

McDuff Comes Home



(HYPERION, 1997)

McDuff chases a rabbit and finds himself lost and far from his special spot in the corner of the garden.

Before Reading

Discuss the title of the book with students. Invite children to think about what it means to come home from a faraway place. Where might McDuff go in the story and why? What about the title *McDuff Comes Home* makes you want to read the book?

After Reading

Revisit the title of the book. Encourage students to discuss whether the title fits the story. What else could Rosemary Wells have titled this book? Use the following prompts to further explore the story and help students make connections to the characters.

- © How do you think McDuff feels when he first sees the rabbit? How do you think he feels when he sees Mrs. Higgins? When he rides on her motorcycle?
- © There are many books with characters who are curious and many books with characters who get lost. What story or character does *McDuff Comes Home* remind you of? Explain.
- © In what ways is a person you know similar to Mrs. Higgins? Would you like Mrs. Higgins for a neighbor? Why or why not?

Messages and Themes

- ◆ It is important to know the address where you live.
- ◆ People and animals use their senses to gather information.



Additional Rosemary Wells books that include the character McDuff are:

McDuff and the Baby
(Hyperion, 1997)

McDuff Goes to School
(Hyperion, 2001)

McDuff Moves In
(Hyperion, 1997)

McDuff Saves the Day
(Hyperion, 2002)

McDuff's New Friend
(Hyperion, 1998)

The McDuff Stories
(Hyperion, 2000)



Just Like Woof (Language Arts)

Help children use what they already know about onomatopoeia (words that imitate the sounds they name) to think about animals and the noises they make.

1. Provide each child with a copy of *Did You Hear That?* (page 36). Ask students to imagine that they are listening to the animals in the pictured scene. What sounds would children hear? Students may say words such as *moo*, *woof*, and *meow*.
2. Encourage children to think about the letters that make those sounds and, in turn, help put together the words. Then have students write noise words in each speech bubble.
3. Use your discussion about sounds as a springboard for discussing noise words in the book *McDuff Comes Home*. You may start the discussion by examining the first page of the book and pointing out the word *zoom*. Before you write the word on chart paper, have students tell what letter sounds they hear in the word.
4. Ask children to suggest other expressive words that remind them of *zoom* (*whoosh*, *zip*, *kaboom*). Accept and record students' onomatopoeic words, whether the words are inspired by the McDuff story or are from the story itself.
5. Have children make a word wall by copying the words onto sentence strips, arranging them on a wall space, and adding a title such as "Noise Words."

A Smelling Center (Language Arts, Science)

Use the story as inspiration for creating a smelling center in the classroom that also reinforces content vocabulary.

1. As a group, talk about the five senses (seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, and tasting), and discuss how characters in the book use their senses. Which senses did McDuff, the rabbit, and Mrs. Higgins use? For example, McDuff used his eyes to see a rabbit and his ears to listen to voices inside the house. Explain that you'll be setting up a center in the classroom that invites children to use their sense of smell to do a little sleuthing of their own (like McDuff).
2. Set up a smelling center in your classroom. To start, collect several small, empty opaque containers (such as film canisters) and fill with aromatic, nontoxic items, such as cinnamon sticks, aniseed, onion skins, rosemary stalks, mustard seed, and rose petals. Once the containers are filled, use a nail to poke tiny holes in each lid. Use white glue to secure each lid to the top of its container. Label each container with a letter and make a key for later reference.
3. When the center is ready, invite students to use their sense of smell to try to identify the fragrance in each container. After center time, invite volunteers to share their findings and consult the key to confirm their matches.

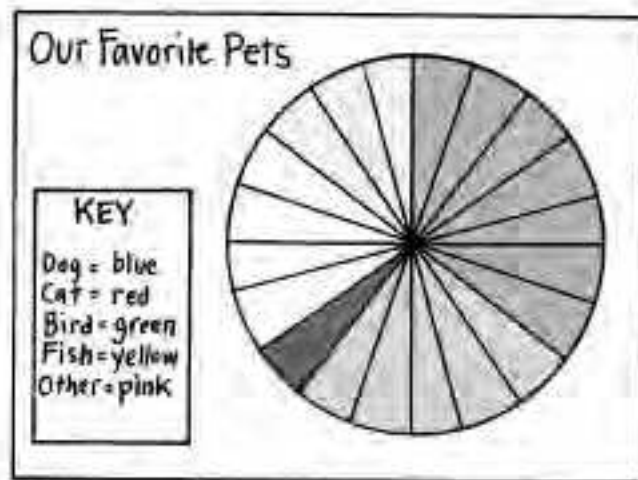
An Easy-as-Pie Chart

(Language Arts, Math)

Help students learn that there are lots of ways to organize information into charts and graphs, such as with a pie chart, and reinforce key math vocabulary.

