

Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH

By Robert C. O'Brien

1972 Newbery Medal Winner

A Teaching Guide by Margaret Whisnant



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with

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Mrs. Jonathan Frisby,
a mother mouse desperate to save her frail son. . .

is led to the strange rats living under Farmer Fitzgibbon's
rosebush . . .

The rats have secrets, ways. . .

They know all about Mrs. Frisby, her late husband Jonathan. . .

They are like no other rats. . .

Something extraordinary happened to them at a place called NIMH.



An Introduction to **Your Teaching Guide. . .**

Goals

To . . .

- Offer a teaching guide with a full spectrum of learning experiences that flow from **basic knowledge** to **higher-level thinking skills**.
- Provide **classroom-ready** materials that **motivate** and **instruct**.
- Create **novel-specific activities** that require careful reading, help develop comprehension skills, and challenge the thinking process.
- Accommodate a wide variety of student **ability** and **interest**.
- **Support teachers** by providing a practical teaching resource that saves preparation time.
- Include **cross-curricula activities** as an integral part of the novel study.
- Correlate to various U.S. and world-wide **education standards and requirements** for language arts.

The Seven Components. . .

1. Summaries

Written in present tense, the chapter-by-chapter summaries are more detailed than those found in most teachers' guides or other sources. Important points of the plot, character motivation and development, and story clues are all included. For quick reference, the summaries are presented in bulleted format. These synopses are a valuable resource for

quickly becoming familiar with a title when time is limited
managing a reading program that involves multiple titles/reading groups
facilitating independent study
refreshing memory when using a novel from year to year.

2. Before You Read

In this component, the focus is on sparking student interest. Each teaching pack includes both an **independent activity** and a series of **whole-group/small-group discussion** or **research topics**, written as open-ended questions.

At least one **bulletin board idea** is included. In some cases, activities in the **Think, Write, Create** component also involve the creation of a bulletin board or classroom display.

3. Vocabulary

One of the many advantages of literature-based reading instruction is the opportunity to observe vocabulary in action! It is this circumstance that drives the vocabulary portion of the novel teaching packs.

Word Choices. . .

The words lifted from the novel for focused study are chosen based on one or more of the following criteria:

<i>their level of difficulty</i>	<i>their frequency of use in children's literature</i>
<i>their importance in comprehending the story</i>	<i>their value as useful composition vocabulary</i>
<i>the probability that they will be encountered across the curriculum</i>	<i>unique meanings, spellings, pronunciation, etc.</i>

Word Lists and Definitions. . .

For teacher convenience and reference, word lists with definitions are included. The selected words are arranged in story order, complete with page numbers so they can be spotted easily and studied in their "natural habitats." For clarity, the definitions are paraphrased to match the word's tense, number, part of speech, etc. rather than cross referenced as in a standard dictionary. The major resource of this information is www.dictionary.com.

Dictionary Activities. . .

Long word lists are divided into chapter sets of workable numbers and presented as **Dictionary Digs**—sometimes given a slightly different name to correspond with the theme of the novel. In this introductory

stage, students use a dictionary to answer a series of multiple choice questions about word meanings, usage, unique characteristics, etc.

Using the Words. . .

Other activities, which pull terms from the lists in random order, lead students through a variety of word studies which include

sentence usage
word forms
synonyms and antonyms
anagrams
categories
word groups/connections

word types (acronyms, onomatopoeia, etc.)
scrambled sentences
analogies
whole-class/group games
etymologies

4. Assessment

The two sections in this portion of the teaching pack offer a wealth of materials designed to build a strong **foundation** for student progression to higher level thinking skills. The operative phrase is **basic comprehension**.

Short Answer Questions

Short answer questions for each chapter (or groups of chapters) are the first available assessment tools. The items encourage (and check) careful reading. Some require the reader to recognize a major event or idea while others involve finding a minor detail. The questions are in *sequence* with the pages they cover, but they are **not** designed to call attention to plot construction or other story elements.

The short answer questions can be used as

student reading guides
pop quizzes

discussion groups guides
conferencing with individual students

Objective Tests

The objective tests have multiple functions. In addition to their obvious application, they also serve as tools that can *improve **comprehension skills** by providing practice in understanding plot structure and recognizing important story elements.*

Rationale:

Focus on the Plot. . .

Whether they are aware of their ability or not, all good readers sense the **rhythm** of the **connected** events that compose the plot of a novel, and consequently **comprehend** the story. They are in tune with cause and effect, behavior and consequence, sequence—the heartbeat of the narrative.

