FEATURED SELECTION


Written at a fifth grade level, Robert C. O’Brien’s Newbery Award book *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH* is the story of Mrs. Frisby, who is a widowed mouse, and her four young children who live on the Fitzgibbon family farm. Every year the mouse family must move to a summer shelter because their winter home gets destroyed by plowing. However, this year they must move earlier than normal because of an early thaw; however, this is not good because Mrs. Frisby’s youngest son, Timothy, is deathly sick and can not be moved. She goes in search of assistance and visits her friend, Mr. Ages, gets medicine for Timothy, and on her way back she saves a crow named Jeremy, from the farmer’s cat. Jeremy takes her to a very wise owl and he tells her to seek the help of a group of rats who lives under a rose bush in the woods. When she meets them she finds out that they were rats that had been experimented on in the NIMH laboratories and have human-level intelligence. Mrs. Frisby also found out that her late husband, Jonathan, had been experimented on as well and was a friend of the rats, and so they agree to help come up with a solution to her problem.

RELATED MATERIALS


This is a direct sequel to *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH*, and is written at a fourth grade reading level, and written by the daughter of Robert C. O’Brien, Jane Leslie Conly. Mrs. Frisby's children visit the Rats of NIMH themselves when they are older and solidify many questions that the other book left unexplained.


Written at a fifth grade reading level, this story is about a mouse named Ralph, who lives with his family in a hotel, gets fed up with his family, and gets on his toy motorcycle and goes down the road to a summer camp. This book relates to the *Rats of NIMH*, because Ralph, a mouse, gets himself into many tough situations, just like Mrs. Frisby.

Written at a fifth grade reading level, this book, the first in a series, is about a mouse named Matthias and his adventures searching for weapons of the legendary mouse warrior, Martin. This book ties in well with Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH because it also deals with rats and mice that have human-like qualities.


This book is written at a fifth grade level and is a non-fiction book about owls and gives detailed information about the habitat and way of life of owls. This book ties in with Mrs. Frisby and the rats of NIMH because one of the characters is an owl, and the students will use this book as a reference for when we talk about owl habitats.


This book is written at a fourth grade level and is a non-fiction book about rats and describes their habits, characteristics, and life cycle. This book links well with Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH because it gives factual information about rats.


This book is written at a fifth grade reading level and is a non-fiction book about owls in North America and offers another look into their habitat and different species of owls. This ties in again with Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH because of the owl present in the text.

GOALS

- Students will study the various characters in the book, focusing heavily on Mrs. Frisby and her bravery when faced with the danger of losing her family.
- Students will gain a better understanding of the behavior and habitats of owls by comparing and contrasting real owls to the character in the book.
- Students will gain a better understanding of the behavior and habitats of rats by comparing and contrasting real rats to the characters in the book.
- Students will examine the different types of conflict that take place within the book.
- Students will practice making connections, such as text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world while reading.

STRATEGIES

- I will teach predicting and visualizing.
- I will teach about how to make inferences when reading.
- I will teach about personification and how it is used in the text.
- I will teach about the different types of conflicts.
• I will teach about making connections, such as text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world.

STATE STANDARDS

English:
5.2.3 Recognize main ideas presented in texts, identifying and assessing evidence that supports those ideas.
5.2.4 Draw inferences, conclusions, or generalizations about text and support them with textual evidence and prior knowledge.
5.3.2 Identify the main problem or conflict of the plot and explain how it is resolved.
5.3.3 Contrast the actions, motives, and appearances of characters in a work of fiction and discuss the importance of the contrasts to the plot or theme.

Science:
5.4.7 Explain that living things, such as plants and animals, differ in their characteristics, and that sometimes these differences can give members of these groups (plants and animals) an advantage in surviving and reproducing.

UNIT PLAN

Pre-reading
Activity:
  o The teacher will have a speaker, or naturalist, come in and show the students different types of owls and rats. The students will be able to touch and see the animals they are going to be reading about in the book.

Grouping: Whole group
  o They will write a quickwrite about what they learned about rats and owls.

Grouping: Individual
  o The teacher will give a book talk about Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH and the students will do a K-W-L chart.

Grouping: Whole group, individual

Reading
Activity:
  o Teacher will read the first chapter of the novel aloud to the class. While reading aloud to the class, the teacher will stop periodically to discuss what type of conflict is developing and what pictures are developing in their minds about the setting and characters.

Grouping: Whole group
  o The students will start reading chapter two individually or with a buddy and whatever they do not finish is homework.

Accommodations: For my struggling readers, I will have them read with a buddy who is a stronger reader so that they can help them while they are reading. I will also work with the student myself during individual reading making sure they are staying on task and helping them with any questions. I will also use the resources available to me through the school, such as resource teachers, aids, or parent volunteers to help the student during reading time.
Grouping: Individual and Buddy Reading

Responding
Activity:
  o While reading the book, students will write in their response journals at least two times each week. One topic will include “In what ways has Mrs. Frisby shown her bravery so far, and if you were in a similar situation would you be able to do the same? Why?”
  o The students will also write in their journals about various predictions they have of what they think will happen next in the story.
  o They can also make connections and discuss the various elements of conflict they see developing and changing.

