

The Blue Ghost

by Marion Dane Bauer

Annotation

When a strange blue light glows and a voice calls her name, nine-year-old Liz wakes to find a ghostly woman dressed in old-fashioned clothes in the bedroom of the family's old homestead. The woman beckons to Liz and then disappears through the log cabin wall. Liz is at first bewildered by the woman's actions, but soon learns that she is being pulled back in time to help the ghost's family. Suspense builds as Liz reencounters the ghostly woman and becomes involved with caring for a sick child. This spooky story with its black and white artwork will satisfy many young readers. (Grades 2-4)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.mariondanebauer.com/>

Realia

Item: Medical home reference book

Statement: Does your family have a home medical reference book or do you just call the doctor? What did families do 100 years ago if someone was sick? Find out how Liz "travels back in time" to save one of her ancestors in *The Blue Ghost*.

Food

Oatmeal, Chocolate ripple ice cream

Challenging Words

| | | | |
|-------------|------------|----------------|------------|
| afeared | (p. 60 PB) | helter-skelter | (p. 10 PB) |
| brassy | (p. 61 PB) | hoarse | (p. 61 PB) |
| cast-iron | (p. 28 PB) | hodgepodge | (p.10 PB) |
| croup | (p. 58 PB) | inky | (p. 1 PB) |
| deep-set | (p. 7 PB) | moth-eaten | (p. 81 PB) |
| droning | (p. 78 PB) | muzzy | (p. 21 PB) |
| gasping | (p. 58 PB) | screech | (p. 53 PB) |
| goose bumps | (p. 53 PB) | vivid | (p. 37 PB) |
| hasp | (p. 65 PB) | wheezing | (p. 69 PB) |

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- "He might have been a tiny stove the way heat poured off of him." (p. 61 PB)

Similes

- "Then the figure wavered like smoke in a puff of wind." (p. 4 PB)
- "Liz pulled her hand back as if she had been burned." (p. 8 PB)
- "Her face had gone as pale as paste." (p. 37 PB)

Idioms and Expressions

- "Little hope except for me?" (p. 63 PB)
- "You're a sleepyhead today," she said. (p. 75 PB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Have students think of an older relative with whom they have spent time. Instruct students to record family stories and advice that was shared with them from family members. Have students choose the most important “piece of advice” that a relative shared. Why is it so important? How has it influenced their lives?
- Show an example of a Venn diagram to the class. Then have students compare Liz’s reaction to the cabin with her grandmother’s memories of it, using a Venn diagram.

Fine Arts:

- Have students construct a diorama or a model of a log cabin, including any features gleaned from the book.

Language Arts:

- Have students brainstorm how the story might have ended if Liz had not located the cure for croup in the *Booke of Remedys*. Follow-up this activity by having the students write an alternative ending to the story.
- Explain to students that they will be rewriting the first chapter from the Blue Ghost’s point of view. Have students brainstorm ideas before the writing activity.

Mathematics:

- Using an atlas, have students calculate how far Gran’s cabin, in northern Minnesota, is from the city of Minneapolis. Follow this activity by having the students calculate how much it would cost in gas to drive to the cabin.

Science:

- Organize a small group to conduct a survey of their classmates on whether or not they believe in ghosts. Have the group graph their findings.
- Explore which religions believe in ghosts and/or an after-life; have students debate this issue.
- Invite a doctor/nurse to talk to the class about effective “home remedies.”

Social Studies/Geography:

- Ask students to survey their relatives and find out some of the “home cures” they have used. Have students share their findings with the class. Follow this activity by having the students make a class booklet of home cures.
- Initiate a discussion with class on moving west in the 1800s. Then have the students pretend that they are Liz’s great-great-great-grandfather/grandmother moving west. Have students decide what year it might have been, what supplies would be vital to take, and what criteria would be used in deciding where to build the cabin. Take class to the library media center to research what was happening in the United States at that time.

Clementine

by Sara Pennypacker

Annotation

Clementine is an outrageous, but ingenuous, third-grader who is constantly in trouble. Her parents often remind her to “Think about the Consequences” before she acts. Clementine tries to focus on the teacher, but her mind is constantly redirected to other problems around her. One humorous scenario follows another until Clementine saves the apartment building from pesky pigeons. This easy chapter book blends humor and realistic characters into a fun read. (Grades 2-4)

Realia

Item: Painter stilts

Statement: “I was smiling all about this when I strapped the stilts onto my legs.” Read *Clementine* to discover why she wanted to walk on the painter’s stilts.

Items: Hat with Polka Dottie’s flea collar, pepperoni, red shoes, blue jay feather, M&Ms, charm bracelet, lace, pink sparkle nail polish, a dead bumblebee, and the rest of the red curly hair.

Statement: “Then I got my mother’s favorite hat, a big bottle of glue, and my dad’s aftershave, which Margaret and I love to squirt all over us because it has such a heavenly aroma.” Read *Clementine* to find out why she was making such a wonderful creation.

Food

Rutabaga, Lentils, Spinach, Turnips, Zucchini, Lima beans, Celery, Pigeon war cake

Challenging Words

| | | | |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| allergic | (p. 49 HB) | maneuvers | (p. 75 HB) |
| appointment | (p. 61 HB) | moisturizer | (p. 133 HB) |
| arthritis | (p. 45 HB) | nitrogen | (p. 67 HB) |
| coincidence | (p. 72 HB) | orthodontist | (p. 47 HB) |
| consequences | (p. 127 HB) | parasol | (p. 21 HB) |
| detective | (p. 41 HB) | riddance | (p. 121 HB) |
| exquisite | (p. 21 HB) | suspicious | (p. 52 HB) |
| fierce | (p. 95 HB) | wok | (p. 61 HB) |
| lentils | (p. 42 HB) | | |

Figurative Language

Similes

- “Aaauuuugggghhh!” she screamed. “I look like a dandelion!” (p. 15 HB)
- “It looked beautiful, like a giant tattoo of tangled-up worms.” (p. 22-23 HB)
- “Nope, they feel like heaven,” Margaret said. “No pointy parts at all. They’re as soft as rabbit ears. Baby rabbit ears.” (p. 59 HB)
- “That’s the best part, because when a million pigeons take off at the same time right above you, you can feel their wing beats exploding inside you, like fireworks.” (p. 75 HB)
- “My mom’s part of the bed smells like cinnamon rolls.” (p. 47 HB)
- “Principal Rice sighed like a leaky balloon.” (p. 50 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “I’m sorry, honey, but you can’t stay home. You have to go and face the music.” (p. 48 HB)

Clementine’s Word Variations

- “‘Well that’s not all,’ I said. ‘I also have the heartbreak of sore irises.’” (p. 45 HB)
- “She has an appointment at the orthodontist’s to have bracelets put on her teeth.” (p. 47 HB)
- “And the Margaret went all historical, and the art teacher went all historical and nobody could think of anything to do except the regular thing, which is: send me to the principal’s office.” (p. 11 HB)

Curriculum

Character Education:

- Have students orally explain why Clementine cut Margaret’s hair and why Clementine cut her own hair. Have students write a paragraph about things they would do for their best friend.
- Write a student-produced list of how Margaret treated Clementine after the hair-cutting incident. Discuss with students how those things would make them feel.

Fine Arts:

- Instruct students to illustrate scenes in the story just as Clementine did throughout the book.

Language Arts:

- Explain to students that they should choose their favorite event in the story to reread. Then have students explain to the class why they liked it. Have students include a brief list and explanation of the words the author used to create their favorite scene.
- Have students make a list of words that they use every day. Ask them to change those words into colorful though incorrect words like Clementine does (e.g., Orthodontist=Orthodontist, and braces=bracelets, etc.).

Mathematics:

- Discuss with students ways to create their own math problems by reading examples from *Clementine* (e.g., “I ran out of Mrs. Jacobi’s apartment and all the way down to my own---eight times twelve stairs, which equals ninety-six.”). Then have students individually or in small groups construct their own math problems.

Science:

- Bring class to the library media center to research pigeons. Have them find out if Clementine’s solution to the Great Pigeon War would actually work.

Dexter the Tough

by Margaret Peterson Haddix

Annotation

Dexter's introduction to his new school and fourth-grade class is not a good one. He slips in the hall on the newly waxed floor and the other students laugh at him. He then goes into the restroom and punches classmate Robin. In class, Dexter's enthusiastic, bubbly teacher assigns a writing assignment in which the students must create a story describing their lives. At the moment, Dexter's life is difficult. His father has cancer and both parents moved to Seattle for treatments. Dexter must live with his grandmother in Kentucky. Through interaction with his patient teacher, Dexter's story is creatively told as he begins to come to terms with his emotions and situation. This realistic story will capture the interest of readers and will also offer a good read-aloud selection. (Grades 2-5)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.haddixbooks.com/>

Realia

Item: A very old bike or pictures of very old bikes

Statement: Have you ever seen or ridden a very old bike? Dexter didn't have anything else to do but ride the old bike. Read *Dexter the Tough* and discover where Dexter's bike ride led him.