Dog	Cat	Bird	Fish	Other
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1. In advance, prepare a pie chart. Divide the pie chart into as many equal sections as there are students.
2. Tell the class that they will each be voting for their favorite type of pet. Explain that they will be using the results of the vote to make a pie chart.
3. To begin, have each student vote. You may ask, "Raise your hand if your favorite pet is a dog (cat, bird, fish, or other animal)." (Remind children to vote only once.) Tally the votes on chart paper or a whiteboard.
4. Discuss the voting results with the class. Explain that on the pie chart each animal will be represented by a different color, which will make it easy to understand the data they collected. As a group, assign each animal a color—for example, all votes for dogs will be recorded in blue—and create a key for the pie chart.
5. To complete the pie chart, invite a volunteer to identify the total number of votes for one animal and color in that many sections on the pie chart. For example, if seven children voted for a dog as their favorite pet, the volunteer would color seven segments blue. Repeat for each type of pet. Label the chart with a title, such as "Our Favorite Pets."
6. As a group, examine and discuss the pie chart. Invite students to make observations that compare quantities (more than, fewer than, most, least, and so on).



Book Links

Boomer's Big Day

by Constance W. McGeorge
(Raincoast, 1994)

Much to this golden retriever's dismay, his family is moving and his casual lifestyle is turned upside down.

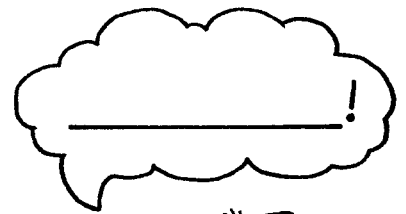
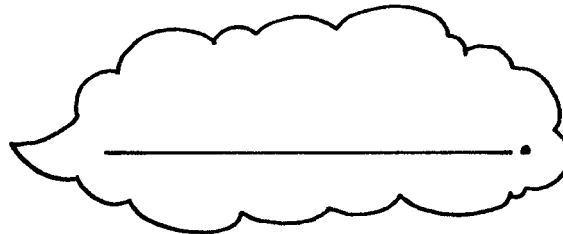
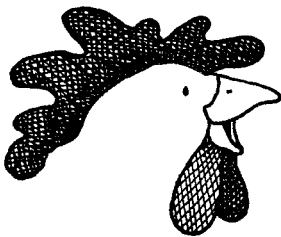
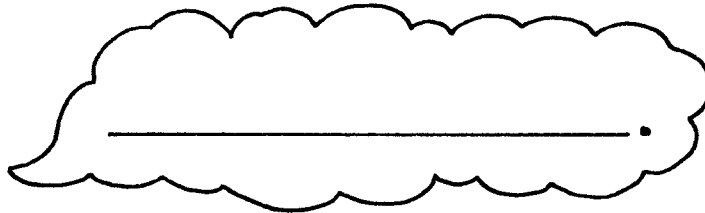
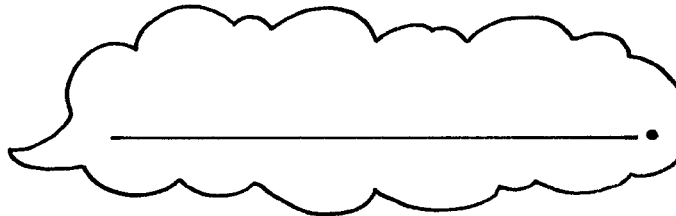
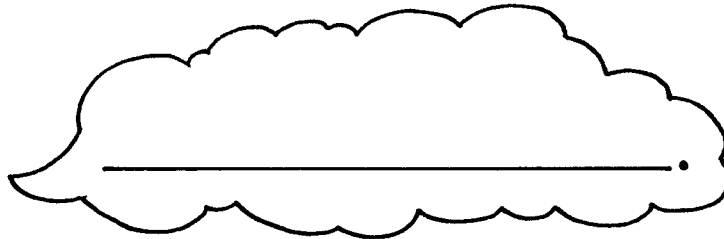
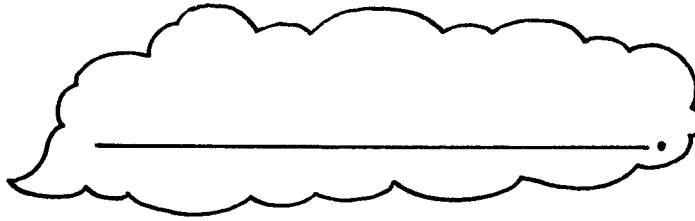
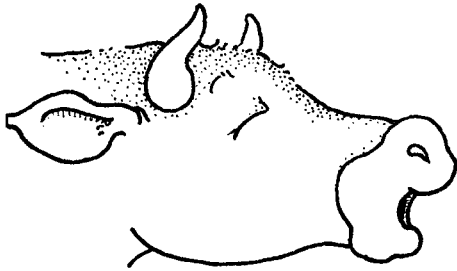
Harry the Dirty Dog

