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## Science Notes - Book News: Cry of the Kalahari

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## SCIENCE NOTES

### Book News: *Cry of the Kalahari*

*Cry of the Kalahari*, written by the husband and wife research team of Delia and Mark Owens, offers the basis for a variety of innovative science and cross-curricular activities at the high school level.

Delia and Mark Owens had long dreamed of studying carnivores in Africa. In 1972, spurred by reports of dwindling animal populations and fear that political problems would soon make realization of their dream impossible, the Owenses auctioned their belongings and left for Africa with \$6000 and rudimentary supplies. *Cry of the Kalahari* details, in narrative form, their experiences and findings while conducting field research in a remote area of Botswana's Central Kalahari Game Reserve.

*Cry of the Kalahari* is a flexible classroom tool. Many chapters are self-contained and could easily be excerpted if the students were provided with a short introduction. The book can be used in sections or as a whole, depending on the nature of the activities generated and the amount of time the teacher desires to spend.

The book reports many animals' methods of verbal and chemical communication, the establishment and expression of the animals' relationships to each other, inter-species cooperation and competition, the animals' daily behaviors and their reactions to humans.

In addition to descriptions of the animals' social behaviors, *Cry of the Kalahari* provides valuable insight into the Owens' methods of obtaining information and keeping records of their observations. These methods are useful in teaching students the difference between field and laboratory research and might be used to spark student interest in conducting their own studies of local animals.

This book can also be used to integrate English topics such as point of view, joint writing projects and artful nonfiction into the science curriculum. Each chapter begins by noting whether it is written from Delia's or Mark's point of view. Students can compare and contrast chapters written by each of them in terms of style and tone. They might also discuss methods of approaching a joint writing project, analyze the benefits and problems with the Owens' methods and generate other approaches to collaboration.

Students might also explore the possibility of using fictional techniques such as narrative and dialogue to convey factual information. For example, if the students conduct their own observations on the behavior of some local animal, they might be encouraged to report their findings both as a scientific report and as a narrative combining the facts with their experiences while gathering the information. Students could then examine the two genres of reports in terms of their usefulness in a given situation and their relationship to "what really happened."

As a tool for exploring science content and methods as well as interdisciplinary work in English, *Cry of the Kalahari* would be an asset to any high school classroom library.

— J.M.H.