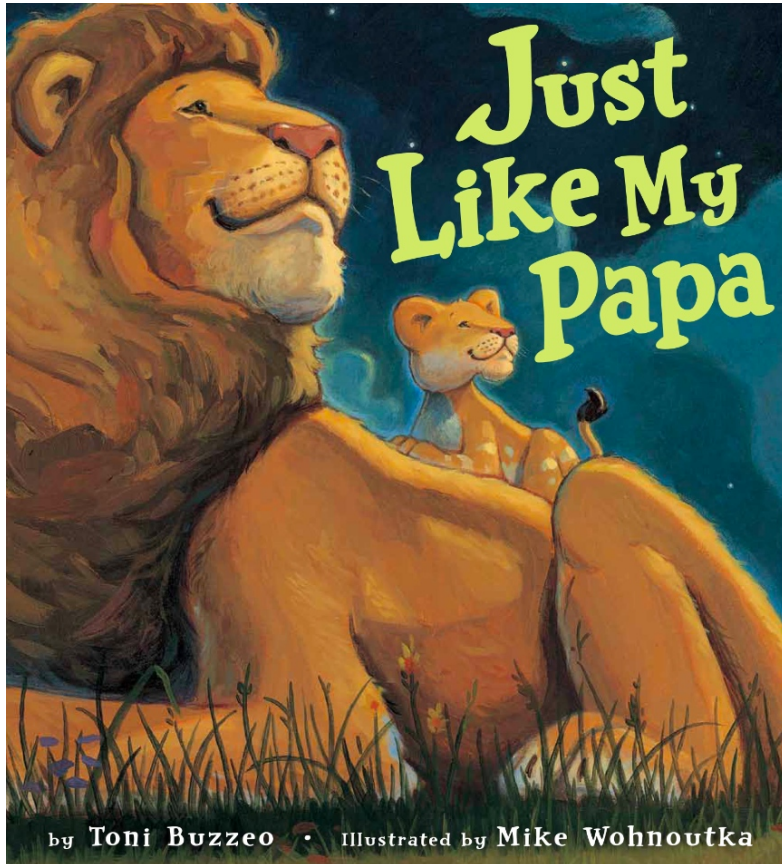


# **JUST LIKE MY PAPA**

## **CURRICULUM GUIDE**



### ***Just Like My Papa***

by Toni Buzzeo; illustrated by Mike Wohnoutka  
Hyperion Books for Children, 2013

## **Author Toni Buzzeo**



Toni Buzzeo is the *New York Times* best selling children's author of nineteen picture books. She is also the author of the 2013 Caldecott Honor book, *One Cool Friend*. For sixteen years, she worked as a school librarian in Maine where she honed her knowledge of children's literature. Combining this knowledge with her love of children, Toni writes about characters of all stripes (including lions, giraffes, dinosaurs, loons, kids, teachers, and librarians) who explore their worlds, their relationships, and themselves in settings that include East African savannahs, peaceful Maine lakes, rocky lighthouse islands, as well as aquariums and the interiors of fictional public and school libraries. Toni is well known for her lively spirit and her sense of humor.

## INVESTIGATIONS: LION FAMILIES

In many animal families, the father does not remain with or near to the mothers and babies, but lion families are different. After reading *Just Like My Papa* aloud to students, ask them to discuss the roles of the father, the mother, and the offspring as portrayed in the story. Ask: *What important job does the adult male do? What important job do the adult females do?*

Then, ask your students to undertake an investigation of lion families. Read resources aloud to very young children or let older children explore on their own, asking them to be on the lookout for interesting facts about the roles of adult males and females in the family structure.

Read the excellent article at the National Wildlife Federation Kids site at <http://www.nwf.org/Kids/Ranger-Rick/Animals/Mammals/Lions-Families.aspx> or the full *Ranger Rick* article, "The Sweet Life of Lions" at [http://www.nwf.org/~media/PDFs/Kids/Ranger%20Rick/Spreads/RRAPR10\\_6-11Lions.pdf?dmc=1&ts=20130306T1152264375](http://www.nwf.org/~media/PDFs/Kids/Ranger%20Rick/Spreads/RRAPR10_6-11Lions.pdf?dmc=1&ts=20130306T1152264375).

