Caribou Song by Thomson Highway

This book can be used at several levels to help children better understand the culture of the Canadian Indian. The following are suggestions to use with your students as they study “Caribou Song”.

Before Reading:

1. Take children on a picture walk of the book and have them predict who the story is about and where it might take place. Discuss what clues helped them make their decisions. (This might be a written prediction depending on the age).

2. Introduce any vocabulary you feel children at your level need to understand to get meaning form the text. Students might match words with meanings printed on index cards and displayed on the board or in a pocket chart.

3. Display a map of Canada and pinpoint the setting of the story. Brainstorm what students know about this area of the country and the people who live there.

During Reading:

4. Make overheads of the first few pages of the book and while you read the story, have them focus on the different format of the print.

5. Give each student several sticky notes and have them jot down the similarities and differences they see and hear in the lifestyles of the Cree family compared to their own. Place two hoola hoops in a Venn Diagram format on your front board. Have students bring their stickies to the front and place them in the correct space on the board. They could read these to the class as they place them in the Venn Diagram.

After Reading:

6. After reading, ask them to explain how the written Cree language is different from English (from a visual perspective ... ex. no capital letters at beginning of sentences.)

7. Using the English translations of words, find the Cree words that have the same meaning. Have students write messages in Cree and change with a partner to decode messages.

8. Research and find out more about the importance of the caribou to the Cree nation.