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About the Book

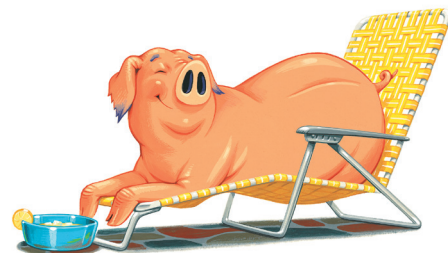
Mercy's appetite has got her into trouble again. When Eugenia Lincoln's pansies go missing, Animal Control Officer Francine Poulet arrives on the scene. But as she soon discovers, not just anyone can think like a pig. Especially when that pig is porcine wonder Mercy Watson!



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Mercy Watson *Thinks Like a Pig*

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

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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