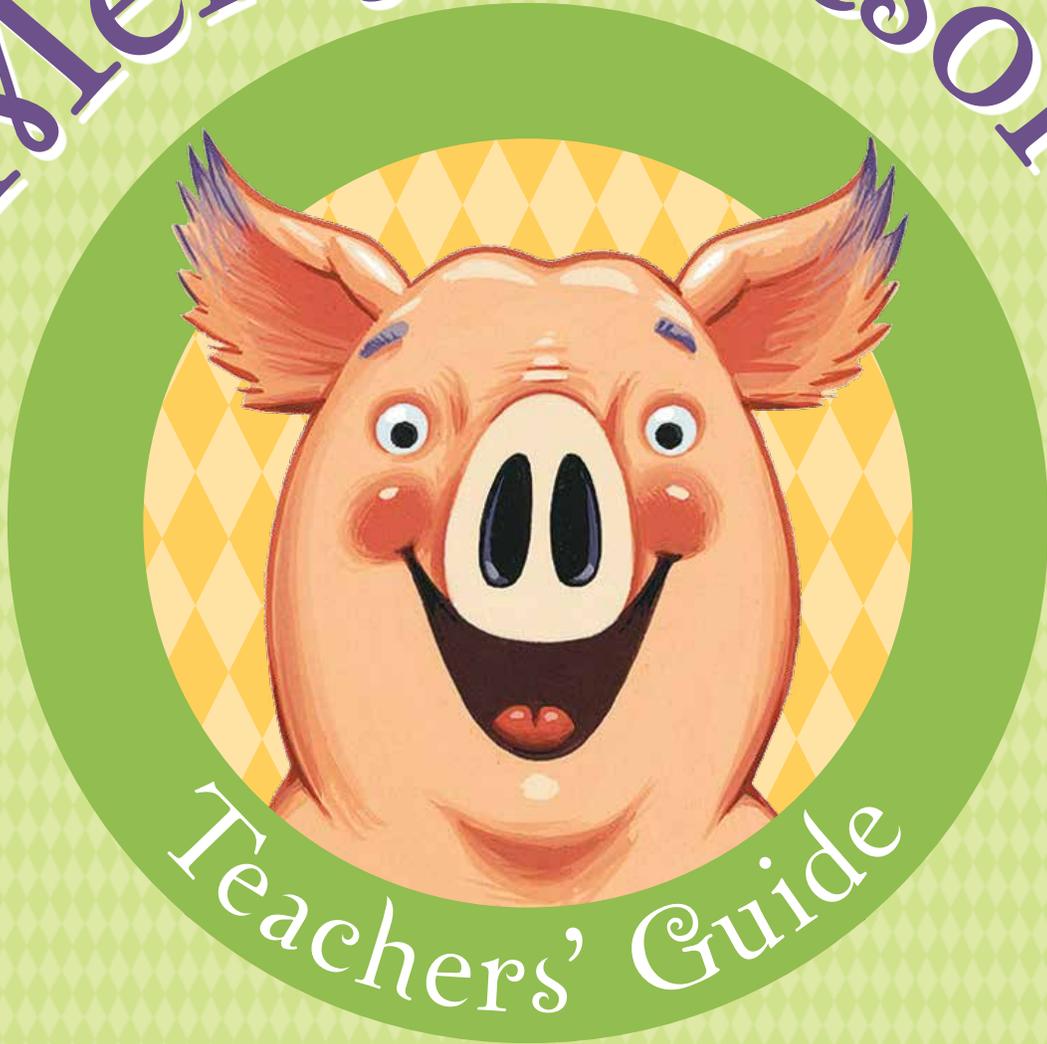


Mercy Watson



 *Mercy Watson to the Rescue*

 *Mercy Watson: Princess in Disguise*

 *Mercy Watson Goes for a Ride*

 *Mercy Watson Thinks Like a Pig*

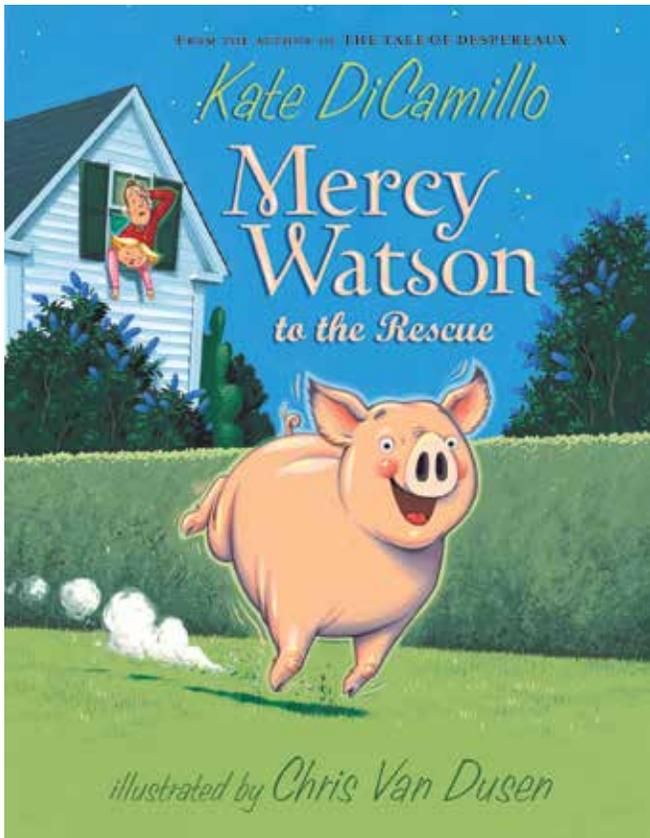
 *Mercy Watson Fights Crime*

 *Mercy Watson: Something Wonky
This Way Comes*

by Kate DiCamillo *illustrated by Chris Van Dusen*



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About the Book

To Mr. and Mrs. Watson, Mercy is not just a pig—she’s a porcine wonder. And to the portly and good-natured Mercy, the Watsons are an excellent source of buttered toast, not to mention that buttery-toasty feeling she gets when she snuggles into bed with them. This is not, however, so good for the Watsons’ bed. BOOM! CRACK! As the bed and its occupants slowly sink through the floor, Mercy escapes in a flash—“to alert the fire department,” her owners assure themselves. But could Mercy possibly have another emergency in mind—like a sudden craving for their neighbors’ sugar cookies?



CANDLEWICK PRESS

Mercy Watson to the Rescue

Kate DiCamillo
illustrated by
Chris Van Dusen



Common Core Connections

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COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

RI.K.5: Identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book.

RI.K.6: Name the author and illustrator of a text and define the role of each in presenting the ideas or information in a text.

RI.1.6: Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text.

RL.3.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.

L.3.5: Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

L.3.5.A: Distinguish the literal and nonliteral meanings of words and phrases in context.

L.3.5.B: Identify real-life connections between words and their use.

L.3.5.C: Distinguish shades of meaning among related words that describe states of mind or degrees of certainty.

RL.2.4: Describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.



RF.1.2: Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.

Prereading