Food

Graham crackers, Canned pears, Chocolate chip cookies

Challenging Words

| | | | |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| bone marrow | (p. 72 PB) | imitation | (p. 82 PB) |
| chemo | (p. 95 PB) | longingly | (p. 56 PB) |
| disinfected | (p. 50 PB) | perspective | (p. 67 PB) |
| donor | (p. 93 PB) | revision | (p. 16 PB) |
| dutifully | (p. 20 PB) | self-sufficient | (p. 52 PB) |
| engineering degree | (p. 52 PB) | sentence fragment | (p. 58 PB) |
| enthusiastic | (p. 3 PB) | therapeutic | (p. 126 PB) |
| experimental | (p. 72 PB) | transplant | (p. 72 PB) |
| extension | (p. 98 PB) | wincing | (p. 80 PB) |
| imitated | (p. 119 PB) | | |

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- "Now he was standing in front of his new fourth-grade class, a sea of staring eyes." (p. 1 HB)

Similes

- "Every other kid in the class was writing like crazy." (p. 5 HB)
- "Dexter had felt crazy, like someone turning into a monster in a comic book." (p. 134 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “The words on his paper swam before his eyes.” (p. 127 HB)
- “She glowed so brightly it hurt to look.” (p. 78 HB)
- “It was more like he had hope bubbling up inside him now, hope for things he hadn’t even let himself think about before.” (p. 96 HB)
- “Now the pit of Dexter’s stomach felt like it had sunk all the way down to his tennis shoes.” (p. 123 HB)
- “The words on his paper swam before his eyes.” (p. 127 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Discuss with students the causes and consequences of peer pressure. Then have students write about a time when they felt peer pressure. How did they handle it? Did they do what was right? How did they feel afterwards?

Language Arts:

- Ask students what it means to be “tough?” Brainstorm ideas with class and then have them write to the prompt, “I feel tough when . . .”
- Have students create their own writing prompt relating to *Dexter the Tough*.
- Have students write letters of encouragement to children at St. Jude’s Hospital.

Mathematics:

- Instruct students to research and find out what they weighed at birth. (p. 15) Have small groups compile the list and chart the information on a graph, using a spreadsheet program if possible.

Science:

- Collaborate with the library media specialist to have students research bone marrow transplants, including background, reason needed, etc. Have the library media specialist provide a pathfinder that includes books and websites (e.g., <http://www.StJude.org>).

The Ghost's Grave

by Peg Kehret

Annotation

Twelve-year-old Josh is stuck in Carbon City, Washington with his eccentric great-aunt while his mom and step-dad go to India for the summer. To keep himself busy since there is no television, DVDs or CDs, Josh goes for long bike rides past a haunted tree house and old cemetery. Josh eventually meets the ghost of the coal miner who died in 1903 in a mining accident. Unfortunately, the coal miner's leg was buried separately from his body and his mission over these long years was to find a kind person who would dig up his leg and rebury it with the rest of him. When Josh exhumes the leg, he also finds a box of cash! This fast-paced, spooky, but humorous adventure will delight many readers. (Grades 4-7)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.pegkehret.com/>

Realia

Items: Baseball, Coal miner's hat, Models of leg bones, Realistic copy of \$100.00 bill

Statement: What can a baseball, a coal miner's hat, leg bones, and money have in common? They are all items found in Peg Kehret's thrilling book *The Ghost's Grave*.

Food

Cake, Spaghetti, Peas in a pod

Challenging Words

| | | | |
|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| affidavits | (p. 190 PB) | nonchalant | (p. 56 PB) |
| ageism | (p. 5 PB) | plea | (p. 192 PB) |
| chafed | (p. 129 PB) | quarry | (p. 98 PB) |
| coke | (p. 65 PB) | resumes | (p. 21 PB) |
| corrugated | (p. 38 PB) | scuttled | (p. 46 PB) |
| crack shot | (p. 9 PB) | smithereens | (p. 11 PB) |
| fuddy-duddy | (p. 22 PB) | stance | (p. 17 PB) |
| hoists | (p. 69 PB) | transient | (p. 52 PB) |
| monsoon | (p. 199 PB) | unscrupulous | (p. 167 PB) |
| motes | (p. 46 PB) | vindictive | (p. 177 PB) |

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- "Anger formed a hard knot in my chest." (p. 20 PB)
- "I longed to sit at the kitchen table with Mom and Steven, all of us eating cinnamon rolls before they cooled, joking about what pigs we were." (p. 96 PB)

Similes

- "In one yard a faded FOR SALE BY OWNER sign looked as if it had been there long enough to grow roots." (p. 4 PB)
- "Her face was as lined as a road map." (p. 4 PB)
- "It seemed unlikely the bat would want to land in her hair, with her head bobbing up and down and twisting back and forth like a roller coaster as she watched him." (p. 8 PB)
- "The refrigerator looked as if it had the measles. Red dots covered the floor like confetti." (p. 9 PB)

- “I’d always thought ghosts were delicate, transparent beings that a living person could see through, but this man was as solid as a tree stump.” (p. 63 PB)
- “He was like a patch of fog, here one minute and gone the next.” (p. 93 PB)
- “Those coke ovens looked like big ol’ beehives.” (p. 98 PB)
- “My imagination took off like a batter who’d laid down the perfect bunt.” (p. 144 PB)
- “In my desperation, the words rolled effortlessly out of my mouth like a bike going downhill.” (p. 178 PB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “The truck had seen better days, and so had Aunt Ethel.” (p. 4 PB)
- “‘Oh, fleas and mosquitoes,’ Aunt Ethel said as she picked up a cake plate that held a layer cake with chocolate frosting.” (p. 13 PB)
- “I was too psyched to wonder what the look meant or to quit talking.” (p. 17 PB)
- “This is a once-in-a-lifetime chance for Steven and me.” (p. 19 PB)
- “My summer in Washington was a done deal, and I could do nothing to change it.” (p. 22 PB)
- “I don’t cotton much to cats.” (p. 41 PB)
- “Nothing here but Mother Nature at her best.” (p. 51 PB)
- “Someone bent on mischief would have vandalized the tree house, but everything was tidy.” (p. 53 PB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Discuss with students how Josh’s feelings about Aunt Ethel change during the story. Have students locate specific examples in the book.
- Define ageism for students and have them consider it in their own lives. Ask students if it has affected their feelings/beliefs about another person?
- Have students compare the letters that Josh writes and never mails to his Mom with the letter that he does mail (p. 205 PB). Ask students to consider why he never mailed the first three letters and made certain that the last letter did get mailed.

Language Arts:

- Review with class the letter on page 23. Then have students pretend they are Josh and write their parents a letter, describing the events since his arrival at Aunt Ethel’s.
- Remind students that Aunt Ethel has no “recent” electronic equipment in her house. Have students journal what one of their days would be like if their house was like Aunt Ethel’s.
- Have students interview grandparents about their lives when they were young (before the “electronic age”). Have students share their findings with the class.

Mathematics:

- Remind students that Josh knew how to recognize counterfeit money (p. 163 PB). Invite a banker to come and share information on this topic with the class.
- Have students calculate how far away Josh was from his Mom in India and his hometown of Minneapolis.

Science:

- Explore which religions believe in ghosts and/or an after-life; have students debate this topic.
- Have students research the renewability of energy resources.

Social Studies

- Have students compare coal mining in the late 1800’s with today’s practices.
- Take students to the library media center to gather information on mining disasters. Have students graph the number of deaths in each disaster and compare locations, dates, etc. Are mines safer today? What conclusions can be drawn?

The Homework Machine

by Dan Gutman

Annotation

Four very different students are bound together by a big secret – Brenton has created a homework machine! Their teacher divides the class into groups and the four central characters form the D group, forcing them to spend a lot of time together. At first, they do not get along with one another, but their secret binds them together and leads them into a world of trouble. This creative story is told in alternating chapters by the teacher, police chief, and the four fifth-graders. Readers will enjoy this dramatic and thought-provoking story that packs a strong message about honesty and friendship. (Grades 4-6)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.dangutman.com/>

Realia

Items: Computer and examples of homework

Statement: So what can go wrong if you have a computer do your homework? Read *The Homework Machine* to find out about the consequences this foursome faces when Belch takes over homework duty!

