

# CHEESIE MACK

Grades  
3-7

*Educator  
Guide*



*The following Common Core Anchor Standards are integrated into this guide:*

### Key Ideas and Details

**R.1** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

**R.2** Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

**R.3** Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

### Craft and Structure

**R.4** Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

**R.6** Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

★ “Cotler’s . . . funny and (sneakily) educational Cheesie Mack series is . . . interactive fiction perfected.”

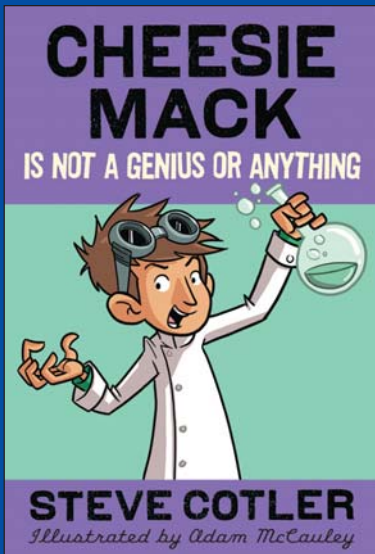
—*Kirkus Reviews*, Starred

CheesieMack.com  
RHTeachersLibrarians.com



Illustration © 2013 by Douglas Holgate.

# STEVE COTLER



**Cheesie Mack Is Not a Genius or Anything**

PB: 978-0-375-86394-3  
 HC: 978-0-375-86437-7  
 GLB: 978-0-375-96437-4  
 EL: 978-0-375-89570-8

**R**onald “Cheesie” Mack is not a genius or anything but he remembers everything that happened before, during, and after fifth-grade graduation. He’s written it all down with lots of lists, drawings, and splendorful (that’s splendid plus wonderful!) made-up words. Cheesie’s story is about more than just his boring graduation ceremony and the not-so-boring party afterward; it’s also about his ongoing battle with his evil older sister, a mouse plot gone wrong, and his best friend Georgie’s discovery of a mysterious old coin that just might change the summer completely. Cheesie—with a little help from Steve Cotler—writes about family, friendship, and tough choices in an unforgettable voice that will have readers laughing out loud and making their own BLART sandwiches.

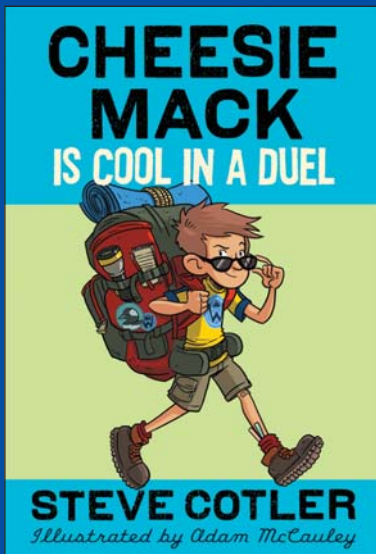
## Pre-Reading Activity

How do you know what genre a story is without even reading the first chapter? What type of story do you think Cheesie Mack is going to be by looking at the front and back cover? Predict what you think will be the most important elements of this story.

