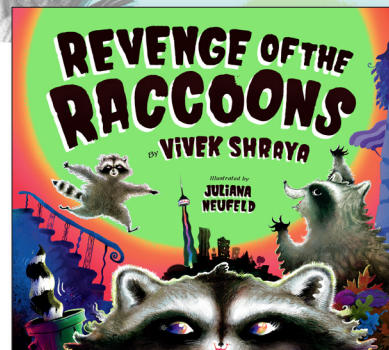


# Revenge of the Raccoons

Activity Guide by Anna-May King for Grades 4 to 6

## About the Book

Raccoons are hitting the streets to finally tell their story. The bushy-tailed bandits take over the town, swinging from cranes, scampering through subway cars, and pestering the police. Amid the mischief, the raccoons describe themselves as humans see them: thieving “trash pandas” that steal doughnuts and cash, topple our green bins, and frighten our cats. But when asked why they’re invading the city, the raccoons insist they aren’t pests, but survivors of the *real* invaders: humans.



Written by Vivek Shraya and  
illustrated by Juliana Neufeld

## CONNECT AND ENGAGE BEFORE READING: What do you know about raccoons?

Give students an opportunity to discuss what they know about raccoons using the guiding questions below. Write their answers down on chart paper to refer back to.

- What is a raccoon? Describe what raccoons look like? How do they behave? Are they friendly? Is a raccoon a mammal?
- Where is a raccoon’s natural habitat?
- What does nocturnal mean? Do you know any other animals that are nocturnal (awake at night)? What do you think raccoons do at night?
- Would a raccoon make a good pet?

## CONNECT AND ENGAGE AFTER READING:

Give students a chance to turn and talk to a partner as they consider the answers to some of the following questions. Listen to their conversations and then discuss some responses as a whole group.

- Why do you think the author decided to tell the story from the perspective of a raccoon? Why might this be an important perspective?
- How have humans been careless?
- How do you think the raccoons feel in the story? Do the raccoons seem to enjoy being in the city? Are they having fun in the story? Why do you think that is?
- Should cities be habitats for wild animals or just humans?
- How has human presence and land use changed over time?
- Has human development had a positive/negative impact on wildlife?

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**CURRICULUM LINKS**  
**Language Arts:** Reading, Rhyming,  
Word Patterns  
**Character Education:** Adaptability

**READING LEVELS**  
**Grade:** I and up  
**Fountas & Pinnell:** H  
**Lexile® Measure:** AD340L  
**Reading Recovery:** 14  
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**COMMON CORE**  
RL.1, W.1, SL.1, L.1



## CONNECT AND ENGAGE AFTER READING: (continued)

- How does removing trees affect the environment?
- How are some ways raccoons have adapted?
- Is it healthy for animals to eat human waste/food?
- Do you think raccoons thrive better in an urban dwelling or the woodlands?
- What predators would an urban raccoon face compared to a woodland raccoon?

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Use these activities to extend your student's thinking and experience with *Revenge of the Raccoons*.

### Activity 1: The Great Debate: Should Humans Have to Share Their Space with Raccoons?

Explain to the class that they will be participating in a debate (when you look at both sides of an argument). Provide students time to research their topic.

In small teams students participate in a role play debate (Humans Vs Raccoons). Students will examine different points of view or perspectives related to the RACCOON issue: Should humans have to share their space with raccoons? They will articulate and justify their position. They will record arguments in support of and opposing on a Debate T-Chart (included below).

Tell the students that based on their stance on the argument they will be split up into several teams. Give them advanced warning that there needs to be enough people in support of and opposing, so some students may be arguing the opposite of what they believe (let them know the sign of a good debater is someone that can do that successfully).

After the research is complete and the teams are set, students will prepare their notes for the debate using the Note Organizer (included below). Remind students that they will want all of their notes with them when the debate takes place. Their notes should include:

- An overview of their topic and opening statement
- Three facts in support of their opinion
- Three questions for the opposition



### Activity 3: Mini Research Project

Urban Raccoons are much more complex creatures than most realize. Use this opportunity to discuss them as a species. Have students think of a question they have about urban raccoons (e.g., Where do urban raccoons make their den?) to complete a MINI RESEARCH project. The project can be created and presented in any medium or format as long as they share their question, give research details and share sources.

**Extension:** Think of other animals who have to adapt to living in cities (e.g. rats/mice) and how they find the means to survive.

### About Anna-May King

Anna-May King is an experienced Primary Teacher of 12 years with Toronto District School Board. She spent 2 years teaching at the Canadian International School in Vietnam. Her mission is to instill a love for learning (specifically reading and writing) in her students.



## Note Organizer

| Arguments in Support of Sharing | Arguments Opposing Sharing |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
|                                 |                            |

**Topic Argument:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Your Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

Opening Statement:

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Three Support Statements:

1.

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2.

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3.

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Three questions for the Opposition:

1.

2.

3.

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Notes (during the debate):

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