Food

Cinnamon rolls, Popcorn, Chocolate chip cookies

Challenging Words

| | | | |
|----------------|------------|----------------|------------|
| ballistic | (p. 43 HB) | humiliating | (p. 5 HB) |
| blunder | (p. 24 HB) | intrigued | (p. 57 HB) |
| bothered | (p. 9 HB) | invasion | (p. 32 HB) |
| catapult | (p. 40 HB) | obnoxious | (p. 47 HB) |
| coincidence | (p. 64 HB) | pestered | (p. 27 HB) |
| defiant | (p. 21 HB) | projectile | (p. 40 HB) |
| discrimination | (p. 6 HB) | responsibility | (p. 24 HB) |
| experienced | (p. 7 HB) | studious | (p. 11 HB) |
| gravitated | (p. 60 HB) | totalitarian | (p. 19 HB) |
| hideous | (p. 49 HB) | unique | (p. 13 HB) |

Figurative Language

Similes

- “The kid is like a human computer.” (p. 23 HB)
- “I explained to him that when you play chess, you’re like a general with a whole army of all kinds of soldiers at your command.” (p. 57 HB)
- “He’s like an encyclopedia.” (p. 70 HB)
- “My dad attacks with his queen and rook at the same time, and it’s like there are interesting laser beams shooting all over the board.” (p. 104 HB)
- “Judy and Kelsey were screaming and crying and running around like an asteroid was about to hit the house.” (p. 143 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “But you have to swear on your life you’ll never tell anybody about it.” (p. 28 HB)
- “They wanted to enjoy being top dogs while they still can.” (p. 50 HB)

- “I didn’t ask a lot of questions. I was just happy that Brenton was beginning to fit in.” (p. 56 HB)
- “We drove over to the place, but I chickened out at the last minute.” (p. 71 HB)
- “He was creeping me out.” (p. 76 HB)
- “We got the call on New Year’s Day. Kind of put a damper on the celebration.” (p. 77 HB)
- “Are you friends? Are you turning goody-goody?” (p. 84 HB)
- “It helped get Sam out of his funk for a while, too.” (p. 86 HB)
- “It was fascinating for the whole class! I could almost see the wheels turning in their little heads.” (p. 95 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Initiate a discussion on ethics by reading the following passage: “But in some situations, you can’t tell the difference between right and wrong so easily. Like driving faster than the speed limit is wrong, but if you’re rushing to the hospital so that a baby can be born, then speeding is okay. Or hitting somebody with a baseball bat is wrong, but if that person was attacking your mom, then it’s okay.” (p. 87) Discuss with class the ethical ramifications of the four characters’ behavior. Have students offer their opinions on what the students did and what consequences they should face for their actions.
- Discuss with class the issue of Internet safety. Ask students about their school’s Acceptable Use Policy and the consequences of not adhering to it. Brainstorm with class acceptable behaviors while on the Internet (both their own and adult behaviors).

Fine Arts:

- Share paintings by Leonardo da Vinci with the class. Give students background on his life and works. Have students paint their own version of the Mona Lisa.
- Remind students that Brenton had written “My Concerto” when he was six years old. Discuss with class the characteristics of a concerto and have students listen to several examples.

Health/Physical Education:

- Conduct a chess tournament with the final winners in each class playing the other class winners. Offer certificates and trophies for the participants and winners. Expand the tournament to other schools with the opponents emailing their moves to each other.

Language Arts:

- Have the library media specialist present a booktalk featuring science fiction titles. Allow time for students to check out their selection.
- Take the class to the library media center to research the careers mentioned in *The Homework Machine*, including psychologist, physician, physicist, park ranger, computer analyst/programmer, soldier or military officer, police officer, and K-12 teacher.

Science:

- Have a local National Park Service person visit the class to discuss their job and the park in which they work.
- Collaboratively plan with the library media specialist on a Grand Canyon research project. Have students research the geological history of the canyon, as well as other interesting facts.
- Reproduce the “Our Solar System” homework assignment on page 34 and have students complete the assignment.
- Introduce the class to Greek and Roman history, including the purpose of the catapult and other uses of levers. Divide class into small groups and have them build an example of one of these devices.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Have students consult an atlas to locate Arizona and Florida. Tell students that they will be planning a family road trip and that they need to include the following topics: budget for gas, food, and lodging; interesting places to stop along the journey; and activities available at the destination point near the Grand Canyon. Students will share their trips with the class.

Listen!

by Stephanie S. Tolan

Annotation

Twelve-year-old Charley is grieving for her mother while trying to recuperate from a car accident that has left her with a slowly healing leg. Summer looms as a lonely time for her since her best friend is at tennis camp and her father has buried himself in work because of his own pain. Charley decides to take her physical therapist's advice and go for long walks in the woods. On her first day out, she meets a stray dog that she names Coyote. As she tries to tame him, they develop a deep and lasting bond. Readers will appreciate this gentle story of healing and the connections that can develop between humans and animals. (Grades 4-8)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.stephanietolan.com/>

Realia

Item: Digital camera

Statement: Listening to nature was very important to Charley's mother, a famous naturalist photographer. Read *Listen!* to find out what Charley learns about herself and her mother's unique gift.

Food

Peach cobbler, Cereal, Blackberry muffins, Liver, Waffles, Lemonade

Challenging Words

| | | | |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| concussion | (p. 4 HB) | perpetually | (p. 81 HB) |
| deliberately | (p. 22 HB) | plough | (p. 59 HB) |
| dwindled | (p. 151 HB) | plume | (p. 96 HB) |
| flailing | (p. 92 HB) | ramshackle | (p. 146 HB) |
| frisks | (p. 51 HB) | sheltered | (p. 20 HB) |
| intermittently | (p. 154 HB) | slathers | (p. 114 HB) |
| interrupting | (p. 33 HB) | snatching | (p. 134 HB) |
| jaunty | (p. 186 HB) | trickling | (p. 19 HB) |
| mysterious | (p. 35 HB) | tussling | (p. 60 HB) |
| obvious | (p. 137 HB) | vanishes | (p. 62 HB) |

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- "But Sarita's face could be a mahogany mask, it is so still and steady." (p. 39 HB)
- "She remembers, then, a winter photo her mother took of a place where sand and water have frozen into a forest of tiny stalagmites." (p. 119 HB)

Similes

- "She can't remember looking away, but she must have. Because the dog was gone. Like a ghost. Just gone." (p. 8 HB)
- "But the trail, narrow and uneven under foot, isn't much better. It is crisscrossed with kudzu vines, like an obstacle course of trip wires." (p. 16 HB)

- “Things that really happened were there, impossible to forget, like massive boulders that you had to work and work and work to move.” (p. 35 HB)
- “Sarita says her father went nearly nuts the first days Charley was in the hospital, because every time Charley fell asleep it was like turning off a computer without saving. Her memory would get wiped clean.” (p. 36 HB)
- “Most times the nightmare throws her out of sleep and leaves her stranded like a whale on a beach.” (p. 37 HB)
- “She closes her eyes and gives herself over to the images, like watching a movie in her mind.” (p. 47 HB)
- “It was as if a bungee cord stretched between the two dogs, pulling harder and harder as Sadie swam away.” (pp. 54-55 HB)
- “His dark eyes are lined with black all the way around, a line that slants up in the corners like the eye makeup on an Egyptian princess.” (p. 63 HB)
- “The empty day, in the empty house, stretched ahead of her like a trek across the wilderness.” (p. 82 HB)
- Others are found on pages 83, 85, 102, 109, 112, 148, 157, and 185.

Idioms and Expressions

- “Stupid old wives’ tale, Charlie thinks.” (p. 50 PB)
- “Much as we love her, she’s not the brightest bulb in the pack.” (p. 61 HB)
- “He stands his ground, his ears and tail up, looking at her as if to ask if there is any more.” (p. 99 HB)
- “‘Biscuits first, friendship after,’ Charley tells him. ‘One step at a time.’” (p. 165 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Fine Arts:

- Show class examples of famous nature photographers’ works either in books or on the Internet. Distribute digital cameras to students and take them outside to photograph plants, insects, and other nature subjects.

Language Arts:

- Read Haiku poetry to students and explain the structure of these poems. Have the students write and illustrate their original Haikus.
- Ask students to write the text that could be in Colleen Morgan’s book *Trees and Stones Will Teach You*. Refer students to the quotes mentioned in the text that are given in the book as starting points for their text.

Science:

- Collaboratively plan with the library media specialist to have the students research the plant and animal life found in North Carolina. Have students compare/contrast the North Carolina environment with their local plants and animals.
- Organize class into small groups. Have each group choose a breed of dog to research. Have students create an informative PowerPoint, including pictures and/or graphics.
- Bring in a pond water sample for the students to view under a microscope. Have students identify the animals and plants that they locate in the sample and research additional information on them.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Have students reread sections of the book that describe the setting. Based on this information, have students draw a map of the area described.

The Missing Manatee

by Cynthia DeFelice

Annotation

11-year-old Skeet Waters was excited about spring vacation in his Florida home, but his hopes are soon dashed by the fact that his parents are splitting up and his father is moving out. After hearing this devastating news, Skeet finds a dead manatee floating in the water. He quickly goes back to shore to get the sheriff, but when they return to the spot, the manatee is missing. Skeet is determined to solve the crime, but soon learns that administering true justice is not always simple or easy. Strong characters and the first-person narrative are sure to hook older readers. (Grades 5-7)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.cynthiadefelice.com/>

Realia

Items: Plastic or plush manatee, Fishing pole, Rod and reel, Artificial fishing bait, Plastic tarpon, Karaoke machine, and/or Rope to demonstrate different knots

Statement: Why in the world would anyone want to shoot a manatee? And where was it now? Read *The Missing Manatee* to find the answers to Skeet's questions.

