

Bruce Balan's
Activities, Presentation Ideas,
Discussion Topics & Related Books
by Ellin Klor and Bruce Balan



Pie In the Sky Viking, 1993.

(K-3, also upper grades for geography and writing)

A pie, meant as a birthday gift, flies around the world, passing famous landmarks, before it hits its mark.

Activities:

- *Identify the famous landmarks & their locations. Look at a map or globe to see how far the pie traveled.*
- *Plan a "Pie in the Sky" flight and draw it on a map of the school, the neighborhood (with children's homes marked), or your city or town.*
- *Use paper plates and tissue paper plates to make pies to decorate the MP room. Crumple tan colored tissue paper into the crust, and attach it to the plate with thinned white glue. Make and glue in fruits of colored tissue paper.*
- *Sew and stuff a pie from 2 circles of construction paper with holes punched around the edge. Stuff it and sew together with yarn and big needles.*
- *Make a class book of Pie in the Sky rhymes. "The pie in the sky ' Use the pie template for the pages of the book.*

Related books:

How to Make an Apple Pie and See the World by Marjorie Priceman. Knopf, 1994
A young girl travels around the world to gather each pie ingredient from its source.

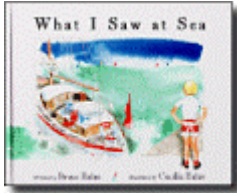
Piggie Pie by Margie Palatini. Clarion, 1995
Pigs outwit a witch who wants them in her Piggie Pie. 1st & 2nd grade fare. *(Make up recipes for your own kinds of pie [silly, basketball, dirt, etc.] and compile them into a class book. Use the pie template to make the pages of your book.)*

Sweet Dream Pie by Audrey Wood. Blue Sky, 1998
When Pa Brindle convinces Ma to make a sweet dream pie, full of goopy candies and such; everyone in the neighborhood eats too much, and their dreams go wild.

Sweet Potato Pie by Anne Rockwell. Random House, 1996
Rhyming easy reader. *(Could be used as a chant.)*

Alligator Pie by Dennis Lee

Food poetry. The title poem is also a chant/song on a recording by Joanne Olshansky, **Pizza Boogie**.



What I Saw at Sea ABC (UK), 1991. (K-3)

While sailing with his father, a boy sees fantastic things in the clouds.

Activities:

- *Make your own cloud watercolors of things you might see in the clouds.*
- *Cut out cloud shapes to decorate with cotton balls*
- *Go outside and do some cloud-gazing.*

Related books:

Cloud Book by Tomie de Paola. Holiday House, 1975
A very simple factual explanation of clouds.

Cloudland by John Burningham. Crown, 1996
A boy falls off a mountain and lives for a time in the clouds with the cloud children. The illustrations are a dramatic combination of photography and drawing.

Down Comes the Rain by Franklin Branley. Harper Collins, 1997
Simple explanation of the water cycle.

It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles Shaw. Harper, 1947
Classic guess-what-it-is book. Simple patterned text. *(Make your own extended version of this book)*

Little Cloud by Eric Carle. Philomel, 1996
Similar to Spilt Milk - The little cloud makes many shapes before meeting his destiny -as part of a rain storm.



*An imagination cloud raining
ideas upon the unwary...*



Buoy, Home at Sea Delacorte, 1998. (all ages)

Discussion Topics:

- *Why did the author capitalize words like Sea , Star, Sky and Wind?*
- *If you were a character in this book, who would you want to be? Why?*
- *How is it that Buoy can see and hear and talk? Does it matter that Buoy doesn't have eyes or ears or a mouth?*
- *In SHARK, why does Shark speak in all lower case?*

What does "too long a time for Seal, and too short a time for Shark" mean? Is Shark evil?

- *In CONCERT, what does it mean that "Gull forgot that he wasn't having a good time?"*
- *In TRAVELERS, why does Buoy tell the crabs that they are heading in "exactly the right direction?" Why does Buoy think the crabs will like that he rings his bell all night long?*
- *In CLOUDS, why do you think the clouds look like a crab and a rock to Seal but a herring and a fishing boat to Gull?*
- *In BIRTHDAY, why does Gull harrumph and interrupt Seal? Does he want credit for giving Buoy the balloon?*
- *Are Seal and Gull friends or enemies? How do you know?*
- *Did this book change the way you think or feel about: Buoys? Sharks? Ships? The ocean? Home?*
- *What is a home? Is it a building? A place? Something we feel?*
- *Was it interesting to read (or listen to) a book about a hunk of metal that never goes anywhere? Before you read this book would you have thought that a book of this type could be interesting?*

Writing Discussion Topics

- *Alliteration: the repetition of initial sounds in adjacent words or syllables*
 - ❖ *Page 1:* Buoy rolled lazily on the long low swell of the sea.
 - ❖ *Page 10:* It sounded very much like the song the Stars sang on crystal nights.
 - ❖ *Page 24:* ... slowly circling still.
- *Metaphor: To describe something by using a word that is usually used to describe something else e.g., The ship plowed through the sea.*
 - ❖ *Page 1:* Faint tones swam through the blue Sea.
 - ❖ *Page 11:* The sweep of their great flukes a metronome to their song.
 - ❖ *Page 16:* Splashes came from the place where the bow kissed the Sea.

- **Simile:** To describe something by comparing it to something else using *like* or *as*. e.g., The moon shone *like silver*.
 - ❖ *Page 14:* Flowing like the great ocean currents,...
 - ❖ *Page 16:* The boat moved as if it were coasting down a long gentle hill.
 - ❖ *Page 26:* Night came like a blanket of silence spread over the Sea.
- **Anthropomorphism:** to ascribe human form or attributes to a being or thing not human (an animal, plant, material object, etc.).
 - ❖ The author attributes human thoughts and emotions and actions to things. For example:
 - Page 1:* ...the Clouds raced against each other...
 - Page 1:* ... the Wind seemed a bit angry,...
 - Page 2:* ...the air was almost too sleepy...
 - Page 15:* ...the Sea was thinking and...
 - ❖ **Questions:**
 - Why does the author give (attribute) all of these human characteristics to non-human things?
 - Does it make sense?
 - Does it make Buoy's world more real, or more of a fantasy?
 - Does the author really think clouds race against each other? Do you?

Writing Activities:

- Pretend you are one of the characters in the book. Write a paragraph or poem about your life.
- What other characters might you find in Buoy's world? Write a paragraph about one of them.
- Write a paragraph or poem using:
 - ❖ Alliteration
 - ❖ Metaphor
 - ❖ Simile
 - ❖ Anthropomorphism