## Questions for Group Discussion

- Why does the book start with Chapter 0? List everything you learn about Cheesie in this not-yet-a-real chapter.
- Describe Cheesie’s friends and family. Explain why he is not looking forward to fifth-grade graduation.
- What is the setting of the story? How can a setting change a story? What did Georgie find and what did Cheesie discover on the Internet about it? What’s the coolest thing you’ve ever found?
- What is Georgie’s terrible news? Why is it rotten but maybe not as bad as it could be? What is Cheesie’s decision? Would you make the same one or not? Why?
- How does Cheesie show his dog, Deeb, who’s boss? Do you have a pet? Which one of you is in charge? What, exactly, is the mouse plot?
- Cheesie experiments with writing a little science fiction. How do you know when you’re reading science fiction instead of a contemporary realistic fiction story? What would you write about if you tried your hand at sci-fi?
- Where does Georgie put the mice at school? Do you think it is a good idea for a prank or not? How much trouble could they get into with this prank? How do you decide if a prank is worth it or not?
- Explain what the principal decided to do with the “ratted-out mouse plot” of Georgie and Cheesie. What characteristics do you think make a good principal? Does Mrs. Crespo qualify for one or not? Why? What does Cheesie keep an elaborate score card for?
- Describe why Georgie and Cheesie are writing a letter to G. J. Prott. How would you get to the bottom of a mystery such as this one? Where do you go to look for answers?
- Georgie and Cheesie are best friends . . . so much so that one can tell when the other is lying and they never even have to ask about eating at each other’s houses. What unwritten rules are there between you and your best friend?
- List the sequence of events that occur when Cheesie tries to drop off the letter to G. J. Prott at The Haunted Toad. What do they learn from a local officer that’s intimidating? Why do they call it “The Haunted Toad” anyway? Do you have funny names for places in your own neighborhood?
- Outline the steps that Cheesie takes to prove that his sister has tried to ruin his (and Georgie’s) chances at winning the pizza party at the fifth-grade graduation party. Tell how Mrs. Crespo rewarded Cheesie’s detective work about the tickets.
- Why do you think Mrs. Crespo decides to leave what to do about his sister up to Cheesie himself? What would you do? Ultimately, what does he decide? Decide whether you think she got what she deserved or not.





**Cheesie Mack Is Cool in a Duel**

PB: 978-0-375-86395-0

HC: 978-0-375-86438-4

GLB: 978-0-375-96438-1

EL: 978-0-375-89571-5

**C**heesie and Georgie are back, and this time they're off to the greatest summer camp in Maine. As the oldest of the Little Guy campers, they'll get to make the campfires and choose the sports teams. It's sure to be their best summer yet!

Then disaster strikes. Cheesie and Georgie are put in a cabin with the Big Guy campers, including Cheesie's archenemy, Kevin Welch. Now the youngest—and smallest—of the Big Guys, Cheesie has no choice but to use his brains to fight Kevin's brawn—he challenges the bully to a Cool Duel. The adventure that follows includes a toilet on a wall, a headless skateboarder, a garter snake mustache, and *the scariest ghost story ever told*. Will Cheesie survive to start middle school?

With plenty of lists, drawings, and made-up words, Cheesie—with a little help from Steve Cotler—tells the story of the best worst summer ever.

## Pre-Reading Activity

What is a duel? How do you think Cheesie will get in one?

What do you suppose a "Cool Duel" consists of?

## Questions for Group Discussion

- What does Cheesie do to get revenge on his sister for the chocolate bar incident? What trouble follows on the bus? What plan does he make?
- How does Cheesie end up with new enemies instead of friends? Have you ever made an enemy? How?
- Why did Cheesie and Georgie expect the best summer ever? What sudden change could ruin all their plans?
- List all the important characters from Cabin H, including Cheesie's nemesis and the counselor.
- How do you play Roboto? Do you think it is fun? Which activity at camp sounds the best to you? Which is Cheesie's favorite? Is there anything you would not like about being at camp?
- What do Marci and Lana ask Cheesie to help them do that's against the rules? Why? Do you believe their story? Why or why not?
- Where did Cheesie get his ideas for "The Legend of Double Wobbly"? Where do good writing ideas come from? What's your favorite thing to write?
- What, exactly, is the Cool Duel and what are the rules of the contest? How does Cheesie get Marci to her phone? Is this a good idea or not?
- How is Cheesie able to win a few votes over Kevin? Why is Mookie getting suspicious? How do you know when someone is getting suspicious?
- What super cool trick does Cheesie pull with the camp photo? Where did he get the idea? Does it help with the duel?
- Describe how Cheesie and George pull off the dance double cross? Did their plan work? Would you be willing to do this or not? What else did it gain Cheesie?
- What were the most memorable acts of the talent show? Do you think Cheesie outshone Kevin or not? Would you want to try the JAMPAC? Have you ever participated in a talent show? What act might you do?
- Cheesie likes stories about knights and battles. What type of stories are your favorite? Why?
- What Big Idea does Georgie have that ends up backfiring in Kevin's favor? How cool was that? What is Cheesie's only hope now? Did you know Marcie was lying about her twin before Cheesie revealed it or not? Why?
- Did Cheesie take the scary story too far? What makes a great scary tale? How did the guys react?
- What was the final vote in the Cool Duel? Why did Cheesie get a camper to change his vote?
- What was your favorite part of this Cheesie Mac book? Who is your favorite character? If you were going to write another story about Cheesie what setting would you pick for the book?

