



THE WORLD OF ROSEMARY WELLS

Dial Books for Young Readers/Puffin Books/Viking Children's Books

INTRODUCTION

Who is the most amazing person in a child's life? What will a little girl do to capture her parents' attention? How might a child feel on the first day of school? In over 60 picture books, Rosemary Wells addresses universal childhood experiences with endless wit, humor, and good cheer. Ms. Wells' irresistible characters invite readers to explore their own feelings as they commiserate with each protagonist's plight and celebrate each triumph. Ms. Wells deftly weaves the themes of love, laughter, hope, and heroism into her spirited tales, enabling children to confront their fears with confidence and optimism. To learn more about Rosemary Wells, visit her website at www.rosemarywells.com . For grades preK-3

LANGUAGE ARTS

How do You Feel?

Timothy Goes to School, **Noisy Nora**, **Shy Charles**, **Hazel's Amazing Mother** and **Morris' Disappearing Bag** are excellent titles to include in a unit about feelings. As you read these books, have the class create a list of feelings experienced by the main character in each book. Unit activities might include writing poems about feelings, creating masks to portray feelings, or writing stories about events in the students' own lives when specific feelings were experienced.

The Best of Times

After reading the three **Voyage to the Bunny Planet** books, have students describe the best day they can recall. Ask them to think about the small, simple encounters which made their day particularly enjoyable, just as cloud watching, tomato soup, and a card game brightened Robert, Claire and Felix's day. Students should write about and illustrate their best day.

Family Fun

After reading **Noisy Nora**, ask students to develop a list of activities that their family members would enjoy doing together. Students might suggest ideas such as making cookies, going to a movie, visiting a museum, or riding a bike. Have students create for their family an invitation to participate in a day of family enjoyment in one or more of these activities.

Fantasy In Literature

Hazel's Amazing Mother provides an interesting opportunity to discuss the genre of fantasy. On a second reading of the book, stop at various points in the story to ask the students to distinguish between events that could and could not actually occur. Record the events on a two-column chart. While comparing and contrasting the two lists of events, introduce the concept of fantasy in literature.

I've Got the Power

In Morris's **Disappearing Bag**, Morris is able to make himself invisible to others. Ask students to write about a special power they would like to possess, such as being able to fly or to shrink. Students must include both the advantages and disadvantages of possessing their particular power, and why they chose that particular power.

Heroes and Heroines

In *Shy Charles*, Charles is deemed a hero when he comes to the aid of his babysitter. Ask students to define heroism and to describe one of their heroes. Students should write a short composition about this person, explaining why s/he is heroic. Remind students that their hero or heroine can be an historical figure, a celebrity, a writer, a best friend or even a family member (as in *Hazel's Amazing Mother*).

MUSIC, ART, AND DRAMA

Treasure box

After reading **Max Cleans Up**, discuss how Max tucks his belongings into his pocket as if they were treasures. Ask students to decorate a box with paint, glitter, sequins, and metallic paper. Then have them choose several "treasures" from home to place inside their treasure box and to show their classmates. When sharing, have students explain the personal significance of their treasures.

Talent Show

In **Timothy Goes to School**, Timothy and Violet are jealous of Claude and Grace, who seem to excel at everything. Ask students to share their own expertise with the class (e.g., jump-roping, singing, making cookies, bouncing a ball, or playing checkers). Help students discover and celebrate their strengths and interests with the class.

Noisemaker

Discuss the many ways in which Noisy Nora made noise in her home. Ask children to think about how they could construct a unique noisemaker or instrument using a variety of household objects. Students can design their instrument at home or bring their materials into school. Hold a "concert" in the classroom with these instruments.

Friendship Cards

After reading **Timothy Goes to School**, discuss ways to form new friendships. Then have students design a friendship card for a classmate that might include a compliment, a kind greeting, or an invitation to one's home. Provide materials such as sequins, tissue paper, or ribbon for creating unique and attractive cards. (Note: To ensure that each classmate receives a card, you might have students pick a classmate's name out of a basket.)

Holiday Hideaway

After reading **Morris's Disappearing Bag**, ask students to compose a holiday gift wish list. Then have them illustrate a cut-away picture of their home. Ask students to imagine places in their home where their parents might hide holiday presents. Have them draw the gifts from their list in these discreet locations, and then glue small paper flaps over the drawings to conceal the gifts. Students' parents will enjoy perusing their child's pictorial wish list, while learning where not to hide their child's gifts!