This “plot rhythm” forms the framework for the objective tests. The chain of events that tell the story have been pulled from the novel and reformatted into a series of sequential questions, none of which require **interpretation**. They are intended to **draw student attention to the fact that something happened**, not to what the incident means. That comes later.

In addition to their testing function, teachers may use the pages to strengthen their students’ ability to **Summarize**: With only the questions as a guide, have students write a summary of the chapter. For a set of ten questions, limit the number of sentences they may write to seven or fewer. When they work with twenty or more questions, allow no more than twelve sentences.

Report the News: Ask your students to write a newspaper article based on the events identified in a set of questions and the *who, what, when, where, why* elements. Some information needed to complete this assignment may be located in previous chapters.

Twist the Plot: Choose one or two questions from each chapter and change its answer—true to false, no to yes, etc.—to demonstrate how changing a single (or several) events would (or would not) change the story. This process can be used to help students become proficient in distinguishing major plot movers from minor story details.

The Characters. . .

Too often, when they are asked to describe a story character’s personality, the only answer many students can muster is “nice.” This portion of the Novel Teaching Pack, coupled with related activities from **Think, Write, Create**, is a well of opportunities for those teachers who wish to eradicate “nice” from their students’ vocabularies!

Questions that identify a character’s personality and/or motivation are purposely and carefully included with the plot movers. Again, the questions do not require **interpretation**. They simply establish that someone did or said something—knowledge that is invaluable when character analysis is required.

Implied Meaning and Story Clues. . .

The objective tests include items that establish the existence of story components carrying ***implied meaning***. ***Story clues*** that tantalize the reader with hints of future events also appear as question. At this point in the novel study, as before, **interpretation** is not the goal. **Awareness** of the **facts** is the target.

Developing/Improving Listening Skills. . .

Listening skills are rightfully included on every list of state competency requirements. Rather than always requiring students to answer test questions on a printed page, why not surprise them occasionally by doing the test orally and meeting competency goals at the same time?

Discussion Guide Capability. . .

The objective tests are helpful discussion guides. Use individual items on these pages to draw student attention to sequence, cause and effect, story clues (foreshadowing), character traits, recognizing and interpreting implied meanings, etc. These “thinking out loud” sessions are an **important building block** for the next learning phase.

5. Think, Write, Create

In this section, students pack up what they already know about the novel and go exploring into its every nook and cranny. Some activities require the simplest interpretation or application, while others will challenge the most proficient thinkers. There is a high probability that young scholars, even reluctant ones, will label some of the selections as ***fun***.

Rationale:

Guidelines. . .

Most of the items in this section are based on the skills presented in the ***Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Bloom’s Taxonomy)***. There are two reasons for this choice. First, it mirrors the Novel Teaching Pack’s primary purpose of building a variety of sophisticated thinking skills on a foundation of basic knowledge. Second, in following the taxonomy guidelines, activities that correlate with many state educational standards emerge automatically.

Organization. . .

Chapter-specific activities are grouped and presented according to their corresponding sets of **Short Answer Questions** and **Objective Test** page(s). Having led students through the basics for each chapter (or selected section), teachers may shop in this section for in-depth activities to optimize student understanding and interest. Armed with a firm grasp of each successive chapter, students are more likely to anticipate, embrace, and enjoy the next section. By repeating the process, students are also mastering concepts and intricacies connected to the **whole** novel

The **Whole Book Activities**, as their name indicates, require a grasp of the theme(s), characters, implications, etc. as they apply to the full novel. These pages are a teacher’s smorgasbord of culminating possibilities. In some cases, the choices are outgrowths of concepts that students have dealt with in a previous activity. In others, students are encouraged to look at the novel from a new angle.

Levels of Difficulty. . .

A broad spectrum of **difficulty levels** to accommodate the needs of individual students, including the gifted, is an integral part of ***Think, Write, Create***. However, **all** items from this section are intended to **challenge** and **sharpen** thinking abilities.

Activities. . .

Every novel teaching pack includes activities that require students to choose and use precise, appropriate, and meaningful **vocabulary**. These exercises involve choosing a group of words to describe a character’s personality or behavior. The following example is from ***Charlotte’s Web***.

Eight-year-old Fern cried and begged her father not to destroy the runt pig. She sealed the little animal’s fate by asking her father if he would have killed her if she had been born very small.

- Which **two** of the following words do you think **best** describe the way Fern’s father behaved during this episode? Explain your choice. Include the definitions of the words you selected in your answer.

