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# Activity Guide

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## What A Trip, Amber Brown!

### ABOUT THE STORY

Amber Brown and her family are going on with her friend, Justin Daniels, and his family, To the Poconos for vacation. The house where they are staying has a swing, a treehouse, and a swimming pool, and everyone is having a great time. When Amber and Justin decide to camp out with their father, though, they hear a scary noise. Is it an attacking animal?

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paula Danzinger is the well-known and well-loved author of more than 25 books, including *It's Justin Time*, *Amber Brown*, another easy reader and Live Oak Readalong. Though many of the characters and situations in her books come from situations in her books come from her imagination, the character of Amber Brown was inspired by a conversation Ms. Danzinger had with her niece. Paula Danzinger loves to travel and has been to dozens of different counties, but she always returns to her home in New York City.

### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Tony Ross was born in London, England. He trained at the Liverpool School of Art and was an art director at an advertising agency and an instructor before he began illustrating children's books. He is the author and illustrator of over 50 books, including *It's Justin Time*, *Amber Brown*. He lives in Cheshire, England, with his wife and daughter.

### INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children to describe what they do on vacation. Ask if any of them have ever slept out in a tent. Then tell them that the story they will read is about to best friends who go on vacation together and decide to sleep out in a tent.

### READING ACTIVITIES

#### Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- "What happened on the car ride to the Poconos?"
- "Why is Justin able to unpack so quickly?"
- "Why does Amber get angry at Justin?"
- "What does Amber worry about during the campout?"
- "What is making the scary noises?"
- "Why do you think Amber and Justin decide to let Danny stay in the tent?"  
(Draw conclusions)
- "What does Amber mean when she says, 'There's no place like tent'?"  
(Analyze)

### Vocabulary

vacation      antlers      tantrum      calendar

Write these words from the story on the chalkboard. Then write each of these sentences. Have volunteers fill in the blanks in each sentence with one of the words.

- The deer had huge, beautiful \_\_\_\_\_.
- My baby brother threw a terrible \_\_\_\_\_ when Mom took away his candy.
- I wrote the date of my dentist appointment on the \_\_\_\_\_.
- Every year, The Blakes spend their \_\_\_\_\_ in Maine.

### CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

#### Social Studies: *Where in the World Are the Poconos?*

Show children a map of the northeastern United States. Point out the state of Pennsylvania to the class. Have children draw their own maps of Pennsylvania. Then help them locate the Poconos Mountains on the map and draw them on the maps. Children can even label the spot in the Poconos where they think Amber Brown's vacation house might be.

#### Language Arts: *Homophones*

Amber Brown and Justin have some fun with real and made-up homophones: dear/deer, Poconos/poke-a-nose. Divide children into pairs and have each pair think of two sets of homophones and use each pair of words in sentences. Encourage them to make the sentences as funny as they can. Volunteers can read their sentences aloud to the class.

#### Science: *Animals of the Poconos*

Amber is afraid that a grizzly bear might interrupt the sleepover – but do grizzlies live in the Poconos? Have children work in groups to use reference and nonfiction books to find out what animals make their home in the Poconos Mountains. Groups can list five animals each and report on what they learn to the class.

#### Art: *Design a Vacation House*

Amber and Justin's vacation house is just about perfect. Ask children to design and draw a picture of a vacation house they would like to have. Encourage them to put in details they'd like, such as playground equipment, swimming pool, tree house, playhouse, and so on. Display children's designs in the classroom.

### INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

#### Picturing the Poconos

Have children use the keyword Poconos to find pictures of the mountains on the Internet. Children can print out a picture of the area that appeals to them, or can locate an attraction that they would find interesting if they were vacationing there. Encourage them to share their findings with the class.