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## *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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# Mercy Watson

## *Princess in Disguise*

*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](http://www.corestandards.org).

## 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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