

Hills Bank & ICCSD Foundation Visiting Author 2017

Candace Fleming

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ICCSD Visiting Author Curriculum

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Biography

Candace Fleming was born on May 24, 1962, in Michigan City, Indiana. Her dad was a superintendent and her mom worked in the home. Candace Fleming came from a family of readers and storytellers. Her mom had the best magical power in that she could recommend the perfect book at the exact time you needed it. In addition to this, Mom Fleming could also tell great stories from her own childhood. Candace Fleming didn't care that they were told the same way every time, with the same voices, hand gestures, and even breaths in the same place. In fact, she would beg her mom to tell the same stories again and again. One of these stories actually became *Boxes For Katje*.

Candace Fleming moved to Charleston, IL in 4th grade which is where she came to love Abraham Lincoln. In fact, she played in the Lincoln log cabin when she was a kid, "There was no park ranger or any of that stuff. Somebody came in and locked the door to the cabin sometimes, and other times they didn't. We would just ride our bikes out into the country, and if the cabin was open, we'd play in it like a playhouse."

In 5th grade, Candace Fleming awarded herself the Newbery Medal, that's the award for the best story, after she scraped the gold sticker off the class copy of *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*. She then glued that gold medal onto her own writing - a ten-page, ten-chapter mystery called *Who Done It?*

Throughout all of her school years, Ms. Fleming learned to especially love two things: 1.) language and how words sounded when you said them aloud, and 2.) historical research. These two loves led her to be the author she is today. She wants historical research (and let's face it, sometimes history can be a bit dull) to be entertaining. She tries to achieve this by using words that tell a good story not just the facts. She goes on to say, "I don't really have an eye out for educational objectives. I just want to convey to my readers the joy and passion I find in my particular subjects." She wants us, as readers, to see historical figures as real human beings and to even bring them back to life. Ms. Fleming wants readers to see that these people had their own fears and flaws, they made their own mistakes, but they were still able to do amazing things.

In fact, Candace Fleming's love of historical figures, including Ben Franklin, has been passed onto her two sons, Scott and Michael. Well, sort of. Scott and Michael got up on Ben Franklin's birthday to find their mom baking a strawberry cake. When they asked her what she was doing, she told them that OF COURSE! they were going to celebrate the big day! And didn't they know strawberry cake was Ben Franklin's favorite? They agreed to eat the cake, but they put their foot down at actually singing Ben Franklin "Happy Birthday" saying they wouldn't sing to a dead guy.

Ms. Fleming's normal work day might look something like this: she gets up and makes coffee and maybe does some jobs around the house. She likes to be at work by about 9:00am. If she's got the writing flow that day, she might work for four to five hours. If the words aren't coming, she'll push herself to work three hours and will then write emails, have lunch, exercise, and try to work for another hour. Sometimes she'll look back over her words at night, just to try to get ready for the next day. When Candace Fleming isn't working, she likes to collect old and rare books, camp, hike and travel!

[Nine part video interview with Candace Fleming.](#) You don't have to watch them all and can pick and choose.

More information about Candace Fleming on her [website's biography page.](#)

Sources:

"Meet the Biographer: Candace Fleming." Kidsbiographer's Blog, 6 Aug. 2012, kidsbiographer.com/2012/08/06/452/.

"Fleming, Candace 1962-." Something About the Author, Encyclopedia.com, www.encyclopedia.com/children/scholarly-magazines/fleming-candace-1962.

Wikipedia contributors. "Candace Fleming." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 21 Jun. 2017. Web. 6 Sep. 2017

"TeachingBooks.net In-depth Written Interview | Candace Fleming." TeachingBooks.net. <https://www.teachingbooks.net/interview.cgi?id=83>.

Ben Franklin's In My Bathroom / Candace Fleming; illustrations by Mark Fearing

Summary: Nolan and Olive, brother and sister, are ready to strangle each other after spending too much time stuck together in the house. While their mom is working on her new book with a strict "Don't bother me!" warning, a strange and mysterious box with the initials H.H. is delivered to the doorstep. After fiddling with some dials, Ben Franklin mysteriously appears, much to Nolan's dismay and Olive's delight! Chaos, laughs, and maybe even some tenderhearted moments ensue as the Nolan and Olive show Ben Franklin around their town of Rolling Hills.

