

"Nothing to Do"

Written by : Douglas Wood

Illustrated by : Wendy Anderson Halperin

Dutton Children's Books - 2006

About the Author: Douglas Wood is a man of many talents. He is considered not only an author, but an artist, a musician, a naturalist, and a wilderness guide. He resides in Minnesota where he has endless opportunities to enjoy nature at its finest. Presently, Mr. Wood performs and speaks across the country sharing his music and storytelling. Douglas Wood has received numerous awards including the Christopher Medal, the ABBY award, the International Reading Association Book of the Year, the Minnesota Book Award, the Midwest Publishers Association Book of the Year, the Parent's Choice Award, the Barnes and Noble Star of the North, and the Storytelling World Award. Perhaps the highlight of his career though was in 2004 when he was invited to read at the White House Easter Egg Roll.

Author's Homepage:

"Douglas Wood" <http://douglaswood.com/>

Publisher's webpage:

Dutton Children's Books Penguin Group <http://penguin.com/>

<http://us.penguin.com/static/pages/author-browse.html>

Other children's books by Douglas Wood include:

Old Turtle, Old Turtle and the Broken Truth, The Secret of Saying Thanks, A Quiet Place, Grandad's Prayers of the Earth, Chickadee's Message, Rabbit and the Moon, the "Can't Do" series

Other adult books by Douglas Wood include:

Fawn Island, Paddle Whispers, the "Wisdom of Nature" series

About the Illustrator: Wendy Anderson Halperin attended Syracuse University where she studied anatomy. She went on to attend the Pratt Institute majoring in illustration. Wendy was an art director for many facilities before becoming a teacher in 1993. She continues to teach and conduct drawing workshops for schools, teachers, and librarians. Wendy uses pencil with crayon over a copy in most of her illustrations. In addition, she gives lectures on creativity and book illustration. Among the awards received by Ms. Halperin are the Boston Globe Best Book of the Year, Parents Magazine Pick of the Lists, School Librarians Journal Best Books of the Year for "Homeplace", and the National Council of Teachers of English 30 Notable Children's books for "Hunting the White Cow".

Other children's books illustrated by Wendy Anderson Halperin include:

A Little Shopping Cart by Cynthia Rylant, Bonaparte by Marsha Wilson Chall, Homeplace by Anne Shelby, Hunting the White Cow by Tres Seymour, and In Aunt Lucy's Kitchen by Cynthia Rylant just to name a few.

Illustrator's Homepage: www.wendyhalperin.com

Annotation: Douglas Wood takes a unique approach to a very common problem facing youngsters today: What to do on a day when

nothing is planned. Many children now -a -days are very accustomed to having nearly every second of their days planned out for them. So what happens when all of a sudden unstructured time is facing a child? Many simply ask an adult to tell them what to do. The art of "playing" for the sake of play seems to have dwindled and many children have no idea how to just play.

Wood uses a young boy who excitedly discovers nothing is planned for him on his calendar. The boy's mind quickly begins exploring the many options he might have for the day, anything from creating various animals in the clouds, to making paper airplanes, to reading a favorite book. In the end, though, the boy realizes his day might just be best spent with someone special doing nothing at all but spending time together.

This book is a great reminder to all that many times we get caught in the hustle and bustle of everyday life and forget to enjoy those quiet times when we have "nothing to do"!

Genre: realistic fiction, family stories

Point of view: first person

Theme: unstructured time, spending time with a special adult, creative play - The title "Nothing to Do" is so appropriate for this book given the book starts out by acknowledging the beauty in having no plans for a day and then progresses into fantasizing about all the possible ways to spend that day. At the conclusion, the main character realizes that having nothing at all to do with a special person is the greatest gift of all even though the majority of the book laid out so many options for how to spend the day.

Conflict: The main character realizes he has no plans for the day. He ponders how to spend that day.

Resolution: The main character determines that simply spending time with someone special doing nothing is all he really wanted.

Characters: The main character is a young boy perhaps age 10-12. He is tall and thin with dark hair. He wears loose clothing with a baseball cap. He is missing his shoes which indicates his relaxed nature. The boy seems imaginative and creative with an emphasis on personal values and a keen respect for adults. An additional character at the end of the story represents the someone special to the young boy.