- Cheesie is the narrator of this story. How would it be different if told through Georgie's eyes? Kevin's? Cheesie's sister?
- How important is the setting on this story? How would it be different if it took place in Cheesie's hometown or at school?
- Cheesie likes to take words and add them together to make new words. Which one of these invented words is your favorite? What two words would you like to conjoin to make a new one?



Illustration: © 2013 by Adam McCauley.

## Vocabulary

Cheesie uses lots of great words and then usually defines them. As you're reading find 10 words that are new for you and add the definitions to the chart below. Then, try to use all of these new words at least once in the next day or so. After you've used one, put a check mark beside it.

Used the word	New word:	Easy definition:

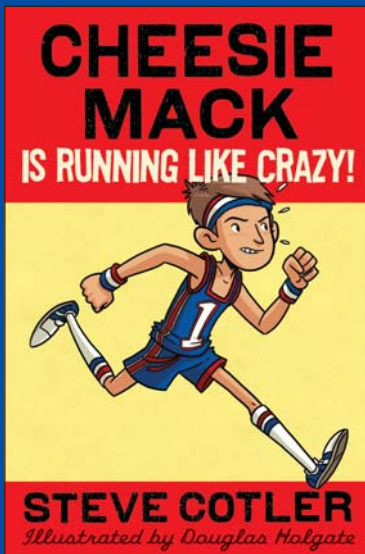
Illustration below left: © 2013 by Adam McCauley, below right © 2013 by Douglas Holgate.



## Comprehension

For each chapter find one sentence (or direct quote) that best represents the action of that chapter. You can copy the quote down or mark it with a sticky note, but be prepared to defend your choice!





**Cheesie Mack Is Running Like Crazy!**

HC: 978-0-307-97713-7

GLB: 978-0-307-97714-4

EL: 978-0-307-97715-1

**R**eaders of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* will love Cheesie's wacky lists, drawings, and made-up words as he tells the story of the weirdest election in the history of the sixth grade!

In his third adventure, Cheesie and his best friend, Georgie, are off to middle school, where there will be lots of new kids and new teachers. Cheesie has a terrific idea: What better way to meet all the new kids than to run for class president? Plus, if he wins, it'll drive his evil older sister nuts! Then Cheesie gets bad news. One of his friends from his old school is also running for president. Cheesie has a tough decision to make, one that could affect his entire middle-school career. Should he bow out and support his friend, or go for the glory?

