

Tools for Teachers

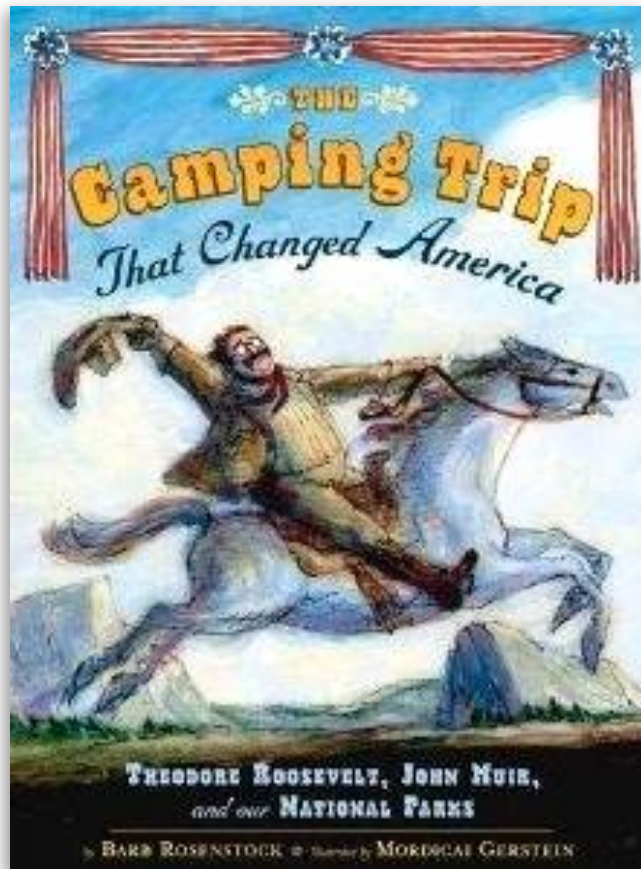
Lesson Plans for the Home and Classroom

THE CAMPING TRIP THAT CHANGED AMERICA

Theodore Roosevelt, John Muir *and our* National Parks

Written by **Barb Rosenstock**

Illustrated by **Mordicai Gerstein**



by Barb Rosenstock · Illustrated by Mordicai Gerstein

Dial Books for Young Readers · AN IMPRINT OF PENGUIN GROUP (USA) INC.

ISBN 978-0-8037-3710-5 (hardcover) · 32 Pages · 9.25 x 6.25 inches · 6 - 8 years · Full-color illustrations

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BOOK SUMMARY

From Dial Books for Young Readers:

Caldecott medalist Mordicai Gerstein captures the majestic redwoods of Yosemite in this little-known but important story from our nation's history. In 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt joined naturalist John Muir on a trip to Yosemite. Often camping alone in the uncharted woods, the two men saw sights and held discussions that would ultimately lead to saving large parts of America's wilderness.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Barb Rosenstock loves true stories best. Her books include: *Fearless: The Story of Racing Legend Louise Smith* (Dutton, 2010), which was named a Top Ten selection of the ALA/Amelia Bloomer Project's Book List and *The Littlest Mountain* which was named a Notable Book by The Sydney Taylor Committee. She lives outside Chicago with her husband, sons, and two big poodles.

Learn more about Barb Rosenstock on the web at WWW.BARBROSENSTOCK.COM

Mordicai Gerstein is the author and/or illustrator of numerous books for children, including *The Man Who Walked between the Towers*, which was awarded the Caldecott Medal in 2004. He lives in western Massachusetts with his wife, Susan Yard Harris, who is also an illustrator, and their daughter, Risa.

Learn more about Mordicai Gerstein on the web at WWW.MORDICAIGERSTEIN.COM

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR



PRE-READING

Common Core Standards Reading & Language – Integration of Knowledge & Ideas: 2.4; Key Ideas & Details 1.1

Prior to reading *THE CAMPING TRIP THAT CHANGED AMERICA*, provide students an opportunity to visually explore the book's cover. Encourage readers to predict what the story might be about based on the cover illustration. Dictate responses on chart paper for reference after the story is shared.

