

Cricket

THEME

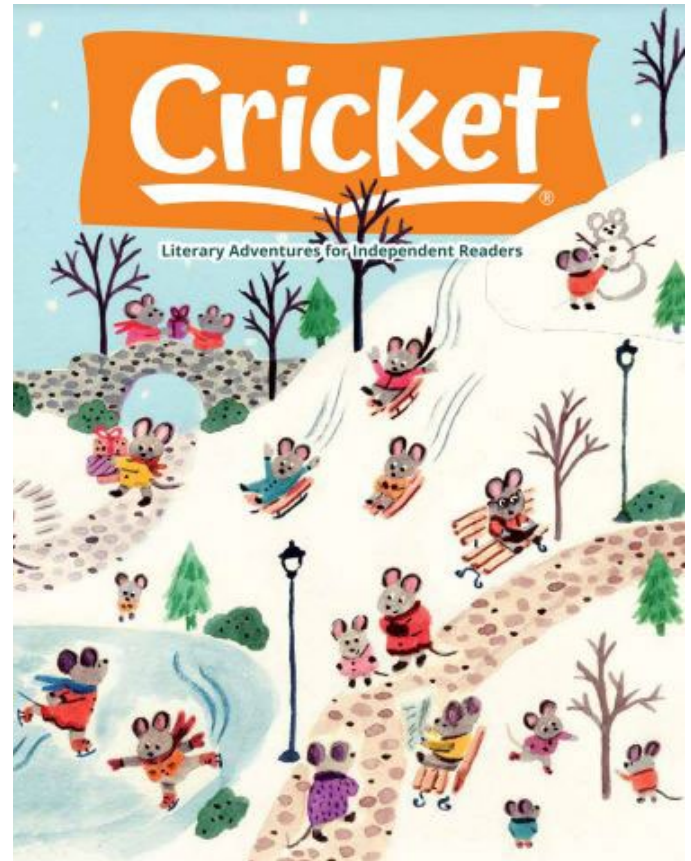
Use the stories, lessons, and activities in this teacher guide to reinforce literary analysis skills while exploring ideas about the importance of home.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

What does it mean to call a place home?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact.
- Students will determine themes.
- Students will assess how point of view shapes the content and style of a text.
- Students will conduct short research projects.
- Students will write narratives to develop imagined experiences.
- Students will create drawings that convey character traits.



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core English Language Arts skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

SELECTIONS

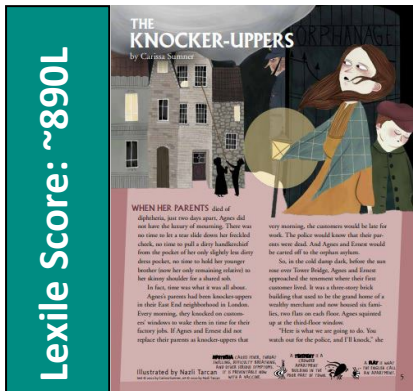
- **The Knocker-Uppers**
Historical Fiction, ~890L
- **The Miracle Cracker Latkes**
Folktale, ~580L
- **Dulce Domum**
Fantasy, ~1120L

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The Knocker-Uppers

pp. 5–11, Historical Fiction

Use this story about two orphaned children living in 19th-century London to help students analyze how setting affects characters and plot.



RESOURCES

- Setting, Character, and Plot

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact.
- Students will conduct short research projects.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **merchant (p. 5)** someone who buys and sells goods, especially in large amounts
- **rival (p. 6)** a person or thing that tries to defeat or be more successful than another
- **asylum (p. 6)** an institution offering long-term shelter and support

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What does it mean to call a place home?

Discuss how the meanings of *home* and *house* are similar and different. Then ask students to share something in their homes that is special to them, such as a room, a view from a window, or a piece of furniture. Finally, tell students to notice the place where the characters in this story live and whether this place is a house or a home.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Read the vocabulary words and definitions. Then display the sentences below and have students use the vocabulary words to complete them. Finally, remind students to look for the vocabulary words as they read.

1. I sold many more cupcakes at the bake sale than my _____ did.
2. The old building was turned into a/an _____ for veterans.
3. The _____ buys cloth from Japan and sells it to American designers.

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. Explain what knocker-uppers and wake-up boards are.
2. Why is Agnes suspicious of Mrs. Cavill?
3. What did Agnes learn from her mother about Mrs. Cavill?
4. How would you describe the flat Agnes and Ernest live in?
5. How does Agnes show that she is a practical person?
6. What was family life like for Agnes before her parents died?
7. What do Agnes and Mrs. Cavill have in common?
8. Did you find this historical fiction story believable? Explain.

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Setting, Character, and Plot

INSTRUCT: Use the box below to review three different aspects of setting. Then have students work in small groups to underline setting details in the story and discuss which aspects of setting the details represent.

Time: year; season; time of day; historic era; past, present, future, etc.
Place: city, country, or planet; desert or farm; indoors or outdoors; buildings, etc.
Social Environment: beliefs, customs, values, manners, attitudes, prejudices, etc.

Next, point out that setting can influence a story in different ways. It may bring characters together who might not otherwise meet or create challenges and opportunities for story characters. Discuss how setting influences characters and events in “The Knocker-Uppers.”

ASSESS: Distribute the *Setting, Character, and Plot* worksheet. Have students complete the activities and compare responses with a partner.