Another excellent source of information is the San Diego Zoo website at <http://animals.sandiegozoo.org/animals/lion>.

## WHO LIVES ON THE SAVANNAH?

Kito and his father live on the East African savannah in Kenya with many other animals, some of which we meet in *Just Like My Papa* and its companion book, *Stay Close to Mama*. Beginning with lions, ask students to make a list of all of the animals they see in *Just Like My Papa*. Continue to add to the list by choosing animals from *Stay Close to Mama* if you also have that book available. When the list is complete, choose one animal at a time to explore further. First, ask children what they know about the animal by carefully examining the illustrations and re-reading the text. Now, using child-friendly websites (such as Fort Wayne Zoo about wildebeests <http://kidszoo.org/our-animals/african-journey/wildebeest> or National Geographic Kids Creature Feature about the spotted hyena <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/animals/creaturefeature/spotted-hyenas/>) and nonfiction books from the library collection, explore further information about each of the animals in the two books.

If time allows, create a class book about the animals using child-created text and illustration.

## WHAT TIME IS IT?

Time of day plays an important role in the story, *Just Like My Papa*. After reading the book, ask students to list each scene in the story and then track the time of day it takes place.

Next, re-read the text to them WITHOUT sharing the illustrations, asking them to listen for textual clues about the time of day. Make a list of the words, phrases, and sentences that indicate time. Then, share the books WITHOUT reading the text, asking them to look for illustration clues about the time of day. Make a second list, detailing what specific elements in each illustration offer clues about the time of day. Compare the two lists. Finally, discuss how both the author and the illustrator contribute to the reader's awareness of the time of day in the story.

Ask students: *Why is time of day important to a story about lions?*

## WHAT DID YOU SAY?

Author Toni Buzzeo chooses not make the animals in her story speak, but she does use a technique that is similar to dialogue. Whenever Papa or Kito *would* speak in a scene, she uses italics to indicate their thoughts, or the language interpretation of their roars and growls.

Use a chart similar to the one below to record the instances of the lions' actual sounds and the words the author uses to interpret their meaning or the lions' thoughts:

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| ROAAAAAR!   | <i>My pride is here. Stay away!<br/>I am the protector and King.</i> |
| Groooooowl! | <i>I am here too.<br/>Just like my papa, the King.</i>               |
|             |  |
|             |  |
|             |  |

Ask students: *Why do you think Toni Buzzeo chose not to have her lions speak? Do you think it was a wise decision or would you have preferred speaking animals? Can you think of books in which the animal characters are living in the wild but also speak in words?*

## ILLUSTRATION IN COMPANION BOOKS

Both *Stay Close to Mama* and *Just Like My Papa* are written by author Toni Buzzeo and illustrated by artist Mike Wohnoutka, making them companion books. Take time to compare the illustrations in the two books.

Begin by talking about the artist's palette. Introduce the definition of the word: "The range of colors used in a particular painting or by a particular artist."

(<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/palette>) Then, ask students to compare Mike Wohnoutka's palette in the two books. Ask: *How and when is Mike's palette similar in the two books? How and when is it different? Why?*

Now compare Mike's palette and illustration style in these two East African savannah books with his palette and illustration style in another animal book he illustrated, *Mama's Little Duckling*. Discuss how and why Mike used the palette he chose and a different style.

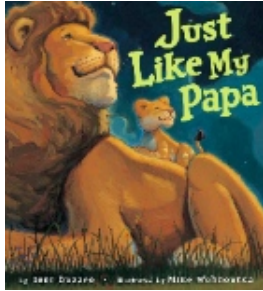
Ask: *What demands does the story make of an illustrator?*

## JUST LIKE . . .

In *Just Like My Papa*, Kito longs to be just like his papa, the king. Discuss what it means to admire someone and want to be like that person when you grow up. Next, ask students to list the reasons that Kito admires his papa.

