Horton Hears a Who
Novel Study
Grades: 1-3

Suggested Vocabulary

yelp  twerp  speck  disturb
alarm  building  church  grateful
kangaroo  holler  faint  swift
mayor  person  pouch  rushed
voice  trunk  repair  search
apartment  ceiling  clover  kettle
jungle  fear  protect  gang
nonsense  pool  racket  breeze

Vocabulary Activities

Day One: Make vocabulary “flash cards.” Write the word on the unlined side of an index card and its definition on the lined side of a different index card. You will have two cards per word.

Day Two: Using your flashcards, place the words in alphabetical order.

Day Three: Identify the part of speech and any synonyms or antonyms for each of your words and write it on the word’s index card.

Day Four: Take your two sets of cards and divide them into “words” and “definitions.” Mix them up well and give yourself plenty of room! Lay your “words” facedown in a column on the table or floor and do the same for the “definitions.” Set a timer and see how quickly you can match the word to its definition.

Day Five: Using as many words from your vocabulary list as possible, write a short story or poem about Horton. Have fun with this!
Animal Research

Throughout *Horton Hears a Who*, there are many animals running through the Jungle of Nool. Choose one of the following animals to explore.

- elephant
- monkey
- kangaroo
- eagle

1. Create a drawing of your animal.
2. Research your animal’s habitat and write a short paragraph explaining where your animal lives.
3. Is your animal a carnivore or herbivore? The hunted or the hunter? Discuss your animal’s main diet.
4. Include any interesting facts about your animal that most people may not know.

Internet Resources

http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/Animals/CreatureFeature

http://www.sandiegozoo.org/animalbytes/index.html


http://www.seaworld.org/animal-info/index.htm
Questions for Discussion

Who knew the children’s book *Horton Hears a Who* could possess the power to make us ponder the nature and theory of knowledge. Philosophers have been addressing the nature of human knowledge throughout history. What is human intuition? What is knowledge? Why are we steadfast in our beliefs? Marissa Cooke addresses these philosophical questions in her online article *Teaching Children Philosophy*. Here, she poses great questions for discussion that introduce young students to philosophy and providing them opportunity to think critically. I have included these questions on the pages that follow.

As teachers, we are always looking for ways to challenge our students. Instead of taking the common path of posing basic questions to check for reading comprehension, I chose to take the “road less traveled.” I stumbled across Marissa’s page and found it refreshing. I thought this would be a great way to develop critical thinking as well as introduce students to philosophy. Clearly, if students can participate in a discussion initiated by these questions, they have a firm grasp on the content in this book.

I hope this activity provides you with new insight into a children’s classic.
When Horton hears the voice on the dust speak, he reasons that there must exist a person, too small to be seen, but who is definitely there. But, the other animals don’t believe him.

1. How does Horton know that this voice means there is a person on the speck?

2. Why doesn’t the kangaroo believe Horton? What justifies her belief that a person could not be on the dust speck?

3. How does Horton try to convince the kangaroo of the existence of a person on the dust speck? If you were Horton what would you say to convince the kangaroo?

4. If they didn’t believe you, what would you do?

The Wickersham brothers show up and take action to stop Horton’s nonsense.

1. Why do they consider Horton to be foolish? Is what Horton knows really nonsense?

2. What reasons do the animals have for thinking that Horton is just speaking nonsense?

3. Horton knows the truth, but how come the monkeys can’t know?

4. What do the animals think will happen if they hid the dust speck so Horton can’t find it?

5. Will that prove that to Horton that his belief is not true?
The animals have had quite enough and decide they are going to boil the speck and tie Horton up. Horton says that the Who’s can prove they are there.

1. What do the animals think they will accomplish by roping and caging Horton?

2. Why does Horton say he can do to get them to believe him that there are persons on the speck?

3. When you know something, how do you prove it to someone else? Do you have to prove to know it’s true?

4. How can the Whos prove their existence?

The Who’s try to make themselves heard but the kangaroo denies hearing anything. Finally, the Who’s try again and they are heard!

1. Why does the kangaroo tell Horton that she didn’t hear any voices and he didn’t either? Why does she think he didn’t hear any voices?

2. Just because you think you know something, does that mean everyone else has to know the agree? How do you know if somebody knows what you know?

3. The Whos are finally heard. Is hearing believing? Do you have to hear, or see, or feel something to believe it or know it’s true?

4. Give an example of something you know but that you can’t justify with your senses? How did you come to know that thing?
**Extension Activities**

**The Human Ear vs the Elephant Ear**
Explore the similarities and differences between a human ear and an elephant’s ear.

Resources for the human ear:
http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/anatomy/ear/label/label.shtml
http://www.glenbrook.k12.il.us/GBSSCI/PHYS/Class/sound/u11l2d.html
http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/175622/ear

Resources for the elephant ear:
http://elephant.elehost.com/About_Elephants/Anatomy/The_Ears/the_ears.html
http://www.crayola.com/lesson-plans/detail/elephant-ears%E2%80%94african-or-asian?-lesson-plan/
http://www.animalcorner.co.uk/wildlife/elephants/elephant_anatomy.html

**The Phenomenon of Sound: Surf the Waves!**
Explore how sound waves travel and understand that sound is a form of energy.

Resources:
http://school.discoveryeducation.com/lessonplans/programs/soundwaves/
http://pbskids.org/zoom/activities/sci/#sound
http://www.brighthub.com/education/k-12/articles/40458.aspx