## Pre-Reading Activity

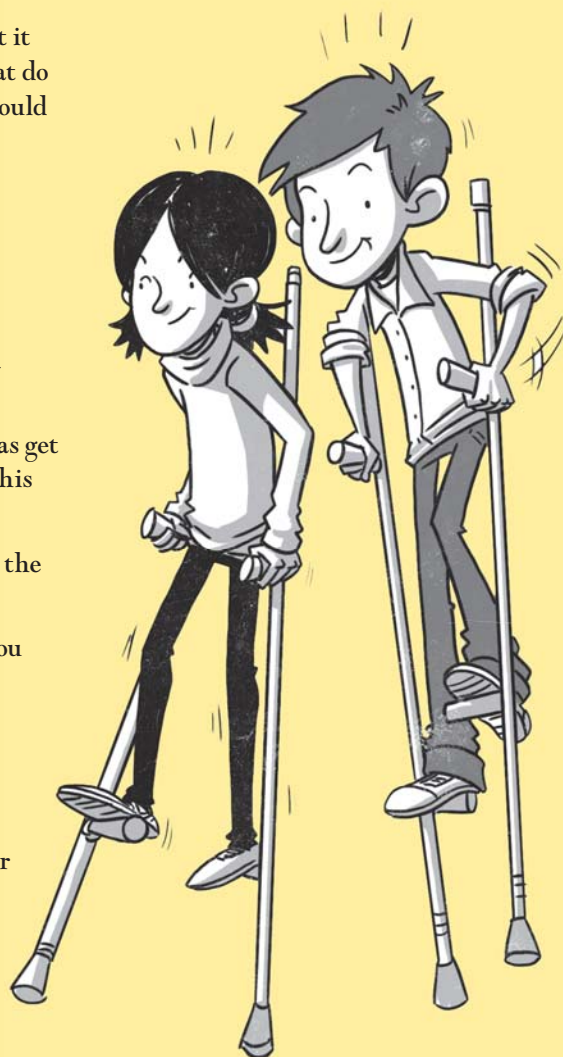
Why do you think Cheesie Mack is running? Do you like to run?

What qualities/characteristics make a person a good runner?

## Questions for Group Discussion

- What do you think is the most important thing to know about Cheesie's "background stuff"? Write your own list of background stuff that someone would have to know and understand to become your friend.
- What did June "Goon" do to Cheesie on his first day of middle school? What's the worst thing a sibling has ever done to you?
- Describe Eddie Chapple. List the five things you think are most important to know about him. How does the author develop this character? What are the ways an author can bring a character to life? Which details make him seem the most real to you? Why does Eddie's plan create conflict in the story for Cheesie?
- What do you think of Cheesie's core teacher, Mrs. Wikowitz and her policy of assignment format? How does Cheesie creatively attack assignment one? Why does he need a mulligan on it? How is it finally received?
- Mr. Amato does some interesting things in science on the first day. What are they? What does Cheesie figure out about his amazing memorization ability? Whose class do you think you'd enjoy more with Cheesie: core or science? Why?
- Explain what Goon attempted to do at lunch to embarrass Cheesie and how he pulled out the win in the point battle. Could you have kept your composure like he did or not?
- How would you stack up in Coach T's gym class? After school, what do both Cheesie and Goon announce at dinner? Will they both be able to get what they want?
- How does Goon try to embarrass Cheesie next? How does he handle it? What does Cheesie learn about the election that could make it a much more difficult win for him?
- Describe Cheesie's first mile run in gym class. What does this tell you about him as a character/person? What does it take to be a good runner? How would you do on this challenge? Would you be able to get in the zone too?
- Explain how the outcome of who should run for class president is decided. Why does Cheesie decide this is a great idea? Would you ever run for elected office?
- Prioritize a list of things that Cheesie learned on his field trip from most important to least important. What's the best field trip you've ever been on? Have you ever visited a national park? Why is Cheesie inspired to try his hand at historical fiction? Do you think this would be harder to write than realistic? Why?
- Why is Diana Mooney going to be such difficult competition for Georgie? Outline the steps they take to win the election for Georgie. Which do you think is the most creative idea? How does Goon try to sabotage his campaign?