<i>practical</i>	<i>sensitive</i>	<i>loving</i>	<i>cruel</i>	<i>considerate</i>
<i>realistic</i>	<i>flexible</i>	<i>callous</i>	<i>compassionate</i>	<i>logical</i>

- Choose **two** words from the list below that you believe **best** describe Fern’s behavior. Explain why they are the appropriate words. Use the definitions of your choices as part of your explanation.

<i>impulsive</i>	<i>compassionate</i>	<i>assertive</i>	<i>tender-hearted</i>	<i>hysterical</i>
<i>undisciplined</i>	<i>naive</i>	<i>juvenile</i>	<i>humane</i>	<i>empathetic</i>

In each case students work with a given collection of terms, all of which can be correctly applied to the character(s) in question. However, the individual words have strengths of meaning. It is the student's task to analyze both the character's behavior and the words, make choices, and then cite events from the story to support his/her selection.

Teachers may opt to narrow the choices to fewer words, choose words for individual students, divide the class into groups and offer a specific set of words to each group, or use the assignment as it is written. Whatever the technique, it is here that the word **nice** can be knocked off the shelf, shattered on the floor, and swept out the door. No longer necessary. Useless. Gone!

Other items in this section challenge students to . . .
*write for self-expression, for communication, and
for entertainment
form opinions and theories
cite "evidence" from the story to support their
explanations and opinions
connect personal experience to story situations
become familiar with and identify literary elements
analyze story characters and events
make predictions based on given facts*

*think about social issues
create drawings, diagrams, photos, maps,
models, recordings, films, etc.
imagine
categorize
engage in research and data gathering
recognize and perceive story theme(s)
understand point of view*

Cross Curricula. . .

Think, Write, Create takes full advantage of opportunities to connect both major themes and the smallest story detail to other realms of the curriculum. In **Charlotte's Web**, for example, students may apply their calculation skills to a page of "Spider Math." In the **Holes** teaching pack is a challenge to create a game that utilizes a "saved" group of Camp Green Lake's holes.

Options, options, and more options. . .

Think, Write, Create is purposely bulging at the seams to give teachers **pick-and-choose options** for

*individualizing assignments
group work
whole class activities
capitalizing on student interest*

*homework
short-term and long-term projects
differentiating assignments for two or more classes*

6. Graphic Organizers

Ideas for the graphic organizers are pulled from the chapter or whole book activities and expanded into a writing assignment. Priority is given to those topics that allow a student to relate personal experiences, make choices, empathize with a story character, and/or imagine.

Structure. . .

The organizers do not repeat a set pattern of circles, squares, lines, etc., prescribed for a particular type of writing. Each one is tailored to a **specific idea** pulled from the novel. **Structured directions** for organizing the topic support the student at this stage of the process so that **writing** is the major focus.

Non-writing Organizers. . .

Sometimes, students are enticed to stretch their imaginations by filling out "forms" or writing "diary entries." One graphic organizer from **Hatchet**, for example, allows students to assume the persona of the pilot who rescued Brian by writing three entries into his log—the day before the rescue, the day of the rescue, and the day after the rescue. In the **Holes** Novel Teaching Pack, students become detectives and conduct a "background check" on Mr. Sir, recording their findings on the provided "official form." In these cases, composition skills take a back seat to **imagination, empathy, and pure enjoyment**. Teachers may wish to capitalize on student enthusiasm by asking for a written "report" based on the information entered on the forms.

7. Answer Keys

Keys for **all items that require a specific answer** are included in this section.

A final note from the author. . .

It is my personal wish that when the last page has been read, the last activity completed, and the last idea discussed, at least one of your students will ask, "What are we going to read next?"

Margaret

Margaret Whisnant

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Chapter Summaries

The Sickness of Timothy Frisby

- Mrs. Frisby, a widow mouse whose husband died the previous year, lives in a cinder block home buried in the vegetable garden of a farmer named Mr. Fitzgibbon.
- One day at the very end of February, Mrs. Frisby leaves her home to find food for her four children and discovers a storehouse of corn in a stump.
- Mrs. Frisby's younger son Timothy, smartest and frailest of her children, is not feeling well. He refuses to eat when his mother returns with food.
- While Mrs. Frisby is out with two of her children gathering the corn she has found, Timothy's condition worsens.
- Mrs. Frisby knows she must go to Mr. Ages for medicine.

