

**Literature in Context:
A Community-Based Education Guide
to *Prize in the Snow***



by Robin Huntley
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Summary

A young nature-loving boy admires his older brother for his animal tracking and trapping abilities, and sets out on a quest to become an expert himself. Unlike his brother, the boy is a novice, and goes about trapping with a very rudimentary trap and classic bait. He treks into the snowy woods with a box, a carrot, and a long string which, with the addition of a stick, become a carefully balanced and patiently manned trap for unsuspecting small mammals. The boy waits patiently, all the while looking forward to the respect he imagines receiving from his brother when he has caught his prize. Finally, a creature comes – but as it's the dead of winter, the rabbit is slow and thin, starving due to lack of food amidst all the snow. Instead of causing excitement and action, the sight of the rabbit makes the boy stop and think. Is it fair to bait and catch a starving animal? Is his role in the landscape really to trap animals purely for sport, or could he perhaps serve some other purpose? This short, sweet story includes plenty of depth and serves as a catalyst for discussion of human interaction with the landscape around us.

Critical Thinking Questions

Prize in the Snow is a short, sweet story appropriate for readers of most any age. Additionally, it serves as a catalyst for discussion of human interaction with the landscape around us and, in particular, the way we regard wild creatures.

- What qualities does the boy admire in his brother? Why do you think he values these qualities?
- Based on his approach to trapping, do you think that the boy is really ready to trap his first animal? Explain.
- How does the boy feel when he first realizes an animal is coming? Is he perhaps feeling multiple emotions?
- How do the boy's feelings change when he realizes the condition that the rabbit is in? What might this tell you about him as a character?
- Ultimately, the boy lets the rabbit eat and leave. Why did he make this decision? What does this tell you about how he regards the natural world?
- What do you think the boy's brother will say about his decision? Explain.
- Does the boy change his attitude about trapping? What makes you think that way?
- What would you do if you were in the boy's position?

Community-Based Learning Map

Prize in the Snow inspires readers to learn about the winter habits of creatures found in their local landscape, and challenges them to learn to see these creatures and their ways with respect and to treat them with compassion should interactions take place. Additionally, the book encourages readers to look closely at the landscape around them, seeing it with reverence just as the boy in the story must do in order to attract an animal to his trap.

Use the resources listed below to explore animal tracks and sign in the winter landscape and to become more closely aligned with the natural phenomena that surround you.

Resources for Self-Directed Learning of Animal Tracks, Sign, and Winter Survival

Learning Landscape for January: Tracking to Learn Winter Habits

<https://hilltownfamilies.wordpress.com/2018/01/15/hf-718/>

Part of a monthly series, this installment of Learning Landscape teaches the basics of tracking common animals in mid- and late-winter. Use the .pdf guide that accompanies while out in the wild to learn to find tracks and sign of birds, deer, and small mammals – like the rabbit from the story!

Young Explorers Activity Page: Snow Insulation

<https://www.massaudubon.org/content/download/25371/410099/file/Snow%20Insulation%20Activity%20Sheet.pdf>

Offered seasonally by Mass Audubon, the Young Explorers Activity Pages connect natural phenomena to ideas for experiential learning that is appropriate for all ages. Use the Winter 2018 activity page to learn about the insulation that snow provides and the ways in which creatures take advantage of the “snow blanket” for survival.

Pocket Guide to Massachusetts Wildlife (Printable)

http://www.town.barnstable.ma.us/naturalresources/fishinghunting/wildlife%20tracking_guide.pdf

Distributed by the Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, this guide includes an extensive list of creatures from coyotes to mice – and everything in between! The basic black-and-white format includes the shape, size, and pattern of common mammals and ground birds.

Resources for Guided Learning of Animal Tracks, Sign, and Winter Survival

Walnut Hill Tracking & Nature Center

<http://www.walnuthilltracking.com/upcomingprograms.html>

Based in Orange, Walnut Hill offers a variety of opportunities for nature-based learning. Tracking workshops often focus on specific creatures or groups of creatures, and vary from hour-long events to all-day adventures.

Earthwork Programs

<http://earthworkprograms.com/family-programs/animal-tracking/>

Offering online resources for self-directed learning as well as guided classes, Earthworks offers tracking classes throughout the year. Bringing together beginners and expert trackers, Earthworks' tracking classes are appropriate for families, teens, and adults.

MassWildlife's Trapper Education Program

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/hunter-education-course-descriptions>

Intended for those interested in obtaining a state trap number for legal animal trapping practices, the Trapper Education program teaches about furbearing animal identification, proper responsible trap management, land use, trapping regulations, and the ethics of trapping. Age appropriateness is determined by state trapping laws.