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About the Book

Mr. and Mrs. Watson's porcine wonder, Mercy, loves nothing more than a ride in the car. It takes a fair amount of nudging and bribing and a "You are such a good sport, darling" to get the portly pig out of the driver's seat, but once the convertible is on the road, Mercy loves the feel of the wind tickling her ears and the sun on her snout. One day the Watsons' motoring ritual takes an unexpected turn, however, when their neighbor Baby Lincoln pops up in the back seat in hopes of some "folly and adventure"—and in the chaos that ensues, an exuberant Mercy ends up behind the wheel!



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Mercy & Watson

Goes for a Ride

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

L.2.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 2 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.

L.2.4.A: Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

L.2.4.B: Determine the meaning of a new word formed when a known prefix is added to a known word.

L.2.4.C: Use a known root word as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word with the same root.

L.2.4.D: Use knowledge of the meaning of individual words to predict meaning of compound words.

L.2.4.E: Use glossaries and beginning dictionaries, both print and digital, to determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases.

L.2.5: Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

L.2.5.A: Identify real-life connections between words and their use.

L.2.5.B: Distinguish shades of meaning among closely related verbs and closely related adjectives.

W.2.3: Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.



Folly!

Eugenia Lincoln refers to the Mr. Watson's Saturday drive with Mercy as "folly" (page 14).

Ask your students:

- What does *folly* mean? After students' ideas are put forward, check a dictionary (as a group or individually) and write the definition on a chalkboard.
- What are some synonyms for *folly*? List them on the board.
- Why does Eugenia think the rides are folly, while Mr. Watson and Mercy think they are great fun?
- Baby thinks the rides are both folly and fun. Can this be true?

Have each student write and draw about one of their own follies (a time when they acted foolishly or recklessly). Optional: If this activity is done in the fall, have students write or draw on leaf-shaped paper. Post the entries on a class bulletin board entitled "Fall Follies."



Mercy's Seat-Belt Crusade

Mercy flew out of the car because she was not wearing a seat belt. Discuss the importance of wearing a seat belt. Have students create a seat-belt campaign using Mercy as the mascot. Each campaign should have a motto and a poster. As an example, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has an ABC motto:

Air Bag Safety: Buckle Everyone! Children in Back!

Students can work individually or in groups. When they are finished, create a display of all the campaign posters in your classroom or hallway. Invite someone from the local police department (reminiscent of Officer Tomillello) to come see your posters and speak to students regarding safety in general (perhaps discussing bike helmets as well as seat belts).

COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

RL.1.7: Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.

RL.2.7: Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

RL.3.6: Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.



RI.K-1.2: Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.



For Consideration

Ask your students to discuss or write answers to the following questions.

Baby Lincoln hid in the back seat of Mr. Watson's car. Is that a safe thing to do?

On page 35, Eugenia Lincoln says, "That is my point exactly. I do think. And apparently, I am the only one around here who does." What does Eugenia mean by this statement?

Mr. Watson pulls out of his driveway very quickly. "Mr. Watson is a forward-looking man. He does not believe in looking back" (page 10). What is the double meaning of this statement?

Should Mr. Watson have been given a ticket? Why or why not?

What Happened Next?

Have your students summarize the story by putting these five sentences into proper order.

- _____ Baby Lincoln thinks a little folly wouldn't be a bad thing.
- _____ Mercy leaps onto Mr. Watson's lap.
- _____ A pink convertible speeds past Officer Tomilello.
- _____ Everyone has toast.
- _____ Baby Lincoln applies the brake pedal.



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What Happened Next?

Can you remember everything that happened in *Mercy Watson Goes for a Ride*? Summarize the story by putting the following five sentences into proper order.



- _____ Baby Lincoln thinks a little folly wouldn't be a bad thing.
- _____ Mercy leaps onto Mr. Watson's lap.
- _____ A pink convertible speeds past Officer Tomilello.
- _____ Everyone has toast.
- _____ Baby Lincoln applies the brake pedal.