



Sky Rat

Discussion Guide for Educators. For use with students aged 8-12

About the Book

Sky Rat is a coming-of-age novel about a flying squirrel named Scrat who is raised by city rats and discovers he is different in more ways than one. When Scrat learns he can glide, he begins to uncover his true nature and learns to see his difference as a strength. This book is a metaphor-rich exploration of identity, courage, and the power of embracing what makes you unique.

Reading Level

Grades 3–6 (Ages 8–12)

Themes: Identity, self-acceptance, belonging, creativity, courage, leadership, neurodiversity (metaphorical)

Before Reading: Build Curiosity

- Discuss difference. Ask students: Have you ever felt different from your peers? What did that feel like?
- Think about animals. What animals do we usually associate with bravery? What about rats? Squirrels?
- Predict. Based on the title Sky Rat, what kind of story do you think this might be?
- During Reading: Engage the Story

Encourage students to keep a reading journal. Ask them to record moments when Scrat:

- Felt misunderstood
- Was told he didn't belong
- Did something new or brave
- Helped someone else
- Discovered something about himself

After Reading: Discussion Questions

1. Identity and Belonging
 - Why does Scrat feel different growing up in the rat community?
 - How do the other rats respond to his differences? How does that change over time?
 - What does Scrat learn about himself by the end of the story?
2. Metaphor and Meaning
 - What might Scrat's gliding ability represent in real life?
 - What kinds of strengths do people have that might not be immediately understood by others?
 - How can being different be a superpower?
3. Courage and Leadership
 - Why is it brave for Scrat to return to the rats even after he finds out he is a flying squirrel?
 - How does Scrat lead in a way that is different from Tulla?
 - What do you think it means to be a leader "between two worlds"?
4. Personal Connections
 - Have you ever felt like Scrat? When?
 - Have you ever seen someone being treated like they didn't belong? What happened?
 - What is something that makes you unique? How could that be a strength?

Extension Activities

1. Character Map: Create a visual map of Scrat's journey—emotionally and physically.
2. Wings of Your Own: Have students create a symbolic glider or wings, decorated with words and images that represent their unique strengths.
3. Rooftop View Writing Prompt: Imagine you're Scrat looking out over the city. Write a journal entry from that point of view.
4. Group Debate: Should Scrat have

stayed in the forest or returned to help the rats? Why?

5. Build Your Own Sky School: Design a "school" for kids who think differently. What would you teach? How would learning happen?

Standards Connections

Canada Curriculum Connections

Alberta (Grades 4–7):

General Outcome 2: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view, and represent to comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print, and other media texts.

General Outcome 3: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view, and represent to manage ideas and information.

British Columbia (Grades 4–7):

Comprehend and Connect: Access and integrate information and ideas from a variety of sources and from prior knowledge to build understanding.

Create and Communicate: Exchange ideas and perspectives to build shared understanding and use writing and design processes to plan, develop, and create texts.

Ontario (Grades 4–7):

Strand A: Literacy Connections: Apply knowledge of reading, writing, oral communication, and media literacy skills to understand and create texts.

Strand B: Foundations of Language: Understand and use the foundational skills of language, including vocabulary, grammar, and conventions, to communicate effectively.

USA Common Core

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4–7.1: Refer to details and examples in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4–7.3: Describe in depth a character, setting, or event.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4–7.6: Compare and contrast points of view.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4–7.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences.

For more resources, visit solica.ca or contact Scott Cressman (403) 613-3142 for classroom visits or virtual readings.