



THE OWL AND THE LEMMING

by Roselynn Akulukjuk
illustrated by Amiel Sandland

EDUCATOR'S
RESOURCE



The Owl and the Lemming

About the Book

As Owl swoops down and blocks the entrance to a lemming den, he is sure that he has a tasty meal in the little animal he has cornered. But this lemming is not about to be eaten! This smart little rodent will need to appeal to the boastful owl's sense of pride to get away. This fun and cheeky tale is accompanied by full-colour still photographs of illustrated characters on a hand-built set.

About the Author

Roselynn Akulukjuk was born in Pangnirtung, Nunavut, in the Canadian Arctic. In 2012, Roselynn moved to Toronto to pursue a career in film and attend the Toronto Film School, where she fell in love with being behind the camera. After finishing her studies and working in Toronto, Roselynn returned home to Nunavut, where she began working with Taqqut Productions, an Inuit-owned production company located in the capital of Nunavut, Iqaluit. Part of Roselynn's love of filmmaking is the ability to interview Elders, listen to their traditional stories, and share them with the world. In 2015, Roselynn wrote and directed her first film, the live-action and puppetry short *The Owl and the Lemming*, on which her book by the same title is based. Her film won Best Animation at the 2016 American Indian Film Festival.

About the Illustrator

Amiel Sandland is an illustrator living in the Toronto area. He studied illustration at Seneca College, eventually specializing in comic arts and character design. He has also dabbled in layout, comics, and props making. Rarely found without a pen in hand, he enjoys drawing animals, monsters, and plants.

Note to Educators

This educator's resource is written for Kindergarten to Grade 3 classrooms. The suggested discussion questions and activities can be adapted for each class according to the experiences of students.

Educators can use this book to teach about topics such as:

- Inuit legends
- Oral storytelling
- Arctic animals
- Arctic landscapes and vegetation



Pre-Reading Discussion Questions

- Who do you think the main characters will be in this book?
- What sort of relationship do you think the owl and the lemming have? How can you tell from the cover illustration?
- Point to the title. Point to the author's name. What does an author do? Point to the illustrator's name. What does an illustrator do?
- Make a prediction about what this story is going to be about.
- Is this story going to be fiction or non-fiction?
- Have you seen an owl before? Have you seen a lemming before?
- What do you know about owls? What do you know about lemmings?

During and Post-Reading Discussion Questions

The following questions and discussion points can be used during and after reading *The Owl and the Lemming*. Provide students with the chance to voice their own opinions, share their experiences, ask questions, or point out anything else they may notice about the book.

- Page 4: What must be in the sky?
- Page 7: Do you think the lemming will get back to her home? How so?



- Page 8: Do you have any friends or relatives that like to play tricks?
- Page 11: What might she try next?
- Page 15: Notice the illustration of all the doors into the ground! The illustrator was very creative when designing this.
- Page 19: Sometimes when you are too proud, you end up making a mistake or not thinking properly. Have you ever had something similar happen to you?
- Page 22: How is the owl feeling at this point? How is the lemming feeling?
- What was the setting of this book?
- What was the problem in this book? How did it get resolved?
- Who were the characters in this book?
- Summarize the story in five sentences or less.
- How do you think the owl felt at the beginning of the story? How did he feel at the end of the story?
- Have you ever been told, “Don’t play with your food”? What does that mean in this context?



Extension Activities

The following activities can be used to help strengthen students' understanding of the story. Adapt these suggestions to the ability level of your students as necessary.

Writing Prompts

Pretend you are the lemming trying to get into your home. Think of a different way to trick the owl into moving away from the entrance. What would you do? What would you say?

Talking Circle

Sit in a circle on the floor or in chairs, and pass around a talking piece so each person has a turn to contribute. Allow students the right to pass if they do not wish to share. The following questions can be used to guide students' discussion:

- Which character did you like more, the owl or the lemming? Why?
- Who would you recommend this book to?
- Give this book a rating on a scale of one to ten.
- What would you like to learn about owls or lemmings?

Drawing

Pretend you are going into the lemming's home. Draw what it looks like inside. Make a map or drawing of the house. What things are in there? Who else lives there?

Science: Arctic Vegetation

The lemming was nibbling on some moss before the owl swooped down. What other plants grow in the Arctic tundra?

- Research this question using books, encyclopedias, or the Internet
- Present your findings to the class
- Draw a picture of the Arctic in summer, when all these plants grow

Adjective Alphabet

There are many adjectives used in this book, such as "young," "proud," and "disappointed." On chart paper with the class, or on your own paper, write the entire alphabet vertically. Think of an adjective (a describing word) for each letter.

For example:

- Awesome
- Blue
- Colourful
- Dirty
- Elegant
- Fast

