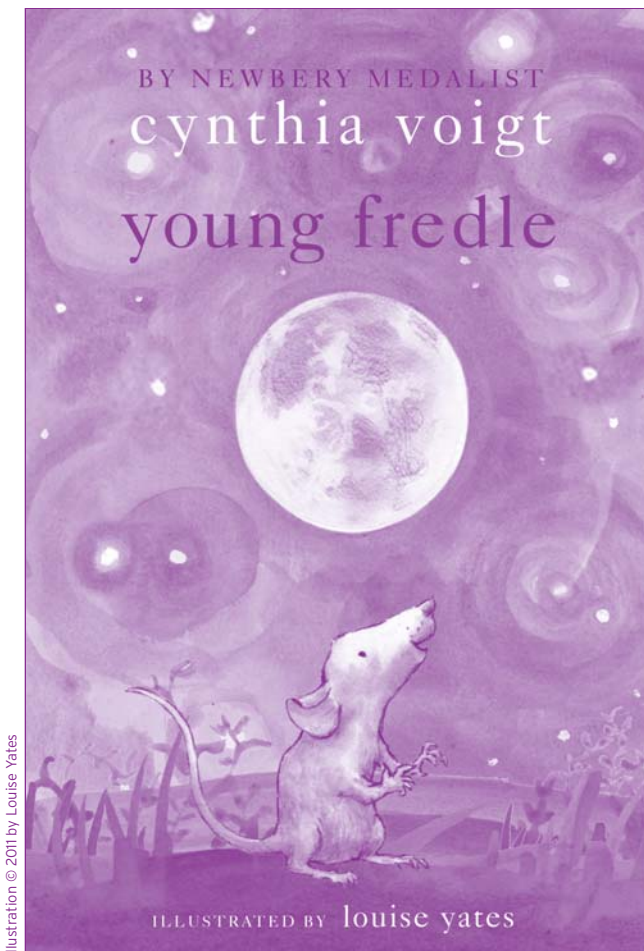


BOOKNOTES

educators guide



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THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

Emotions & Feelings
Family & Relationships • Friendship
Self-Discovery • Survival

GRADES 3–7

ABOUT THE BOOK

Young Fredle takes a journey from his kitchen home to the dangers of the outside world, and back again, only to discover that there is much more to life than what is hidden behind the pantry walls.

Fredle, a kitchen mouse, is used to a quiet life with his family in the walls of the kitchen pantry. But his sweet tooth leads him to trouble and he finds himself in an unknown world—the outside. Fredle now has to rely on his survival skills, as well as some friends that he meets along the way, in order to eat, sleep, and find his way back to his family. What Fredle doesn't expect is that the outside world is full of beautiful and magical things like stars, flowers, and grass. Travel with Fredle as he discovers the world and himself and a place to call home.



PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Ask students to research the habitat and behaviors of mice. Where do they live? What do they eat? What are their typical behaviors? Students should use both reference books and Internet resources to gather their information. Then, as a class, construct various food chains that include mice. Discuss the difference between producers, consumers, and decomposers, as well as herbivores, carnivores, and omnivores.

THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

SELF-DISCOVERY

When Fredle is forced to live outside, he begins to discover who he really is while developing and exploring his independence. How do the friends he meets help him learn about himself and the world around him? At what point does Fredle start to seek adventures on his own? Discuss the difference between *having* to do something all by yourself and *getting* to do something all by yourself (p. 62). How does Fredle's self-discovery and independence influence his attitude when he returns home to his family?

FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS

Discuss the meaning of “home” with your students. What do they consider their home and why? Is it that they have a bed or that their family is there? Then discuss Fredle's view of “home.” What does he consider home—his nest in the pantry wall or the one behind the lattice wall? How are they different and how are they the same? Where does Fredle make his home at the end of the book and why?

SURVIVAL

The most important task for Fredle while he is outside is survival. What strategies does he use to stay safe from predators? How does he find food and water? How much of Fredle's survival is due to his own instincts and how much is due to help from friends? Is there a moment in the book when you think Fredle's survival is in jeopardy?

FRIENDSHIP

The friends that Fredle makes throughout the book help him learn and survive while he is away from home. Discuss the following characters and their role in helping Fredle: Axle, Bardo, Neldo, Sadie, Rilf, and Tarnu. Which characters are genuine friends to Fredle and which have ulterior motives? Who do you think Fredle would continue to be friends with after the story ends? Who would you choose to be friends with and why?

EMOTIONS & FEELINGS

Loneliness is a feeling that follows Fredle throughout his time in the outside world. What is loneliness? How does Fredle cope with this feeling while he is away from his family? Explain this statement: “Loneliness, he thought, came and went, kept changing. Or maybe it was him that kept changing?” (p. 67) When do you feel alone and what do you do to feel better?



