

A Loonie for Luck

A Teacher’s Guide to Making Connections

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About this Book

McClelland & Stewart website

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A Loonie for Luck Written by Roy MacGregor

In February 2002, the greatest hockey teams this country could muster headed to Salt Lake City to compete in the Winter Olympics. The Canadian men and women hoped to go all the way to the finals, but it had been fifty long years since the Canadians had won Olympic gold. In the past, they had come close – it was just that luck always seemed to be against them. This time, however, their chances to end the long drought were good. The women looked set for a medal – although the all-powerful American team stood between them and the ultimate prize. The Canadian men faced strong opponents, too, but prospects were good for the all-star team assembled by the great Wayne Gretzky. And this time, both teams had a secret weapon. So secret, in fact, they didn’t even know it existed. At first. Like all good secrets this one was too good not to pass along. Under the surface at centre ice, Trent Evans had hidden a Canadian loonie. The expert ice maker had been invited down from Edmonton to help install the ice for the Games, and this was his little good-luck charm for our Olympic hockey teams. Perhaps, he figured, the guys could use some “home ice” advantage.

A Loonie for Luck is the true story of that loonie and the magic it wove at Salt Lake City. It follows Wayne Gretzky, Trent Evans, and the men’s and women’s teams through their time at the Games. And it pays tribute to the role of ritual, superstition and chance in hockey – a part of the sport not always acknowledged, but one that brings real magic to the game.

With the close co-operation of Wayne Gretzky and Trent Evans, Roy MacGregor tells the inside story of how the coin came to be in Trent Evans’ pocket and then buried under centre ice. He tells how, throughout the Games, the loonie was in danger of being uncovered as the secret began to spread, and how, as the tournament progressed, with the players in need of every break they could get, the good luck miraculously held.

This true story, brilliantly illustrated by Bill Slavin, is full of suspense, humour, and charm. It will delight every Canadian who felt a surge of pride for our athletes at Salt Lake City.

Category: Sports & Recreation; Sports & Recreation - Hockey; Sports & Recreation - OLYMPICS

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McClelland & Stewart at <http://www.mcclelland.com>

Or The Teachers Book Depository: <http://www.teachersbookdepository.com>

Sharing the Book

To read aloud or not to read aloud, that is one question.

The best plan, always, is for a teacher to read the book to himself/herself, first. It is a short book, only 96 pages. There is a place for many different kinds of approaches to a study of A Loonie for Luck. Here are two of the basics:

Read Aloud

If you choose this approach you may want to plan a chapter every few days so you have time to do one or two activities with each chapter, before moving on to another idea. Or read the book a chapter a day over the course of 3 weeks and then allow students a choice of activities as follow up.

Literature Circle

If you have not heard about Literature Circles you may want to go to one of these websites to learn more about them.

Literature Circle Resource Centre <http://www.litcircles.org>

Theory to Practice: Literature Circles <http://eduscapes.com/ladders/themes/circles>

Good Hockey Books for Connections

The following is a list of books that would give students a choice about a book with a hockey theme. It is by no means comprehensive. There are new hockey fact and story books being published every year.

Thomas, Keltie; How Hockey Works
(great book – staple for hockey themes)

Leonetti, Mike; The Goalie Mask
Gretzky's Game

Brownridge, William; The Moccasin Goalie
The Final Game
Victory at Paradise Hill

Bouchard, David; That's Hockey

Napier, Matt; Z is for Zamboni

Etue, Elizabeth; Haley Wickenheiser, Born to Play

Wilson, Stacy; The Hockey Book for Girls

Arnason, Kathleen; Falcons Gold, Canada's First Olympic Hockey Heroes

Stubbs, Dave; Our Game, The History of Hockey in Canada

Carrier, Roch; The Hockey Sweater (a Canadian Classic)

Polacco, Patricia; Rotten Richie and the Ultimate Dare

For guided reading bins:

Marzollo, Jean and Dan; Hockey Hero (Hello Reader series)

Kramer, S.A.; The Great Gretzky (All Aboard Reading)

Roy MacGegor has a kids' mystery series with main characters from a hockey team called the Screech Owls. They have their own website: www.screechowls.com

Hockey Vocabulary

Whether or not you are a hockey fan, our Canadian use of English (and French) has many metaphors that come to us from the world of hockey.

- As a class, start collecting expressions from the book.
- The book How Hockey Works has a simple Hockey Talk index in the back.
- Kidmonton by Linda Goyette has an excellent story titled “Hockey English” about a new Canadian boy teaching himself English by watching Hockey Night in Canada.

Connections

This guide contains no worksheets, crossword puzzles or colouring pages. Sorry.

The following connections could be investigated chapter by chapter or done as individual student projects along the way or at the completion of the story. Certainly, there is no expectation that anyone would try to do everything.

This guide does contain lots of cyber places to go, other books to read, math tips, mapping activities and things to talk about.

- Through the study, consider tackling some of your mapping objectives in social studies.
- Use the book to be sure the students know the difference between an author (Roy MacGregor) and the main character (Trent Evans). And the difference between fact (this is a “true” story) and fiction.
- Start a math unit connected to money. If you have Gr. 3 find out about the money in Peru, Tunisia, India and Ukraine.
- Pull out the floor hockey equipment and do a physical education unit.
- Even though it is hard, get your class out skating a time or two.
- Start a list of questions for Trent Evans. If the answers come up as you read the book, tick them off.

The following activities are organized by the book chapters.