Read the title aloud. Ask readers to interpret what the title may mean. What might the story be about? How might America change? Who is camping? Dictate responses on chart paper for reference after the story is shared.

Determine Prior Knowledge & Invite Inquiry Using a K * W * L Chart

Common Core Standards Reading & Language – Craft & Structure: 2.1

Explain that this particular story takes place in Yosemite National Park.

Before reading the story, determine prior knowledge about the Yosemite National Park to measure what readers may already know about this particular place, and National Parks in general.

Create a KWL Chart for visual and literary reference. On this chart, gather knowledge about what readers already know about Yosemite National Park prior to sharing the book, and add additional information that is learned after the book is read. Invite readers to engage in further study about conservation, parks, and presidents. Each time new information is learned on the subject matter, invite students to share it and add it to the chart.

K: What we *know* about Yosemite National Park?

W: What do we want to *learn* about Yosemite National Park?

and after reading the story and further research,

L: What we *learned* about Yosemite National Park

Conduct Research

- Where is Yosemite located? Find it on a map.
- What types of animals live in Yosemite? What types of plants grow in Yosemite?
- Select a National Monument to research. Share what you learn with classmates. Where is it located? What makes it unique? When was it protected?
- What is being done today to protect the *sequoia*, the earth's largest, living thing?

Vocabulary

Common Core Standards Reading & Language – Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: 2.7

Students might be unfamiliar with some of the vocabulary in the book, *The Camping Trip That Changed America*, or with some of concepts that inspired the author to write the book. Invite and encourage students to use **picture clues** to infer meanings of words they may be unfamiliar with, and to use **context clues** to decode meanings as the story is shared aloud.

- sequoia • pyramids • conservation •
- ancient • Egyptians • glacier •
- granite • valley • Congress • sanctuary •

GEOGRAPHY

Book to Nature Connection

What is granite? Many children may know it as an item used for home countertops. Do your students realize that granite comes from the earth? Visit your local home improvement store and ask for a sample of granite. Bring the sample to class and allow students to handle it and study it. Use this as a stepping stone for discussion about how man harvests the earth. How else do humans harvest the earth? Look around your indoor environment. Is there wooden furniture? Where did the wood come from? Refer to the page in the book, *The Camping Trip That Changed America*, where John Muir shows how the valley's granite was carved by glaciers.

Book to Nature Connection

Over the course of millions of years, rivers have carved out valleys and canyons and shaped the earth. Allow students to experiment with this. Provide a rectangular, aluminum baking dish, soil & sand mixture, small terrarium rocks, and water from a water bottle or jug. Invite students to manipulate the soil's formation by pouring water over it. Vary the water technique: trickle it, pour it, drizzle it.

The Art of Writing

Common Core Standards Reading & Language – Craft & Structure: 1.4; 2.4

Barb Rosenstock, the author of *The Camping Trip That Changed America*, carefully crafted word choice and text organization in her book. Review and interpret the text in the following boxes.

I feel like a runaway school boy!

What does this phrase mean? What made President Roosevelt feel like a runaway school boy?

Describe a time when you felt jubilant and free.

The author created a story within a story in the book *The Camping Trip That Changed America*. One of the main characters, John Muir, tells a story about an encounter with a grizzly bear.

That bear and I were both scared and embarrassed, but I tell you it was the bear that had the better manners!

How did the bear have better manners than John Muir?

Under the trees, Teedie and Johnnie slept.