Setting: This story takes place in the young boy's home. Much of the story is also in the imagination of the young boy as he contemplates all of his options for how to spend his free day. This is a modern day story.

Interest and Reading Levels: ages 5-9, 3.7 reading level

Booktalk: Have you ever had a day when you had no where to be, no plans to do, or games to play? What would you do on such a day? Some people might think this would be the most boring day in the world. But what if you took just a little time to think, let your mind wonder. Could you go build a fort with a friend? Could you explore bugs in your backyard? Could you climb the tree in your neighbor's yard? The possibilities are endless! Read "Nothing To Do" by Douglas Wood to open up unlimited opportunities for how to spend a day when you only *thought* you had nothing to do!

Book Talk

Name _____ Date _____

Please choose a book from the front table to complete this assignment.

Steps to follow:

- 1. Find a quiet spot and enjoy reading the book you selected.**
- 2. On a sheet of paper write the title and author at the top.**
- 3. Think about why you enjoyed the book. Answer these questions.**

What was your favorite part? _____

Where there any interesting characters? _____

Can you make a connection with this book, either to something in your life or with another book you have read? _____

Why should someone else read this book? _____

- 4. After thinking about these questions, write at least 5 or 6 sentences to “sell” this book to your classmates so they just can’t wait to read it for themselves.**

** Remember: This is not a summary of the book. Your book talk should convince your classmates that they should read this book. It is like an advertisement or commercial for your book.*

Discussion Questions: Pre-reading: How many of you play a sport or have lessons of some kind? Are you really busy with things to do after school and places to go? Do you like being busy or do you wish you had more free time?

Pre-reading: If you had a day to spend like the boy in this story, is there someone special you would like to spend it with? Who would it be and why?

Post-reading: What do you think the author meant by "sometimes doing nothing is the most important thing in the whole wide world to do"? What would be your "nothing" to do? (think, pair, share with your partner)

Post-reading: What if you had a day when you had absolutely nothing at all to do and nowhere to be? How would you feel about that? Would you like it or be bored? What would you do with a day like that? (think, pair, share with your partner)

Pages 7-8 What are the connections between the pictures on these pages?

Pages 9-10 Why did the illustrator put a sun in the middle of the pictures?

Pages 15-16 How does the word swinging relate to the loops on these pages?

Pages 19-20 What's your favorite book? Do you ever read when you have nothing to do?

Pages 21-22 What does this illustration remind you of? Why?

Pages 27-28 Is this a house where a child could be creative? How do you know?

Language/Vocabulary:

Page 1 absolutely - sure, positive

Page 3 rehearsal - practice for a performance

Page 9 crocodiles - reptiles similar to alligators

Page 12 surviving - to last, live

Page 20 exploring - to search, find, look for

Page 22 icicles - frozen water hanging from a roof or branch

Page 25 cartwheels - a gymnastics move where you put your hands down, flip your legs over all at a sideways angle

Academic Standards:

Language Arts

K.2.1 K.2.3 K.3.1

1.2.7 1.2.3 1.2.5 1.3.1 1.3.3

2.1.2 2.1.6 2.3.7 2.5.1 2.5.3 2.6.4

3.2.2 3.2.8 3.3.3 3.3.8

Math

K.1.8 K.1.9

1.1.10

2.1.11 2.1.12

3.1.13 3.1.12

Science

K.4.1 K.4.2

1.4.1 1.4.2

2.3.4 2.4.4 2.4.5

3.4.1 3.4.2

Social Studies

K.5.2 K.5.3 K.3.2

1.5.3 1.3.5 1.3.7

2.3.3 2.3.4

3.5.2 3.3.7 3.3.1

Anticipation Guide:

Anticipation Guide Name _____

“Nothing to Do” by Douglas Wood

Before reading the book, write A for agree or D for disagree in the BEFORE column. After reading the book, write A for agree or D for disagree in the AFTER column.

BEFORE	Statement	AFTER
	I love days when there are no plans.	
	Parents should always have activities planned for kids to do.	
	Playing is no fun without toys.	
	I would like to spend time with a special adult without any activity planned.	
	I have trouble thinking of what to do with free time.	
	I get bored when there aren't any plans. (practice,games,rehearsals)	

Art Medium Used: The author used colored pencils over with crayons over a copy to create her illustrations. She used dry media. Her use of lines throughout the book enhanced the feeling that all of the pictures on a certain page connected. The artwork affirmed the feeling of softness and relaxation in the story. There is an easy nature to the pictures with a freedom to be creative. The hustle and bustle attitude is definitely put to rest with these soft, sense of ease illustrations.