Then, initiate a conversation about an adult each child admires, noting that it does not have to be a parent, but asking that it be someone with an admirable quality the child can name. While some children will admire sports stars or television personalities, ask them to only name such figures if they know of other reasons to admire them in addition to their athletic or acting skills. Ask: *What personality traits or actions make him or her a person to admire? For example, is he or she kind, generous, intelligent, creative? In what way would you like to grow up to be like him or her?*

## SIX TRAIT WRITING GUIDE



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#### **IDEAS: How Do Story Ideas Form?**

After *Stay Close to Mama* was complete, Toni Buzzeo's editor asked her whether she had an idea for a similar story featuring a young savannah animal and its father. Ask student: *How do you think Toni Buzzeo decided to use a lion father and his cub as the main characters of her story? What do you think her first step was?*

#### **VOICE: The Differences between Papa and Kito**

After reading *Just Like My Papa*, stage a second reading in which you ask students to listen for the differences in expression between Papa and Kito. Ask: *How are the two "voices" different? What do we learn about each character from the thoughts they have (exemplified in the italicized text and the way they are expressed)?*

#### **ORGANIZATION: Try and Fail**

*Stay Close to Mama*, the companion book to *Just Like My Papa*, has a circular story organization, much like Toni Buzzeo's book, *No T. Rex in the Library*. However, *Just Like My Papa* has a different organization.

Invite students to create a list of the scenes in the book. For example:

Scene One: Late in the afternoon, Papa protects his territory. Kito tries to protect the territory too, to be just like his papa, but fails because he is frightened by a hyena.

After you have a list of the scenes, ask: *Do you detect a repeated pattern of Kito trying to be like Papa? How many times does he try and fail? Does he finally succeed?*

Discuss the common Pattern of Three with students in which a character tries-and-fails, tries-and-fails, tries-and-succeeds (or tries-and-fails, tries-and-fails, tries-and-fails, succeeds). Ask: *Does Just Like My Papa fit the Pattern of Three organization?*

Introduce students to other books by Toni Buzzeo that use the Pattern of Three organization such as:

- ❖ *Adventure Annie Goes to Work*
- ❖ *Adventure Annie Goes to Kindergarten*
- ❖ *Little Loon and Papa*

#### **SENTENCE FLUENCY: One Word Punch**

Several times in *Just Like My Papa*, author Toni Buzzeo uses one word sentences. Each time she does, she ends the one word sentence with an exclamation point. Ask students to hunt for and record these sentences. Ask: *What do these sentences have in common? Do you think they work well as single word sentences? What effect do these single words have?*

**WORD CHOICE: Personification of Nature Using Active Verbs**

Author Toni Buzzeo employs personification of nature to announce the changing time of day from one scene to another in *Just Like My Papa*. For example, on the first page, "Yellow moon **peeks** over the horizon."

Take your students on a tour of the story, scouting for sentences in which the moon or the sun makes an appearance. Write each sentence, in order, on the board, on chart paper, or on your electronic white board. Ask students: *How does Toni Buzzeo indicate the time of day by the verb she chooses to use to describe the action?*

**CONVENTIONS: Where Are the Quotations Marks?**

There are no quotation marks in *Just Like My Papa* because author Toni Buzzeo chooses not have the animals in her story speak, but she does use a technique that is similar to dialogue. Whenever Papa or Kito *would* speak in a scene, she uses italics to indicate their thoughts, or the language interpretation of their roars and growls.

Challenge students to change the text. Ask them to be the editor who suggests that Toni ought to use actual speaking lions in the text. Ask: *What punctuation would Toni Buzzeo need to add to create dialogue in her text?* Then ask them to supply the necessary quotation marks throughout.