important elements of the habitat and why the animal lives there.

