

Book Notes

Caribbean Cats

Author and Illustrator Susan Giles

16 pages ■ 637 words

Fountas and Pinnell Level M

Intervention Level 23



Caribbean Cats

SYNOPSIS

A fantasy narrative account of eight homeless cats that sail from island to island in the Caribbean Sea looking for new homes.

WHAT THE BOOK OFFERS

- Fantasy fiction narrative adventure
- Third person
- Past tense
- Universal narrator
- Diminishing structure
- Alliteration
- Patterns and pairs—alphabetizing and matching of cats' names and islands
- “Nod nod, wink wink”—reader is in on the secret with the author
- Carry over to next page
- Descriptive and varied phrasing
- Ellipses
- Highly detailed illustrations
- Geography
- Superlative word ending *-iest*

POSSIBLE SKILLS EMPHASIS

- Use of alliteration
- Use of poetic and descriptive language
- Patterns in storyline, language, illustrations
- Reading unfamiliar words and proper names
- Effective use of adjectives, phrasing
- Geography and maps

INTRODUCING THE BOOK

Look at this cover. What do you notice? (map, water, islands, names of islands, directionals) Can you pronounce some of the islands? I wonder how we will work those out.

- Introduce syllabication as one technique for pronouncing unknown words. What do you see on the left when you open the book? Why are the words written that way? How does this help us with the names of the islands? Title page: What do you notice about the names of the cats? (pairs; alliteration) Do you think that is important for the story?
- Notice the song. Two notes, two meows—pairs of characters. “Nod nod, wink wink”—readers are in on the secret with the author. Teachers and children may hum or sing “The Caribbean Cat Song,” replacing the familiar words of “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” with the “meows” that the cats sing.

Caribbean Cats (continued)

FOCUS OF INSTRUCTION

Pages 2 and 3: *Where does this story happen?* (beach, island, Caribbean Sea) *Who are the characters?* (cats, kittens) *When did it happen?* (September) *What's happened here?* (Hurricane Bob left some cats homeless) *Why did the cats get into the boat? Where do you think they're going?*

- Chart challenging vocabulary and compare to more familiar words—remained/stayed; wedged/stuck; curious/nosey—want to find out about something.

What do you notice about a lot of the words on these pages? (descriptive vocabulary—pretty purple, white warm—alliteration) *Why did the author do that? Did we see that earlier? Do you think we'll read more words that start with the same letters?*

- Start a chart of alliterations.
- Page 5: If students don't notice it, draw attention to alliteration of island name and cats' names.

Page 5: *What is the island like?* (descriptive adjectives) *"Just as" and the ellipsis make us anticipate the next page. What do you think happens? Turn the page to find out if we're right.*

Pages 6 and 7: *What familiar things are we seeing on these pages?* (alliteration, boat swept away, song, an island, two cats jump off, "Just as" and ellipses).

Pages 8 and 9: *Do you see a pattern? How many cats are left on the boat? What do you think will happen next? How is the author helping us figure it out?*

- Teacher and children sing the song each time it appears, noticing that as the pairs of cats leave the boat the number of meows diminish accordingly. Talk about the musical notes that appear after each last "Meow."
- Pages 10 and 11: Draw students' attention to the slightly different illustration on page 11. Compare to pages 5, 7, and 9. Discuss possible reasons for this.

Pages 12 to 15: *What parts of the previous patterns appear on these pages?* (alliteration, names of islands and cats, long sentences). *What is different?* (illustrations, different tone or mood, no song)

Page 16: *What does the author get us thinking about?* (further adventures of the boat or the cats, how the patterns affected their reading, using pairs of adjectives and alliteration in writing)

FOLLOWING THE READING

What information did the illustrations provide?

What new vocabulary did you learn?

- Students can list several descriptive words that begin with the same letter sound and then write a piece using alliteration.
 - Chart descriptive words used for each island.

Book Notes

Caribbean Cats (continued)

Additional Comprehension Prompts For Oral or Written Use Before, During, and After Reading	
FINISH THIS THOUGHT	<i>The title page of this book shows . . . If I were a cat, I would want to live in . . . because . . .</i>
USE YOUR MEMORY	<i>What did Archibald and Angel like to do in their new home called, Anguilla? How many cats were left on the boat after Archibald and Angel jumped off? Where can you check to see if you remembered correctly? What color was the boat? What color were the sails on the boat? Check and see if you were right.</i>
WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?	<i>Why did all the cats jump into the boat in the first place? Which place do you think is the best place for a cat, of all the places you see in this book? How come?</i>
BE CREATIVE	<i>Look at the title page in this book. You will see 8 characters' names and pictures. Use all 8 cats to write a Readers' Theater script. Decide what the story will be about and what the cats will say. Decide what the problem will be and what the solution is. Be sure that you label each cat with his or her lines so that people who read your script aloud will know their part. Then find 8 friends and practice presenting your Readers' Theater so you can perform it for people!</i>
VOCABULARY AGENT	<i>Use the following phrases in sentences: *into the sea *in the white warm sand *through the waves *in their boat *onto the land *through the bushes *out to sea *through the night</i>