Mr. Ages

- Mr. Ages, a white mouse who was a friend of Mrs. Frisby's late husband, makes medicines from plants.
- Mrs. Frisby takes the longest route to Mr. Ages' home on the other side of the farm to avoid the cat.
- Mr. Ages once saved baby Timothy's life when he was bitten by a spider.
- Though he seems old, Mr. Ages is spry.
- Mr. Ages says Timothy has pneumonia and will recover this time.
- Mr. Ages warns that Timothy must not get cold or breathe cold air for three weeks to a month or the pneumonia could come back and Timothy could die.

The Crow and the Cat

- To avoid walking alone in the woods at night, Mrs. Frisby takes the short route home across the farm where there is danger from Dragon, the Fitzgibbon's cat.
- Mrs. Frisby finds a young crow named Jeremy tied to a fence by a piece of silver-colored string.
- Mrs. Frisby chews the string and frees the crow, saving him from certain death.
- The commotion attracts Dragon, but Jeremy saves himself and Mrs. Frisby by carrying her on his back and flying away.
- Jeremy flies Mrs. Frisby home.

Mr. Fitzgibbon's Plow

- As Mr. Ages predicts, Timothy recovers in three days.
- Before Mr. Fitzgibbon's plow destroys her garden home, Mrs. Frisby will need to move her family to their summer home at the edge of a brook.
- The warm weather causes Mrs. Frisby to worry that Moving Day will come too soon to be safe for Timothy.
- Outside on a warm morning, Mrs. Frisby meets a lady shrew who predicts that Farmer Fitzgibbon will be plowing in a few days.
- Mrs. Frisby remembers that her husband used to say: All doors are hard to unlock until you have the key.
- Mrs. Frisby is frightened by the sound of Mr. Fitzgibbon starting his tractor.

Word Lists with Definitions

(Arranged According to Story Order)

(Part One: *The Sickness of Timothy Frisby—A Powder for Dragon*)

- preceding** To come, exist, or occur before in time (p.4)
- rancid** Nasty; having a disagreeable odor or taste due to decomposition; rank (p.4)
- warily** Cautiously; in a manner that is watchful or on guard. (p.5)
- hypochondriac** A person who worries about personal health, imagined diseases, and symptoms so that normal living habits are disrupted (p. 10)
- tedious** Tiresome by reason of slowness, length, or dullness; boring (p. 11)
- relentlessly** Steadily and persistently; without ceasing (p.13)
- draughts** (variation of **draft**) a measured portion; a dose (p.14)
- vigorous** Strong, energetic, and active in mind or body; robust (p.15)
- invariably** Constant; not subject to change; without fail (p. 21)
- lashed** Struck as with a whip; made a scathing oral or written attack against (p. 21)
- dubiously** Done or said with doubt or uncertainty; doubtfully; undecidedly (p. 24)
- literally** In a strict sense; word for word (p. 26)
- harrow** A farm implement consisting of a heavy frame with sharp teeth or upright disks, used to break up and even off plowed ground (p. 29)
- laboriously** Accomplished by means of long, hard work (pp. 37 and 82)
- essence** The characteristics or properties by which something can be identified; the most important ingredient (p. 39)
- plummeted** Fell straight down; plunged; declined suddenly and steeply (p. 40)
- surge** To rise and move in a billowing or swelling manner; a sudden forceful flow (p. 47)
- gnarled** Twisted and misshapen; knotty (p. 48)
- primeval** Ancient; having existed from the earliest age or ages (p. 49)
- jutted** Extended outward or upward beyond the main body; projected (p. 49)
- slithered** Glided or slid like a reptile; slipped and slid as on an uneven or loose surface (p. 49)
- sonorous** Having or producing a full, deep, or rich sound (p. 50)
- talons** The claws of a bird of prey (p. 51)
- protruding** Pushed or thrust outward (p. 51)
- peering** To look intently, searchingly, or with difficulty (p. 51)
- inevitably** Impossible to avoid or prevent (p. 54)
- agitated** To cause to move with sudden or violent force; upset; disturbed (p. 55)
- deference** Courteous respect (p. 55)
- lee** The area sheltered from the wind; cover; shelter (p. 57)
- eavesdrop** To listen secretly to the private conversations of others (p. 61)
- domain** The territory over which rule or control is maintained (64)
- densely** Compactly or closely connected; thickly (65)
- abruptly** Suddenly and without warning; unexpectedly rude (p. 70)
- cordial** Friendly; warm and sincere (p. 71)
- radiated** To extend in straight lines from or toward a center; to send out waves or rays (p. 79)
- dignity** The state or quality of being worthy of esteem or respect (p. 79)
- impression** A vague notion, remembrance, or belief; a visible mark made on a surface by pressure; an effect, feeling, or image held as a consequence of experience (p. 80)
- musty** Stale or moldy in odor or taste (p. 81)
- explicit** Fully and clearly expressed; leaving nothing implied (p. 84)
- incomprehensible** Difficult or impossible to understand (p. 85)
- subsiding** Sinking to a lower or normal level (p. 86)
- scrutiny** A close careful study or examination (p. 90)
- recounted** Repeated the facts or particulars of (p. 90)
- sentry** A guard posted at a particular spot to prevent unauthorized entry (p. 93)
- disinterested** Indifferent; not interested (p. 93)