Food

Chinese food, Bar-B-Que, Pizza

Challenging Words

| | | | |
|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| brackish | (p. 5 HB) | eligible | (p. 48 HB) |
| carcass | (p. 155 HB) | fruitless | (p. 116 HB) |
| cast | (p. 82 HB) | incredulous | (p. 148 HB) |
| chortle | (p. 14 HB) | maneuvered | (p. 62 HB) |
| conniption | (p. 104 HB) | motive | (p. 56 HB) |
| dubiously | (p. 73 HB) | penetrating | (p. 129 HB) |

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- “He may look rough with that nasty old scar and all, but he’s a squishy old marshmallow inside.” (p. 167 HB)

Similes

- “I read someplace that when the old sailors told of seeing mermaids, they were actually looking at manatees. Which really cracked me up. I mean, a manatee looks kind of like a gigantic dark brown Idaho potato. Or a balloon that got blown up wrong.” (p. 4 HB)
- “Greasy with sunscreen from head to toe, smelling like a giant coconut, and looking ridiculous, I finally got out of the house.” (p. 109 HB)
- “Memaw went on. ‘He got a horrible cut on his face, and when the fellow with the ax saw all that blood pouring down Dan’s cheek and onto his shirt, well, he turned tail and ran like a rabbit.’” (p. 170 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “That got Mac’s attention and he looked at his watch. ‘Oops. How’d it get so late? Skeet, you’d better get on home now or your mama’ll skin me alive and feed me to the sharks.” (p. 74 HB)
- “After she left, there was another long, uneasy silence, until finally Memaw said, ‘I declare! If I’d known you were going to be such party poopers, I’d have come by myself. I’d be better off trying to celebrate with that napkin holder than with you two sad sacks.” (p. 50 HB)
- “But Dan only said, ‘The thing about a tarpon, Skeet, is that he’s lazier than an old dog in the noontday sun.’” (p. 86 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Discuss with class why Skeet did not want to tell about Dan’s behavior on the fishing trip. Have the class explain why it was so difficult for Skeet to face Dan.

Fine Arts:

- Instruct students to bring in objects or “trash” to the class, explaining to the students that they will be creating their own “Study in trash” from the objects collected.

Language Arts:

- Engage students in a discussion on their favorite hobbies or leisure time activities. Bring the *Missing Manatee* into the discussion and the fishing stories that Skeet could write. Then have students compose their personal story about their favorite activity.

Science:

- Take students to the library media center to investigate the flora and fauna of the area of Florida where Skeet lived. Have students create a *PowerPoint* presentation to share their information with your class or other classes.
- Have students locate information about the manatee, blue heron, and tarpon on the Internet and/or using print or nonprint resources. Students could construct a poster, highlighting information on their topic. Hang the posters in the library media center with a display of books on these topics.
- If possible, take the class on a field trip to see a manatee. If this is not possible, show class a documentary on manatees.
- Initiate a discussion on endangered animals and how the class or individuals can be proactive in their affecting future outcome of these animals.

No Talking

by Andrew Clements

Annotation

The “unshushables,” Dave Packer’s fifth-grade classmates, are known for being nonstop talkers. After Dave learns that Mahatma Gandhi practiced being silent one day a week to bring order to his mind, he decides to try it. An encounter with Lynsey, another fifth-grade talker, initiates a contest between the boys and girls for the next 48 hours. The principal and teachers negatively react to the contest and insist that the students return to their previous behavior. Consequently, Dave finds himself in the middle of a swirling controversy. This fast-paced, thought-provoking story will quickly grab readers and could lead to interesting class discussions. (Grades 3-6)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.andrewclements.com/>

Realia

Items: Red plastic bullhorn, Red mini notebook, and Folded index cards for tallying points

Statement: Could something as simple as not talking change your school? It is boys against girls in this amazing two day competition. Find out who the winners and the losers are in *No Talking* by Andrew Clements.

Food

Cafeteria tray with a milk carton, Macaroni and cheese, Pizza, Cherry popsicles

Challenging Words

| | | | |
|----------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| conservation | (p. 115 HB) | miracle | (p. 49 HB) |
| courteous | (p. 33 HB) | nudged | (p. 77 HB) |
| discrimination | (p. 101 HB) | recruits | (p. 18 HB) |
| disorderly | (p. 32 HB) | rousing | (p. 106 HB) |
| enlightening | (p. 140 HB) | skirmish | (p. 79 HB) |
| experiment | (p. 2 HB) | stereotypes | (p. 100 HB) |
| ignorant | (p. 21 HB) | stratospheric | (p. 140 HB) |
| illegal | (p. 23 HB) | suspense | (p. 45 HB) |
| interjection | (p. 77 HB) | tolerance | (p. 19 HB) |
| maniacs | (p. 66 HB) | vandalism | (p. 32 HB) |

Figurative Language

Similes

- “Even though she was sitting behind him at the next table, and even though the cafeteria was almost bursting with noise, Lynsey had a sharp voice, the kind that cuts like a hacksaw.” (p. 12 HB)
- “So I pull my hands away like she’s holding a dead skunk or something, and I say, ‘You think I want *that*?’” (p. 13 HB)
- “When little Dave Packer and all the other kids his age first showed up to begin kindergarten together, it was sort of like they were new recruits joining the army.” (p. 18 HB)
- “Under Mrs. Hiatt’s leadership, the place ran like clockwork.” (p. 35 HB)

- “On any other day Mrs. Hiatt would have already used her bullhorn at least once, because when half the fifth graders were standing in the food line, and the other half were in the milk line or rushing toward their seats, there was always a terrific burst of yelling and calling out and wild chatter – sort of like feeding time at the zoo.” (p. 41 HB)
- “There were the usual grunts of effort and screams of terror, and when three or four kids with red dodgeballs would silently go hunting for one player on the other team, it was sort of like watching a pack of wolves go after a lone caribou: A motion of the leader’s head, a movement toward the prey, and then, *Whack!, Whack! WHOMP!* – dead meat.” (p. 67 HB)
- “She felt like a faucet had been wide open, gushing and gushing forever, and then suddenly it flipped shut.” (p. 93-94 HB)
- “And the gesture spread through the room like ripples on a pond.” (p. 130-131 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “He wanted to keep his lips zipped right up to the very end of the day, to not say one single word until the last bell rang at ten after three.” (p. 2 HB)
- “And the reason Dave had decided to clam up...but it still isn’t the time to tell about that.” (p. 2 HB)
- “As those words flew out of his mouth, Dave had two thoughts.” (p. 10 HB)
- “Dave had gotten through the lunch line without a peep.” (p. 10 HB)
- “When it came to dishing out the put-downs, Dave was a pro.” (p. 12 HB)
- “And in his ignorant but creative young mind, an idea sparked to life.” (p. 21 HB)
- “Jim said, ‘You bug me!’” (p. 29 HB)
- “She tried to look as casual as possible, tried to act like it was perfectly normal for the lunchroom to be stone silent except for the clattering of plates and the squeaking of sneakers on the waxed floor.” (p. 43 HB)
- “There were the usual grunts of effort and screams of terror, and when three or four kids with red dodgeballs would silently go hunting for one player on the other team, it was sort of like watching a pack of wolves go after a lone caribou: A motion of the leader’s head, a movement toward the prey, and then, *Whack!, Whack! WHOMP!* – dead meat.” (p. 67 HB)
- “However, there was one gigantic problem with all this harmony and order and balance and peace that was blooming in the fifth-grade hall: Mrs. Hiatt wasn’t in the loop.” (p. 124 HB)
- “Dave’s head was spinning, but he managed to say, ‘Where?’” (p. 138 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Remind students that the No Talking contest in this book was the fifth grade boys versus the girls. Discuss why the boys and girls did not get along. Ask students if they can relate to these problems.
- Discuss stereotypes and discrimination with students, reminding them that Mrs. Hiatt and Mr. Burton had some problems with these issues on pages 100-101. Work with class to create lists of popular stereotypes and discrimination issues. Discuss how these can be overcome and the problems that are created by stereotypes and discrimination.
- Discuss with class why Dave felt that Mrs. Hiatt was bullying him in the cafeteria when she yelled at him through the bullhorn. What exactly is a bully? Discuss how to effectively deal with a bullying problem.

Fine Arts:

- Hum or clap songs and have the students guess what song you are performing. Songs could be patriotic, lullabies, or traditional nursery rhymes.

Language Arts:

- Have students create a cumulative story where they can only add a three word sentence.
- Pick a short story and have the students read it aloud, three words each, and as fast as possible, with the teacher calling out the next reader.
- Assign topics to students for short debates. Students should be paired off and instructed that they may only answer using no more than three words for each statement. One student will argue *for* and the other *against* the topic. Some suggested topics could be: school uniforms, soft-drink machines in schools, year-round-school, homework, or school dances.
- Have students research the development of language. How do children learn to use language? Can we use language in a “new way?” Divide class into small groups to create lists of ideas on how to communicate without talking. Discuss how the invention of sign language changed how deaf and mute people could communicate.

Mathematics:

- Have students tally how many words they use in one school day. How many words would that equate to per week? Per month? Per year? Have students graph their findings.