Show the class the front and back covers of *Mercy Watson to the Rescue*, but conceal the title. Note the names of the author and illustrator. Ask students to look at the picture and guess what they think the book might be about. Why is the pig running? Does she look happy? Where do you think she is going? Look at the people. What expressions do they have on their faces? Why do you think they look like that? Then turn to the title page of the book and ask what additional guesses students can make knowing the title.

You Said It: an Exercise in Figurative Language

Teach children the concept of figurative language by reading aloud this sentence on page 50 from *Mercy Watson to the Rescue*: “The Watsons’ bed sighed loudly and crashed all the way through the floor.”

Then ask your students:

- Can a bed really sigh?
- If the bed could sigh, why do you think it would?
- What does the sentence mean?
- What might the author have been trying to convey by this choice of wording?

Explain that the author chose to make her sentence more interesting (and funny) by imagining that the bed sighed like a person carrying a heavy load. Ask students to practice using figurative language by replacing *sighed* in the sentence above with other words. (You may wish to write the sentence on a sentence strip or chalkboard.) Ask the class for substitute words that would retain the basic meaning of the sentence, such as *moaned*, *whimpered*, or *groaned*. Then ask them for words that might change the meaning, such as *sang*, *whistled*, or *laughed*.

Sing-Along Rhyme Time

Every night, Mr. and Mrs. Watson sing to Mercy:

“Bright, bright is the morning sun,
but brighter still is our darling one.
Dark, dark is the coming night,
but oh, our Mercy shines so bright.”

Copy the song onto chart paper and analyze its rhyme and rhythm. Underline the last line of each sentence to show the rhyming words. Discuss why the word *bright* is used in association with the sun and conversely why the word *dark* is used to refer to night. Challenge students to write their own songs to describe Mercy. Display the pig songs around the classroom.

What Happened Next?

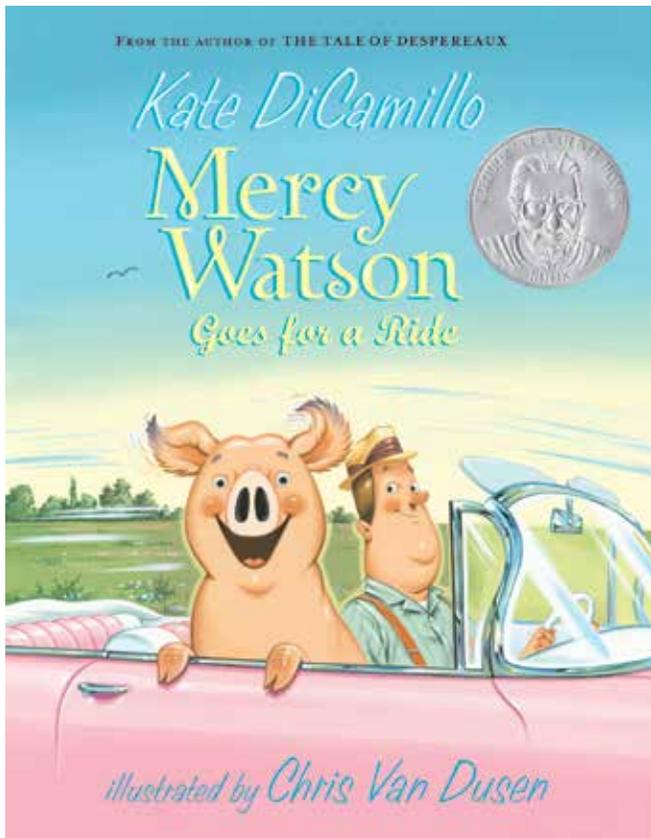
Using the reproducible page, have your students summarize the story by putting the six sentences into proper order.

