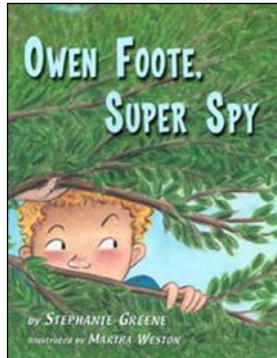


OWEN FOOTE, SUPER SPY**CURRICULUM TIE-INS:**

Courage
Honesty
Consequences
Friendship
Conflict Resolution

PLOT SUMMARY:

Owen and his friends decide spying on their families is getting boring, so Owen makes it more exciting by suggesting they spy on their principal in his own backyard. When things go wrong, Owen discovers who his real friends are, the meaning of courage, and what accepting the consequences of his actions really means.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION:

1. As a spy, Owen lives to see something amazing. Do you feel the same way about spying? Have you ever seen something amazing?
2. Owen and Joseph use Morse code to communicate silently while they spy. What did you learn about Morse code? Do you know anything more about it? Can you think of another way kids could communicate without talking?
3. Why did getting caught when they spied on the house under construction make Owen, Joseph, and Anthony feel so good? Wouldn't you expect it to be the opposite?
4. Why did Owen think that Mr. Mahoney would be the perfect person to spy on?
5. Why does Owen get indignant about the things Anthony owns? When he and Lydia talk about it, why does he end up thinking that Lydia thinks he, Owen, is interesting?
6. After Owen falls down the hill and Mr. Mahoney finds him, Mr. Mahoney says, "It appears your troops have deserted you." What does he mean? As a Marine, what do you think he feels about this?
7. Mr. Mahoney tells Owen and Joseph they should come back in a week and they can all talk about what happened, but Owen wishes they could talk about it right away. Why?
8. Were you surprised Ben waited for Owen and Joseph on Saturday? What does it say about him? How did it change Owen's feelings about him? How does Owen end up feeling about Anthony, and why? Would you agree with him?

9. Lead a discussion about the scene when the boys talk to Mr. Mahoney in his basement. Did any of them actually confess? Why doesn't Mr. Mahoney ask them what they were doing in his backyard? Why does he say good things about all three of them? Why doesn't he punish them? Do you think you would go back with your friends the way Ben did? What did it say about Anthony?
10. Owen comes away from the experience having learned something about "facing up to things." What does that mean, and why is it important? What happens if you don't face up to things?

WORD HUNT:

It's fun to discover new words. See if your students can find the words below on the pages in the book where they're used. Then see if they can figure out what the word means by reading the sentence it's in. Let them choose several of the words to use in sentences of their own.

1. Flailing p. 9
2. Arborist p. 16
3. Decisively p. 18
4. Incredible p. 29
5. Ultimate p. 33
6. Uneasy p. 38
7. Flare p. 44
8. Eroding p. 61
9. Careening p. 65
10. Consolation p. 71
11. Suspense p. 80
12. Rallied p. 90

CREATIVE WRITING EXERCISE:

Owen's passion is spying. He comes up with his own camouflage, the Morse code idea, and the game "Duck or Die" for the boys to play. Invite your students to design and create their own game around something they love to do. It can involve any hobby or interest a child may have. See how creative they can be. What kinds of costumes, or rules, or game goals they can create.

The scene where the boys face up to Mr. Mahoney is the pivotal scene in the book. It could have ended in a variety of ways. Ask the children to write alternative outcomes to it: one they think would be terrible or one they think would have been better than the way it turned out. Ask them to consider what role they think Anthony should, or might have, played in it.