Science:

- Conduct an experiment on word conservation with class. Utilizing the rules and guidelines in the book, have the students try to go 48 hours with No Talking. Students may respond to any grown up with only three words or less. Select who will keep the tallies of mistakes and explain “the honor system.”

Social Studies/Geography:

- Divide class into small groups and assign the following research projects:
 - Research India and its history, culture, and issues.
 - Research Mahatma Gandhi and his importance in freeing India from British rule.
 - Compare and contrast Mahatma Gandhi’s ideology with that of Martin Luther King Jr.
 - Make a map of India. Find Gandhi’s birthplace and other important cities.
- Assign each student a research partner. Assign each team a different country and have them prepare a report on the country. Each report must include history, government, land and industry, people and culture, and one major historical figure. Have both students present the report to the class.

Phineas L. MacGuire... Erupts!

by Frances O’Roark Dowell

Annotation

Phineas Listerman MacGuire, also known as “Mac,” is a budding scientist who is upset because his best friend moved away, leaving him without a science fair partner. Eventually, Mac is paired with the new kid in class, also known as Mac, who is obnoxious and has already alienated the entire class. Along the way to building their erupting volcano, the two boys also build a friendship and learn to respect each other’s differences. This fast-paced, delightfully illustrated story will entertain young readers. (Grades 3-5)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.francesdowell.com/>

Realia

Items: Plastic dinosaurs, purple ink pen, empty soda bottle, dishwashing liquid, baking soda and vinegar (e.g., volcano making supplies), and comic books

Statement: From the highly scientific notebooks of Phineas L. MacGuire, read about his re-invention of the other Mac in his class.

Food

Cheddar cheese, *Jell-O*, Peanuts, Marshmallows

Challenging Words

| | | | |
|---------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| ballistic | (p. 73 PB) | danger | (p. 99 PB) |
| canister | (p. 33 PB) | humane | (p. 135 PB) |
| cannibal | (p. 34 PB) | obnoxious | (p. 77 PB) |
| Cassette tape | (p. 146 PB) | penicillin | (p. 48 PB) |
| collaborate | (p. 37 PB) | signature | (p. 65 PB) |
| concentrate | (p. 91 PB) | simulation | (p. 112 PB) |

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- “What’s obvious is that you have peanut butter for brains,” Aretha said, then turned to Mrs. Tuttle. “There must be some logical explanation.” (p. 128 PB)
- “Our refrigerator is practically a museum of mold.” (p. 48 PB)

Similes

- “Mrs. Tuttle wears green high-top shoes every day. She says they make her bouncy, like a frog.” (p. 17 PB)
- “Soup grows mold that looks like little stars.” (p. 50 PB)
- “He was wearing Spider-Man pajamas, and his hair was sticking out even worse than usual. He looked like he was a very tall two-year-old, if you want to know the truth.” (p. 54 PB)
- “Mac R.’s room looked like it had been picked up, turned upside down, and shaken all around.” (p. 62 PB)

- “But if you put us in the same room, watch out. It’s like a chemical reaction we have to each other.” (p. 78 PB)
- “‘Who?’ everyone in the class asked at once. ‘Who?’ It sounded like a gigantic owl had just flown into the room.” (p. 90 PB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “This made Mrs. Tuttle learn her lesson that “zip your lips” is more of a little-kid thing.” (p. 30 PB)
- “My dinosaur collection isn’t all that great, if you want to know the truth.” (p. 75 PB)
- “Talk quietly among yourselves until I get back. Absolutely no hanky-panky.” (p. 124 PB)
- “You know how sometimes people talk about a light going off in their head? I’ve never actually had that happen to me, but sometimes I get this feeling that’s almost like electricity.” (p. 131 PB)
- “I was almost ready to go throw myself into a vat of day old spaghetti sauce in the cafeteria’s kitchen, when something caught my eye.” (p. 151 PB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Discuss with class why Mac had to find a way to change his classmates’ opinion of Ben.

Fine Arts:

- Find examples of graphic art and share with class. Initiate a discussion on what the students like about this art form and its uses.

Language Arts:

- Borrow from your school library or interlibrary loan from another school several copies of the *Scientific American* journal. Have students explore its contents and report back to the class.

Science:

- Have students replicate the scientific experiments in the back of *Phineas L MacGuire... Erupts*.
- Discuss science fair projects and have small groups work on various examples.
- Take students to the library media center to research mold. Set up various mold experiments for which students will track the development, keeping a spreadsheet on the daily progress.

Roxie and the Hooligans

by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

Annotation

Poor nine-year-old Roxie is the target of the class bullies known as Helvetia's Hooligans. They have chosen her to be the Victim of the Year because she has ears that stick out. The Hooligans chase Roxie into a dumpster and they all end up on a barge pulling out to sea. Eventually, they are stranded on a deserted island with two robbers who are hiding out. Roxie, however, comes to the rescue with her survival skills memorized from a book written by her Uncle Dangerfoot's colleague, Lord Thistlebottom. This quick read that mixes fantasy and reality will have everyone cheering for the success of the young adventurer. (Grades 2-4)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.ipl.org/div/askauthor/Naylor.html>

Realia

Items: Walking stick or cane

Statement: "When Uncle Dangerfoot came to visit, everything in the house had to be just so...the man who had wrestled alligators and jumped planes was not to be kept waiting." Nine-year-old Roxie Warbler loves to hear her uncle tell of his adventures with Lord Thistlebottom, the author of *Lord Thistlebottom's Book of Pitfalls and How to Survive Them*. Roxie practically knows the book by heart. But unfortunately Roxie doesn't need to survive pitfalls in adventures, but she does at school where a group of bullies, Helvetia's Hooligans, tease her about her big ears. Suddenly, though, Roxie finds herself on a deserted island with, not only the hooligans, but a pair of bank robbers on the run! Can Lord Thistlebottom's advice help Roxie survive all the pitfalls she faces on this wild adventure? Read *Roxie and the Hooligans* to find out.

Food

Crumpets, Tea, Sausages, Cheese, Bottles of water

Challenging Words

| | | | |
|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| admonition | (p. 11 PB) | morosely | (p. 80 PB) |
| avalanche | (p. 11 PB) | pitfalls | (p. 2 PB) |
| barge | (p. 28 PB) | rogue | (p. 60 PB) |
| brigade | (p. 90 PB) | seeping | (p. 6 PB) |
| burlap | (p. 77 PB) | sniveling | (p. 37 PB) |
| crumpet | (p. 3 PB) | spluttered | (p. 26 PB) |
| furrowed | (p. 30 PB) | squalling | (p. 92 PB) |
| gingersnaps | (p. 112 PB) | taunt | (p. 57 PB) |
| gravel | (p. 19 PB) | throttle | (p. 27 PB) |
| harrowing | (p. 5 PB) | truce | (p. 18 PB) |

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- "So did the eyes of her little band of hooligans: Simon Surly, Freddie Filch, and the smallest, leanest, meanest of them all – a wiry little hornet of a girl called Smoky Jo." (p. 8 PB)

Similes

- “It was her ears, of course. They were round ears, pink ears, ears of the normal variety, and Roxie scrubbed them daily inside and behind. But they stuck straight out from her head like the handles on a sugar bowl, the ears on an elephant, the wings on a bat.” (p. 7 PB)
- “Helvetia brayed like a donkey: ‘Hee-yah, hee-yah!’
Simon howled like a hyena: “Hoo-hoo ha-ha, hoo-hoo ha-ha!”
Freddy cawed like a crow: ‘Ca-haw! Ca-haw!’
And Smoky Jo squeaked like a mouse: *Eeeka. Eeka. Eeka.*” (pp. 8-9 PB)
- “‘I think we ought to find something to *hang* on those ears,’ said Simon Surly, who was as tall and skinny as a broom.” (p. 10 PB)
- “Smokey Jo had eyes that positively gleamed, and her short hair circled her head like a barbed-wire fence.” (p. 10 PB)
- “‘Those kids are like sharks, Roxie,’ he said.” (p. 15 PB)
- “Roxie put the rest in her mouth. The hooligans’ eyes were as big and round as coat buttons.” (p. 54 PB)
- “Roxie moved as if she were stalking deer.” (p. 61 PB)
- “She crawled like a crocodile through the willowy weeds, stopping now and then to listen.” (p. 72 PB)
- “Roxie lay as still as a stick in the sea grass.” (p. 76 PB)
- “Five children scattered in five different directions, and the roar of the men sounded like wild animals behind them.” (p. 101 PB)
- “Coming down out of the sky, like a huge bird, was a helicopter, and as Roxie ran out into the water to escape the robber, she saw a rope ladder tumble out of the helicopter till it hung five feet above the surf.” (p. 103 PB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “We’ll throttle your engine!...We’ll blow your whistle!...We’ll stop your clock!...” (p. 27 PB)
- “Finally Helvetia said, ‘She can’t stay up there forever. And when she comes down, we’ll get her all right. We’ll fix her wagon!’
‘We’ll punch out her lights!’ growled Simon.
‘We’ll clear her deck!’ panted Freddy Filch.
‘We’ll clean her plate!’ squeaked Smoky Jo.” (p. 33 PB)
- “‘Now, don’t you go gettin’ soft,’ Snake Eyes said, looking about him in all directions. (p. 45 PB)
- “‘We’ll give them a run for their money – or should I say, the bank’s money?’ cried Lord Thistlebottom, and he turned to his instruments and radioed the police.” (p. 109 PB)
- “With the police ahead of them, the helicopter behind, land on one side of them, and the wide ocean on the other, Rat and Snake Eyes jumped overboard and tried to swim away, but the jig was up, and the officers pulled them into the police boat.” (p. 111 PB)
- “‘A jolly good adventure, that!’ Lord Thistlebottom added with a chuckle. ‘Jolly good show, Roxie Warbler.’” (p. 111 PB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Remind students that Roxie and Norman were beset by school bullies. Discuss the concept of bullying with the students. Explore the excellent lesson plans and follow up activities found on these sites:
Education World http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson/lesson191.shtml
(10 lessons, including some K-2 that can be adapted for 3rd graders, plus links to archives)
Suite 101.com http://lesson-plan-help.suite101.com/article.cfm/lesson_plans_on_bullying

(An excellent lesson plan in which the class constructs a chart detailing individual experiences with bullying, then students make a Venn Diagram comparing their opinions with other class members.)