Dictionary Digs

Dig into a dictionary to answer the following questions about words from *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH*. Write the letter of the answer in the blank to the left.

- _____ 1. Read the following sentence:
*In **deference** to his Grandmother's wishes, Morgan agreed to spend a week-end with her without televisions or computers.*
How does Morgan feel about his grandmother? He (A) is afraid of her, (B) often argues with her, (C) respects her.
- _____ 2. Is it OK to eat **rancid** food?
(A) Yes. **Rancid** means vitamin-enriched. (B) No. **Rancid** means rotten. (C) It would be OK after it has been washed and cooked.
- _____ 3. **Draught** means *a measured portion, such as a dose of medicine*. The dictionary will tell you that **draught** is also a variation of another word spelled differently but pronounced the same. What is the word?
(A) draft, (B) drought, (C) drapht
- _____ 4. What is the meaning of the word **tedious** in the following sentence?
*With over a thousand pieces to deal with, putting the puzzle together was a **tedious** process.*
(A) challenging and enjoyable, (B) slow and tiresome, (C) practically impossible.
- _____ 5. The word **laboriously** is an adverb. Which of the following words is the **noun** form of the word?
(A) laborious, (B) labor, (C) labored
- _____ 6. If your parents give you **explicit** instructions to be home by noon, what do you have to do?
(A) Be home by noon. Their instructions are clear. (B) Try to be home by one or two o'clock. You're not sure exactly what they meant. (C) Come home in the afternoon.
Explicit means "flexible."
- _____ 7. If the weatherman says a storm is **subsiding**, what's happening?
The storm is (A) forming in a certain area, (B) gathering strength, (C) calming down.
- _____ 8. **Gnarled**, which means *twisted or knotty*, is an example of a word with a silent letter. Which of the following three words does **not** have a silent letter?
(A) gnu, (B) pneumonia, (C) nova
- _____ 9. Which of the following words has something to do with noise?
(A) primeval, (B) sonorous, (C) agitated
- _____ 10. In which of the following professions would a **harrow** be a useful tool?
(A) farming, (B) engineering, (C) medical research.
- _____ 11. What is the meaning of the word **literally** in the following sentence?
*Hal bounded into the room, tripped, and **literally** bounced off the wall.*
(A) Hal pretended to hit the wall. (B) Hal really hit the wall and bounced back. (C) For a moment, it looked as if Hal really would hit the wall.
- _____ 12. In 1847 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote a long poem that he called **Evangeline**. The first line is "*This is the forest **primeval**.*" What is a **primeval** forest?
(A) one that is very old, having existed from the earliest times, (B) one where there are evil things and beings; a place of hostility, (C) one that is so large and dense there seems to be no beginning or end

Short Answer Questions

The Sickness of Timothy Frisby

1. Describe Mrs. Frisby's house and tell where it was.
2. Where was Mrs. Frisby's husband?
3. What time of the year was it when Timothy fell sick?
4. What was the probable source of the winter's supply of corn that Mrs. Frisby found in a stump hole?
5. How did Timothy compare to his three brothers and sisters?
6. Why did Mrs. Frisby decide to go see Mr. Ages?

Mr. Ages

1. On her journey to see Mr. Ages, why did Mrs. Frisby circle the wide farmyard rather than take the direct route past the farmhouse and the barn? How long did it take for her to reach the clearing where Mr. Ages' home was located?
2. What special ability did Mr. Ages have?
3. What was the reason Mrs. Frisby had been to see Mr. Ages once before?
4. What was odd about Mr. Ages?
5. Though Timothy would get better, what special instructions did Mr. Ages give for him?

The Crow and the Cat

1. What did Dragon look like?
2. How did the crow get tied to the fence?
3. How did Mrs. Frisby rescue Jeremy?
4. When Dragon started coming their way, how did Jeremy save himself and Mrs. Frisby?
5. What did Jeremy say to Mrs. Frisby before he flew away?

