

Lesson Plan: “The Upstairs Cat” by Jaimi Ilama
45-55 minutes

Introduction: A book written by a good friend, who I’ve known for 20 years. Her name is Jaimi Ilama. She currently lives in California. Jaimi Ilama not her real name she uses it for writing it is her “pen name”. “Ilama” stands for I Love All My Animals. Jaimi has been writing since she was child. Her earliest memories are of writing poetry when she was 8. When she was in her twenties, she had one of her poems published in an anthology of poems along with poems from other poets. For many years she was a stay at home, raising her two sons, and many, many animals including: dogs, cats, birds, turtles, and a ferret (which she rescued as a stray). She also worked as a massage therapist and medical transcriptionist. However, she never lost her love of writing. As her boys grew older, she decided to start writing again—this time children’s books.

Motivation: Just like you had motivation and you researched a famous person’s motivation--Jaimi found her motivation to write from: her love of writing, her own children, and her animals. Jaimi was also very interested in helping animals through promoting organizations that directly help animals. Most of the money that she earns or will earn from the sales of her books will go to organizations that help: keep safe, feed, shelter, and find homes for animals. Her first book was inspired by her cat’s, reactions when Jaimi’s son left home.

Effort: Just like you put in effort and your famous person put in effort--Jaimi did not write and publish this book in one day. The planning, writing, and searching for an illustrator took over a year. Jaimi worked hard. She made several rough drafts before her final copy was published. Other people-including her friends and family supported and encouraged Jaimi.

Persistence: Just like you had some difficulties along way and your famous person had some challenges along the way--Jaimi started working with one illustrator and they could not agree on some things and the illustrator quit. Jaimi had to look for another illustrator. Publishing books costs money. Jaimi needed to save money and ask for donations so she could pay to have her books professionally published.

Encouragement/Feedback: Just like all had people who taught, helped, coached, encouraged, and cheered us to our accomplishments. We can also be that person for others in our lives.

Accomplishment: “The Upstairs Cat” is published. Jaimi also has stories in the works about other animals and hopes to publish a series of children’s books about animals.

Features of the Book: This is a fictional story inspired by real life persons, animals and events. “The Upstairs Cat” is modeled after Amazon. There is photograph of Amazon in the book. The writing style is a rhyming narrative. Be sure to listen for the rhymes. The cat is a bit personified. That means that Jaimi gave her some human like feelings in the book. We will stop to notice the personification. “The Upstairs Cat” has a theme or a message for the reader. We will think about and discuss the theme together.

Read Aloud: Read book, pausing to: examine rhyme, personification, and make predictions about where the boy went. Solicit feedback about the “theme” or lessons we can learn from the “Upstairs Cat.”

Encouragement Feedback: Now that we have finished reading the book, I am asking you to provide some encouragement and feedback to Jaimi. I will read the questions to you and please try to answer at least one if not all of them. The last question is about whether you would tell a friend to read this book. You should recall that you did a book review/recommendation in quarter 2. My last request is that whatever you write is respectful. It’s okay not to like something about the book or to give suggestions to Jaimi, but please use kind words. I am planning to mail all of your feedback to Jaimi.