Forward

(a little pun – Wayne Gretzky was a forward)

- Do a Wayne Gretzky investigation. Find out about him and the Wayne Gretzky Foundation at his official website at www.gretzky.com . Look at the timeline of his life.
- Read a biography about him.
- In Edmonton, there is a road named after him. Find out when that happened. Google it to see a map.
- Find out about other Foundations. What kind of things do they do? The Edmonton Oilers has a Community Foundation that supports the ICE School program. Look at that website. www.oilersfoundation.ca

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- Plan a project that might raise some money for a Foundation that interests you. Maybe send it to Wayne Gretzky’s Foundation with a letter about how you found out about it.
- Find Oslo, Norway on a map of the world.
- Map all the previous Winter Olympic locations. There is a list at the very interesting website www.olympic.org.
- Look ahead to 2010 and our Canadian connection of Vancouver.

Chapter 1

- Investigate Tim Horton. Yes, he was a hockey player before he started a coffee shop. Start with the Hockey Hall of Fame www.hhof.com
- Poke around the Tim Horton’s website www.timhortons.com
- Google directions from Tim Horton’s (137 Main Blvd) in Sherwood Park, AB to Rexall Place, Edmonton.
- In the fall of 2007, a large Tim Horton’s coffee costs \$1.60. Do the math to figure out the change from \$5. Use money sets, to put together different sets of change that contain at least one loonie and one dime.
- Keep track of Trent Evans’ family and friends as they are mentioned in the book.

Chapter 2

- 1987 – Begin to collect a list of things that happened in 1987. Start with the things in the book. Survey family and friends. Investigate your community. Do the same for 2002.
- Go to the Royal Canadian Mint at www.mint.ca
- Make a centre with a set of coins. Use a blindfold and feel coins to see if you can tell the difference.
- Find some Robert-Ralph Carmichael art work. Go to www.ccca.ca/artists or www.artfocus.com/robart.html (*there are some nude images here so check them out before you go with kids*)
- Use the missing voyageur coin “dies” as a story starter or suggest students write an adventure around finding them buried somewhere.
- Try to think of some interesting “nicknames” for the coin that never was.
- At the Mint website, go and look at a 1935 Silver Dollar (with a voyageur) under The Passion, Our Coins on the timeline.
- Invite in someone who collects coins to share their collection and why they do it.
- When you come to the end of the chapter, write out the words for the number 795,865,541.

Chapter 3

- Start finding places on maps, as they are mentioned. Salt Lake City, Kelowna, New York, Germany, etc, etc, etc.
- Make a list of things, smaller than a loonie, about the size of a loonie, bigger than a loonie. Start a list of uniquely Canadian sayings. Invent some unique to your school, your class.

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- Check out the E Centre today at www.theecenter.com.
- Investigate the process of ice making. There is an excellent section in the book, How Hockey Works. Go to either of these websites to get the low-down: entertainment.howstuffworks.com/ice-rink – Carolina Hurricanes ice at the RBC Center. www.exploratorium.edu/hockey - San Jose Sharks ice
- Investigate the Zamboni at www.zamboni.com. Check out the inventor, Frank Zamboni.
- What about that dime?

Chapter 4

Ritual or Superstition

- Survey or interview teachers, other students, family and community members about their rituals and superstitions.
- Try to find some “good luck charms”. Write a story about finding a “lucky charm” and what happens.
- Read some sport biographies to learn about other sport superstitions.
- Check out the Edmonton Oilers Heritage website at www.oilersheritage.com. Search for photos and information about some of the people mentioned in this chapter. Report back to the class.

Chapter 5

You tell two friends and they tell two friends and.....

- Play the game “Gossip” by passing a whispered secret around a circle.
- Go to the beginning of the chapter and start a web of the spread of the secret.

Chapter 6

The games begin....

- If you have Gr. 6, check out the section at www.olympic.org about the Ancient games.
- Use that website to look at the posters and logos of previous games and the upcoming ones. Use the book cover to see a Salt Lake City logo.
- Check out the opening ceremonies in Salt Lake City.
- Keep adding the countries mentioned on the map of the world.

Chapter 7,8,9

- Keep track of Canada’s record. Who did they beat and what were the scores?

Chapter 10

- Read Hayley Wickenheiser, Born to Play and learn more about her.
- Investigate the story of what happened to Jamie Sale and David Pelletier at the Salt Lake Olympics at www.sale-pelletier.com under the 2001-2002 season.
- Look at a picture of the women’s team looking at the loonie at www.hhof.com/html/olypress.shtml Compare it to the book’s illustration.

Chapter 11

- Survey grown-ups (18 years and older) to find who watched the gold medal games and who didn’t. Make a graph about how many did and did not.

Chapter 12

- Go to the CBC radio archives to see a clip of Gretzky with the loonie and hear an interview with Trent and Roy MacGregor at:
http://archives.cbc.ca/IDC-1-41-1374-8400/sports/olympics_winter_1984_2002/clip7

Where is Chapter 13?

Chapter 14

- If you have not looked at them yet, go see the photos with captions at the Olympic Gallery of the Hockey Hall of Fame:
<http://www.hhof.com/html/olygallery02.shtml#x>

Interviewing Trent Evans

Now that you have finished the book you can use VC (video conferencing) technology to give your class the chance to interview Trent Evans. Contact Sandy VanRiper, Program Coordinator of the Edmonton Oilers ICE School at svanriper@northlands.com or phone 780-471-8123 to start the process.