- Compare the scoring for cross-country to your favorite sport. Which is the most difficult to understand? Which, do you think, is the most fair? How is XC both a team and individual sport?
- What is the plan for Georgie's election speech? Why is he so nervous about it even though he often performs his magic act in front of other people? What do you think is Cheesie and Georgie's best idea for the speech? Why? How would it be received at your school?
- What would you name the ships and characters in your own pirate story?
- Describe the scene where the candidates for office give their various speeches. Categorize them into *creative* and *ordinary*. Where would Georgie's speech go? Why?
- What interesting facts about Iceland does Oddny tell the boys over frozen yogurt? What would your last name be there?
- Near the end, Cheesie helps Goon out (and saves face for Gramps) as well as get her in big trouble. Does she deserve both? Are sibling relationships often this complex? Why?
- What were the fake and true outcomes of the election? Why do you think the author decided to create so many versions of it? Which was your favorite?
- Which of the Cheesie Mack novels has been your favorite so far? Would you want to be friends with Cheesie and Georgie?



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## Reading

Good readers can summarize what is most important about a text or chapter after they read it. Being able to identify this main idea or purpose can help a reader remember and understand it better. As you read the Cheesie Mack book, place a sticky note at the end of the chapter and then summarize what happened in either one or two sentences or a few bullet points.

Compare your summary to a reading partner's.

## Writing

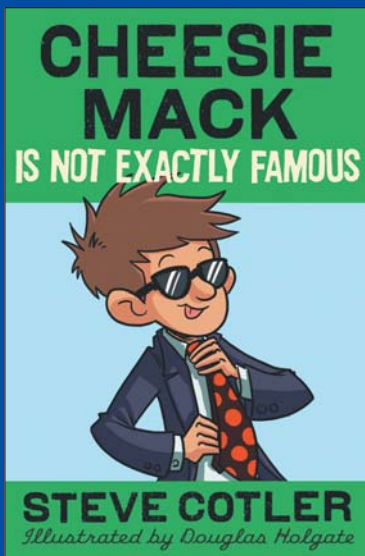
Cheesie loves to write stories. In book one, he tries his hand at science fiction. In book two, he writes a legend, a creepy story, and one about knights in battle. In book three, he tries his hand at a pirate story, a detective story, and historical fiction. With a friend or reading partner, brainstorm a list of genres (types of stories) you'd like to try. After you each choose one, brainstorm a list of features that make that type of story the best. Then, give yourselves a week to construct a draft and share it.

Example: Pirate stories

Features of great pirate stories: evil nemesis (epic bad guys), lost treasure, cool ships with awesome names, eye patches, peg legs, storms, snarly dogs, and swords! Don't forget the sword fights!



Coming  
Spring 2014!



Cheesie Mack Is Not Exactly Famous

HC: 978-0-385-36984-8  
GLB: 978-0-385-36985-5  
EL: 978-0-385-36986-2

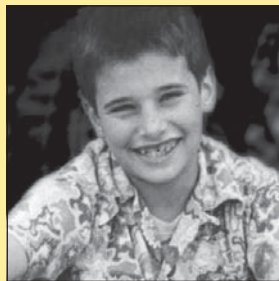
**I**n his fourth adventure, Cheesie Mack becomes famous! Sort of.

Cheesie and his best friend, Georgie, are exploring a construction site when they find a weird-looking . . . thingie . . . sticking out of the muddy ground. Whatever it is, it's very old. And maybe valuable!

Before they know it, Cheesie and Georgie discover they're in possession of an object that dates all the way back to pre-Colonial times. They're instant celebrities, at least at school. Will Cheesie and Georgie hold on to the ancient artifact and the fame it brings, or give it away for the good of all?

With wacky lists, drawings, and made-up words, Cheesie tells a story about buried treasure—that really could happen!

## About the Author



**Steve Cotler** is a retired Little League catcher who's also been a shoe salesman, telecom scientist, singer-songwriter, Apollo I computer programmer, Hollywood screenwriter, Harvard Business School MBA, investment banker, and door-to-door egg man. He lives with his wife and writes in Sonoma County in Northern California's wine country. He thinks he is and always will be 11 years old.



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book excerpts, Cheesie events,  
and more.

Prepared by Tracie Vaughn Zimmer, author and reading specialist.

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