

Activities for *Uncle Snake*

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A. Dramatic Teacher Reading:

Have students vocalize wind each time "rain" or a "storm" is mentioned. Also, have volunteers use rain sticks if available. If rain sticks are not available, have students shake cereal boxes (see art projects below). Also, students can play improvised shakers each time the cave snakes appear in the story. (see art projects.)

B. Theatrical Student Reading:

Assign students to read the roles of the boy, the cave snakes, the father, the nahual, and the narrator. Have other students act out the parts, others contribute with sound effects and still others contribute with moving important props such as snakes (see art projects.) Encourage students to read at different speeds and volumes. Make sure everyone participates in some way.

C. Art Projects:

Rain boxes: Have students bring cereal boxes, with inner liners, plus leaves, twigs and pebbles from home. Have them fill the liners with leaves, twigs and pebbles, then tape the liners shut and place back inside the boxes. Then have them all shake their boxes together and enjoy the rain-like sound. (Note: cereal works too, instead of pebbles and leaves.) Shakers: Have students bring empty soda cans from home. Fill each can with a handful of beans or rice. Tape up opening securely and shake!

D. Creative Writing and Spanish Language Exercise:

On the blackboard, write the Spanish words for three major themes in the story. Example: *culebra* (snake), *lluvia* (rain) and *cueva* (cave). Have students create mini-stories using the three Spanish words. (Example of a mini-story's beginning: Carl the *culebra* crept out of his *cueva*, just as *lluvia* began to fall hard.) Note: ESL students can reverse the languages, using the English words while writing in their first language.

E. Science Links:

Read this story to complement class studies of snakes, lightning, weather, and agriculture.

F. Creative Writing Jump Off Points.

Have students sit quietly with pencil and paper for two minutes. Then read them one of the following jump off points and let them write freely or doodle for 5 minutes. Tell them not to worry about the spelling or grammar YET. (Save the editing and revising for another day. All that matters now is the flow of ideas.) After they've written from at least two jump off points, let them choose which story that they'd like to complete.

1. You're walking barefoot along a sandy beach. Suddenly, by your feet you hear a rattling in the bushes. The rattling grows stronger, more distinct with each moment, as if a thousand rattlesnakes were awaiting your every step.
2. Your parents left you alone in the house but told you not to open the closet in the hallway. Under the door you see darkness. What can be inside the closet. You're eating popcorn, watching tv, when you hear a faint scratching noise behind the door that's to remain closed.