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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](http://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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