Before Reading:

Discuss that this book is a mix between historical fiction and real historical facts. Ask students to keep a list as they read/listen to the book of what they think is real vs. what they think is written to make the story more fun (ex. The clothes Ben Franklin wore are probably real, but the fireman's hat was embellished)

During Reading:

Discuss the phrases from long ago that kids aren't used to hearing in 2017. See if kids can come up with new phrases to replace them. Haha! This should be fun!

Why do you think there are comics placed throughout the book?

After Reading:

Go back to the lists of embellishments vs. true facts and model quality research techniques to find the answers. FYI: What Nolan knows at the end is a good resource! Point out to the kids, though, that even with "true" facts, how do we know for sure they're "true?"

How did Candace Fleming mix old and new throughout the book?

Would you say you liked the adventure part of the book more? Or the historical part? Or both?

What about this ending?! Predictions?

Boxes for Katje / Candace Fleming

Summary: This book is based on real events and tells the story of Candace Fleming's mother sending care packages to a struggling girl and her neighbors living in Holland after World War II. The community in Holland ended up sending tulip bulbs back to the United States as a thank you. It's a fantastic story of kindness and sharing.

Building Context

- Show students where Olst, Holland and Indiana, USA are located on google maps.
- To provide context for the story, a brief description of World War II can be found [here](#).
- The book mentions the Children's Aid Society. A list of this organization's projects over the years can be found on their [website](#).
- What other organizations can students name that provide relief to people around the world? Look at the mission statement for some of these service organizations (or others): [American Red Cross](#), [Save the Children](#), [Americares](#), [Mercy Corps](#)

The Story and Characters

Since this is a World War II story it is obviously historical fiction. What examples can students cite from the story/illustrations that help us know that it is set in the past?

- Mail carrier brought packages on a bicycle and sleds rather than in a truck/van
- People used homemade soap
- People hadn't tasted chocolate in years
- Katje wrote letters to thank Rosie, rather than communicating by email or other electronic forms of communication
- People lined their coats with newspaper to add warmth, clothing styles are old

Katje could easily have kept all the treats from America to herself. Why do you think she chose to share with her neighbors? What words would you use to describe Katje?

Application for Today's World

- What groups of people around the world can students name that would benefit from relief services *today*? (people affected by Hurricane Harvey/Irma, people in areas where terrorist attacks have occurred, refugees from war-torn countries, etc.)
- In the aftermath of the recent hurricanes, relief organizations have said that the best way to provide the greatest amount of assistance is to donate cash to relief organizations rather than actual items. Why is cash a better option today than it would have been 80 years ago?
 - Better coordinated efforts and online purchasing can assure that cash is purchasing what is actually needed
 - Items can be purchased a little at a time to make sure perishable items are used before they go bad
 - Purchasing items as needed prevents the problem of storing large amounts of items for a long time
- Do you think donating cash would have felt the same to Rosie in America? Why or why not? How can people in today's world provide help with cash donations but still provide support on a personal level like Rosie did?

The Fabled Fourth Graders of Aesop Elementary /Candace Fleming

Summary:

The school year is about to start, and Mrs. Struggles, the principal, cannot find a teacher for the fourth-grade class, a group of rambunctious kids who have already built up a naughty reputation. In walks Mr. Jupiter, with a resume fit for a match with these students. Twenty-three vignettes make up the story of *The Fabled Fourth Graders*, each one focusing on a moral of Aesop's fables.

Activities:

Candace Fleming introduces *The Fabled Fourth Graders of Aesop Elementary School* and reads the first chapter aloud [HERE](#).

Print interview with Candace Fleming. $\frac{3}{4}$ into the interview, she talks specifically about creating *The Fabled Fourth Graders* story [HERE](#).

Detailed book guide with LOTS of activities about Aesop fables, storytelling and a reader's theater of *The Crow and the Pitcher* [HERE](#).

Reader's theater of the chapter, *The Boy Who Cried Lunch Monitor* [HERE](#).