Mr. Fitzgibbon's Plow

1. How did Timothy react to the medicine that Mr. Ages sent?
2. Why was Moving Day necessary for Mrs. Frisby?
3. Why was Mrs. Frisby worried?
4. What did the shrew say about the coming of Mr. Fitzgibbon's plow?
5. What sound frightened Mrs. Frisby?

The Sickness of Timothy Frisby
Pages 3- 11

Write either **True** or **False** in the blank before each statement.

- _____ 1. Mrs. Frisby and her family lived underground in a buried cinder block.
- _____ 2. This story began at the end of winter.
- _____ 3. Mrs. Frisby's house was located on the edge of a forest.
- _____ 4. Mrs. Frisby's house had one large room.
- _____ 5. Mrs. Frisby was a widow mouse with four children.
- _____ 6. The family's pantry was completely empty when Mrs. Frisby went out looking for food.
- _____ 7. There was a thick blanket of snow covering the field and woods.
- _____ 8. In the stump at the edge of the woods, Mrs. Frisby found a winter's supply of food.
- _____ 9. The animal that stored the food in the stump most likely had been killed by a hunter.
- _____ 10. Mrs. Frisby took corn from the stump for her children's breakfast.
- _____ 11. Timothy refused to get out of bed because he was sick.
- _____ 12. Moving Day for Mrs. Frisby's family was at least two months away.
- _____ 13. Timothy had a fever and a terrible stomach-ache.
- _____ 14. Mrs. Frisby thought Timothy was the smartest of her children.
- _____ 15. Timothy's pulse was very weak and barely detectable.
- _____ 16. Normally, Timothy was the healthiest of Mrs. Frisby's children.
- _____ 17. Mrs. Frisby and two of her children brought corn, peanuts, and mushrooms home from the stump.
- _____ 18. While Mrs. Frisby was gone Timothy's condition worsened, and he was gasping for breath.
- _____ 19. Timothy became delirious and didn't know his mother was talking to him.
- _____ 20. Mrs. Frisby knew she would have to go see Mr. Ages to get medicine for Timothy.



Mr. Ages
Pages 12- 19

Write either **Yes** or **No** in the blank before each question.

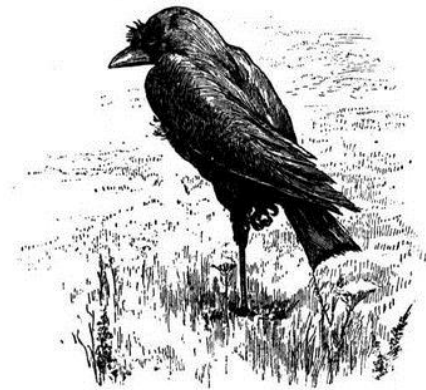
- _____ 1. Was Mr. Ages a white mouse?
- _____ 2. Did Mr. Ages live in a brick wall in the basement of an old farmhouse that had burned down?
- _____ 3. If Timothy had not been sick, would Mrs. Frisby have set out so late in the evening to see Mr. Ages?
- _____ 4. Was Mrs. Frisby able to take the shortest route to Mr. Ages's house?
- _____ 5. Was the cat Mrs. Frisby's only worry as she made her journey to see Mr. Ages?
- _____ 6. Did it take Mrs. Frisby more than two hours to reach her destination?
- _____ 7. Had Mr. Ages and Mrs. Frisby's husband been good friends?
- _____ 8. Did Mrs. Frisby visit Mr. Ages often?
- _____ 9. Did Mr. Ages make his medicines from plants?
- _____ 10. When Timothy was a baby, did Mr. Ages save his life after he was bitten by a spider?
- _____ 11. Was Timothy as big or as strong as his brother Martin?
- _____ 12. Was Mr. Ages at home when Mrs. Frisby arrived?
- _____ 13. Did Mr. Ages seem to be very old even though he was spry?
- _____ 14. Did Mr. Ages remember Mrs. Frisby?
- _____ 15. Was Mr. Ages's house messy and disorganized?
- _____ 16. Did Mr. Ages seem to know a lot about plants and making medicines from them?
- _____ 17. Did Timothy have pneumonia?
- _____ 18. Was Timothy's medicine to be taken in one large dose?
- _____ 19. Did Mr. Ages say Timothy would get better this time?
- _____ 20. Did Mr. Ages say Timothy must not get cold or breathe cold air for at least three weeks to a month?

