

The Mouse and The Motorcycle



By

Beverly Cleary

A Novel Study
by Joel Michel Reed

The Mouse and The Motorcycle

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Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two or three chapters of *The Mouse and The Motorcycle* and is comprised of five of the following different activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language Activities
- Extension Activities

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking. Students will also be expected to provide clear answers to questions and well-constructed explanations. It is critical as well that students be able to relate events and the feelings of characters to their own lives and experiences and describe their own interpretation of a particular passage.

A strength of the unit is that students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A **portfolio cover** is included (p.7) so that students may organize their work and keep it all in one place. A **Student Checklist** is also included (p.6) so that a record of completed work may be recorded.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homonyms
3. Identifying/creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *foreshadowing*.
7. Identify *personification*
8. Use of singular / plural nouns
9. Listing compound words
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identify/create *similes*
13. Identify *anagrams*

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Complete Five W's Chart
4. Identify *cliffhangers*
5. Identify the climax of the novel.

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Relating personal experiences

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Write a description of personal feelings
6. Write a book review
7. Complete an Observation Sheet

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Create an Information Card
4. Design a cover for the novel
5. Create a comic strip

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Synopsis

Ralph is not like the other mice at the Mountain View Inn. He is always looking for adventure. It is Ralph's lucky day when a young guest named Keith arrives with a shiny miniature motorcycle. Right away, Ralph knows that the motorcycle is special – made to be ridden by an adventurous mouse. And once a mouse can ride a motorcycle ... almost anything can happen. (Courtesy of the publisher – Harper Collins)

A complete synopsis and other helpful reviews can be found on the following website:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Mouse_and_the_Motorcycle

Author Biography

Beverly Cleary

Beverly Cleary was born in McMinnville, Oregon and spent the first years of her life on a farm near the town of Yamhill. Even at an early age Beverly loved books, and although the town had no library, her mother had books sent to the family from the library in Yamhill for her young daughter. When the family moved to Portland, Beverly found herself in the school's low reading circle, an experience which gave Beverly a life-long empathy for the problem of struggling readers. Encouraged by the local librarian, where she was a constant visitor, Beverly decided that she would one day like to write the books she longed to read but was unable to find in the library - funny stories about her neighborhood and the sort of children she knew. This ambition led to the creation years later of the beloved characters Ramona Quimby, Henry Huggins, Ellen Tebbits. Her first book, **Henry Huggins**, was published in 1950. The book **Beezus and Ramona** was written five years later, in 1955, and introduced the Quimby sisters to the world.



Beverly Cleary has won many awards for her writing including the American Library Association's 1975 Laura Ingalls Wilder Award and the University of Southern Mississippi's 1982 Silver Medallion. Beverly Cleary was named a "Living Legend" by the Library of Congress. Beverly Cleary passed away at the age of 104 on March 25, 2021.

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Chapter 1-2 The New Guests



Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of **The Mouse and The Motorcycle** is Ralph, a fun-loving and adventurous mouse. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read. What do you think makes for an especially interesting **protagonist**?



Vocabulary:

Write a list of five different synonyms for each of the following words.

Shout	Little	Shriek

Questions



1. Describe the **setting** of the story as Chapter One begins.

2. Why was Mrs. Gridley so upset about staying at Mountain View Inn?

3. Describe three of the tasks which Matt, the bellman, had to perform.

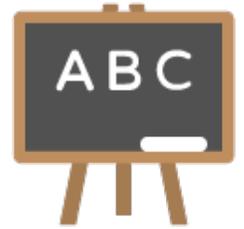
4. What was the fate of Ralph's father?

5. What was it that startled Ralph, causing him to crash the motorcycle?

Language Activity



A. The author seems to enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here's an example of an alliteration: "... **g**rouching, **g**rouching, **g**rumbling, **g**ripping about something or other."



Using your imagination, create your own examples of **alliteration** from the following topics. Each example must contain a minimum of three words.

The bark of a dog.	
The sound of a motorcycle.	
A grandfather clock.	

B. A **simile** is a comparison using the words "like" or "as". Here is an example of a simile "... *The boy ran so fast that he looked like a lion chasing after it's prey.*"

What two things are being compared in this example?

--	--

Invent your own **similes** comparing the following items with something from your own imagination:

a) A motorcycle driving down the road.

--

b) A woman jumping into a pool of water.

--

C. Write the plural of the following nouns from the last few chapters. Careful – you may wish to consult a dictionary for some of these words.

Singular Noun	Plural Noun
Mouse	
Suitcase	
Story	
Family	
Country	
Woman	
Child	
Person	
Life	
Hotel	

D. Place the following words from these chapters in **alphabetical order**.

Stripes	1.
Smaller	2.
Shoulder	3.
States	4.
Shorts	5.
Stomach	6.
Sniffs	7.
Sports	8.
Snoopy	9.
Scented	10.

Extension Activity



Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A storyboard can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel.



Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first 2 chapters of the novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6