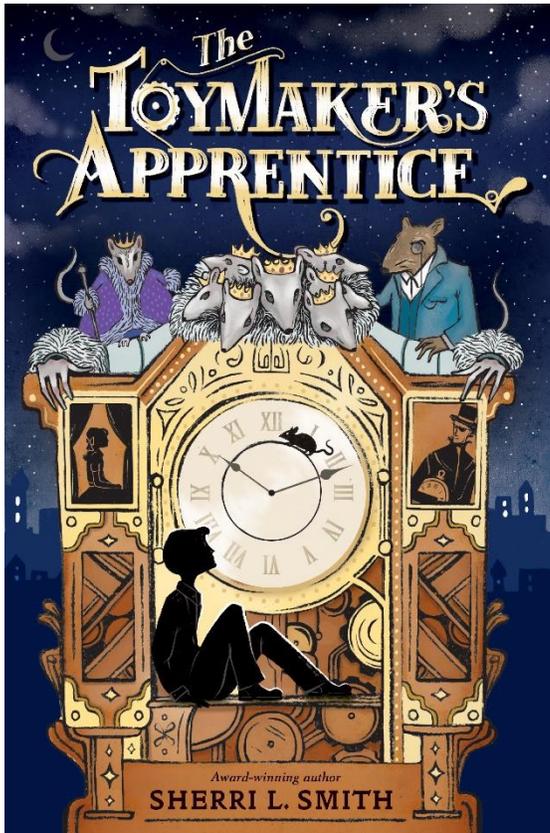


A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR

THE TOYMAKER'S APPRENTICE

By Award-Winning Author
SHERRI L. SMITH

FOR
USE WITH
COMMON CORE
STATE
STANDARDS



Ages 10 and up

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ABOUT THE BOOK

Stefan Drosselmeyer is a reluctant apprentice to his toymaker father until the day his world is turned upside down—his father is kidnapped and Stefan is enlisted by his mysterious cousin, Christian, to find a mythical nut called the *krakatook*. Embarking on a wild adventure through Germany and beyond, Stefan must save Boldavia's princess and his own father from the fanatical Mouse Queen and her seven-headed Mouse Prince. Don't miss this fascinating journey into a world of toymaking, magical curses, clockmaking guilds, talking mice and erudite squirrels, based on the original inspiration for the Nutcracker ballet.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sherri L. Smith is the award-winning author of YA novels *Lucy the Giant*, *Sparrow*, *Hot Sour Salty Sweet*, *Flygirl* and *Orleans*. In October 2015, she makes her middle grade debut with *The ToyMaker's Apprentice* from G.P. Putnam and Sons for Penguin Random House. Her books have been listed as Amelia Bloomer, American Library Association Best Books for Young People, and Junior Library Guild Selections. *Flygirl* was the 2009 California Book Awards Gold Medalist. Sherri was a 2014 National Book Awards judge in the Young People's Literature category. She is a three-time writer-in-resident at Hedgebrook retreat in Washington State, as well as a resident at Wassard Elea retreat in Ascea, Italy.



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Using *The Toymaker's Apprentice* with the Common Core State Standards

This guide is aligned to the common core standards for the 6th grade, English Language Arts for Literature. If you teach a grade other than that, it is simple to parallel these objectives to your own by visiting the common core website (corestandards.org).

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3

Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.5

Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.6

Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Have students mark their opinion of the following statements below. Then place posters around the four corners of your room that correspond with the rankings and discuss the answers as a class, allowing the students to move between their answers.

Statement:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	WHY I think this:
Stories set in other countries are more interesting than ones set at home.					
Talking animals are always a great addition to a story.					
I would rather be able to build toys than clocks.					
Revenge is a great reason for a battle.					
I would rather be able to speak to animals than know a foreign language.					