by Gene Zion
(HarperCollins, 1956)

Harry doesn't like to take a bath—that is, until his family doesn't recognize him through his sooty fur.

Did You Hear That?

Think about letter sounds. In each speech bubble, write a word that sounds like the noise that animal makes.



Books Based on the Characters Max and Ruby

Rosemary Wells's most popular books for young children are rooted in the amusing antics of a brother and sister pair of bunnies, Max and Ruby. Use the suggestions below and on pages 38–39 with any Max and Ruby book to support your reading program and build skills across the curriculum. In addition, individual lessons are provided for the following specific Max and Ruby titles:

Read to Your Bunny (page 41)

Bunny Cakes (page 53)

Bunny Money (page 45)

Bunny Mail (page 59)

Max's Dragon Shirt (page 49)

Bunny Patterns

Make several copies of the bunny patterns (page 40) and cut them out. Use the bunny shapes for a variety of instructional purposes. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- ☉ **Pocket Chart Pictures:** As a class, summarize the Max and Ruby story you've just read and record the summary on sentence strips. Then, each time one of the bunny's names appears on a sentence strip, place a cutout of the bunny pattern on top of the word. Invite students to read the pocket chart using the rebus picture clues.
- ☉ **Favorite Stories Pictograph:** Create a class pictograph of favorite Max and Ruby stories. On chart paper, make a grid with a row for each Max and Ruby book the class has read. Write the title of each book in the first box of each row. Then have each student vote for a favorite book by writing his or her name on a bunny and taping (or gluing) it to the graph. Examine and discuss the results.
- ☉ **Bunny-Shaped Mini-Books:** Make mini-books of new Max and Ruby adventures. Provide each child with several copies of the same bunny pattern. Have students align the shapes, staple the bunnies together along the left margin, and then write and illustrate an original story in the booklet.
- ☉ **Story Element Strings:** String story elements together for a lively display. Provide each child with pencils, crayons, scissors, tape, four 6-inch lengths of yarn, and a copy (or two) of the bunny patterns. Have students cut out the bunny shapes and

(continued)

then write about a different story element on each bunny (characters, setting, problem, solution). Have children tape a length of yarn to the first bunny shape and then use the second length of yarn to connect that bunny to the second bunny. Clip students' story element strings to a length of clothesline in the classroom.

- ☉ **Stick Puppet Props:** Invite students to make stick puppets that represent characters from favorite Max and Ruby stories (such as Max, Ruby, Grandma, and the mail carrier), and use them to perform dramatic retellings. For each set of four puppets, you'll need scissors, glue, four craft sticks (tongue depressor–sized), two sheets of construction paper, and copies of the bunny patterns. Guide children in following these steps:

1. Cut out a bunny pattern.
2. Dot glue along half of the craft stick, front and back. Leave the remaining half free of glue.
3. Place the section of the craft stick with glue between the bunny pattern and a half sheet of construction paper. Press it in place.
4. When the glue is dry, trim the construction paper to the puppet's shape. Repeat to make more puppets.
5. Color the puppets with markers, embellish them with yarn, and add other decorative details.