CONNECTING TO THE CURRICULUM

LANGUAGE ARTS

The author uses anthropomorphism to bring Fredle and his animal friends to life—attributing human characteristics and emotions to animals. Discuss the definition of anthropomorphism and ask students to give examples of this literary concept from the book. Then ask each student to choose one animal character from the book and transform it into a human. Have them make a poster that illustrates physical characteristics, personality traits, likes and dislikes, habits, things he/she is good at, and hopes and dreams.

SCIENCE

Fredle's sweet tooth often gets him in trouble, and he spends lots of time foraging for food in the compost. While he always satisfies his appetite, he isn't quite sure what he is eating. Conduct a blind taste test with your students. Have them taste several foods while blindfolded and see if they can guess what it is. Discuss the science of taste including the tongue map and the four tastes of bitter, salty, sour, and sweet.

ART

Fredle sees the world from the perspective of a small mouse, and things certainly look different. Ask students to choose one setting from the book and draw, sketch, paint, or sculpt that setting from a mouse's point of view. For example, what would the vegetable garden look like if you were a mouse? Be sure to add Fredle into the finished product!

GEOGRAPHY

Fredle's adventures take him through miles of land filled with gardens, roads, streams, lakes, and farm pens. Ask students to use what they have learned about the landscape to draw a map of the territory that Fredle has explored. They should include all important geographical landmarks as well as any landmarks that are important in Fredle's adventures. A map scale should also be included.

MUSIC

Throughout the book, we watch Fredle go through emotional ups and downs, as well as moments of quiet reflection and imminent danger. Have students create a score for *Young Fredle* consisting of songs that they feel match the mood of the book at various points. Students can work in groups to create a score for the book as a whole, or you can assign students one chapter to focus on.

Illustration © 2011 by Louise Yates



VOCABULARY | USE OF LANGUAGE

Ask students to write down unfamiliar words, then look up their definition and use them in a sentence. They can use the context of the novel and a dictionary to help them.

Examples of vocabulary words:

p. 1	<i>foraging</i>	p. 36	<i>illuminated</i>	p. 107	<i>foolhardy</i>	p. 162	<i>improbable</i>
p. 17	<i>descent</i>	p. 45	<i>accustomed</i>	p. 119	<i>combatants</i>	p. 179	<i>barraged</i>
p. 23	<i>ejected</i>	p. 66	<i>solitary</i>	p. 129	<i>simultaneously</i>	p. 187	<i>perilous</i>
p. 27	<i>persevered</i>	p. 87	<i>impenetrable</i>	p. 140	<i>menacingly</i>	p. 191	<i>hastily</i>
p. 31	<i>vastness</i>	p. 95	<i>vehement</i>	p. 154	<i>misfortunes</i>	p. 203	<i>nocturnal</i>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

Cynthia Voigt is the award-winning author of many books for young readers. Her accolades include a Newbery Medal for *Dacey's Song* (Book 2 in the Tillerman cycle), a Newbery Honor for *A Solitary Blue* (Book 3 in the Tillerman cycle), and the Margaret A. Edwards Award for Outstanding Literature for Young Adults. She is also the author of the Kingdom series, the Bad Girls series, and *Angus and Sadie*. Cynthia Voigt lives with her husband in Maine.

For more information, visit cynthiavoigt.com.

Louise Yates has written and illustrated several books for young readers, including the *New York Times* bestseller, *Dog Loves Books*, which went on to win the Roald Dahl Funny Prize and the Parents' Choice Award.

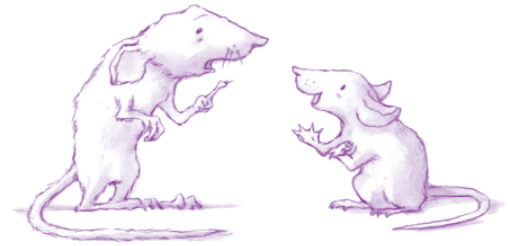


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INTERNET RESOURCES

Rat and Mouse Club of America

www.rmca.org

Man vs. Wild: Survival Strategies

dsc.discovery.com/tv/man-vs-wild

Feeling Lonely

www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetailsKids.aspx?p=335&np=287&id=1800

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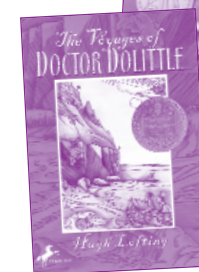
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Prepared by Jamie Simon, who has been involved in education for ten years as both a teacher and an administrator.

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