

# **WDSE *Drawn to Write: Phyllis Root and Betsy Bowen* Lesson Plan**

## **Grade Level:**

9-12

## **Subject Areas:**

Geography, Minnesota History, Language Arts, Arts

## **MN State Standards:**

### ***Geography Standards***

9.3.4.9.1 Analyze the interconnectedness of the environment and human activities (including the use of technology), and the impact of one upon the other.

### ***English Language Arts Standards***

#### ***Writing Benchmarks***

9.7.3.3-11.7.3.3 Write narratives and other creative texts, develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

### ***Arts Standards***

9.2.1.5.1 Create a single, complex artwork or multiple artworks to express ideas.

## **Materials:**

*Drawn to Write: Phyllis Root and Betsy Bowen* DVD or YouTube link

Study Guide – *The Lost Forest*

*This Is a Story About* Template

Art supplies such as colored pencils, brushes and paints, old magazines, scissors, and glue sticks

## **Objectives:**

- Students discuss how people have observed and divided land.
- Students collaborate on illustrated stories about natural places in the community.

## **Procedure:**

### **Day 1: The Lost Forty**

- Introduce this episode of *Drawn to Write* as a conversation with the author and the illustrator of the book, *The Lost Forest*. Pass out the Study Sheet, so students can take notes as they watch the video. Play the show in full. (25 minutes)
- After watching, have students work together in pairs to complete the answers to the questions on the Study Sheet. Then discuss the answers as a class. Spend the majority of class discussion time on the last question, about why the forest was not “lost.” Encourage students to discuss ideas about ownership of land and living things. (15 minutes)

## Day 2: Starting a Collaboration

- Remind students that *The Lost Forest* book was a collaboration between writer Phyllis Root and artist Betsy Bowen. Replay the first minute of the show, so students can again see how written story and descriptive images go together. (5 minutes)
- Ask students to recall how the collaboration on this book occurred. How did work on the book begin? (*Phyllis Root visited the Lost Forty, did some research on its history, and wrote the story.*) How did Betsy Bowen decide what images to include? (*She read Root's story, visited the lost forest, and did research on the history of surveying.*) Why did it work best for the author and artist to work separately? (*Each of them could work freely, using their own inspiration and talents.*) (10 minutes)
- Provide each student with the *This Is a Story About* two-page template. Tell students you would like them to act as authors, to write a brief children's story about a natural site that they know well. Tell them to complete the title and four statements on the template to write their story. Demonstrate by filling in the template yourself and reading it aloud. (*Example: This Is a Story About My Backyard. The first thing you notice about this place is that there are large leafy trees. When you look closer, you discover many small insects living among the leaves. People have changed this place by planting wildflowers under the trees. In 100 years, this place will probably be home to many birds and butterflies.*) Tell students to write neatly on the template and leave enough room for pictures around their written story. Allow time for students to write their stories. Encourage students to visit their natural places after school and revise their stories if necessary, on a new template. (25 minutes)

## Day 3: Collaborating Separately

- Tell students to staple their story pages together, like two facing pages of a book. Then have them fold the pages closed. Collect the stories into a pile and shuffle them. Hand a story to each student, making sure that no student gets their own story. Tell students they will be illustrating the story they receive. They should use the words as inspiration for their illustrations, but also use their own imagination. (5 minutes)
- Provide students with art materials and allow them most of the class period to illustrate the story they have received. (25 minutes)
- At the end of class, have students spread out the stories on a table for the class to examine. Ask each author to comment on the illustrations that were done for their story. Were they surprised by the illustrations? How did the illustrations enhance the story? Have each author and illustrator add their names to their story and keep the stories in the classroom for others to read. (10 minutes)

## **STUDY GUIDE – THE LOST FOREST**

### **1. How did the Lost Forty get “lost”?**

*(Surveyors made a mistake when creating their maps and forty acres of forest were not included in the survey.)*

### **2. What are three of the plants and animals in the Lost Forty?**

*(Possible answers: red and white pines, black bears, moose, eagles, red-backed salamanders, coral root orchids, warblers, flycatchers, flickers, weasels, porcupines.)*

### **3. What happens when land is surveyed?**

*(Sample answers: It gets divided into rectangles; It gets examined to determine the resources on it; It becomes something that can be bought and sold by people.)*

### **4. What kinds of things did surveyors use to map an area?**

*(Sample answer: They used: compasses to determine directions; poles, tally pins, and chains to measure distances; axes to mark trees; notebooks to record measurements; posts to mark section corners.)*

### **5. At the end of the book, the author writes: “The trees had never really been lost...they had always belonged to themselves.” What does this quote mean to you?**

*(Sample answers: Just because humans are unaware of something in nature, it does not mean that it is lost; Natural things live freely and cannot really be owned.)*

**THIS IS A STORY ABOUT**

**The first thing you notice about this place is**

**When you look closer, you discover**

**People have changed this place by**

**In 100 years, this place will probably**