Source: TeachingBooks.net available through GWAEA Online resources. Login: 3141 4-letter school code (i.e. 3141horn). Password: aea10

Giant Squid / Candace Fleming; Illustrated by Eric Rohmann

Type of literature: Nonfiction

Additional Information about giant squid:

Websites recommended at the back of the book:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCWop491Q9Y> YouTube video of an edited Discovery Channel program (2:31 minutes)

<http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/28/asia/toyama-japan-giant-squid> Video is no longer available, but the story is interesting.

<http://ocean.si.edu/giant-squid> Lots of information about giant squid, including photos and diagrams. Note/warning: the male squid reproductive organ has the same name as the male human organ.

<https://livestream.com/accounts/5183627/events/3069649/videos/54249230> 6-hour coverage of giant squid dissection in New Zealand

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/explorations/squid/index.htm> This Scholastic website could be explored independently by students.

Books about giant squid:

Whale vs. Giant Squid by Jerry Pallotta (“Who Would Win?” series)

Giant Squid and Octopuses by Ruth Owen

Giant Squid : Mysterious Monster of the Deep by Paige V. Polinsky

Discussion:

1. Don't miss the author's note at the back of the book!
2. List some of the reasons why there are so few sightings of giant squids. What will need to change or be invented (e.g. equipment, deep sea vessels, photography) in order to learn more about them?
3. Read the text once without showing the pictures. Discuss how Eric Rohmann's pictures add to the mood of the book.

Activities:

1. Discuss the tone of the book's text and how it adds to the mystery of the giant squid. Write an alternate version with an entirely different tone or style, e.g. fairy tale or humorous, or give the squid a happy name.
2. Using Soundzabound, found in Iowa AEA Online, find some background music appropriate for the text. Record yourself reading the book and include music in your production.
3. Research giant squid or another deep-sea animal and present your findings to another class.
4. In the hallway or other large space, measure 30 feet, the approximate size of a giant squid. Add two soccer balls to represent the eyes. Imagine encountering a creature that large in person!

Lowji Discovers America / Candace Fleming

Type of literature: Realistic Fiction

Characters: Lowji, Ma, Bape, Jamshed, Ada Crisp, Ironman, Mrs. Pendergast, Tamika

Plot: Lowji and his family move from the crowded city of Bombay (or Mumbai), India to small town Illinois.

Theme: Friendship can span culture, age, and even species.

Discussion:

Lowji and Jamshed have many ideas about what America will be like. Do these ideas turn out to be true? What stereotypes do you have about other countries? Do you think they are true? Ask a classmate who is from another country or has visited another country to tell you what it is like there.

Activities:

1. Teacher's Guide to the book from Candace Fleming's website: <http://www.candacefleming.com/pdfs/CGLowji.pdf>
2. *On page 18 Lowji mentions that his Aunt Preen "makes magic" with pieces of colored paper. Most of us have heard of origami, or Japanese paper folding. Indian paper folding is also an ancient art that produces beautiful shapes and flowers out of paper. Watch a video of this here: <https://safeshare.tv/x/CEr0BvXen5Q> (the video is 10 minutes long but has three different demonstrations, each of which is 2-3 minutes long)*
3. Lowji desperately wants a pet. ANY pet! Using paint, googly eyes (optional) and imagination make the pet rock of your dreams. Rocks can be painted to look like real animals (dogs, cats, and fish) or crazy make-believe ones. Tip: pet rocks look great when covered with clear coat as a final step!
4. *Landlady Crisp loves Elvis Presley. See him perform Hound Dog here: <https://safeshare.tv/x/ss59b5b4bf0c1bc>*
5. Lowji loves to learn new American expressions, such as "on the house," "holy smokes," and, of course, "silver lining." Think of American expressions, or idioms, that mean something completely different from what they sound like. Use role play to pretend you are explaining an expression to someone who is new to the country.
6. *India has 387 languages! In this book Lowji and his family use many words in Gujarati and Hindi. Use this website to hear how to pronounce animal names in Gujarati: <http://www.letslearngujarati.com/vocabulary/learn/4/Animals#>*