What Happened Next?

Can you remember everything that happened in *Mercy Watson to the Rescue*?
Summarize the story by putting these six sentences into proper order.



- ___ Mercy goes to look for sugar cookies.
- ___ Baby Lincoln thinks a monster is at her window.
- ___ Mercy crawls into bed with the Watsons.
- ___ The firefighters save the Watsons.
- ___ Everyone has breakfast.
- ___ Eugenia Lincoln calls the fire department.



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About the Book

Mr. and Mrs. Watson's porcine wonder, Mercy, loves nothing more than a ride in the car. It takes a fair amount of nudging and bribing and a "You are such a good sport, darling" to get the portly pig out of the driver's seat, but once the convertible is on the road, Mercy loves the feel of the wind tickling her ears and the sun on her snout. One day the Watsons' motoring ritual takes an unexpected turn, however, when their neighbor Baby Lincoln pops up in the back seat in hopes of some "folly and adventure"—and in the chaos that ensues, an exuberant Mercy ends up behind the wheel!



CANDLEWICK PRESS

Mercy Watson

Goes for a Ride

Kate DiCamillo
illustrated by
Chris Van Dusen



Common Core Connections

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Notes throughout the guide correlate the discussion and activities to specific Common Core Standards. For more information on specific standards for your grade level, visit the Common Core website at www.corestandards.org.

COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

L.2.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 2 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.

L.2.4.A: Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

L.2.4.B: Determine the meaning of a new word formed when a known prefix is added to a known word.

L.2.4.C: Use a known root word as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word with the same root.

L.2.4.D: Use knowledge of the meaning of individual words to predict meaning of compound words.

L.2.4.E: Use glossaries and beginning dictionaries, both print and digital, to determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases.

L.2.5: Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

L.2.5.A: Identify real-life connections between words and their use.

L.2.5.B: Distinguish shades of meaning among closely related verbs and closely related adjectives.

W.2.3: Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.



Folly!

Eugenia Lincoln refers to the Mr. Watson's Saturday drive with Mercy as "folly" (page 14).

Ask your students:

- What does *folly* mean? After students' ideas are put forward, check a dictionary (as a group or individually) and write the definition on a chalkboard.
- What are some synonyms for *folly*? List them on the board.
- Why does Eugenia think the rides are folly, while Mr. Watson and Mercy think they are great fun?
- Baby thinks the rides are both folly and fun. Can this be true?

Have each student write and draw about one of their own follies (a time when they acted foolishly or recklessly). Optional: If this activity is done in the fall, have students write or draw on leaf-shaped paper. Post the entries on a class bulletin board entitled "Fall Follies."



Mercy's Seat-Belt Crusade

Mercy flew out of the car because she was not wearing a seat belt. Discuss the importance of wearing a seat belt. Have students create a seat-belt campaign using Mercy as the mascot. Each campaign should have a motto and a poster. As an example, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has an ABC motto:

Air Bag Safety: Buckle Everyone! Children in Back!

Students can work individually or in groups. When they are finished, create a display of all the campaign posters in your classroom or hallway. Invite someone from the local police department (reminiscent of Officer Tomilello) to come see your posters and speak to students regarding safety in general (perhaps discussing bike helmets as well as seat belts).

COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

RL.1.7: Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.

RL.2.7: Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

RL.3.6: Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.



RI.K-1.2: Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.



For Consideration

Ask your students to discuss or write answers to the following questions.

Baby Lincoln hid in the back seat of Mr. Watson's car. Is that a safe thing to do?

On page 35, Eugenia Lincoln says, "That is my point exactly. I do think. And apparently, I am the only one around here who does." What does Eugenia mean by this statement?

Mr. Watson pulls out of his driveway very quickly. "Mr. Watson is a forward-looking man. He does not believe in looking back" (page 10). What is the double meaning of this statement?

Should Mr. Watson have been given a ticket? Why or why not?