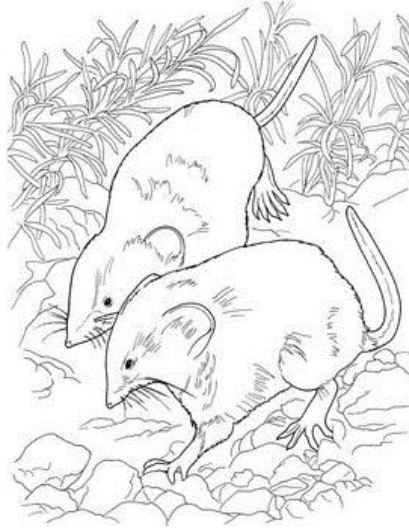


The Crow and the Cat
Pages 20- 26

Write either **True** or **False** in the blank before each statement.

- _____ 1. If Mrs. Frisby went home the same route she came, it meant she would be walking alone in the woods at night.
- _____ 2. The short route across the farm was not dangerous.
- _____ 3. The Fitzgibbon's cat, Dragon, was not a large animal, and he was not much of a hunter.
- _____ 4. Timothy was kind to his sister Cynthia.
- _____ 5. When Cynthia was sick, Timothy entertained her with stories he made up.
- _____ 6. The noise Mrs. Frisby heard was made by a young crow trying to fly.
- _____ 7. The crow was tied to the fence by a piece of silver-colored string.
- _____ 8. The crow was being very quiet.
- _____ 9. The crow was attempting to free himself by flying away from the fence.
- _____ 10. Mrs. Frisby could sense that the crow was more angry than afraid.
- _____ 11. The string caught on the fence when the crow tried to untangle it from his foot.
- _____ 12. The crow picked up the string because he needed it for his nest.
- _____ 13. The crow was only a year old.
- _____ 14. Mrs. Frisby knew the crow would be killed if he stayed tied to the fence.
- _____ 15. Mrs. Frisby freed the crow from the string with only one bite.
- _____ 16. The cat saw the crow before he was free from the string.
- _____ 17. There was nowhere for Mrs. Frisby to hide from the approaching cat.
- _____ 18. Mrs. Frisby escaped the cat by flying away on the crow's back.
- _____ 19. In only a few seconds, the crow had flown Mrs. Frisby home.
- _____ 20. Jeremy the crow felt that, since he and Mrs. Frisby had saved each other's lives, they were even.





Whole Book Test

Mrs. Frisby
Timothy
a brook
Billy Fitzgibbon
Arthur
Mr. Ages
a cinder block
Moving Day
stealing
a white truck
Thorn Mountain
National Forest

Mr. Fitzgibbon
Jeremy the crow
the owl
the rosebush
pneumonia
farming
Jonathan
lee of the stone
Thorn Valley
grain and seeds
powder

Brutus
Nicodemus
Justin
Dragon
NIMH
injections
Jenner
Toy Tinker
Christmas trees
electrocuted

Dr. Schultz
a plow
reading
air ducts
a spool of thread
Boniface Estate
the study
machines
their life spans
cyanide gas

From the list above, choose the word, name, or phrase that fits each of the clues below and write it in the blank. **All** answers will be **used at least once**. **Some** of the answers will be **used more than once**.

- _____ 1. Mrs. Frisby put this in Dragon's food so he would sleep while the rats moved her house.
- _____ 2. He was the farmer who owned the land where the rats and Mrs. Frisby lived.
- _____ 3. The rats spent the winter here after their escape from NIMH.
- _____ 4. The rats discovered how to open their cages by doing this,
- _____ 5. Mrs. Frisby went to see him to get medicine for Timothy.
- _____ 6. He took Mrs. Frisby to see the owl.
- _____ 7. He was the doctor in charge of the experiments at NIMH.

Think, Write, Create

Chapter Activities

The Sickness of Timothy Frisby

In a stump, Mrs. Frisby found food stored by an animal that had somehow lost its life. Knowing this to be the way of nature, Mrs. Frisby felt no remorse, and she was grateful to have found the storehouse at a time when food was at its scarcest.

- How do you characterize the way Nature provided food for Mrs. Frisby's family? Was it a matter of ***cruelty*** or a matter of ***efficiency***? Explain your choice.
 - What happens to a person's possessions when he or she dies? How is the human way of dealing with the situation different from Mother Nature's way?
-

Mr. Ages

One of the dictionary definitions of the word ***enigma*** is *a baffling or perplexing person or thing; a mystery*.

