

secures. The heartbreak for pet owners when death comes to a much loved pet is treated with poignancy and sensitivity. Human carelessness and human atrocity with its toll in animal suffering is catalogued with cold and precise detail. No editorial comment is needed; in the context of this book such information is ironic proof that man can still be an animal.

Still, these dark notes are rare in *The Wild Life I've Led*. The book leaves one with the feeling of cheerful well-being that comes of having been genuinely entertained, and the conviction that, generally speaking man, like Trueman, is at his best when in the company of the animals. I am sure that the older juvenile reader, like myself, would welcome hearing about Mr. Trueman's latest escapades with his animal friends.

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Choosing Language Arts Texts

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Colours: Brown is the Back of a Toad; Yellow is a Lemon Tart; Red is the Nose of a Clown, Robert Barton, David Booth, Agnes Buckles. Longman Canada Ltd., 1976.

Colours is an upper elementary language arts program based on literature and designed especially for Canadian schools. The program consists of four parts: the anthology (\$4.25-\$4.50); the source book (\$2.00-\$2.50); the skills book (\$1.75-\$1.95); and the teacher manual (\$1.75-\$1.95). The idea behind *Colours* is that the different colour levels (corresponding roughly to grades 4, 5, and 6) are arranged in units around a number of themes, the first of which involves the colour for that level. All parts of the program can be used or different parts can be chosen to meet the individual language needs of students.

The anthology contains stories, poems, articles, plays, all pertaining in some manner to the colour of a particular level. Many of the selections in the anthology are excerpts from full-length children's books. The majority of the selections are one to two pages in length, the longest around 8 pages. This enables the reluctant reader to master each selection easily, yet motivates the good reader to seek out the source and read it in its entirety. It is an

excellent program of exposure to many different examples of good children's literature. Each anthology includes full bibliographic information in its acknowledgements, a good table of contents indicating each theme, and an index of selected authors and titles.

The source book carries each theme from the anthology into other media: photographs, drawing, cartoons, charts, maps, newspaper pages, TV guides, letters. Each presentation is a two-page spread giving visual material, print, accompanying activities (such as making puppets, cooking, taking a TV survey, organizing a debate), poetry, projects, questions for discussion. The style and size of lettering varies tremendously; all the black/white illustrations are attractively designed. Each theme in the anthology has at least one presentation in the source book; many have three or four. Many of these presentations are consumer oriented and could easily lead into further consumer study in other courses. For instance, one presentation in the red source book deals with the working mother and the reaction of all family members who are in this situation. The source book lends itself to both group and individualized instruction.

The skills book is also suitable for individual use, especially by those students who need extra work. The skills, related to the themes in the anthology, are comprised of short exercises, usually a half page in length. In many cases they involve the use of everyday items—menus, advertisements, maps, jokes, TV guides—thus providing the student with useful skills, not mere theory. The extensive table of contents lists not only the name of the exercise, but also the skills it teaches and the anthology theme it relates to. Detailed acknowledgements are given, but there is no index.

A teaching manual is provided for each of the three levels, again in two-page spreads which correspond to the theme in the anthology and the support material in the source book. The time required for the study of a unit is broken into whole class study, small group work and individual study. Additional activities are included and discussion questions are suggested for both the anthology selection and the source book presentation. In many cases further study of a related topic is suggested, such as the reading of picture books, the detailed study of drama, the creation of a newspaper, or the study of folklore. These suggestions are outlined but not detailed, so the teacher would have to do some major preparation if she were to pursue one of the ideas. Integrated reading and activities in the content areas are also suggested. At the end of each theme, other books that contain the same theme are suggested for further study. At the back of the book there is a source list of the materials suggested for use in the manual, the source book, and the anthology.

In the process of reviewing *Colours*, I also examined the Gage *Strategies* and the Ginn *360 Language Arts Programs*. All three are organized similarly; the Ginn program lacks a source book, but otherwise all the components of the program are the same. All three (with slight variations) base their selections on actual children's books, but both Ginn and Gage include

more than fiction. Worth noting, Ginn has a full length book at the end of each anthology. Only *Colours* provides a complete bibliography of all books used throughout the program.

In comparison with the Ginn and the Gage series, I found *Colours* to be more easily read and to provide a greater variety of creative activities in the source book. It is far more suitable for the average student. The suggested activities involve more "doing" than mere absorption of the printed word. There is also more Canadian content, which is certainly worth consideration on its own, regardless of other feature of the series. It is a useful source of exposure to a great variety of Canadian literature for children. Canadian selections in the anthology and the source book are indicated in the teacher manual.

Both the Ginn and the Gage programs offer considerably more specific language skills than *Colours* does with its emphasis on the creative and interpretative aspects of language. Gage also provides a great deal more informational reading as opposed to fiction. *Colours* emphasizes language found in everyday use—as in comic strips, the TV guide, on cereal boxes—and organizes its selections around a theme. Neither of the other series does this. Both the other programs offer more language activities and more repetition of skills. The *Colours* activities require less teacher directions, since they are not as complicated as the activities in other programs, and are organized to suit either the whole class, small groups, or individual students.

Colours is the easiest of the three series to read, due to its varying styles and sizes of print, its wide margins, and abundance of open space on the pages. Illustrations in the source book are plentiful, although they are not in colour, as they are in both the Gage and the Ginn series.

Colours presents a new approach to language arts programs and is definitely worth serious consideration. However, it does not have enough skills exercises to be the *entire* language arts program. The skills book does not compare well with others of its kind. The anthology and the source book could always be used by themselves as extra reading material of an enrichment nature. The anthology would be a welcome addition, for instance, to any fiction collection. Here it would serve two purposes: to provide interesting short stories to read and to give the school librarian an excellent resource to use when introducing a variety of children's literature to students at the elementary level.

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