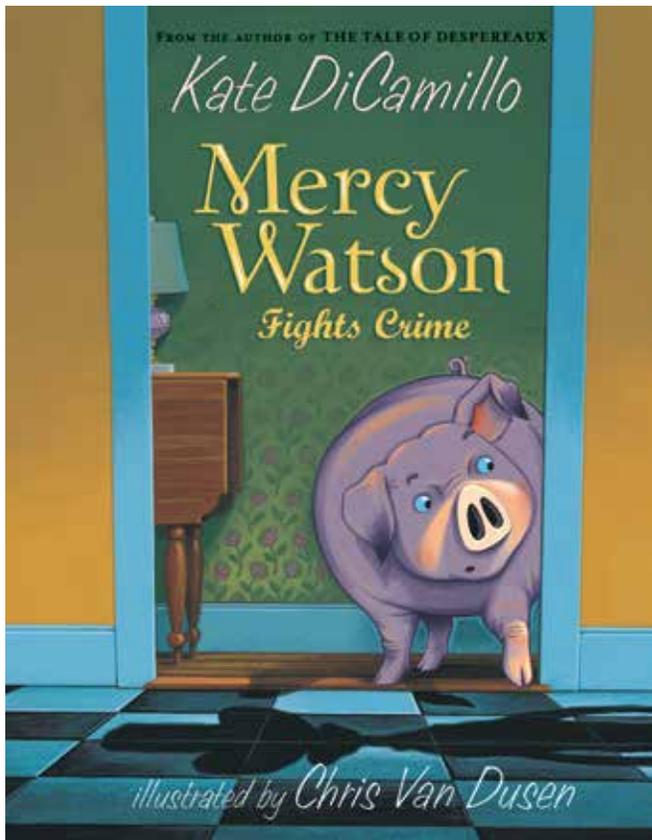
What Happened Next?

Have your students summarize the story by putting these five sentences into proper order.

- _____ Baby Lincoln thinks a little folly wouldn't be a bad thing.
- _____ Mercy leaps onto Mr. Watson's lap.
- _____ A pink convertible speeds past Officer Tomilello.
- _____ Everyone has toast.
- _____ Baby Lincoln applies the brake pedal.



CANDLEWICK PRESS



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Also available in audio

About the Book

Leroy Ninker is a small man with a big dream: he wants to be a cowboy. But for now he's just a thief. In fact, Leroy is robbing the Watsons' kitchen right this minute! As he drags the toaster across the counter—*screeeeeech*—and drops it into his bag—*clannngggg*—little does he know that a certain large pig who loves toast with a great deal of butter is stirring from sleep. Soon a comedy of errors (not to mention the buttery sweets in his pocket) will lead this little man on the wild and raucous rodeo ride he's always dreamed of!



CANDLEWICK PRESS

Mercy Watson Fights Crime

Kate DiCamillo
illustrated by
Chris Van Dusen



Common Core Connections

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COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

SL.K-2.1: Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade appropriate topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

SL.K-2.1.A: Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others and taking turns speaking about the topics and texts under discussion).



W.2.3: Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.



SL.2.1: Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

SL.2.1.A: Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).

SL.2.1.B: Build on others' talk in conversations by linking their comments to the remarks of others.

SL.2.1.C: Ask for clarification and further explanation as needed about the topics and texts under discussion.

For Discussion

Have students discuss the following questions in pairs, then gather as a class and have a discussion. Focus on the different ideas that are brought up.

When Baby tells Eugenia that she hears a “Yippie-i-oh” sound outside, Eugenia asks if she had been eating pie before bed again (page 34). Why would Eugenia ask such a question? Do you believe that eating before bed will give you nightmares? Why or why not?

Firemen Ned and Lorenzo comment that their job is an interesting one (page 55). What events occurred that would make them say that?

Everyone except Mercy is quoted in the newspaper regarding Mercy's capture of the thief (pages 67–69). Pretend you are Mercy. What would you say?

Do You Hear Something? Give Me a Clue

“Screeeeech, went the toaster. . . . Clannngggg, went the toaster” (page 7). The toaster makes noise — a sound Mercy clearly recognizes — when Leroy moves it.

Conduct a lesson on adjectives and onomatopoeia (a word that imitates the sound associated with it). Then pair students up and have them make a list of six things and corresponding adjectives and/or sounds that are clues to what each thing is. Collect the lists and clues, then read the clues aloud and see if classmates can figure out what the things are.

Use this activity as a prelude to a descriptive writing exercise. Ask students to write about a time they heard something and figured out what was happening based only on what they heard.

Help Is on the Way

The fire and police departments are involved in many of the Mercy Watson books. Here are a few safety-awareness activities you can use with the Mercy books:

Ask students how they would call the police or fire department in an emergency.

Discuss when to call and when *not* to call the fire or police departments. Which instances in the Mercy Watson books were appropriate times to call, and which were not?

Invite a local firefighter or police officer to come to the classroom and speak to the children about the role of their department in the community.

As a homework assignment, have students complete an “In Case of an Emergency” form. Information should include address, phone number, emergency contact, and so on.

COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

RL.1.3: Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

RL.2.7: Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

L.2.5: Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.



Extra! Read All About It!

Mercy's capture of Leroy Ninker makes the front page of the morning newspaper. Various neighbors and witnesses are quoted in the newspaper article. Hold a class discussion about the elements of journalism and how it differs from fiction. If possible, read aloud some simple news-related stories (classroom newspapers can be a good source). Have students practice becoming journalists by writing their own version of "Pet Pig Captures Thief."