PBS.org http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/parents/lesson_plans/bullies_classroom_community.html

(A lesson plan using the video on bullying from the PBS Kids site **It's My Life**. It includes a worksheet for a "think-pair-share" activity after students watch the video.)

Language Arts:

- Read examples of how Roxie learned to be resourceful by reading *Lord Thistlebottom's Book of Pitfalls and How to Survive Them*. Have the students recreate the book by combing through the story and finding all of the bits of advice about pitfalls from Lord Thistlebottom. Then have them explain how each bit of advice helped Roxie to manage a situation. Students can use a compare/contrast format, or use *Kidspiration* or a similar program to make a flowchart showing the advice on the left and how Roxie made use of it on the right.
- Organize class into small groups and have them complete a character study of each of the hooligans. What were their flaws or fears? Where does the book give an indication of why they were bullies (unloved by parents, thought no one would miss them).
- Discuss the meaning of the term "daredevil" with the students. Ask if they know of other daredevil characters like Uncle Dangerfoot and Lord Thistlebottom (Indiana Jones will be a likely answer). Discuss the characteristics that would make a person a daredevil. Have them research occupations or activities that require some of these characteristics: stuntman, circus performer, mountain climber, explorer, rodeo rider, etc.
- Have students read other books featuring bullies: *Jake Drake and Bully Buster* by Andrew Clements; *Trading Places with Tank Talbot* by Dori Butler; *Junebug and the Reverend* by Alice Mead; *A Crazy Mixed-up Spanglish Day* by Marisa Montes; *Veronica Ganz* by Marilyn Sachs; *The Monster's Ring* by Bruce Coville; and *Escaping the Giant Wave* by Peg Kehret. Have students compare the characters and the situations in those books with Roxie, the hooligans and their predicament.

Science:

- Remind students that Roxie showed the hooligans ways in which they could survive by eating grubs and collecting dew to drink. Have students research other ways in which they could survive in different habitats if they were far from civilization. Discuss first the habitats and the particular needs for each one, and then the basics: water, food, shelter, plus other concerns such as safety from dangerous animals, clothing, etc. Divide the class into groups and give each group a habitat. Have students list the survival techniques they find, then make a class booklet detailing how to survive in the desert, on a mountain, in a forest, on a deserted island, etc.

Catalog search: wilderness survival

Website with good ideas: <http://www.equipped.org/kidsrvl.htm>

Social Studies/Geography:

- Reread selections from the book in which Uncle Dangerfoot mentions places where he has had adventures with Lord Thistlebottom around the world. Have students find the places mentioned in the book and locate them on a map.
- Have students use an atlas to locate the New England states and to find interesting place names for coastal towns like Roxie's.
- Discuss with students how Roxie is only able to swallow the "grub sandwich" by pretending she's at Buckingham Palace eating with the queen. Have the students research where Buckingham Palace is, the distance between it and their hometown, some of the interesting features and facts about the place, and who lives there today. Some sites:

<http://www.royal.gov.uk/output/page275.asp>

<http://kids.visitlondon.com/explorelondon/detail/427311>

Rules

by Cynthia Lord

Annotation

Catherine, 12, has an autistic brother that she alternately is ashamed of and loves. To deal with her brother's eccentricities, Catherine creates rules that her brother needs to follow. In the meanwhile, she befriends a nonverbal paraplegic boy who communicates by using a book of pictures, including a card for "whatever." Catherine's relationship with the boy, Jason, helps her better understand her complex feelings toward her brother. This uplifting, insightful Newbery Honor book is a warm read and a great discussion starter. (Grades 4-7)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.cynthialord.com/>

Realia

Items: Yellow rubber duck, Audiocassette or videotape, Sketchbook and colored pencils

Statement: "Sometimes people laugh when they like you. But sometimes people laugh to hurt you." "No toys in the fish tank." "Flush!" These are some of the "Rules for David." Read *Rules* to find out why Catherine has to write them down for her brother.

Food

Grape soda, Cookies

Challenging Words

| | | | |
|---------------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| accommodate | (p. 69 PB) | gauzy | (p. 52 PB) |
| autism | (p. 8 PB) | grimacing | (p. 81 PB) |
| cellar | (p. 6 PB) | murky | (p. 111 PB) |
| crimson | (p. 60 PB) | pilings | (p. 150 PB) |
| Down syndrome | (p. 16 PB) | realtor | (p. 4 PB) |
| embarrassing | (p. 60 PB) | thrashing | (p. 64 PB) |
| frustrating | (p. 78 PB) | wharf | (p. 151 PB) |

Figurative Language

Similes

- "David stands with his sneaker toes on the top step, like it's a diving board and he's choosing whether to jump." (p. 3 PB)
- "David flickers his fingers up and down, like he's playing a piano in the air." (p. 6 PB)
- "Mrs. Frost drops her magazine and even the receptionist has stopped typing, her hands held above her keyboard like a conductor waiting to cue a symphony." (p. 27 PB)
- "David hears everything extra loud, Stephanie says. Milk being poured, shopping carts clanging at the grocery store, my pet guinea pigs squealing, the school bus braking as it pulls up to the corner, and the *whoosh* of the bus door opening – all those things and a million more make David cover his ears, fast as lightning." (p. 29 PB)
- "I jump up to stop his hands, flapping now like two fierce and angry birds." (p. 37 PB)
- "Talking to David can be like a treasure hunt. You have to look underneath the words to figure out what he is trying to say." (p. 38 PB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “David had a hard time last week,’ Mom says. ‘I need to make sure Stephanie can handle it. Why don’t we read?’” (p. 15 PB)
- “How’s his day been going?’ the therapist asks his mother. (p. 23 PB)
- “if I were Jason, I’d want cards that said: ‘Get out of my face!’ and ‘Go away!’ and ‘This stinks a big one!’” (p. 24 PB)
- Mom’s question hangs in the air. (p. 26 PB)
- “ There’s a gazillion words and phrases I could choose, and none of them seem worth one of my two last cards.” (p. 54 PB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Discuss the rules of your classroom with students. Does everyone have a clear understanding of the rules and why they are needed? Talk about the rules in your school. Are they the same as the classroom? Ask students to talk to their family about their home rules. Does everyone have an understanding of why their family may have certain rules? At school, discuss family rules. How are they similar or different from other households?
- Discuss with class the many ways people are different. Have students write down ideas on how they would want to be treated and ways they would not want to be treated by others. Discuss how having a disability might make someone appear different. Have students talk about how they think everyone wants to be treated no matter the disability.

Fine Arts:

- Distribute pages from a sketchbook and colored pencils to students. Have them look at a familiar object in the classroom. Students can describe the object then try to draw it by looking at its lines, curves and shadows instead of the whole object.

Language Arts:

- Have students make communication books using their spelling words. Use index cards or have students make their own to draw and write the words. Students can add other words they need to communicate with classmates. Allow them time to communicate with partners.
- Visit your library or media center to rediscover *Frog and Toad* books by Arnold Lobel. Set up a buddy class so students can read them with younger students.
- Draw students’ attention to the way the words are printed when the receptionist at OT speaks. Discuss what the author is trying to convey with her choice of print. Discuss other ways a word could be printed to change its meaning or emphasis.

Science

- Have students go on a webquest on autism using *Kids Quest on Disabilities & Health* website: www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/kids/kautismpage.htm
- Use the Sunlink website www.sunlink.ucf.edu and *Kids Search Tools* (under Research on the left sidebar) to find more information on autism. Have students report on their findings.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Have students research the invention of Morse Code. Find the Morse Code chart using SUNLINK. Have students send messages to classmates using Morse Code.