Grouping: Individual

Exploring
Word wall words to add: admonished, antidote, astute, baffled, brisk, captivity, consternation, contritely, cryptic, dubiously, entranced, futile, incredulously, meekly, protruding, snared, skeptical, tedious, thrived, urgency, and ventilation.

Activity:
  o The students will discuss with each other in class what they think the meaning of various quotes are, such as “All doors are difficult to open until you find the key,” and “The size of the brain is no measure of its capacity.”

Grouping: Partners
  o The teacher will introduce personification by discussing its meaning and how it is used in the text. In the story the animals take on human characteristics, such as attitudes and feelings.
  o Using a Venn Diagram, each student will compare and contrast the behavior of rats and owls in the book to the behavior of rats and owls in nature.

Grouping: Individual

Applying
Activity: Choose one of the following:
  o The students may design and then make a model of Mrs. Frisby’s home. It needs to be three dimensional and have many details that were used to describe what it looked like in the book.

Grouping: Individual, small group
  o The students may choose a section from the book and then create a skit and act it out for the class. They can use costumes and scenery if they so choose.

Grouping: Small group, whole group
  o The students may write a cinquain poem describing a character and then can illustrate their poem.

http://hrsbstaff.ednet.ns.ca/davide/6c_files/Poem%20pics/cinquainDescrip.htm

Grouping: Individual
The students may debate animal rights and medical testing on animals since the rats of NIMH were products of such activities.

**Grouping:** Whole group, small group

**TIME SCHEDULE**

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<th>Monday</th>
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<td><strong>Day 1:</strong></td>
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<td>Have guest speaker/naturalist come in and show students real rats and owls Quickwrite Introduce the book Read chapter 1 out loud/ KWL chart Students start reading chpt 2-3 in class, finish for homework (40 min.)</td>
<td>Class discussion over chpt 2-3 Students write in their journals Teacher introduces conflict Teacher reads chpt 4 Students start chpt 5-6, finish for homework (35 min.)</td>
<td>During class discussion over chpt 5-6 teacher will discuss the predicting strategy Students will write in their journals their predictions Students will buddy read chpt 7 in class (25- 30 min.)</td>
<td>Students read chapters 8 in individual or buddy reading Teacher introduces related materials Students will read chpt. 9-10 for homework (20-25 min.)</td>
<td>Students read chapter 11 buddy reading Students will write in their journals making connections Participate in grand conversation in class discussion (25 min.)</td>
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<td>The teacher will read aloud chpt. 12 Compare and contrast using Venn diagram the rats and owls in real life to the characters in the book Start reading chpt. 13, finish for homework (25 min.)</td>
<td>Discuss in grand conversation chpt 13 Teach minilesson on word wall words Students write in journals Start reading chpt 14, finish for homework (25 min.)</td>
<td>Students read chapters 15 in buddy reading Teacher discusses the predicting strategy Students start reading chpt 16, finish for homework (25-30 min.)</td>
<td>Students read chpt 17 individual Students write in journals Read chpt 18 for homework (20-25 min.)</td>
<td>Discuss chpt 18 in grand conversation Teacher discusses how to make inferences Teacher reads aloud chpt 19 (25 min.)</td>
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<td>Students read chpt 20 individually. Teacher will discuss characters focusing on how Mrs. Frisby’s character has developed. Students will write in journals chpt 21 homework (20 min.)</td>
<td>Students read chpt 22-23 with a buddy. Teacher discusses visualizing. Finish chpts for next day (20 min.)</td>
<td>Grand conversation on chpt 22-23. Minilesson on personification. Chpt 24 for homework (25 min.)</td>
<td>Students read chpt 25 individually or buddy. Students journal – making predictions. Start reading chpt 26, finish for homework (25 min.)</td>
<td>Grand conversation on chpt 26 focusing on quotes from the book. Students read chpt 27 individually, finish for homework (20 min.)</td>
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<td>The teacher reads epilogue. Grand conversation. Students write in journals if predictions were correct (30 min.)</td>
<td>Students choose projects and begin to plan and start them (20 min.)</td>
<td>Students work on projects (25 min.)</td>
<td>Students work on finishing projects. What is not finished becomes homework (20 min.)</td>
<td>Students share their projects with the rest of the class (25-30 min.)</td>
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ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

- [ ] Journal entries during unit
- [ ] Venn Diagram
- [ ] KWL chart
- [ ] Model, Skit, poem, or debate
Monitoring student learning:

- The teacher will observe the students during reading, writing, and small group activities (such as grand conversations) and make anecdotal notes of who participated and how much, along with other observations.
- The teacher will have conferences with students periodically throughout the unit to see if they are comprehending the text and how they are progressing with the assignments.
- The teacher will develop and use a rubric to grade the students’ journal entries, Venn Diagrams, KWL charts, and final projects.
- The teacher will develop a checklist for students to keep track of assignments completed. The teacher will have a folder for each student to keep their assignments and checklists in so they know what they have completed. These folders will be turned in at the end of the focus unit.

Ideas for Focus Unit taken from

- [http://library.thinkquest.org/J002079F/](http://library.thinkquest.org/J002079F/)
- [http://www.kyrene.org/schools/brisas/sunda/mrs_frisby/home.htm](http://www.kyrene.org/schools/brisas/sunda/mrs_frisby/home.htm)