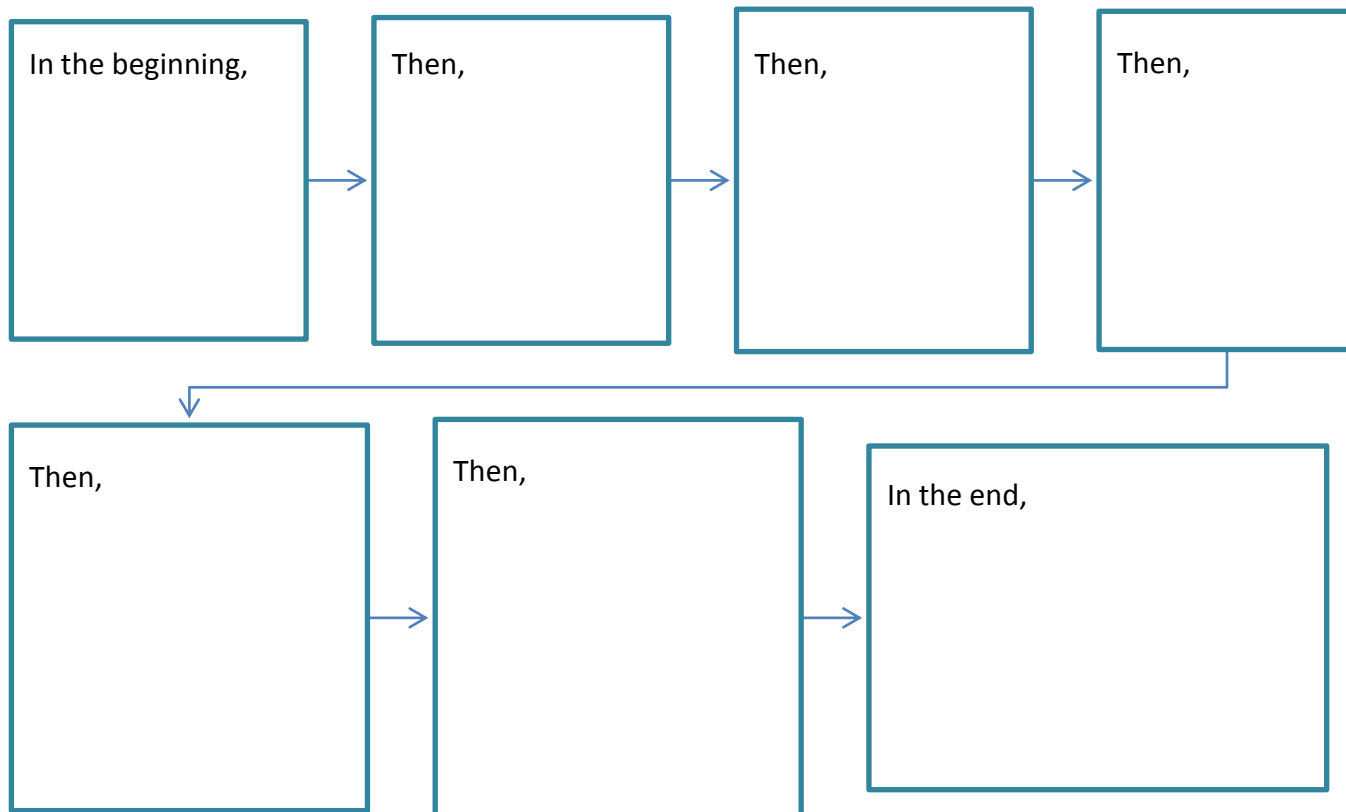
The author created a central theme around trees in the book. How is the theme integral to the story? How are trees integral to the story's ending? Spend time under a tree outside. Sit quietly. Listen. What do you hear? Leaves rustling? Birds chirping? How does it make you feel? Write about it.

Recalling Details

Common Core Standards Reading & Language – Craft & Structure 2.5; Key Ideas & Details 1.2

After reading *The Camping Trip That Changed America*, by Barb Rosenstock, illustrated by Mordicai Gerstein, invite readers to recall details as they sequence events from the story, from beginning to end.

Students may draw pictures, recall details from memory, or use the writing prompts provided to sequence details.



John Muir and Theodore Roosevelt ride by horseback into the wilderness.

President Roosevelt travels by train to California.

President Roosevelt writes a letter to John Muir, asking if he can spend time with him in wilderness.