School Skits

After reading **Timothy Goes to School**, discuss Timothy and Violet's feelings about their school experiences. Then ask students to describe their own first day of school. Have students role-play different school situations and discuss the characters' feelings. Change the scenarios to have both a negative and positive outcome. (For example, how would the story have changed if Claude had been friendly to Timothy?) This book is, of course, ideal for reading on the first day of school.

Nifty Gifts

In **Bunny Money**, Max and Ruby have difficulty buying their grandmother a birthday gift. Have students suggest ideas for gifts they can make rather than purchase (e.g., a bookmark, a painting, or a placemat). Ask students to select an idea from the class list and create the gift for a friend or family member. (Note: This activity could be useful for a Mother's Day, Father's Day, or Grandparents' Day gift.)

Touch and Feel Books

After reading **Goodnight Max**, have students create their own "touch and feel" book. Provide them with materials such as felt, Velcro, fabric scraps, sand paper, feathers or cotton to incorporate many different textures into their book.

MATH

Sorting It Out

In **Max Cleans Up**, Ruby puts Max's toys in his toy chest, Max's sneakers in his closet, and Max's windup bugs in his bug box. Ruby must sort through her brother's belongings before she can put them away. Discuss how items are sorted by similar attributes or properties. Then introduce the properties of color, weight, size, shape, and texture. Present students with a group of assorted materials (e.g., shells, buttons, math counters, or seeds) and have them sort them into groups. Ask students to describe the common property of the items in each group.

Collections

After reading **Max Cleans Up**, create a list of the items Max likes to collect (e.g., dolls, windup bugs, ants, motorcycle riders). Ask students what they like to collect, and plan a day for bringing their collections into school. In small groups, have students estimate the number of items in their classmates' collections. Then have students count the number of items by 2's, 5's, or 10's to practice skip-counting and to determine the correct number of items. (Note: This activity is appropriate for the 100th Day of School; students can be asked to bring in a collection containing 100 items.)

Family Graphs

After reading **Noisy Nora** or **Morris's Disappearing Bag**, create a class graph depicting the number of members in each student's family. A second graph might portray the ordinal position of the students in their families.

Shopping Spree

Use **Bunny Money**, **Max's Dragon Shirt**, and **Bunny Cakes** to introduce a money unit. Begin a discussion about how to earn money, to save money, and to budget money wisely. Then teach students to identify coins and their respective value, to count money, and to make change. After students have practiced these math skills, culminate the unit by having students create their own "shops." They can use actual objects (e.g., using books from the classroom library for a book shop) or design, color, and cut out their inventory using construction paper, cardboard or oak tag (e.g., illustrating animals for a pet store). Provide each student with plastic coins or actual currency. Give each student an opportunity to "purchase" items in their classmates' stores and to function as the cashier in their own store. (Note: Students can substitute paper "currency" for coins during this activity as suggested in **Bunny Money**.)

SOCIAL STUDIES AND HEALTH

Hieroglyphics

In **Bunny Cakes**, Max is able to convey his shopping choice by drawing a picture for the grocer. Explain to students that ancient Egyptians used pictures or hieroglyphics to communicate just as Max did. Provide students with a copy of the hieroglyphic alphabet and have them compose messages using these symbols. If students have access to the Internet, the search engine Ask Jeeves for Kids (<http://www.ajkids.com>) can suggest useful websites about hieroglyphics.

Face Your Fears

After reading **Shy Charles**, ask students to recall incidents in which they managed to resolve a situation or to experience something new despite feeling shy, nervous, or frightened. Then discuss Charles' experience with Mrs. Block, and design a class chart depicting appropriate actions during an emergency. **Shy Charles** can be used to introduce a global health and safety unit.

Let's Eat

After reading **Bunny Cakes**, **Max and Ruby's Midas**, or **Max's Chocolate Chicken**, introduce the USDA nutrition pyramid. Discuss how Max's favorite foods in these stories (Red-Hot Marshmallow Squirters, cupcakes and chocolate) belong in the smallest section of the pyramid. Then ask students to suggest sweet but healthier foods that Max might enjoy eating (e.g., watermelon, strawberries, or frozen yogurt). Students can then discuss their own favorite foods and learn where their food choices are located on the nutrition pyramid.

