



# LANGUAGE ARTS

## Writing Activities

- *Face-Off at the Alamo* is a novel that incorporates suspense, drama, and mystery. There are many different events that occur in the novel that engage readers and make them want to read more. Create a double-entry journal (see Appendix). Include at least three events from the story that added to the story's adventurous plot. Remember to include your specific thoughts and feelings, as well as your connections to each of the events.
- On two different occasions in the novel, Travis and Samantha witnessed something that made them feel uncomfortable. The first situation was when they heard the “slap” by Jimmy Vim to Tanner Brady. The second situation was when Jimmy Vim took Muck hostage at the Alamo. Consider these situations from the perspective of Travis or Samantha. Why do you think they reacted the way they did? What would you have done in the same situation? Would your actions have mirrored the actions of the character in the novel or would they have been different? Explain your choices.
- Describe the perfect hockey player. When thinking about this elite hockey athlete, consider both their character and physical traits. What should this player look like? Act like? Use specific examples from characters in the novel and your own knowledge of the game of hockey to justify your choices. Be sure to include at least five character traits and five physical traits.
- Travis loves everything about hockey. He loves the smells of the rink, the feel of the cool air, the sounds of the Zamboni, and the sight of his teammates dressed to play. Do you have a hobby, sport, or pastime that you are passionate about? Describe this activity using all five senses and descriptive language. If you don’t have a preferred hobby or sport, choose any activity that you enjoy.
- “Remember the Alamo” and “El Degüello” are battle cries that were used during the Battle of the Alamo. Their purpose was to rally, inspire, and motivate the men to fight. Pretend you are a motivational speaker. What battle cry would you create for the Screech Owls? Record your battle cry and explain how it would inspire your team by using evidence from the text and your own knowledge of hockey and/or competitive sport.
- “I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul.” (pg. 93) These two sentences appear on a piece of paper attached to the wall of the Kansas City Cheetahs’ dressing room. It is initially thought that the team’s coach posted these lines to motivate the team.



What do you think these two sentences mean? How do you think a coach could use them to motivate a team before a game? Do you think these lines are appropriate for a coach to use prior to a game? Clearly explain your opinion.

- Write a letter to the author outlining what you liked and disliked about *Face-Off at the Alamo*. Be sure to include your opinion about key elements of the story such as setting, characters, problem, and resolution. Use direct examples from the text to support your opinions. You should consider text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections that you noted while reading the novel and how they influenced your feelings towards the book.
- Samantha Bennett, known by her Screech Owls teammates as Sam, is a strong, confident female character. Wayne Nishikawa, fondly known as Nish, is also a strong but somewhat eccentric male character in the novel. Using a Venn diagram (see Appendix), compare and contrast these two characters. Using specific evidence from the novel, explain why you chose two of the similarities.

## Poetry

- There are several references to poetry in this novel. On page 128, there are examples of rhyming couplets. Read the two rhyming couplets and identify the rhyming pattern involved. Copy the four lines and label the pattern. Now create four more lines to continue this poem.
- Using a poem style of your choice (cinquain, haiku, acrostic), create a poem that describes a specific event from the novel. Focus on the emotion that the characters felt during the event as well as the emotional response that you felt when reading the description of the situation. Be sure to use descriptive language that will paint a picture in the reader's mind.



# THE ARTS

---

## Visual Arts

The Battle of the Alamo took place in San Antonio, Texas at a mission named the Alamo. The mission still stands today (although some minor architectural changes were made after the battle).

- Research what the Alamo Mission looked like in 1836. Choose a medium (clay, pastel, watercolor paint, etc.) to re-create the church based on your research.

## Dramatic Arts

As the coach of the Screech Owls, Muck often gives inspirational talks to the team before a game.

- Imagine that you are the coach of a hockey team like the Screech Owls. Write a pep talk for your team before a big game with a focus on teamwork and fair play. Be prepared to present it to your class. Consider voice, body language, and eye contact when you give your pep talk to the class.



# SCIENCE

---

## Matter and Energy

What is force? Write a definition in your own words.

- Consider how force relates to hockey. List as many examples as possible. Be specific and use examples from the novel and the game of hockey.

## Life Systems

Go to <http://kidshealth.org/kid>. Conduct a search on “scabs.” Read or listen to the information provided.

- Write a short report that includes at least ten facts on the formation of scabs. Explain how Nish’s lip healed and then reopened during the hockey tournament using the information from your report.

# HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

---

Hockey is a very exciting but tiring sport. It is very demanding on the body but it can also be a fun and engaging way to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

- In partners or small groups, create a radio or television PSA (Public Service Announcement) that effectively promotes the benefits of playing hockey. Remember the three B’s of advertising – Big, Bold, and Beautiful. Be sure to include facts about hockey that will “advertise” its benefits to one’s overall health and well-being. Record your PSA and present it to the class.



## CHARACTER EDUCATION

---

*Face-Off at the Alamo* takes place in San Antonio, Texas, the historic site of the Battle of the Alamo. At this battle, the Mexican Army defeated the Texans. The Texans were outnumbered but persevered against all odds for thirteen days until their ultimate defeat.

- The theme of perseverance weaves its way through the entire novel. Use a dictionary to look up the meaning of “perseverance” and write a definition in your own words.
- Choose one event from the novel when a character had to persevere. Explain the event and describe the actions the character took in order to continue, making specific references to the novel. Would you have acted any differently? Why or why not?
- Describe an event in your life when you persevered even though your chance of succeeding was slim. What did you do to motivate yourself to keep trying? Were you successful? How did it feel? Looking back, is there anything you would have done differently?



## ABOUT THIS BOOK

---

The Screech Owls have come to the southern city of San Antonio, Texas, a surprising hotbed of American ice hockey. They are here to compete in the San Antonio Peewee Invitational, and between games can explore the fascinating canals that twist and turn through a maze of shops and restaurants in the city's downtown.

The tournament has been set up to include guided tours of the Alamo, the world's most famous fort, and for one night the championship team will even get to camp out in the historic site. The Screech Owls discover that the Alamo is America's greatest symbol of courage and freedom, and when Travis and his friends uncover a plot to destroy it, they must call upon all the courage of the fort's original defenders.

## PRAISE

---

**"For kids who love hockey... Roy MacGregor's series of books makes perfect reading."**

—Ottawa Citizen

## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

---

Roy MacGregor is the author of *Home Team: Fathers, Sons and Hockey* (shortlisted for the Governor General's Literary Award); *A Life in the Bush* (winner of the U.S. Rutstrum Award for Best Wilderness Book and the CAA Award for Biography); and *Canadians: A Portrait of a Country and Its People*, as well as two novels, *Canoe Lake* and *The Last Season*. A regular columnist at *The Globe and Mail* since 2002, MacGregor's journalism has garnered four National Magazine Awards and eight National Newspaper Award nominations. He is an Officer of the Order of Canada, and was described in the citation as one of Canada's "most gifted storytellers." He lives in Kanata.

THE SCREECH OWLS  FACE-OFF AT THE ALAMO

## Double-Entry Journal

| Event From Text | Your Reaction/Connection to the Event |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
|                 |                                       |
|                 |                                       |
|                 |                                       |



THE SCREECH OWLS FACE-OFF AT THE ALAMO

## Venn Diagram - Samantha and Nish