President Roosevelt reads a book written by John Muir.

President Roosevelt and John Muir keep in touch through letters. Today, each is buried beneath a tree.

President Theodore Roosevelt fights Congress and is able to preserve and protect wilderness.

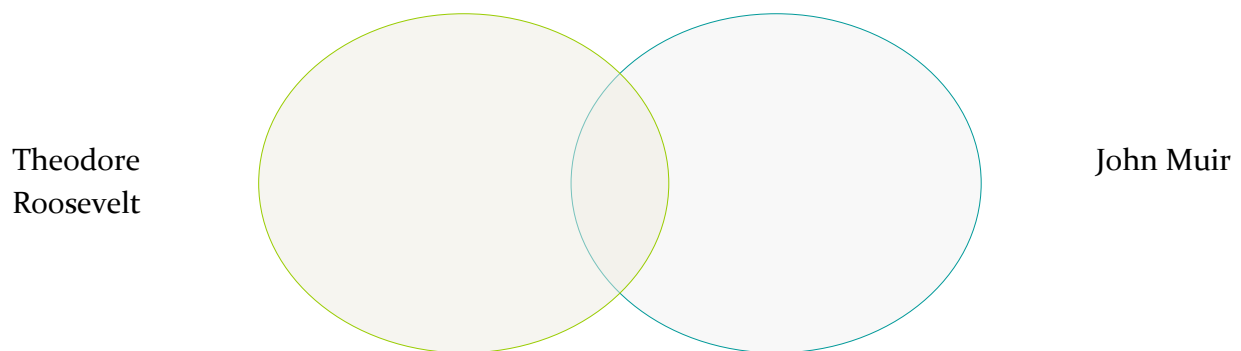
John Muir and Theodore Roosevelt camp under the trees.

Compare and Contrast

Common Core Standards Reading & Language – Craft & Structure: 2.6

From the very beginning of the story, *The Camping Trip That Changed America*, by Barb Rosenstock, illustrated by Mordicai Gerstein, the author compares President Roosevelt (Teedie) to John Muir (Johnnie). Similarities and differences are shared throughout the story.

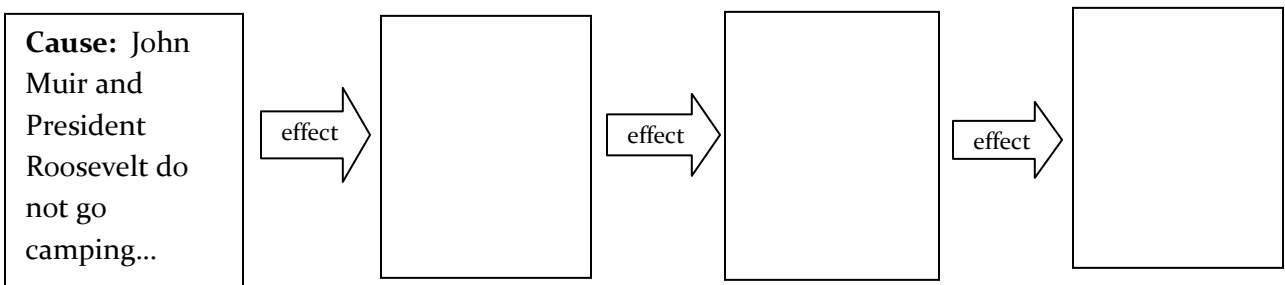
Use a Venn Diagram to visually organize and recall details from the story and compare and contrast how the two main characters were alike, and how they were different. How do the two main characters remain alike to this day? (Hint: trees)



Exploring Cause and Effect. What if?

Common Core Standards Reading & Language – Key Ideas & Details: 3.3

This particular camping trip proved to be one that really did change America. After reading the story, we can describe how the characters actions contributed to America in a beneficial way. But think about it. What if John Muir and President Roosevelt had not gone camping together? Think about the cause and effect if this one action had not taken place? Would our planet have protected, wild spaces? If not, what impact would this have on wildlife? Ecosystems? Air quality? Water quality? Complete the flow chart based on speculations of what might have been.