If You Like "Nothing to Do" by Douglas Wood, You'll Love:

- "One of Those Days" by Amy Krouse Rosenthal
Similar writing format - "Some days are just not so great, it's one of those days"
- "A Quiet Place" by Douglas Wood
Similar setting - relaxed quiet place to not do much of anything
- "All the Places to Love" by Patricia Maclachlan
Similar setting - describes quiet, peaceful places
- "When Catherine the Great and I Were Eight" by Cari Best
Similar theme - ideas for how to spend time, not money or sports, plays, etc.
- "In Aunt Lucy's Kitchen" by Cynthia Rylant
Similar theme - spending quality time with special people, creative use of time and play
- "The Treasure Hunt" by Bill Cosby
Similar theme - creative play without spending money
- "A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever" by Marla Frazee
Similar theme - spending time with special people, not money

- "The Table Where Rich People Sit" by Byrd Baylor

Similar theme- determining what's important in life - not typical costly items

Across the Curriculum Connections:

Math - K.1.9, 1.1.10, 2.1.11, 2.1.12, 3.1.13, 3.1.12 As a class, students will generate five top answers for the question: Where would you most like to spend your day doing "nothing"? After those are decided upon, students will vote. Each student will use tally marks to record the data. Students will then use graph paper to make a bar graph to represent the data.

Rubric: _____ graph is titled
_____ graph is a bar graph
_____ graph is properly labeled
_____ graph is completed correctly

Resources needed: paper, graph paper, previous knowledge of bar graphs

Science - K.4.1, K.4.2, 1.4.1, 1.4.2, 2.3.4, 2.4.4, 2.4.5, 3.4.1, 3.4.2
Students will spend time outside observing nature. They will journal about their observations of animals and plants. They will create and complete a web about their favorite place in nature. The web will be labeled with the five senses. Students will also make a list of living things in their journals during one observation. In addition, students will find materials in nature that can be reused or recycled, such as grass, sticks, rocks and make something "new" with those materials.

Resources needed: journal notebooks, art supplies

Social Studies- K.5.2, K.5.3, 1.5.3, 1.3.7, 2.3.3, 2.3.4, 3.5.2, 3.3.7

Students will practice locating the local community, the state, and the U.S. on a map. Students will use their maps and play a simple game of locating different places on the map at the teacher's direction. They will use directional words to describe the location of the places.

Students will then create a project depicting their community's place in the world. The project is a set of concentric circles with the outer one being the continent, then glue the next smaller one on top with the country, then the next smaller one with the state, then the county, then the city, then the individual student address. This gives a visual of being part of a much bigger community.

Resources needed: student maps or social studies books, construction paper cut in 6 sizes, art supplies

Book Activities:

Activity #1: individual assignment

Standard 2.5.3 write a friendly letter complete with proper letter parts.

After pairing and sharing with partners on read aloud #2, students will select a special someone to write a friendly letter to asking him/her to spend time together doing "nothing". (prior to the task the class will review the parts of a friendly letter)

RUBRIC:

_____ letter parts are correctly done

_____ content of letter is asking someone to spend

time together (shows reflection on the story)

_____ conventions are correct (spelling, punctuation)

_____ letter is 4 or more sentences

Activity #2: individual and paired assignment

Standard 2.6.4 correctly identify parts of speech such as nouns and verbs

To begin, each student will make a "T" chart on a sheet of paper. Label one side NOUNS and the other VERBS. Students will individually listen for examples of nouns and verbs as the story is read again to them slowly. (prior instruction on nouns and verbs would have occurred) At the completion of the story, partners will get together to compare lists and discuss if they are in agreement about the nouns and verbs listed on their papers. To conclude, as a whole group, students will share out nouns and verbs as we make a class "T" chart.

(individual papers could be collected and checked for accuracy if desired)

Bibliography:

Indiana Academic Standards, <http://www.doe.state.in.us>

Douglas Wood, <http://www.douglaswood.com>

Wendy Anderson Halperin, <http://www.wendyhalperin.com>

Amazon Books, <http://www.amazon.com>