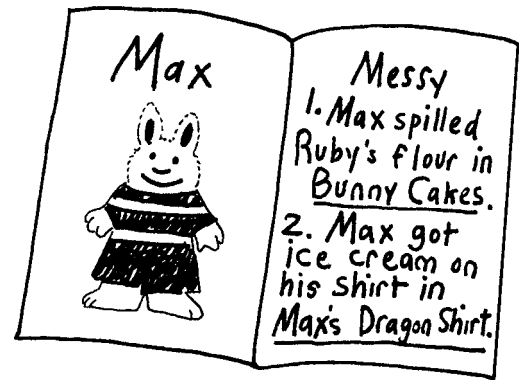


Character Close-Ups (Language Arts, Art)

Invite students to put their investigative skills into action by examining the character traits of Max, Ruby, and Grandma.

1. Give each child a copy of one of the bunny patterns. Explain that to get started on this project, each student will choose one character on which to focus.
2. Provide children with paper, scissors, glue sticks, cotton balls, and other art supplies. (Origami paper and wrapping paper are a fun addition for this activity.) Invite students to refer to illustrations in the Max and Ruby books as they “dress” and add details to the characters they’ve selected.

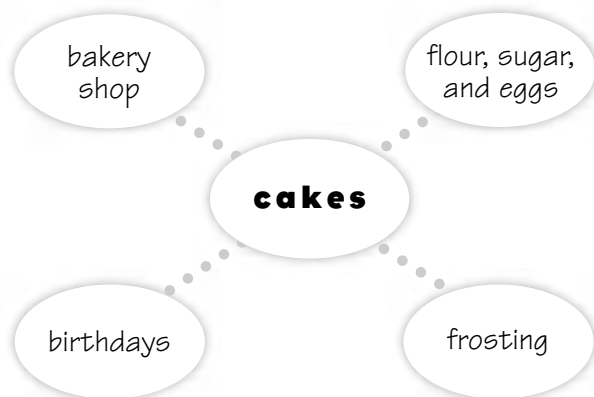
3. Give each child a sheet of paper. Have children fold the paper in half and then open it back up (to divide it into halves) or draw a vertical line through the center to divide the page into two sections. Ask students to write their character's name on the left side of the paper and glue their character below. On the right side, have children list a character trait and then provide evidence from two Max and Ruby books.



What-You-Know Webs (Language Arts)

Help students build scaffolding for comprehension with a web-style graphic organizer.

1. Before you read a Max and Ruby story aloud, examine the book's cover with children. Talk about what the subject of the book may be, based on the story's title.
2. Invite students to share what they already know about the subject, and record that information on a web. For example, if you plan to read *Bunny Cakes*, you may write the topic "cakes" in an oval at the center. As students describe what they know about cakes, add that information to the web. For example, a child may suggest that people purchase cakes at a bakery. To record that information, draw a line like the spoke of a wheel, extending from the word *cake*. At the end of it, write "bakery shop." Continue soliciting ideas from students and recording their ideas on the web until the web contains several spokes.
3. As a group, discuss the contents of the web and how the ideas relate to each other. Then read the book, in this case *Bunny Cakes*, aloud.



Additional Rosemary Wells books that include the characters Max and Ruby:

Bunny Party (Viking, 2001)
Max and Ruby's Midas (Dial, 1995)
Max Cleans Up (Viking, 2000)
Max Drives Away (Viking, 2003)
Max's Bath (Dial, 1985)
Max's Bedtime (Dial, 1985)
Max's Birthday (Dial, 1985)
Max's Breakfast (Dial, 1985)
Max's Chocolate Chicken (Dial, 1989)
Max's Christmas (Dial, 1986)
Max's Dragon Shirt (Dial, 1991)
Max's First Word (Dial, 1979)
Max's New Suit (Dial, 1979)
Max's Ride (Dial, 1979)
Max's Toys (Dial, 1998)
Ruby's Beauty Shop (Viking, 2002)
Ruby's Tea for Two (Viking, 2003)

Bunny Patterns

