

# TEACHER'S GUIDE



## Flying Over Brooklyn

Written by Myron Uhlberg  
Illustrated by Gerald Fitzgerald

HC: 978-1-56145-194-4  
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Ages 4–8 | Fantasy  
AR • RC • Lexile • F&P • GRL O; Grade 3

### ABOUT THE BOOK

*Flying Over Brooklyn* is a magical story of how a young boy's everyday world is transformed into a snow-covered wonderland through the force of a blizzard and the power of a dream.

A young boy trudges through deep snow in a neighborhood park. Suddenly a strong wind grabs his coat and lifts the child up into the air. Soon the boy is soaring high above his strangely silent, snow-covered neighborhood. As he flies over familiar sites—a bridge over a frozen river, a baseball field, and an amusement park—he gains a new perspective on the world around him. The boy's airborne adventure provides a magical escape from the routine of everyday life. In the end the boy returns to the safety of his home and family, but is left wondering: Was it all just a marvelous dream or did it really happen?

Author Myron Uhlberg's story is based in part on his own childhood memories of the Great Blizzard of 1947, which blanketed Brooklyn and the surrounding area under several feet of snow. An author's note at the back of the book provides details about the snowstorm and places this fantasy in its historical context. Illustrator Gerald Fitzgerald's two-page, gently softened illustrations beautifully evoke the story's nostalgia and dreamlike quality.

### THEMES

- Snow
- Flying
- Dreams
- Adventures
- Reflecting on the past

### BEFORE YOU READ

- Show the cover of the book and illustrations; ask the children what they think the book is about.
- Ask the children if they have experienced a blizzard before.
- Ask the children what snow is and if they have ever seen it; if so ask them to explain it using their five senses.
- Ask the children if they have ever been to New York City. If so, what was it like?
- Put together a bulletin board with pictures of the places that the boy visited.
- Ask the children what their dreams are and what they would do if they came true.
- Ask the children if they have ever wished they could fly and why.
- Ask the children if they have ever wished they could do something really different and what that would be.
- Read the Author's Note. Ask them what they think it would have been like to be in such a snowstorm.

### AS YOU READ

- Show the children how some of the text is curved, which adds to the excitement of the book.
- Discuss different snow-related activities.
- Point out all the details in the illustrations; ask them what they see and what they think will happen next.
- Use expression and change your voice and tone when reading to go along with text.
- In the book, the little boy's father says to him: "Not just a bridge, ... more like a dream." Looking down, I understood what he was trying to tell me." Ask the

children what they think that means.

- On the page where the boy is over the baseball stadium, ask the children to close their eyes and imagine themselves there, using all of their five senses (smelling the roasted peanuts, hearing the cracking of the bat, etc.).
- Ask the children what they think it would be like to be stuck in a snowstorm.
- Stop in the middle of the book and have the children draw a picture of the places they would go if they could fly.

### AFTER YOU READ

- Have students pick their favorite line and create their own illustration.
- Have students pick one illustration and write their own story.
- Write and illustrate a class book.
- Have students turn the book into a play; create roles, costumes, sets, etc.
- Transform students into critics and have them give reviews of the book.
- If possible, create a fieldtrip to allow students to play in the snow (or just take them outside during the season). Have students write / draw / sing / reenact their feelings of what they saw after being in the snow.
- Invite a pilot of some sort to the class and have them talk about what it is like to fly.
- Ask children where they would go if they could fly, as well as why they would go there.
- Have children tell stories of visits to amusement parks. What did they eat? What rides did they ride?
- Have children ask parents if they remember any big storms or blizzards happening when they were little.

### CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

- Have students research other places on the globe that would have snowfall.
- Have students make a weekly snow record (how much it snowed in inches that week either in their own city or another city that is having snow) and graph it.
- Include musical instruments in the storytelling process and have the students create an 'orchestra pit' for a more theatrical production.

- Have students paint a picture of what they recall best from the story.
- Have children bring in pictures of themselves playing in the snow.
- Show a documentary or slide show about New York City.
- Have children bring in pictures of different places that they have visited.
- Have a snow cone party.

### CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

#### SCIENCE

- Discuss facts about snow. For example: All flakes are different, etc.
- Have children research when the Brooklyn Bridge was built and how tall it is.
- Have children do reports on how people survive in cold regions of the earth.

#### ART

- Have children draw pictures of themselves living out their dreams.
- Make paper snowflakes to decorate the classroom.

#### WRITING

- Have children write a story to go along with the picture that they drew for their art project.
- Make a list of new vocabulary words from the book. You can start with these:
  - trudging
  - coattails
  - billowed
  - swooped
  - boardwalk
  - drifts
- Make up a crossword puzzle with the new vocabulary words above and any other words from the book.
- Have children write an essay about the best vacation they ever went on.

## REVIEWS

“...an enchanted vision of Brooklyn transformed but ever itself.” —*Publishers Weekly*

“Youngsters will delight in the idea of such a snow-filled flight. ...a magical winter storytime.”  
—*School Library Journal*

### Also available from Myron Uhlberg:

*Dad, Jackie, and Me*  
*Lemuel the Fool*  
*The Printer*  
*The Sound of All Things*  
*A Storm Called Katrina*

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Myron Uhlberg, a native of Brooklyn, New York, connects many of his texts with the neighborhood and city in which he grew up. He was born as a hearing child to two deaf parents and developed an early love for words and reading. As a young child, he lived without a television and instead read books and became an avid baseball fan. Later on his family did buy a television, but Myron still continued to nurture his love of reading and later writing. He has written many books for children, including *Flying Over Brooklyn*, *Lemuel the Fool*, *Mad Dog McGraw*, *The Printer* and *The Sound of All Things*. He continues to nurture his love of baseball and writes full time in California, where he lives with his wife, Karen.

[www.myronuhlberg.com](http://www.myronuhlberg.com)

### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Gerald Fitzgerald has received awards for his illustrations in numerous children's books. He has illustrated well-known books such as *In My Pocket*, and *Casey at the Bat*. For the illustrations in *Flying Over Brooklyn*, Fitzgerald has relied on family photographs and memories from Myron Uhlberg to correctly capture the setting and nostalgia of the story. He can be found living on the Isle of Arran in Scotland.

Peachtree Teacher's Guide for  
**FLYING OVER BROOKLYN**  
prepared by Joe Plesser and Kristy Threlfall

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