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## About the Book

To Mr. and Mrs. Watson, Mercy is not just a pig—she’s a porcine wonder. And to the portly and good-natured Mercy, the Watsons are an excellent source of buttered toast, not to mention that buttery-toasty feeling she gets when she snuggles into bed with them. This is not, however, so good for the Watsons’ bed. BOOM! CRACK! As the bed and its occupants slowly sink through the floor, Mercy escapes in a flash—“to alert the fire department,” her owners assure themselves. But could Mercy possibly have another emergency in mind—like a sudden craving for their neighbors’ sugar cookies?



CANDLEWICK PRESS

# Mercy & Watson to the Rescue

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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

RI.K.5: Identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book.

RI.K.6: Name the author and illustrator of a text and define the role of each in presenting the ideas or information in a text.

RI.1.6: Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text.

RL.3.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.

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.

RL.2.4: Describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.



RF.1.2: Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.

## Prereading

Show the class the front and back covers of *Mercy Watson to the Rescue*, but conceal the title. Note the names of the author and illustrator. Ask students to look at the picture and guess what they think the book might be about. Why is the pig running? Does she look happy? Where do you think she is going? Look at the people. What expressions do they have on their faces? Why do you think they look like that? Then turn to the title page of the book and ask what additional guesses students can make knowing the title.

## You Said It: an Exercise in Figurative Language

Teach children the concept of figurative language by reading aloud this sentence on page 50 from *Mercy Watson to the Rescue*: “The Watsons’ bed sighed loudly and crashed all the way through the floor.”

Then ask your students:

- Can a bed really sigh?
- If the bed could sigh, why do you think it would?
- What does the sentence mean?
- What might the author have been trying to convey by this choice of wording?

Explain that the author chose to make her sentence more interesting (and funny) by imagining that the bed sighed like a person carrying a heavy load. Ask students to practice using figurative language by replacing *sighed* in the sentence above with other words. (You may wish to write the sentence on a sentence strip or chalkboard.) Ask the class for substitute words that would retain the basic meaning of the sentence, such as *moaned*, *whimpered*, or *groaned*. Then ask them for words that might change the meaning, such as *sang*, *whistled*, or *laughed*.

## Sing-Along Rhyme Time

Every night, Mr. and Mrs. Watson sing to Mercy:

“Bright, bright is the morning sun,  
but brighter still is our darling one.  
Dark, dark is the coming night,  
but oh, our Mercy shines so bright.”

Copy the song onto chart paper and analyze its rhyme and rhythm. Underline the last line of each sentence to show the rhyming words. Discuss why the word *bright* is used in association with the sun and conversely why the word *dark* is used to refer to night. Challenge students to write their own songs to describe Mercy. Display the pig songs around the classroom.

## What Happened Next?

Using the reproducible page, have your students summarize the story by putting the six sentences into proper order.

# *What Happened Next?*

Can you remember everything that happened in *Mercy Watson to the Rescue*?  
Summarize the story by putting these six sentences into proper order.



- \_\_\_ Mercy goes to look for sugar cookies.
- \_\_\_ Baby Lincoln thinks a monster is at her window.
- \_\_\_ Mercy crawls into bed with the Watsons.
- \_\_\_ The firefighters save the Watsons.
- \_\_\_ Everyone has breakfast.
- \_\_\_ Eugenia Lincoln calls the fire department.