



Justine McKeen, Thermostat Chat

Sigmund Brouwer

Illustrated by Dave Whamond

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About the Book

In *Justine McKeen, Thermostat Chat*, Justine helps those around her measure energy vampires—things around the house, or school, that drain small amounts of electricity even when they aren't in use.

About the Author

Sigmund Brouwer is the author of 20 novels for adults and dozens of books for children. He visits over 150 schools per year to deliver his Rock and Roll Literacy presentation, reaching about 60,000 students per year. He is writer in residence for 80-plus schools through www.writerinresidence.org. His latest novel, *Thief of Glory*, is the 2015 Alberta Readers' Choice Award winner, and his YA novel *Deadman's Switch* is the 2015 Arthur Ellis best juvenile mystery in Canada. For more information, visit www.sigmundbrouwer.com.

About the Writing

This is the eighth title in the Justine McKeen, Queen of Green series. In each new story, I look for ways to help the planet that students might not yet know about and are able to do themselves at home or in the classroom. When I learned that small appliances that are plugged in, like microwaves and televisions, still use electricity I wanted to share what I had discovered with younger readers and their teachers.

Teaching Ideas—Curriculum Connections

Prereading Ideas

- We all know that vampires are not real creatures. So why would someone like Justine compare a microwave to a vampire?
- If vampires are scary creatures in movies, at what age is it appropriate or suitable to talk about vampires with kids?
- Is the kind of vampire in a horror movie scarier to little kids than a vampire from a Scooby Doo cartoon?
- Why is it appropriate to make sure that stories and movies and posters are suitable for the audience?

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. Can you think of anything in your house that is plugged in all the time, even when you don't use it?
2. Can you make a guess whether it is still using, or drawing, electricity even when it is not being used?
3. What kind of hints can you use to see if the appliance is still drawing electricity?
4. How could you figure out how much electricity it might use in a day? In a week? In a month?
5. Why does Justine McKeen compare cutting down on the use of electricity to planting a tree in the rain forest?
6. Why is the rain forest important to the health of planet Earth?

Suggested Activities

- Find out how much carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere produced by the electricity used by one house in one day.
- Find out how much carbon dioxide a large tree will absorb from the atmosphere
- Find a fun and silly cartoon picture of a vampire and compare it to a serious picture of a vampire. Decide if either would be okay to put on a poster that children in kindergarten would see if you had it in the hallway of your school.
- Find out how much it would cost to buy a device that measures electrical use in your classroom. Brainstorm ways to raise money to purchase this device and see if your principal will measure the school's energy use.
- Think of as many ways as possible that you can conserve energy in the classroom.

Websites of Interest

www.savewithsrp.com/advice/appliance/energyvampires.aspx

<https://cleantechnica.com/2015/02/18/room-room-guide-ousting-energy-vampires-lurking-home>

<https://20somethingfinance.com/electrical-leaking-standby-appliance-list>

www.pcmag.com/article/343177/how-to-measure-home-power-usage

Other Books by the Author from Orca Book Publishers

Justine McKeen, Queen of Green

Justine McKeen, Walk The Talk

Justine McKeen, Pooper Scooper

Justine McKeen, Eat Your Beets

Justine McKeen, Bird Nerd

Justine McKeen vs. the Queen of Mean

Justine McKeen, Bottle Throttle

Reviews

“In the final chapter of *Justine McKeen, Bottle Throttle*, author Brouwer provides the reader with the story’s sources for the evidence presented. This inclusion demonstrates Brouwer’s respect for the reader, as young as seven, and underlines that his character should not be taken at face value.” —*CM Magazine*

“Inventive and intrepid Justine McKeen...finds amusing ways to make classmates and community members more environmentally conscious.” —*Kirkus Reviews*