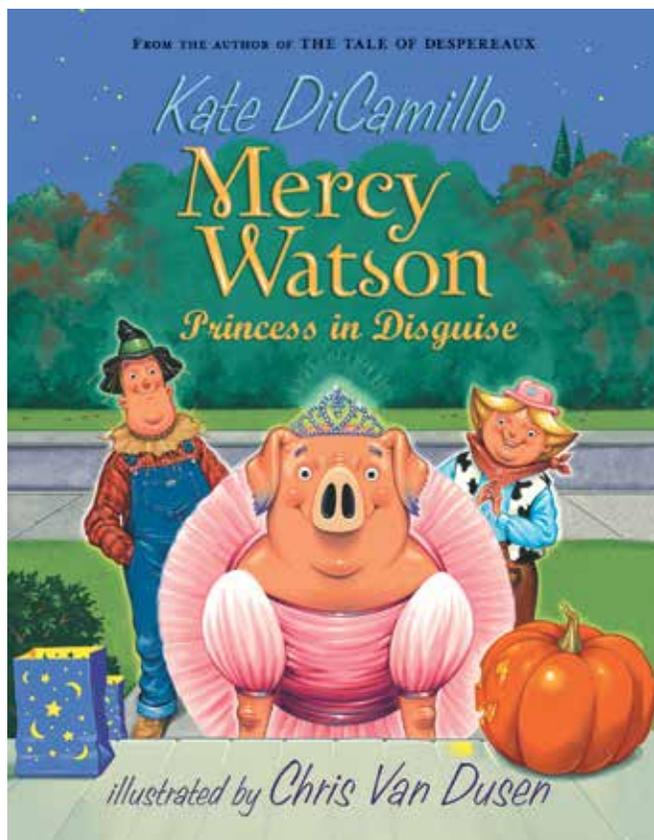
A Pig by Any Other Name

Mercy gets hailed as a porcine wonder. Ask students if they know what *porcine* means. Explain that it is another word for piglike. Have students define the following terms related to the porcine wonder: *swine*, *hog*, *boar*, *sow*, *gilt*, *piglets*. Children can use any reference material they choose (such as a dictionary or library books). Move the discussion to parts of speech, in particular nouns and verbs. Note that *sow* as a noun refers to a pig, but *sow* as a verb means "to plant." Ask students to cite a similar example from *Mercy Watson Fights Crime* (such as *toast*). Challenge students to find further examples in their reading. As an extension, introduce homophones, words that sound the same but are spelled differently.

A Cowboy's Dream

Leroy Ninker is described as "a small man with a big dream" (page 4). He dreams of becoming a cowboy. Ask students about their dreams. What would they like to become? Whom do they idolize, and what steps might they need to take to fulfill their dream?





Mercy Watson

Princess in Disguise

Kate DiCamillo
illustrated by
Chris Van Dusen

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Also available in audio



About the Book

When the Watsons decide to zip their porcine wonder into a formfitting princess dress for Halloween—complete with tiara—they are certain that Mercy will be beautiful beyond compare. Mercy is equally certain she likes the sound of trick-or-treating and can picture piles of buttered toast already. As for the Lincoln Sisters next door, how could they know that their cat would lead them all on a Halloween “parade” of hysterical proportions?



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COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

SL.3.4: Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.

R.L.3.6: Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.



SL.1.5: Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.



Fact Versus Opinion

Eugenia Lincoln has many opinions. For example: “In my opinion,” said Eugenia, “pigs should not go trick-or-treating. In my opinion, pigs should not pose as princesses” (page 21). As a class, discuss the difference between fact (truths) and opinion (beliefs).

On chart paper, draw a T-table and write the heading FACT on the left and OPINION on the right.

Read the following sentences to the class to determine if they are fact or opinion. Feel free to create additional sentences.

- Pigs like to eat.
- Pigs do not sweat.
- Pigs are clean animals.
- Pigs should not live in houses.
- Pigs should not be kept as pets.
- Pigs ought to be put on a leash.

Write each sentence on the chart under the heading students believe to be correct.

Immerse children in research on pigs to find out whether they put each statement in the proper category. (You might wish to guide them through the search for information as a class, or assign individual research if students are old enough.) Use library books or the Internet. Allow an amount of time appropriate to the age group, then come back together as a class to share results.

If any statements were incorrectly listed, rewrite them in the correct column.

Mercy in Disguise

The Watsons decide to dress Mercy up as a princess for Halloween. Other suggestions for Mercy’s costume were robot, pirate, witch, and pumpkin. Ask students to design a costume for Mercy. Each student can draw either the costume alone or a picture of Mercy wearing the creation. Encourage the students to embody Mercy’s personality and passion for butter, toast, and a good chase. Put on a mock fashion show in the classroom, with each child walking the runway and then describing his or her costume for Mercy. Each student must also explain why he or she made that particular costume choice. Display all the costumes on a class bulletin board entitled “Mercy in Disguise.”

COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

RL.1.3: Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.



RF.K-3.3: Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.



What a Character!