Mythology and Me

Max and Ruby in Pandora's Box and **Max and Ruby's Midas** offer students an entertaining and accessible introduction to the study of Greek mythology. Provide students with an overview of the Greek gods and goddesses and their stories. Ask students to write a report about a specific character in Greek mythology. If students have access to the Internet, [Prosser's Student Guide to Greek Mythology](#) is one of many websites that can provide useful information; this particular website is created by students and offers concise descriptions of mythological characters. Student presentations of their completed reports will expose the entire class to a variety of individuals in mythology. Students can even dress like their mythological character on the day of their presentation.

Egg Hunt

After reading **Max's Chocolate Chicken**, students can decorate their own eggs. They can dye hard-boiled eggs, or adorn plastic eggs with paint, stickers, bits of paper and ribbon, and glitter glue. Students can then participate in an egg hunt either in their classroom or outdoors.

ABOUT ROSEMARY WELLS

photo by Nelvana Productions

Rosemary Wells was born in New York City in 1943. Her mother was a member of Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo, and her father was a playwright and actor. Most of her childhood was spent outdoors on the New Jersey shore at a time when New Jersey was still small farms and miles of woods. Mrs. Wells says, "My father made sure I could swim and ride well. My mother made sure I listened to classical music. Both of them flooded me with books and stories and took me to the theatre and to museums. I thank them endlessly for giving me all the important stuff in life. When I was two years old I began to draw and they saw right away the career that lay ahead of me and encouraged me every day of my life."

Rosemary Wells attended Boston Museum School and married in her early twenties. She and her architect husband, Tom, have two daughters and live near New York City.

Rosemary Wells' career as an author and illustrator spans more than thirty years and 60 books. She has won numerous awards, including the Osborne Humor Award, and has given readers such unforgettable characters as Timothy, Max and Ruby, and Noisy Nora. She also spearheaded a campaign for early literacy nationwide under the name "Read to Your Bunny-the Most Important Twenty Minutes of Your Day." Most days, Mrs. Wells can be found in her studio, sketching and painting illustrations for her books, or at her computer writing a story. Even when traveling she sketches and paints, using a notebook and a portable watercolor set. Besides writing and illustrating, she loves to cook for friends, play tennis, and sit by the ocean with a wonderful book.

ROSEMARY WELLS BOOKS USED FOR THIS GUIDE

Bunny Cakes

International Reading Association-Children's Book Council Children's Choice
School Library Journal Best Book of the Year
0-14-056667-8 (PB) / 0-8037-2143-9 (HC)

Bunny Money

0-14-056750-X (PB) / 0-8037-2146-3 (HC)

Goodnight Max

0-670-88707-2 (HC)

Hazel's Amazing Mother

New York Times Best Illustrated Book

0-14-054911-0 (PB)

Max and Ruby in Pandora's Box

0-14-056415-2 (PB)

Max and Ruby's Midas

International Reading Association-Children's Book Council Children's Choice
0-8037-1782-2 (HC)

Max Cleans Up

0-670-89218-1 (HC)

Max's Chocolate Chicken

0-14-056672-4 (PB) / 0-670-88713-7 (HC)

Max's Dragon Shirt

International Reading Association-Children's Book Council Children's Choice
American Library Association Notable Book Horn Book Fanfare
0-14-056727-5 (PB) / 0-670-88727-7 (HC)

Morris's Disappearing Bag

American Library Association Notable Book
School Library Journal Best Book of the Year
0-14-054664-2 (PB) / 0-670-88721-8 (HC)

Noisy Nora

American Library Association Notable Book
School Library Journal Best Book of the Year
0-14-056728-3 (PB) / 0-670-88722-6 (HC)

Shy Charles

School Library Journal Best Book of the Year
Horn Book Fanfare
Boston Globe-Horn Book Award
0-14-054537-9 (PB) / 0-670-88729-3 (HC available May 2001)

Timothy Goes to School

International Reading Association-Children's Book Council Children's Choice
Booklist Editor's Choice
0-14-056742-9 (PB) / 0-670-89182-7 (HC)

Voyage to the Bunny Planet

0-8037-1174-3 (HC)

For a complete listing of available Rosemary Wells titles, refer to
www.rosemarywells.com

This guide was prepared by Sue Ornstein, who is a first grade teacher for the Byram Hills School District in Armonk, New York. She lives with her husband, two children, and two cats in Chappaqua, New York.

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