



Assembly Ideas for
***The Trumpet of the Swan* (1970)**
by E. B. White

1. **Provide a Taste** – The default assembly idea is to have a reader—the principal, the librarian, an esteemed guest, a local performer, even a student—read a sample chapter from the book. Often the first chapter, but not always. If you go this route, be sure to choose someone who can model good reading aloud practices.

2. **Character Monologue** – Choose a minor character that can introduce Louis. Anyone other than Sam Beaver or Louis should work quite well. Make sure that this character doesn't give away any details that would spoil the surprise when read your book together—just give enough details to whet your students' collective appetite. You may even choose to have a few shorter monologues from different characters rather than one long one from one specific character's point of view. Here are some characters to consider:
 - Mrs. Hammerbotham or Miss Snug
 - One or more of the students from school
 - The music store owner (or the store clerk)
 - Mr. Bickle
 - Applegate Skinner
 - Any of the other students from Camp Kookooskoos
 - Serena
 - The Boatman
 - The desk clerk from the Ritz
 - Mr. Lucas
 - The Head Man in Charge of Birds from the Philadelphia Zoo

For a sample monologue by the desk clerk at the Ritz, see the *Assembly Script* file in this Book Packet.

3. **Sam Beaver's Journal** – Take advantage of Sam Beaver's journal in building your assembly. Sam is a keen observer of nature, so you might select some brief passages from nature writings (H. D. Thoreau, Rachel Carson, Edward Abbey) and read them along with a couple of Sam's entries. It would take a good reader to make this work—to draw kids into wondering what's going on with these sensitive observations about nature. Encourage them to be observant and contemplative.



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4. **Play on Themes** – The sky’s the limit here, but here are some starter ideas of themes you could highlight in a kickoff assembly for *The Trumpet of the Swan*:
 - Have a representative from a local nature center come by and talk about (and hopefully show about) waterfowl. Students are naturally interested in animals, and learning about ducks, geese, and swans will get them ready for the book.
 - Invite someone who could play Reveille or Taps so kids could anticipate Louis’s responsibilities at Camp Kookooskoos. Perhaps your performer could play one of the myriad standard jazz numbers Louis plays in Boston and Philadelphia. For some potential selections, see the *Song List* in this Book Packet.

5. **Quiz Show** – There are various ways to involve students and others in the community, including sponsors. You might, for example, work up a quick 10-minute game show, which might pit preselected students against visiting sponsors. Questions might be about nature and waterfowl. This kind of assembly takes more effort to plan and organize. But doing so always makes for a more dynamic and engaging assembly.

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