

**Minnesota Storytime
Reading Guide**

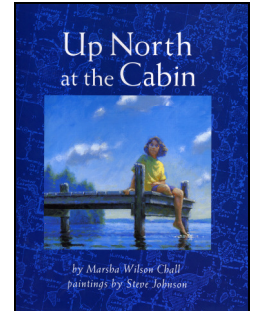
Title: *Up North at the Cabin*

Author: Marsha Wilson Chall

Illustrator: Steve Johnson

Publisher and Copyright Date: HarperCollins (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard); 1992

Connection to Minnesota: Minnesota author, Minnesota illustrator, Minnesota theme



Summary: This is a story about a young girl's summer vacations up north at the cabin. She describes what she does up at the cabin with all of her family and how it makes her feel.

Suggested ages: 4-6, 7-10

Tips for Reading:

- Show vacation photos or items connected to “up north” memories before reading the book
- Share a personal story of going “up north” or ask the children to share stories.
- Notice the patterned language in the story. “Up north at the cabin I am a _____” is followed a page or two later with descriptive examples of what made her feel like a dolphin or voyageur, etc.
- Read the story all the way through and then go back and reread one or more of these sections to point out the description.

Questions before reading:

- How do you spend your summer vacations?
- Have you ever gone to a cabin on a lake? Or camped?
- What were some of your favorite things to do there?
- Close your eyes and pretend you're at the lake. What do you see? What do you hear? (Younger children especially like to make the sounds of water splashing, birds chirping, etc.)

To Introduce this story say: We're going to read a story about going up north to a cabin. This is one girl's experience. Let's see if it is the same or different from your trips up north.

Questions After Reading:

- Is there anything in the girl's descriptions that sounds like your experience?
- Why does the illustration show only the girl in the car and not images like the Big Walleye statue?
- The water-skiing illustration shows only part of the full picture. What effect does this create?
- What brought this writing to life? How did the author paint a picture with words?

RELATED ACTIVITIES

Art:

- Make Log cabin pictures ("pretzel" logs!).
- Draw or paint vacation memories.
- Make vacation photograph collages.

Culture:

- Look at a map of Minnesota and locate the setting of the book.
- Learn about Minnesota tourism; view the website, www.exploreminnesota.com.
- Learn more about this Minnesota author at her website, www.marshachall.com.

Writing:

- Create a pattern book using the idea of *Up North at the Cabin*, for example, "Down South at the Beach".
- Create a group book using the pattern – "We took a trip to a cabin and I brought...". Have each child create a page telling what they would take and what they would do.

Suggestions for English Language Learners:

- Refer to the first illustration in the book. Talk about the cabin and why people spend time there. Discuss where people from other cultures go on vacation.
- Walk through the book again after an initial reading. Look at the illustrations. Have children describe what they see in the pictures. Make a list of new words to help children expand their descriptions (leeches, angler, Northern Pike, etc).

Related Books:

- *Antler, Bear, Canoe: A Northwoods Alphabet Year* by Betsy Bowen (Little, Brown and Company, 1991)
- *Gathering: A Northwoods Counting Book* by Betsy Bowen (Houghton Mifflin, 1999)
- *Tracks in the Wild* by Betsy Bowen (Houghton Mifflin, 1998)
- *M is for Minnesota* by Dori Butler, illustrated by Janice Lee Porter (University of Minnesota Press, 1998)
- *One-Dog Canoe* by Mary Casanova, illustrated by Ard Hoyt (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003)
- *Star Maiden: An Ojibway Tale* by Barbara Justen Esbensen, illustrated by Helen K. Davie (Little, Brown and Company, 1991)
- *Great Northern Diver: The Loon* by Barbara Justen Esbensen, illustrated by Mary Barrett Brown (Little, Brown and Company, 1991)
- *Letter to the Lake* by Susan Marie Swanson, illustrated by Peter Catalanotto (Dorling Kindersley Publishing, 1998)



Minnesota Storytime is a collaboration of many Minnesota-based organizations.

To see a full list of supporters, or for more information, please visit www.minnesotastorytime.org.