The Sloppy Copy Slipup

by DyAnne DiSalvo

Annotation

Brian Higman, also known as Big Hig, does not have his writing assignment ready to turn in to the teacher. He has a good excuse, but the teacher is not willing to listen. Brian cleverly invents a verbal account of his hectic weekend that involves one crisis after another. This creative, verbal “sloppy copy” narrative flows throughout the story, as do headlines and articles that Brian imagines he would write if he were working for a newspaper. This original and creative story with its funny black-and-white drawings will keep young readers eagerly engaged. (Grades 2-5)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.dyannedisalvo.com/>

Realia

Items: Paper, Pencil, Imagination, and Inspiration

Statement: Read “*The Sloppy Copy Slipup*” to find out how Brian finally manages to get his sloppy copy completed.

Food

Spaghetti and meatballs, Baked beans, Hamburgers, Cereal, Toast, Honey, Hot dogs

Challenging Words

| | | | |
|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| actually | (p 7 HB) | frantically | (p. 83 HB) |
| banished | (first two pages HB) | genius | (p. 87 HB) |
| bonafide | (p. 64 HB) | illuminate | (p. 71 HB) |
| comrade | (p. 38 HB) | motto | (p. 2 HB) |
| descriptive | (p. 30 HB) | simile | (p. 28 HB) |
| destined | (p. 97 HB) | sloppy copy | (p. 83 HB) |
| disastrous | (first two pages HB) | outstanding | (p. 1 HB) |
| distraction | (p.30 HB) | unfortunate | (first two pages HB) |
| exceptional | (p. 1 HB) | universal | (first two pages HB) |
| fielding | (p. 1 HB) | | |

Figurative Language

Similes

- “The annoying sound was coming from somewhere. It made the lamp shade shake like jelly.’ Hey! I thought. That simile was good.” (p. 28 HB)
- “Harry told my mother that his parents paid more attention to his sisters than they ever did to him. He said it made him feel about as worthwhile as a flea.” (p. 32 HB)
- “It would have been chock-full of information—just like a newspaper.” (p. 9 HB)
- “Back in the classroom Miss Fromme had settled into her seat like a war pilot ready for takeoff.” (p. 17 HB)

- “Just the name gives me the same chill as fingernails on a blackboard.” (p. 24 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “Don’t Mess with the Facts is Pop’s running motto.” (p. 10 HB)
- “Did I happen to mention that I am in the market to buy my first guitar?” (p. 11 HB)
- “I walked home from school in a fog.” (p. 88 HB)
- “Here I was, with my life in my hands, and it was all Stevie’s fault.” (p. 17 HB)
- Others are found on pages 24, 36, 51, 53, 63, 71, and 88 HB.

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Discuss with students the various aspects and consequences of peer pressure. How did the characters in the story handle it? Did they do what was right? How did they feel afterwards?

Language Arts:

- Have students write about a time where they felt peer pressure. How did they handle it? Did they do what was right? How did they feel afterwards?
- Discuss with students Brian’s newspaper articles. Have students write their own magazine articles for students on how to deal with creative writing.
- Assign the following prompt, “All students in grade 4 have to take the FCAT writing test. Why or why not should this be a requirement?”
- Divide class into small groups and have them create a “writing terms” dictionary to be used by all the 4th graders and maybe some 3rd graders.
- Have students create their own writing prompt. Then have students swap their prompt with another classmate and write a response.

Stumptown Kid

by Carol Gorman and Ron J. Findley

Annotation

Charlie Nebras, 11, lives in a small Iowa town in 1952. He misses his father, who died in the Korean War, dislikes his mother's domineering boyfriend, and wants to play baseball on the famed Wildcats team, but is cut instead. Then he meets Luther Peale, a former Negro League player with a big secret: he had accidentally killed a drunk, white batter with a wild pitch. Luther agrees to coach Charlie's "Stumptown" team in a game against the Wildcats. The townspeople become more accepting of Luther until his secret is revealed and a harrowing chase ensues. Honesty, loyalty, and heroism are embedded in this fast-paced sports/historical fiction novel. (Grades 5-8)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.carolgorman.com/index.html>

Realia

Items: Baseball glove and bat

Statement: Playing baseball is an important part of Charlie's life. Read *Stumptown Kid* to find out whether Charlie's Stumptown Stormers beat the famous Wildcats.

Food

Peas in pods, Lemonade, Hamburgers

Challenging Words

| | | | |
|---------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| caliber | (p. 127 HB) | nastiness | (p. 3 HB) |
| circulation | (p. 49 HB) | pinpoint | (p. 82 HB) |
| clammy | (p. 146 HB) | shrugging | (p. 222 HB) |
| concentrate | (p. 125 HB) | silhouette | (p. 215 HB) |
| embarrassment | (p. 83 HB) | sizzling | (p. 150 HB) |
| hustle | (p. 122 HB) | sneer | (p. 109 HB) |
| impossible | (p. 108 HB) | squinting | (p. 2 HB) |
| influence | (p. 94 HB) | stomped | (p. 122 HB) |
| miracle | (p. 111 HB) | whether | (p. 124 HB) |

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- "The gears in my brain were whirring around like crazy, and my head was pounding with the banging of my heart." (p. 28 HB)
- "And I'll tell you right here and now, You're the sparkplug of my life.
Sparkplug, sparkplug –
Sparkplug of my life." (p. 62 HB)
- "Great. Now the whole town would know what a chicken I am." (p. 84 HB)
- "Bowie nodded, but I think he was embarrassed. I mean, that fly ball Kathleen hit was a can of corn." (p. 89 HB)

Similes

- “He stopped and looked us over, maybe twenty-five guys, like we were a bunch of horses he might buy.” (p. 2 HB)
- “He’s treated almost like a movie star around Holden.” (p. 4 HB)
- “Lobo strutted after them like a turkey who’d made it to the day after Thanksgiving.” (p. 4 HB)
- “The tryout wasn’t even over, but my dream of playing for the Wildcats had disappeared like smoke on a breeze.” (p. 8 HB)
- “‘You ain’t seen nothing till you seen these girls fight,’ Walter said behind his catcher’s mask. ‘They’re like tigers. They could tear you apart.’” (p. 56 HB)
- “I stopped, breathing hard, and staring at the light. I could see Eileen, Will, and Johnny standing in the opening like small plastic soldiers.” (p. 82 HB)
- Others are found on pages 83, 85, 87, 89, 94, 108, 112, 116, 119, 121, 153, 170, and 176.

Idioms and Expressions

- “Well, I’ll tell you the truth, he was doing a good job.” (p. 3 HB)
- “My nerve were shot.” (p. 8 HB)
- “I don’t tell her so, but it gets on my nerves.” (p. 17 HB)
- “Mrs. Banks is an old busybody.” (p. 19 HB)
- “Just hearing that man’s name was setting my teeth on edge.” (p. 21 HB)
- “Mom came in, and I could feel her standing over me, but I played possum.” (p. 65 HB)
- “I stood up, my mind racing around in circles, trying to think of a way out of this.” (p. 80 HB)
- “His rotten pitches had made me even madder, but now the broken window and trying to weasel out of paying for it made me feel all crazy inside.” (p. 99 HB)
- “‘Me, I just say live and let live,’ Nancy said.” (p. 129 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Discuss with class the topic of bullying, using examples from the book as well as examples that the students contribute. Ask students why this type of behavior occurs and then have students offer ways to handle this problem.
- Initiate a discussion on prejudice and the affects on individuals and societies that this behavior has had in the past. Divide class into small groups. Have some of the groups read fiction stories containing prejudice issues. Have the other groups read nonfiction titles on this topic. Reunite the class to continue the discussion using examples from the books read.

Fine Arts:

- Show students examples of famous baseball team logos, including historic ones (see <http://www.logoserver.com/Baseball.html>). Have students deconstruct them, discussing the various pictures or symbols on them. Have students design logos for the Stumptown Stormers and the Wildcats.

Language Arts:

- Initiate a discussion with the class on genres, focusing on historical fiction. Have students write a short historical fiction story, paying particular attention to setting and characterization.
- Have library media specialist present a booktalk to class featuring historical fiction titles. Give students time to check out their historical fiction choice.

Mathematics:

- Project for the class either of these baseball statistics Internet sites: National Collegiate Athletic Association baseball statistics (<http://www.ncaa.org/stats/baseball/index.html>) or the Sports Reference site (<http://www.baseball-reference.com/>). Have students analyze the statistics using a spreadsheet program.

Physical Education:

- Remind students that baseball is called the “nation’s favorite pastime.” Have students research the history of baseball, including the women’s leagues in the 1940s and the Negro league teams. Visit the following Internet sites for additional information:
 - <http://www.negroleaguebaseball.com/> (Negro League Baseball)
 - <http://www.nlbm.com/> (Negro Leagues Baseball Museum)
 - <http://www.nlbpa.com/> (Negro League Baseball Players Association)
 - <http://www.aagpbl.org/> (All-American Girls Baseball Professional League)

Science:

- Discuss with class why the advice that Luther suggested to Charlie (“throw the ball across the seams” p. 10 HB) or (“pick some grass after the ball leaves your hand” p. 11 HB) will make a difference to the trajectory and velocity of the pitch. Use baseball pitcher statistics to illustrate how fast the ball can be thrown. What would be the reactive force by the bat?