The characters in the Mercy Watson books are unique and funny. To keep Mercy “hanging around” your classroom and in your students’ minds, use this mobile-making project. Each student will need:

- a hanger
- 4 two-foot lengths of yarn
- 4 oak-tag circles, 5 to 6 inches in diameter, with one hole punched in each

On the front of each circle, students should write the name of one character from the Mercy Watson books and draw a picture of him or her. On the back of the circle, they should write two facts about the character.

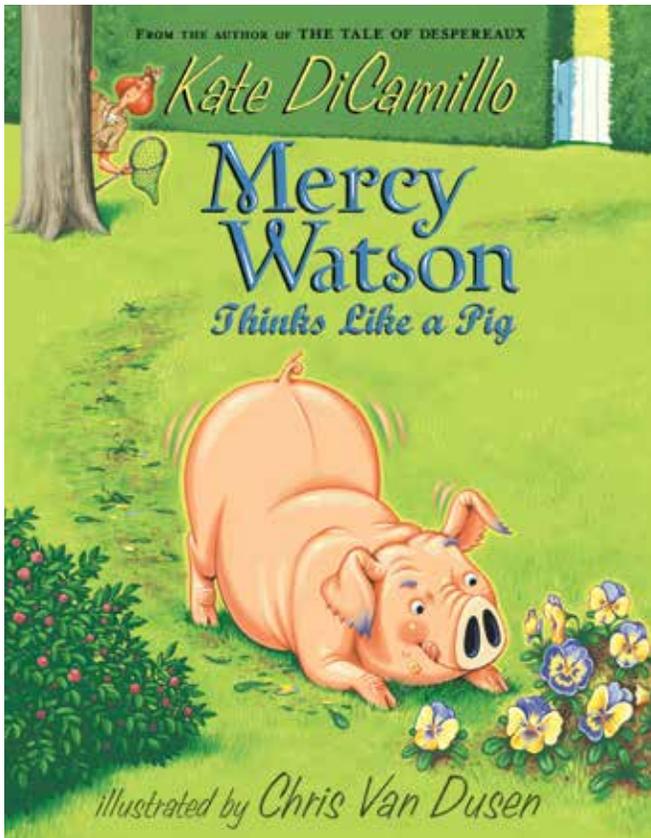
When all the circles are completed, students should tie one end of each string to a circle (through the punched hole) and the other to their hanger. Hang the mobiles throughout the classroom.

All in the Word Family

Use the words *pig* and *toast* in this delightful story to springboard into various spelling and phonics lessons. Begin with the word family *-ig*. Write *ig* several times on different pieces of small sentence strips and insert them into a pocket chart. (If a pocket chart is unavailable, use chart paper or a chalkboard.) Ask students for words that rhyme with *pig* and have them volunteer to write the beginning consonant on the sentence strip to complete the word (such as *big*, *fig*, or *wig*). Then let children create their own *-ig* family booklets. In marker, write *ig* on a piece of oak tag, measuring approximately 5½ x 8½ inches (one for each child). Cut out small pieces of white paper, about 4 x 2 inches. Stack eight pieces onto each piece of oak tag, staple at the top, and distribute to each student. Have students write the beginning consonants on each piece of white paper. When each piece of paper is flipped, it makes a different *-ig* word. This is a wonderful phonetic awareness activity as it incorporates oral segmentation and oral blending. It is also a great introduction to spelling and handwriting. Students can also learn the sound *oa* in the CVVC (consonant – vowel – vowel – consonant) pattern of *toas* in the word *toast* by repeating the same activity, for example *coat*, *boat*, *oat*, *roast*, and *boast*.



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About the Book

Mercy's appetite has got her into trouble again. When Eugenia Lincoln's pansies go missing, Animal Control Officer Francine Poulet arrives on the scene. But as she soon discovers, not just anyone can think like a pig. Especially when that pig is porcine wonder Mercy Watson!



CANDLEWICK PRESS

Mercy Watson *Thinks Like a Pig*

Kate DiCamillo
illustrated by
Chris Van Dusen



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COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

RL.2.6: Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.

SL.2.2: Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.



RL.1.3: Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.



RL.2.5: Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.

SL.2.2: Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

Think Like a Pig

Francine Poulet tries to think like a pig in order to capture Mercy. Put yourself in Mercy's hooves and think like a pig. The Mercy books are written in the third person—but what if they were written from Mercy's perspective?

As a group, retell *Mercy Watson Thinks Like a Pig* from Mercy's point of view instead of the narrator's. Start off by reading a page or two of the book to students, then ask a volunteer to retell that part of the story using Mercy's voice. Proceed this way through the rest of the book.

This should be an activity in oral retelling rather than a written exercise. Children may even enjoy trying on their theatrical wings by acting out the different parts in the story as they retell.

What a Character!

The characters in the Mercy Watson books are unique and funny. Begin a character study by copying the blank table below onto large chart paper.

Character name	What does he/she like?	What does he/she do?	Favorite scene involving this character

Fill in the chart as a class, listing characters in the first column. Students can refer to any of the books in the Mercy Watson series to help complete the character study.

Extension: Ask each student to imagine a new character for a Mercy Watson story. Then they can create character studies for their new characters by copying the chart heading and filling in responses on a sheet of notebook paper.

