



Meet the Kite Maker: Robert Trépanier

Extending the Student Reading by Writing & Discussing

1. Use a map of Canada to point out the province of Québec (find a printable map of Canada, with accompanying lesson plans, at The Atlas of Canada, http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/maps/reference/anniversary_maps/political). Discuss the term province and how it compares to a state in the USA (10 provinces and 3 territories compared to 50 states, in a roughly comparable amount of territory). Follow up with a geo-quiz, at <http://www.lizardpoint.com/fun/geoquiz/canquiz.html>. For additional assistance, turn to the Canadian Studies Center at University of Washington: its online publication Oh Canada! The True North Strong and Free! is at <http://www.wwu.edu/depts/castudies/k12studycanada/files/CanadaSupplement.pdf>. Discuss bilingual communities and how language functions as a marker for distinct cultures.

2. Discuss Robert's childhood experiences as examples of personal interests that affect what he has achieved as an adult. Point out his father's job with animals, plus his family's and neighbors' interest in his early accomplishment with kites, as ways in which family and community can support individual development. Ask students to write a paragraph on an experience that they have had (or perhaps want to have) that will distinguish them from others.

3. Talk about how Robert's job fits into the spectrum of responsibilities within a community. Point out that Robert plays roles both within his local community (teaching school children in Québec) and for more wide-ranging groups (art collectors, festival audiences, children around the world who benefit from his kite designs).

4. Discuss Robert's claim that people who fly kites "want to play," and how this spirit might enable people from different cultural groups to enjoy being together. Is "wanting to play" a cultural universal?

5. Use the description of Robert's kite to emphasize that this is an object made of parts that work together—the sail, the spars, the vent, the tails, the line. Older primary students can discuss how wind through the vent affects the kite's motion and how that motion might change were the vent bigger or smaller.

6. Discuss further points made in the final paragraph about this kite as a design solution for a specific human problem in a specific social context or setting—young children in school who must work with inexpensive materials that are easy to find. Discuss the portability of design: use a globe to point out how distant Palestine and Taiwan are from each other, and from whatever your location.



Photo by Bruce Maede