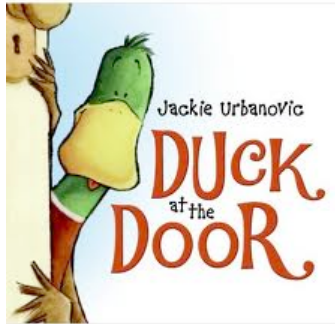


Name the Characters

Duck at the Door

Written and Illustrated by Jackie Urbanovic



Description:

Max, the duck, refuses to migrate with his flock in the fall, but finds refuge at Irene's warm house in the winter. He makes himself at home in her pet family until spring when he rejoins his flock. Will he ever return to see his new friends?

Connections:

This story is the first in a series of books about Max, the duck. The books are also filled with many other loveable animal characters plus their ever-patient owner, Irene. This story leads to a good discussion on the difference between main characters and secondary characters. Children will have to use evidence from the story to make these character decisions.

Additional books, *Sitting Duck* and *Duck and Cover*, will give students another look at Irene's collection of pets with the addition of even more characters. Some of the new characters play a pivotal role but only in one story. This is chance to discuss how authors use their characters from book to book.

Name the Characters

The Old Woman Who Named Things

Written by Cynthia Rylant...Illustrated by Kathryn Brown



Description:

The old woman likes to name her things. Her car is Betsy, her chair is Fred and the bed is Roxanne. But she doesn't name the stray dog that continually visits until he disappears. After locating him as the dog pound, the old woman brings him home and awards him his own name.

Connections:

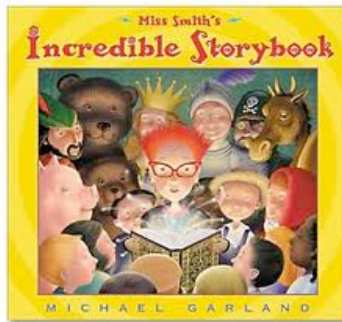
While this is a thought-provoking book about friendship and aging, it also provides an interesting look at story characters. It can be a springboard for a discussion on what makes a character. Are characters always alive and real? Are they always people or animals? What makes an interesting book character?

In addition, the haunting illustrations add another dimension to the book. Children will be fascinated by how the inanimate objects with names appear to have subtle facial features. It is a book with many layers.

Name the Characters

Miss Smith's Incredible Storybook

Written and Illustrated by Michael Garland



Description:

Zack begins another school year with his new teacher, Miss Smith. On day one he discovers she is quite different from his previous teachers. As she reads stories, the characters jump out of the book and fill the room. When she is done reading, if all goes well, the characters return to the book.

Connections:

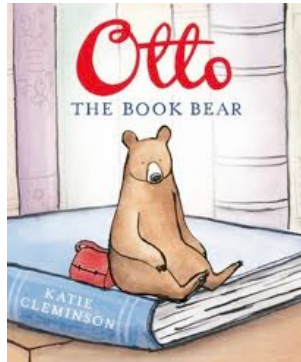
Familiar characters abound in this story. You will find 3 Bears and Goldilocks, Alice in Wonderland, Wizard of Oz, 3 Little Pigs, Little Red Riding Hood and many more.

Besides being pure fun to read and listen to, this book can be used to demonstrate the differences between main characters and supporting characters. Ask students if the story would be the same story without Miss Smith? Could the story continue without the 3 Little Pigs? Encourage students to justify their answers. Help them to discover that certain characters live more in the background while others are pivotal to the action in the story.

Name the Characters

Otto the Book Bear

Written and Illustrated by Kate Cleminson



Description:

This book features the adventures of a character that lives inside a book...Otto the bear. Mistakenly left behind, Otto sets out on a journey to find a new home, a new book.

Connections:

Otto is a charming story with stunning but simple illustrations. The idea that Otto lives in a book and is actually a book character adds to the literary focus. The theme continues, as Otto is happiest when children are reading his book. Questions to ask might be:

How can Otto leave his book?

Would you do that? Why?

Why is the library a good home for Otto?

What's next for Otto?

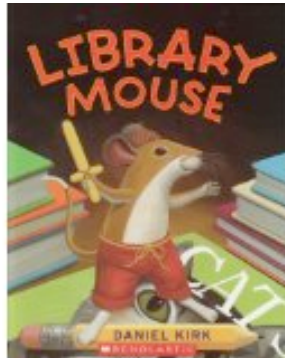
If you could live in a book, what kind of book would it be?

What would it be like in our classroom if the book characters came out at night?

Name the Characters

Library Mouse

Written and Illustrated by Daniel Kirk



Description:

Sam, the library mouse, lives at the library and is a voracious reader. One day Sam decided to write a book of his own and put it on the library shelf. The story was a hit but everyone wonders who wrote the book?

Connections:

Children will be enchanted with the reading mouse that becomes an author. After reading the book, discuss with the children the idea of becoming the main character in your own book, like Sam did. Have children “turn and talk” about a story they could write about themselves.

Then use an idea from the author, place a mirror at the bottom of an empty tissue box, with a hole at the top for viewing. Attach a small sign that says, “Meet the author.” Encourage children to look inside the box to see their reflection. Have a stack of empty “books” ready and turn the children loose to write. It just might last all morning.