Hanging on the Plot Line

This exercise is a fun way to introduce or review the concept of plot with your students. Each Mercy Watson book is structured along a similar plot line: Mercy follows the scent of butter; gets into mischief in the process, and ends up indirectly saving the day.

Preparation: Hang a clothesline in the classroom. The line should be long enough to accommodate thirty-five 5 x 7 index cards (to be hung with clothespins; see below)

Read *Mercy Watson Thinks Like a Pig* to students. Ask the class to recall four or five main story points. As each is suggested, write a sentence or phrase describing each



COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

SL.3.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SL.3.1.A: Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.

SL.3.1.B: Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g. gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion.)

SL.3.1.C: Ask questions to check understanding of information presented, stay on topic, and link their comments to the remarks of others.

SL.3.1.D: Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

story point on a separate 5 x 7 index card. Then ask student volunteers to place the cards in order, and attach them to the clothesline using spring-type clothespins.

Next, break the class into five groups—one for each of the other Mercy Watson books in the series. Assign a book to each group and ask students to repeat the exercise of writing and/or illustrating the main plot points from their title, placing the cards in order, and hanging them on the “plot line.”

The Great Pig Debate

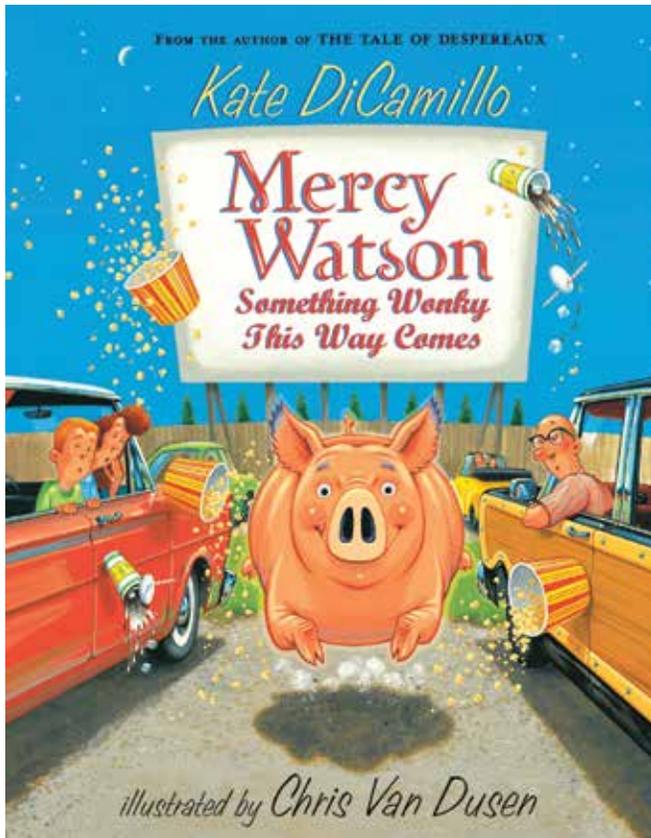
Children love to argue, so here's an activity to channel those argumentative muscles into effective debating skills.

Pose the following question to the class: Which makes a better pet, a pig or a dog? Divide the students into small groups and assign each group one side of the dispute. Ask each group to write at least five reasons defending their position.

Finally, stage a class debate. Have each group take turns sharing their reasons in front of the rest of the class. Continue until every group has had their turn.



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About the Book

Some may find it wonky to take a pig to the movies. But not Mr. and Mrs. Watson, who think the title of the film, *When Pigs Fly*, is inspirational. And not their beloved Mercy, who is inspired by the fact that the drive-in proudly serves real butter on its Bottomless Bucket of popcorn. So when they pull up in their convertible, Mercy lifts her snout and becomes a pig on a mission—for what is more heavenly than being hot on the trail of a true butter smell?



Mercy Watson

Something Wonky This Way Comes

Kate DiCamillo
illustrated by
Chris Van Dusen



Common Core Connections

This teachers' guide, with connections to the Common Core, includes an array of activities to accommodate the learning needs of most students in grades K–3. Students are called upon to be careful readers without jeopardizing the pleasure they gain from reading. It is best to allow students to read the entire story before engaging in a detailed study of the work.

Notes throughout the guide correlate the discussion and activities to specific Common Core Standards. For more information on specific standards for your grade level, visit the Common Core website at www.corestandards.org.

COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

L.3.5: Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

L.3.5.A: Distinguish the literal and nonliteral meanings of words and phrases in context.

L.3.5.B: Identify real-life connections between words and their use.

L.3.5.C: Distinguish shades of meaning among related words that describe states of mind or degrees of certainty.



W.2.5: With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.

W.2.6: With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.

When Pigs Fly: Figures of Speech

In *Mercy Watson: Something Wonky This Way Comes*, Eugenia tries to explain that the expression “When pigs fly” is a figure of speech (page 8).

Talk with students about figures of speech— words used in an unusual way in order to produce a different meaning.

Ask your students:

- Can pigs really fly?
- What does the expression mean?
- Which is more fun to say and read: “That will never happen” or “When pigs fly”?