- In what ways was Mr. Ages an enigma?
- Is there an ***enigma*** in your own life? Write about it (or him/her).

Mr. Ages had a special knowledge of plants, and he made *draughts and powders that could sometimes save the sick from dying*. Herbal medicine—cures made from plants—has been a part of human history for thousands of years. Interest in herbal cures as part of a healthy lifestyle has returned in recent years.

Choose ***four*** of the following and use the internet to find out what diseases or conditions they are said to cure or prevent.

green tea
hot peppers
witch-hazel
olive oil

garlic/onion
Echinacea
St. John's Wort
catnip

cinnamon
ginkgo
chamomile
ginseng

Find ***two*** more herbal remedies that you find interesting and add them to your report.

The Crow and the Cat

To the Fitzgibbon family, Dragon is both a pet and a benefit to the farm. To Mrs. Frisby, Jeremy, and other animals in the area, Dragon is a monster. His nature changes with each *point of view*.

Use **Graphic Organizer #1** to analyze Dragon's personality from both the Fitzgibbon's perspective and the animals' way of thinking. Listed on the left are three Dragon topics—his appearance, his behavior, and his value. On the top line radiating from each topic, write *the animals*. On the second line, write *the Fitzgibbons*.

In the connecting boxes, make notes about how each side feels about the cat.

Write a composition about **The Real Dragon**.

Think, Write, Create

Whole Book Activities

Jeremy said the birds went to the owl when they didn't know what to do. His theory was that the owl didn't sleep in the daytime. He believed the bird sat in the hollow of his tree and thought, at least part of the time, and that was how he knew so much.

- In your opinion, was the owl really wise or was he simply in a position to see more than other animals?
 - How do you suppose owls earned the reputation of being wise? What part of their appearance or behavior might have led people to think of them in this way?
 - Are *wise*, *intelligent*, and *smart* the same thing? Would the owl that Mrs. Frisby went to visit qualify for either title? Explain.
 - Who is someone you consider **wise**? Explain why you think so.
-

The rats had many enemies including Dragon, the men from NIMH, and their own deserters. However, they had techniques for dealing with their enemies.

- What price had the rats paid at the hands (paws) of their enemy Dragon the cat? How did they deal with the danger he posed?
 - One of the goals included in the Plan was for the rats to live without being detected by Nimh. Explain how they intended for it to work.
 - How did Jenner and his followers put the rats in extreme danger?
 - If you could give the rats the benefit of your insight, what other methods would you recommend for dealing with the danger they faced?
-

Prove that Mrs. Frisby was a **courageous** and **intelligent** mouse by writing a composition about the brave and intelligent things she did.

The injections Dr. Schultz forced upon the rats and mice in the laboratory at NIMH greatly increased their intelligence and their life spans.

- What would the world be like if scientists could find a way to make every person a genius? What would be the advantages of such a world? Can you think of any problems that might result from such a change?
 - If the average life span could be increased to 150 years, what do you think people would do with so much time? What changes would have to take place in order for there to be enough food, water, energy, and living space?
-

Martin Frisby hoped to enlist the aid of Jeremy the crow and make a trip to Thorn Valley to see the rats.

- Draw a bird's-eye-view of Thorn Valley after the rats have lived there for a year. Include only those things that you believe could be seen on the surface.
 - Draw a diagram of the underground complex you predict the rats would have built. Use labels to identify the different parts of your drawing.
-

Use objects such as craft sticks, string, paper clips, tacks, buttons, tinker toys, etc, to build a machine or tool that the rats can use. Remember, there is no electricity available. The machine or tool will be powered by rat muscle.

Will the Real Dragon Please Step Forward?

To the Fitzgibbon family, Dragon is both a pet and a benefit to the farm. To Mrs. Frisby, Jeremy, and other animals in the area, Dragon is a monster. His nature changes with each *point of view*.

Use the organizer below to analyze Dragon's personality from both the Fitzgibbon's perspective and the animals' way of thinking. Listed on the left are three Dragon topics—his appearance, his behavior, and his value. On the top line radiating from each topic, write *the animals*. On the second line, write *the Fitzgibbons*.

In the connecting boxes, make notes about how each side feels about the cat.

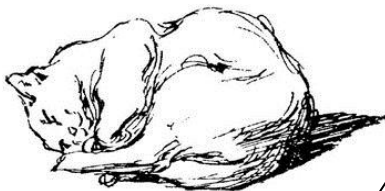
Write a composition about **The Real Dragon**.



Dragon's Appearance



Dragon's Behavior



Dragon's Usefulness