

Dear Family Member,

Welcome to our next unit of study, “Up Against the Wild.”

We are kicking off our sixth unit of study in the Benchmark Advance program. As with the previous units, I am providing suggested activities you and your child can do together at home to build on the work we’re doing in class.

In this unit, we will read and compare selections about characters who are up against the wild and analyze how different genres approach similar themes. We will be reading a variety of genres, including a fable, drama, folktale, realistic fiction, historical fiction, and informational text.

This unit will allow you and your child to consider what drives a character to survive, despite being up against terrible odds.

As always, should you have any questions about our reading program or about your child’s progress, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Up Against the Wild

In this unit, we will be reading examples of ways that characters come up against difficult challenges in the wild. In examining what these characters face, we will think in depth about the question “What compels us to survive?” Here are some activities you can do at home to continue the conversation we started at school about confronting challenges.

Topic Connection

A Tall Tale

Students are reading stories about how characters overcome challenges of the wild. Work with your child to make up a tall tale about a personal challenge you go through together as you face the wild and struggle to survive. First, discuss the features of a tall tale, explaining that the tale should include grandiose, exaggerated details that would not be possible in real life. You can choose to make it a written story or an oral tale, but be sure to include a resolution in which you overcome your obstacle or challenge.

Vocabulary Connection

Word Sort

In school, your child is learning words that writers use in their storytelling. The vocabulary words in this unit include nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Write each of the following words on its own scrap of paper or index card: **adjusted, ascended, bolted, chaos, evacuate, hostile, marveled, peril, priorities,** and **vicarious.** Fold each paper, put them in a bowl, and shake them up. Have your child pull out the cards one at a time and place them on one of three plates, marked “Noun,” “Verb,” or “Adjective.” Then challenge your child to choose five of the words and use each of them in an original sentence.

Comprehension Connection

Challenges Through the Seasons

In this unit, students read about the challenges of the wild. Some of these challenges include harsh cold weather conditions. Get your child thinking about the challenges of nature in each of the four seasons. Take a paper plate or cut a piece of paper into a circle. Have your child divide the circle into four equal sections. Ask him or her to label each section as one of the seasons, and draw a picture in each section to show how that season presents humans with potentially life-threatening challenges. Then talk about how humans overcome each of these challenges of the wild.

Word Study Connections

Hostile Conditions

What better word than *hostile* to focus on in a unit about characters up against the wild? Draw a word web with the word *hostile* in the center oval. Ask your child to fill in additional bubbles extending out from the center oval with examples of ways that nature and the wild can be hostile. Encourage them to think of more examples than just the ones they read about in the unit. Talk about how people can overcome these hostile conditions.