EXTEND

Science Have students conduct research to learn about the disease of diphtheria: What is diphtheria? Where did it come from? Which countries experienced outbreaks of this disease? How was it controlled? Have students create brief oral reports to share what they learn.

Setting, Character, and Plot

Find examples of each aspect of setting in the story. Describe how each aspect influences the story's characters or plot.

Aspect of Setting	Examples from Story	Influence on Character or Plot
Place		
Time		
Social Environment		

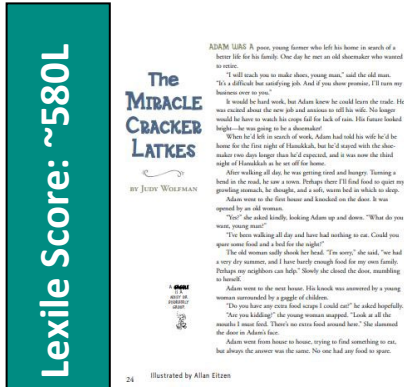
Discuss: Which aspect of setting is most important in this story? Explain your ideas.

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The Miracle Cracker Latkes

pp. 24–28, Folktale

Use this “stone soup” story to give students practice in identifying theme.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a folktale.
- Students will determine themes.
- Students will write narratives to develop imagined experiences.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **splendid** (p. 26) excellent
- **insist** (p. 27) to demand that something happen or that someone do something
- **rave** (p. 28) to talk or write about someone or something in an excited or enthusiastic way

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What does it mean to call a place home?

Ask students to explain what the word *homesick* means. Share your own experiences with feeling homesick. Then invite students to tell about times when they have felt homesick. Next, discuss how students would go about making a visitor feel at home. Finally, tell students to note characters who make others feel at home in this story.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and definitions and read them aloud.

Have students work in groups of three to write sentences using these words, assigning each group member a different word. Have groups review their sentences and confirm that the words are used correctly. Invite students to share their sentences. Then tell students to look for these words as they read the article.

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. What was Adam’s problem at the beginning of the story?
2. Are the townspeople kind or selfish? Explain.
3. Describe three of Adam’s traits.
4. Do you think the townspeople learn a lesson in this story? Explain.

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Theme

INSTRUCT: Review theme (message or lesson about life that an author wants to share with readers). Give examples of common literary themes, such as “it’s better to give than to receive” and “stand up for what you believe in.” Continue by explaining that usually themes are not stated and that students can figure out themes by thinking about information and events in a story, including the problem in the story, how it’s solved, and the lessons characters learn. Discuss themes of familiar folktales, stories, and movies and how they are developed.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to identify at least one theme in “The Miracle Cracker Latkes” and note the story details that convey this theme. Invite pairs to share their ideas with the class.

EXTEND

Writing Share with students examples of stories similar to “The Miracle Cracker Latkes,” such as *Stone Soup* by Marcia Brown, *Stone Soup* by Jon Muth, and “Stone Soup” in *Storytime* by Stella Blackstone. Then have students create their own stone soup stories. Point out that they don’t have to write about soup. Instead, they might write about making a “miracle lasagna” or “miracle tacos,” for example. Suggest students add illustrations to their stories. Then have them read the stories aloud.

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Dulce Domum

pp. 31–39, Fantasy

Use this excerpt from Kenneth Grahame's classic novel, *The Wind in the Willows*, to teach students to analyze character interactions.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a chapter from a novel.
- Students will assess how point of view shapes the content and style of a text.
- Students will create drawings that convey character traits.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **subtle (p. 31)** hard to notice
- **forlornly (p. 32)** do or say something in a sad, lonely way
- **toilsome (p. 33)** involving dull or difficult work

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What does it mean to call a place home?

Ask if students have ever come across the phrases “all the comforts of home” or “creature comforts.” Explain that both phrases refer to things that can make a person feel comfortable and at ease when they are staying away from home, such as good food and a cozy bed. Ask students to name comforts of home they miss when they’re away.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display and read aloud the vocabulary words and definitions. For each word, have students write a sentence that uses it correctly. Have students share their sentences with a partner. Then remind students to look for the vocabulary words as they read the story.

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. Look up the Latin title of this story to find its meaning. Then explain why the title is fitting for this story.
2. What important choice does Mole have to make in this story?
3. How does Mole know when he is near his home?
4. Explain two different impressions of Mole you get from the story. Support your ideas with story details.
5. How does Rat change in the story?
6. What themes about friendship and loyalty do you find in the story?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Point of View

INSTRUCT: Point out that most stories are told from a first-person or a third-person point of view. Review the information below.

- **First-person point of view:** The narrator is a story character who uses the pronouns *I* and *me* to tell the story. Narrator can only tell what he or she thinks and feels.
- **Third-person point of view:** The narrator is an outside voice who doesn’t participate in the story; the narrator uses third-person pronouns, such as *he* and *she* to tell about characters’ actions. Narrator can reveal thoughts/feelings of one or more characters.

Have students identify the point of view of “Dulce Domum.” Then ask which character’s thoughts and feelings are revealed by the narrator.

ASSESS: Have students choose a scene from the story and rewrite it from either Mole’s or Rat’s first-person point of view. Tell students to include details about the character’s feelings and be sure to accurately convey the character’s perspective on the events in the scene.

EXTEND

Art Have students reread the story and highlight details that help them imagine what Rat’s home might look like. Then have them draw or write about Rat’s home. Tell students to include an explanation, with story details, of why they designed Rat’s home in the way they did.