

BOOKPALS STORYLINE PRESENTS:

"KNOTS ON A COUNTING ROPE"

By *Bill Martin, Jr and John Archambault*, illustrated by *Ted Rand*

Watch online video of actors *Bonnie Bartlett* and *William Daniels* reading this story at <http://www.storylineonline.net>

In this poignant story, the counting rope is a metaphor for the passage of time and for a boy's emerging confidence facing his greatest challenge: blindness and the approaching death of his beloved grandfather. While classified as a Native American story, the love, hope, and courage expressed are universal.

Knots on a Counting Rope

By Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault
Illustrated by Ted Rand



RELATED ACTIVITIES

1. Describe, tell or write about how you got your name.
2. Research the different kinds of naming activities in different cultures. Make a chart to share the information you discovered.
3. Research the customs surrounding new births in families in different cultures. Make a poster to share the information you discovered.
4. Make a time line of your life describing one special event for each year you have been alive.

1. In this book there is a race in

MORE ACTIVITIES

which Boy-Strength-of-Blue-Horses participates, but he doesn't win. Describe, tell or write about an event or race in which you competed, and although you didn't win, you grew from the experience.

2. Read the book *Koala Lou* by Mem Fox. Describe, tell, or write about what's the same and what's different in this story and *Knots on a Counting Rope*.

3. Research the indigenous Native American groups in your area.

Use the information you find in your research to fill in the chart on the following page.

CHART OF INDIGENOUS NATIVE AMERICAN GROUPS

Native American Group	Homes	Clothing	Foods
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MORE ACTIVITIES

CONTINUED...

4. The Boy's Grandfather was a very important person in his life. Choose someone from your life that has made an impression on you. Describe, tell or write about this important person and how they have influenced you.

5. Another book about a Native American family is Annie and the Old One by Miska Miles. Read this book and then describe, tell or write how these two Native American stories are similar and how the stories are different. Be sure to include what the young boy in Knots on the Counting Rope and the young girl in Annie and the Old One have in common.

Other books you might enjoy about the topics in "Knots on a Counting Rope":

"Badger's Parting Gift" by Susan Varley
"Koala Lou" by Mem Fox
"Nana Upstairs, Nana Downstairs"
by Tomie dePaola
"The Giving Tree" by Shel Silverstein
"The Name Jar" by Yangsook Choi
"Wind in the Willows"
by Kenneth Grahame

6. Describe a color in a cinquain or Haiku.

A *Cinquain* is a form of poetry with five lines, written using a recipe. The words you choose and the form they take on paper are an important part of the writing.

Here's the recipe:

Line 1: one word to name the subject

Line 2: two words to describe the subject

Line 3: three action words about the subject

Line 4: a four or five word phrase

describing the subject (a thought, not a complete sentence)

Line 5: one word that means the same thing as the first word, or a word that sums it all up

Here's an example:

Dog
Fluffy, playful
Running, rolling, licking
A bundle of energy
Canine

A *Haiku* is a form of Japanese poetry which looks simple, but is really very structured with rules for the way you write it. In English, Haiku consists of 17 syllables, which are arranged in three lines.

Here's the recipe:

Line 1: 5 syllables

Line 2: 7 syllables

Line 3: 5 syllables

Here's an example:

Spring goes, summer comes
With the warm heat from the sun
Swimming, picnics fun!

Now, choose a color and write a Cinquain or a Haiku about the color you selected.

Helpful resource books for your writing:

"Color Dance" by Ann Jonas
"Hailstones and Halibut Bones"
by Mary O'Neill
"My Many Color Days" by Dr. Seuss
"Picasso the Green Tree Frog"
by Amanda Graham

INTERNET ACTIVITIES

A huge part of *Knots on a Counting Rope* is telling how the boy got his name. Go to these websites and read about how babies have been named throughout history.

Go to <http://judaism.about.com/od/hebrewname1/a/namesfaq.htm> and read the questions and answers about the Jewish naming practices.

What did you learn? Share this information with someone.

Go to <http://www.intersurf.com/~rcollins/names.html> and read about many fascinating facts about the naming practices in Colonial America.

What were the three most popular names for girls?

What was the popular custom described that was used in Virginia and New England?

Describe the ritual called "nomination" used by Quakers in Colonial Pennsylvania and Delaware.

Why did the custom of Americanized names in the "Back Country" cause problems?

Go to <http://sweetgrasstraditions.tripod.com/customs.html> to learn more about Native American Naming Traditions. Describe how these compare to those in the book *Knots on a Counting Rope*.

Go to <http://www.vangelis.com.au/names.asp> and click on the first initial of your name. Find out information about what your name means.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bill Martin Jr. is truly one of "America's favorite children's authors." He has been writing for more than 50 years. He is the author of the classic text *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* Bill Martin lives in the east Texas woods near Commerce, Texas. Through the years he has given children some of their favorite books.

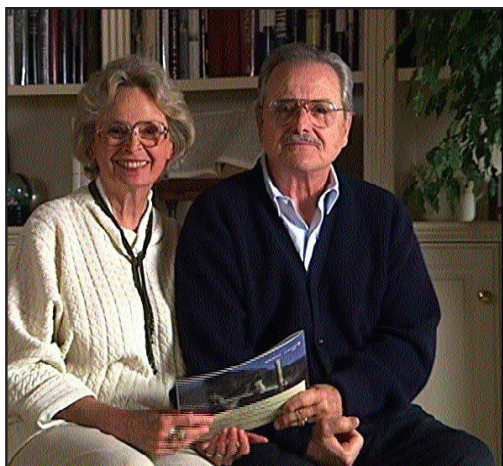
John Archambault is a poet, journalist and storyteller who has worked with Bill Martin Jr. for 8 years. He lives in Idyllwild, California.

Other books by Bill Martin, Jr.:

"Brown Bear, Brown Bear,
What Do You See?"
"Here Are My Hands"
"Barn Dance"
"Old Devil Wind"
"Swish"
"Little Granny Quarterback"
"Polar Bear, Polar Bear,
What Do You Hear?"
"The Ghost-Eye Tree"

Other books by John Archambault:

"White Dynamite and Curly Kidd"
"The Magic Pumpkin"
"Grandmother's Garden"
"Words"
"Chicka, Chicka, Boom, Boom"
"Here Are My Hands"
"Barn Dance"
"Up and Down On the Merry-Go-Round"



Bonnie Bartlett grew up in Illinois and attended Northwestern University. She has been an actor on stage, in films and on television. She won an Emmy Award in 1986 and in 1987 for her work in the hit series *St. Elsewhere* and has also appeared on television in such distinguished and popular productions as *ER*, *Home Improvement*, *Touched by an Angel*, *Boston Legal* and *Grey's Anatomy*. On film, Bonnie has been seen in such films as *Promises in the Dark*, *All Night Long* and *Dave*.

Bonnie met her husband, **William Daniels**, when they were both attending Northwestern University. The multi-faceted actor was born in Brooklyn and made his first stage appearance tap dancing at the age of four and a half. Along with his sister, William performed as one-half of a song-and-dance team on radio and children's shows, and went on to work for Armed Forces radio. Along with impressing audiences and critics with his work on theatre, film and television, William won Emmy Awards in 1985 and 1986 for his work on *St. Elsewhere* and for seven years appeared as Mr. Feeny on the hit series *Boy Meets World*. He served as President of Screen Actors Guild from 1999-2001. William and Bonnie have two sons and four grandchildren.

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