Social Studies/Geography:

- Organize a presentation to show to the class or use a documentary on the United States in the early 1950s, including a timeline on important world and national events.
- Discuss with class the civil rights movement in the United States. Have students share their prior knowledge on the topic. Divide class into small groups to research the affects of civil rights issues on the following topics: education, employment, housing, and entertainment industry. Also include the impact of civil rights and/or political leaders on the movement.

The Stupendous Dodgeball Fiasco

by Janice Repka

Annotation

Leaving his parents and the circus behind, Philip Stanislaw goes to live with his aunt and uncle in Hardingtown, the Unofficial Dodgeball Capital of the World. Much to his surprise, Philip learns that every gym class has a sadistic version of the game. After his glasses are broken by a wild pitch from the coach's daughter, sixth-grader Philip decides to sue for damages and ends up serving as his own lawyer. This humorous, but heartwarming story will have readers cheering for Philip as he stands up against bullies and works to improve his school's morale. (Grades 4-6)

Author on the Internet

<http://janicerepka.com/>

Realia

Item: Sign – 'WELCOME TO HARDINGTOWN: THE UNOFFICIAL DODGEBALL CAPITAL OF THE WORLD'

Statement: "Phillip saw the big sign as the door opened. Dodgeball? He wondered what that was." Read *The Stupendous Dodgeball Fiasco* to find out if Phillip fits in at his new school by playing dodgeball.

Food

Cotton candy, Potato chips and Ketchup, Root beer, Peanuts, Popcorn, Carmel apple

Challenging Words

| | | | |
|-------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| barbaric | (p. 164 HB) | injunction | (p. 96 HB) |
| burgeoning | (p. 168 HB) | lingo | (p. 26 HB) |
| conceivable | (p. 165 HB) | ominous | (p. 37 HB) |
| conviction | (p. 157 HB) | petition | (p. 60 HB) |
| decorum | (p. 165 HB) | proclamation | (p. 84 HB) |
| dwindled | (p. 18 HB) | rendered | (p. 112 HB) |
| equilibrium | (p. 44 HB) | ruckus | (p. 154 HB) |
| flagrant | (p. 165 HB) | skirmish | (p. 103 HB) |
| frivolous | (p. 156 HB) | transgression | (p. 77 HB) |
| futile | (p. 164 HB) | wincing | (p. 67 HB) |

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- "Traffic lights shouted orders at obedient cars while streams of people rushed through crosswalks." (p. 22 HB)

Similes

- "The platform where the two cars were joined together trembled like an inexperienced lion tamer." (p. 18 HB)
- "The vice-principal's office was as clean as a knife-thrower's blade." (p. 76 HB)
- "He sneered at Phillip, his braces shining like jagged shark teeth." (p. 139 HB)

- “The balls were coming down with full force now, going every which way, like elbow macaroni boiling in a pot on the stove.” (p. 166 HB)
- Other similes located on pages 34, 102, 121, 142, 148, 153, 159, and 179.

Idioms and Expressions

- “No more square peg in a round hole.” (p. 18 HB)
- “‘Cat got your tongue?’ Uncle Felix asked him between bites of crunchy breakfast cereal the next morning.” (p. 26 HB)
- “You seem kind of down in the dumps, Philip.” (p. 38 HB)
- “You mean a three-ring circus, said Sam. The expression is: ‘My life is like a three-ring circus.’” (p. 57 HB)
- “They taught him that ‘the early bird catches the worm’ and ‘a penny saved is a penny earned.’” (p. 80 HB)
- Other idioms are located on: pages 56, 92, 145 and 149.

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Discuss bullying and have class brainstorm ways to stop bullying.

Fine Arts:

- Have students design and create a circus poster.

Language Arts:

- Organize class into small groups and have them write and illustrate a circus dictionary. Include the facts and sayings from the book, as well as additional information found through research.
- Read *Frindle* by Andrew Clements. Compare and contrast the two main characters, setting, and plot.

Physical Education:

- Have class read and review the official Dodgeball rules from the National Dodgeball Association: (www.dodgeballusa.com) Have class play a game of dodgeball.
- Divide class into small groups and have them choose one type of circus act to research. Culminate the research activity with the class producing their own circus.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Take students on a field trip to a courtroom and have them observe a trial.
- Invite a judge or attorney to come talk to the class about their jobs.
- Take students to the library media center to research the history of circuses. (www.circusweb.com)
- Look up the schedule for a circus. Using a map, have students trace the route the circus travels based on their schedule.

Additional Teacher Resources

<http://www.ringling.com/activity/education/>
<http://www.colebroscircus.com/index.htm>

The Thing about Georgie

by Lisa Graff

Annotation

Georgie has a height issue. As a dwarf, nine-year-old Georgie will not get much taller than his current 42 inches. Besides that fact Georgie has other worries. His mother is expecting a baby and Georgie knows that the brother/sister will soon physically outgrow him. Then he and his best friend, Andy, argue. On top of all that Georgie must work on the Abraham Lincoln project with Jeanie the Meanie who recommends him to play Abe in the school play. Readers will gain insight into what it means to be different in this upbeat, sensitive novel. (Grades 3-6)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.lisagraff.com/>

Realia

Items: Step stool and/or Coffee cans

Statement: Georgie needs a step stool to write on the chalkboard at school and his friend uses empty coffee cans to make a great costume for his school play. Read *The Thing about Georgie* to see why Georgie needs these items and how he learns to accept himself.

Food

Pork chops and carrots, Peanut butter sandwich, Ravioli, Tuna casserole

Challenging Words

| | | | |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|
| absentmindedly | (p. 29 HB) | dwarf | (p. 6 HB) |
| assassination | (p. 204 HB) | humiliating | (p. 188 HB) |
| bowed | (p. 24 HB) | lever | (p. 16 HB) |
| commander in chief | (p. 23 HB) | mustered | (p. 24 HB) |
| constitution | (p. 23 HB) | orchestra | (p. 19 HB) |
| contemplated | (p. 170 HB) | pluck | (p. 20 HB) |
| critic | (p. 105 HB) | strenuous | (p. 32 HB) |
| darting | (p. 151 HB) | symphony | (p. 19 HB) |
| detour | (p. 5 HB) | ushered | (p. 35 HB) |
| draft | (p. 23 HB) | virtuoso | (p. 210 & 220 HB) |

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- “For a second Georgie found himself staring at her rats’ nest of hair.” (p. 93 HB)
- “Georgie’s knees turned to creamed spinach.” (p. 200 HB)

Similes

- “Georgie let out a long breath and watched as it left his mouth like a cloud in the cold air.” (p. 11 HB)
- “Georgie always felt like he could see the notes she played, one by one, as they left the harp like floating droplets of water. The notes from his dad’s cello seemed to come out like one long ribbon”

of music, sweet and deep, and it was hard sometimes to figure out where one left off and another one started. (p. 21 HB)

- “He always could tell when people saw him for the first time, because they would stare at him for so long, it was like they were checking to make sure their eyeballs were working. Then, when they saw that Georgie had seen them looking, they’d blink and look away quickly like they’d done something wrong.” (p. 33 HB)
- “But she didn’t say anything; she just looked at him, like she was studying his face in case there was a quiz on it later.” (pp. 102-103 HB)
- “That made him so mad that when he jumped, Georgie fell into the water with a splat, his body splayed out flat as a board, so that the water stung like pinpricks all over.” (p. 146 HB)
- “Cody dropped like a bag of cement and shouted so loudly that onstage President Taylor stuttered and forgot half his lines.” (p. 200 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “He was about to tell his mom that they were sure to get a blizzard just in time for Christmas when something caught his eye.” (p. 33 HB)
- “The question around here is what instrument the kid’s gonna take up. Personally, I’m betting on the cello, like your old man.” (p. 105 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Explain to students that they will be writing about their “thing.” Remind them that the thing about Georgie is that he is a dwarf and feels very different from people of average height. He has a hard time accepting his uniqueness. Have students explain if their thing makes them feel special or different.

Fine Arts:

- Play musical examples of the different composers mentioned in the book: Mozart, Vivaldi, and Tchaikovsky. Have the students research the lives of these famous composers.
- Introduce the students to the Internet sites of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Louvre, or other art museums. Ask the students to choose a work of art that they think reflects the music of the composers.
- Take students to the library media center to research the musical instruments mentioned in the book: tuba, bassoon, piano, viola, cello, trumpet, and violin.
- Discuss costume design as a career. Remind students that Jeannie’s design helped Georgie feel confident enough to perform in the play. Ask students how a costume designer helps actors play their roles.

Foreign Languages:

- Ask students to locate and translate some of the Italian words and phrases that Nonna Rosa uses in the book.

Language Arts:

- Read several poems to the class. Then have them write a poem modeled after the one Georgie’s parents wrote or the one he wrote for his new baby sister.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Collaborate with the library media specialist to have the students research the presidents of the United States. Have the students focus on the obstacles each of the presidents faced in their lives.
- Initiate a discussion on how holidays are celebrated differently in our country from other countries around the world. Follow-up with a research assignment on other countries. Have students create a Venn diagram that highlights the differences in the holiday celebrations.