Review a list of popular figures of speech and discuss their meanings. Here are a few:

Hit the road

Weighs a ton

Stay on your toes

Dying of hunger

Over the hill

The pen is mightier than the

Dog tired

Fish out of water

sword.

Extension:

Invite students to choose a figure of speech and illustrate it as if the words meant what they usually do (e.g., an exhausted dog or a fish on dry land).

The Next Adventure

Ask students to imagine that they are the author of one more book in the *Mercy Watson* series. Invite students to imagine where *Mercy* and her friends might go. A toaster factory? A bakery? The moon?

As a class, brainstorm major events of the story. What trouble will *Mercy* get into? Which characters will be involved? How will it end?

If desired, write the story on pink or pig-shaped paper and bind it as a class book, or have each student write and illustrate his or her own *Mercy Watson* story.

Students will no doubt enjoy exercising their creativity in this culmination of the *Mercy Watson* adventures!



COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

SL.1.5: Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

W.1.5: With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed.



RF.1.2: Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).

RF.1.2.A: Distinguish long from short vowel sounds in spoken single-syllable words.

RF.1.2.B: Orally produce single-syllable words by blending sounds (phonemes), including consonant blends.

RF.1.2.C: Isolate and pronounce initial, medial vowel, and final sounds (phonemes), in spoken single-syllable words.

RF.1.2.D: Segment spoken single-syllable words into their complete sequence of individual sounds (phonemes).

A Toasty Tale

It's no secret that Mercy loves to eat—or that her favorite food is hot buttered toast. In honor of Mercy, create a class book in the shape of a stack of toast.

Preparation:

- On a piece of 8½ x 11 paper, draw an outline of a piece of toast. Make two copies. On one, write *Mercy Watson's favorite food is hot buttered toast. What's yours?* This will be page 1 of your book. On the other copy, write the sentence starter *My favorite foods are . . .* Make a copy of the sentence-starter page for each student.
- Make two covers by cutting toast shapes from oak tag or beige construction paper. Write or print the title *A Toasty Tale* on the front cover.

Distribute one sentence-starter page to each student. Ask each student to cut out the piece of toast, complete the sentence, and illustrate his or her sheet. When students are finished, bind all the student pages between the covers using heavy-duty staples or a hole punch and loose rings. Your book will look like a stack of deliciously topped toast to savor in the reading area.

P is for Pig, Porcine Wonder, and Popcorn

Leroy Ninker sells Bottomless Buckets of popcorn at the drive-in. Begin a letter-study by brainstorming some *P*-words. Then have each student draw a large *P* on a piece of oak tag or construction paper and decorate it with as many *P* words as they can think of. For an extra pinch of *P*, use purple or pink markers!



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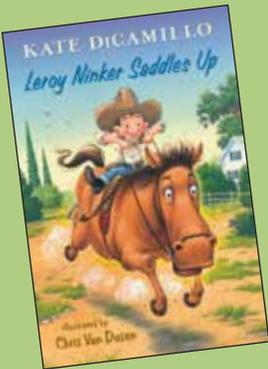
KATE DiCAMILLO is the beloved and renowned author of many books for young readers, including *Flora & Ulysses: The Illuminated Adventures* and *The Tale of Despereaux*, both of which won Newbery Medals. In 2014 she was named the National Ambassador for Young People’s Literature. She lives in Minneapolis.



CHRIS VAN DUSEN is the author-illustrator of *If I Built a Car*, an E. B. White Read Aloud Award winner, as well as *King Hugo’s Huge Ego*, *The Circus Ship*, and *Randy Riley’s Really Big Hit*. He lives in Maine.



Tales from Deckawoo Drive



The hijinks continue on Deckawoo Drive in *Leroy Ninker Saddles Up*, the first in the spin-off series Tales from Deckawoo Drive, starring favorite characters from the Mercy Watson books!

Leroy Ninker has a hat, a lasso, and boots. What he doesn’t have is a horse—until he meets Maybelline, that is, and then it’s love at first sight. Maybelline loves spaghetti and sweet nothings, and she loves Leroy, too. But when Leroy forgets the third and final rule of caring for Maybelline, disaster ensues. Can Leroy wrestle fate to the ground, rescue the horse of his heart, and lasso loneliness for good? Join Leroy, Maybelline, and a cast of familiar characters—Stella, Frank, Mrs. Watson, and everyone’s favorite porcine wonder, Mercy—for some hilarious and heartfelt horsing around on Deckawoo Drive.

- ★ “Kate DiCamillo and Chris Van Dusen strike gold again with this charming addition to the Mercy Watson story-verse” — *Shelf Awareness* (starred review)
- ★ “DiCamillo effortlessly slips back into the comfortable rhythms of Mercy’s world, infusing every chapter with subdued wit, warmth, and heart.” — *Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

And don’t miss the second Tales from Deckawoo Drive adventure, *Francine Poulet Meets the Ghost Raccoon*, coming in Fall 2015!

Visit www.MercyWatson.com for excerpts, downloadables, games, and activities.



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