Get to know the author, *BARB ROSENSTOCK*

An Interview

Q: Have you always known you wanted to be a writer?

Barb Rosenstock: Since kindergarten, I was a big reader but I never thought of myself as creative enough to write books. I would read picture books to my sons at bedtime and realized I was hooked on the idea of writing a picture book when I found myself reading the books over and over long after my sons had fallen asleep!

*Q: What inspired you to write *THE CAMPING TRIP THAT CHANGED AMERICA*?*

Barb Rosenstock: I saw a book review of an adult biography of Theodore Roosevelt that mentioned that he had "left the presidency" to go camping. I'd always thought of TR as a shoot 'em up, nature conquering kind of guy. I was amazed that the wilderness was important enough to him that he went out alone with John Muir just to experience Yosemite with the man who loved it the most. I sometimes wish politicians now would take that kind of personal time to address issues.

*Q: What was your writing process like for *THE CAMPING TRIP THAT CHANGED AMERICA*?*

Barb Rosenstock: Research is key in a fact-based piece of fiction like this. I read everything I could find about the trip, three or four adult biographies of each man and pored through old newspaper articles. Then I stared at a time line of the trip for about 2 weeks while making several failed attempts at putting a book together. It wasn't until I visited Yosemite (and its amazing library) and found a description of Muir's gravesite that the book's central theme of trees came together. After the book was sold, I was lucky enough to visit Muir's grave; it's a lovely place to rest.

Q: Did you have an opportunity to provide input or feedback on the illustrations?

Barb Rosenstock: Mordicai Gerstein is a genius and I consider myself so lucky to be paired with him. I saw the sketches and other stages of his artwork, but when you work with a Caldecott medalist, there isn't much to comment on. His work improved my work. Honestly, even his rough sketches are better than anything I could dream up!

Q: When you are not writing, what do you like to do in your free time?

Barb Rosenstock: My children are still young enough that I happily spend lots of time at sports and school events. I have two 50 pound standard poodles that like to take me on long walks. I love to travel and hope to visit India and China one day. Plus I'm a fool for old musicals, old towns and old people, although my favorite thing to do is still the same as it was in kindergarten—I love to read!

Q: What writing advice can you offer young writers?

Barb Rosenstock: Writing is not as magic as most young people think. It's a craft and it can be learned. The craft of writing has a lot in common with sports, you need to practice in order to get better. Everyone tells stories: family stories, friendship stories, true stories, made up stories. Writing is just a way of capturing and organizing those stories. The best thing a young writer can do is be open to new experiences so they have lots of stories to tell. And never, ever stop reading!

BOOK to WRITING CONNECTION

Letter Writing is a Powerful Tool

Common Core Standards Reading & Language – Integration of Knowledge & Ideas: 1.9; Writing - Text Types & Purposes W.2.1

In the story *The Camping Trip That Changed America*, by Barb Rosenstock, illustrated by Mordicai Gerstein, letters are written. President Theodore Roosevelt writes a letter to naturalist John Muir, asking if he may spend time with him in the California wilderness. Following their camping trip, the two keep in touch for the rest of their lives via letter.

After reading the story, discuss how important it is to protect living things that do not have a voice of their own. Examples include wild animals, plants and wild spaces, such as bodies of water or land that is home to a variety of species. Many natural resources are consumed or destroyed by humans without being replaced.

Suggest to students that they have an opportunity to share their voice on behalf of what they feel is important to protect and conserve. This can be done by writing letters to those who are in a position of power and decision-making in your community, city, state and country.

Introduce readers to parts of a letter.

Encourage students to write their own letters to Congress or to local leaders in your area regarding conservation. Is there a wild area or park in your area that is in need of protection or repair? Is there a threatened or endangered species that your class has studied that students have become passionate about? Discuss it. Write about it. Share what you have learned and why it is important to protect and conserve the wilderness around us.

Parts of a Letter

