

Study Guide For Teachers

Floyd Cooper in *Occupation Illustration*

presented by

Young Audiences

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Is Floyd Cooper an illustrator or illusionist? Is he drawing a picture or pulling it out of a hat? Floyd calls his unique methodology a subtractive process: after painting a blank canvas with flat color, he erases areas of paint to create the image. Cooper demonstrates his technique and adds games, doodling demonstrations, and other interactive exercises to inspire student creativity and share his craft. Expect your students to be absolutely riveted as images seem to magically reveal themselves under his masterful hand.

LEARNING GOALS

Students will:

- Understand various approaches to illustration and drawing
- Be introduced to the career of an illustrator
- Be inspired to find their own unique creativity

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

Floyd Cooper has illustrated over 60 published children's books and over 2,000 book covers.

Mr. Cooper says, "My personal goal is to take the reader on a journey into the story, to get a sense of the smells, the atmosphere, and the emotions conveyed by the characters."

Floyd has received many awards including three Coretta Scott King Honors, NAACP Image Award and starred reviews from Booklist, Kirkus and School Library Journal.

At age three, Floyd Cooper began drawing on pieces of plasterboard left over from his father's work as a builder. He drew constantly after that, even on his math and reading worksheets in school! After getting his college degree in fine art, Cooper got a job creating art for a greeting card company. But he dreamed of being an illustrator in New York City, and, with the encouragement of the artist Mark English, he moved there. After some rejections, he got a book manuscript to illustrate. Only later did Cooper find out that the book, *Grandpa's Face*, was written by Eloise Greenfield, a well-known children's writer. Cooper's illustrations for the book brought him a lot of attention, and his career has continued to grow ever since.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

Have students think about something they did last weekend.

Ask students to draw a picture that shows where they were and what they did.

Invite students to write a story to accompany the picture.

Have students share their stories and illustrations with the class. Then, discuss the following questions:

1. How do illustrations help to tell a story?
2. How do illustrations help someone who cannot read or speaks a different language?

AFTER THE PROGRAM

It is important to pay attention to illustrations. In many books, pictures help to tell a story:

Using books illustrated by Floyd Cooper (see his website), look at the illustrations. Answer the following questions:

1. How does Cooper use illustrations to tell the story?
2. What is the setting? How do you know?
3. Do the illustration help predict what will happen in the story?
4. Do the illustrations show how a character feels? How?

Project:

Illustration is an interesting career choice. Have students write a classified ad seeking someone to fill a position as an illustrator at a children's book company. Classified ads should include:

- *a headline
- *a brief job description
- *a list of qualities the job applicant should possess

VOCABULARY WORDS

Illustration

*An illustration can help you imagine a setting, when and where a story takes place.

*An illustration can help you figure out a difficult word.

*An illustration can help you predict what is going to happen in a book.

*An illustration can show how a character feels.

Illustrator

Career

Doodle

Publish

ARTIST INFORMATION

Floyd Cooper grew up in Oklahoma. He recalls that his first drawing was a duck on the side of his house when he was a small child. Cooper has been drawing ever since.

When Cooper was old enough to attend college, he decided to study art at the University of Oklahoma. Then, he moved east to work in New York. After securing an agent, Cooper began illustrating children's books.

Floyd Cooper says that illustrating children's books is exciting. He strives to create books that bridge cultures. Cooper believes that affection for other cultures leads to understanding of all people.

RESOURCES

Floyd Cooper's website -
<http://www.floydcooper.com/index.htm>

A few books illustrated by Floyd Cooper:
African Beginnings by Jim Haskins (Lothrop, Lee, and Shepard Books)
Miz Berlin Walks by Jane Yolen (Philomel/Putnam)
One April Morning by Nancy Lamb (Lothrop, Lee, and Shepard Books)
Meet Danitra Brown by Nikki Grimes (Mulberry Books)