BOOK I: The Toymaker's Apprentice - Chapters 1-19

Allusions: The Piper's Children, Prometheus, Freemasons, Age of Reason

CH:	VOCABULARY
1	Regarded, approximation, apprenticeship, frantic, lintel
2	Mangy, rapier, sheath, compelling, Détente, sentiment, etiquette
3	Journeyman, accommodate, infuriating, stoically
4	Edifice, proprietor, bard, scribe, stout, vermin, yore, resonance, nostalgia, rampant, melancholia, piebald
5	Pawn, dour, cordial, monotonous, queasy, sanctuary, consternation, eloquently, capacity, anarchists, berth, somberly, squander
6	Compatriots, impoverished, preened, proposition, provincial, remote, mottled, benefactor
7	Quell, chagrined, hubris, sovereign, vile, manikin
8	Intrigue, antechambers, intel, bedraggled, zealots, dominion, petrify, reprisals
9	Precedes, antechamber, recalibrated, eccentrics, foremost, authority, dubious, inexplicably
10	Skirmish, cowering, opulent, wastrel, implicitly, brevity
11	Dour, fez, bulbous, faltered, bemused, theologians
12	Behalf, bizarre, quest, modest
13	Quay, muster, nuisance, ventured
14	Precise, indicate, condolence
15	Imperiously, gravitas, foothold, ascent, prophecy, bane, sundry, procurator, imperceptible, scourge, hovels
16	Credence, astray, façade, bravado, bastions, juddered, precarious, catacombs
17	Atrocity, messiahs, valuable, diplomacy
18	Brazier, intricately, device, dignitaries, synced, provenance, decimated, scavengers, famine, barren, diverted, theology, sarcophagus
19	Subterranean, solidified, hysterically, abnormalities, intoned, monstrosity

DISCUSSION GUIDE: Book I

1. Describe everything you learn about Stefan in chapter one.
2. Summarize the action between Ernst, the rat and the cat in Vienna.
3. After reading chapter three, create a list of all the characters and their relationships to each other.
4. What is Stefan's plan at the beginning of the novel? Predict whether you think he'll go through with it or not.
5. Describe Ernst and how he provides for himself. Why is the audience so affected by his song?

6. How did Christian charm Stefan? What did he offer him that was irresistible? Would you trust Christian? Why?
7. Examine the scene between Ernst Listz and the piebald mouse in chapter six. What does it reveal about each of their backgrounds?
8. Summarize the reason that Christian was set to be executed. Or, retell the story of Princess Pirlipat.
9. Who is Snitter? Is he truly loyal to the Queen of Mice? Defend your answer with a key quote from chapter eight. What is his role/purpose in the story?
10. Determine what everyone believes about the *krakatook*. What does Stefan learn at the botanical garden concerning it? Who else does he meet? Do you think she'll be important to the story or not? Why?
11. In chapter ten, whose philosophy of life do you find yourself most aligned with- rat or squirrel? Why? Who is Ernst Listz and where is he going? Why?
12. Describe Professor Blume. What does his time with Stefan reveal about him? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
13. Explain what happened to Zacharias. What are the clues that he has been bamboozled (tricked)?
14. Synthesize the most important aspects of Ernst's journey to Boldavia.
15. Explain why Stefan cannot go to the city guard about his father. Describe Christian's reaction to the *krakatook*.
16. Analyze Ernst's feelings for the Queen of Mice at court. Has he misjudged her? What is his new role? Have you ever underestimated someone yourself?
17. Where did Christian lead Stefan inside the clockmaker's guild? How was he disguised? Why? What's important to know about the map?
18. What beast does Fleetfoot show Ernst Listz? Create a chart comparing a Breathless through two viewpoints: humans and mice.
19. What does Stefan learn while seeing the city clock of Nuremberg for the first time? Where else does he visit with Christian? Why? What does he learn about clocks and humanity?
20. Describe the Queen's brood? How does Ernst react? What has been foretold about their future?

BOOK II: The Prince of Mice - Chapters 20-44

Allusions: Beauty and the Beast, Ulysses/The Odyssey

CH.	VOCABULARY
20	Persistent, preposterous, regrettable, apparatus
21	Disreputable, harried, notoriously, menace, mutton
22	Disfigured, recruited, fanfare, calligraphied, surmised, quested, obeisance
23	Bristly, balked, solitary, tedious, satisfied
24	Scarlet, obedience, fumbling
25	Idyllic, domestic, procure, hedge, inquisitive, festered, emblazoned, florid
26	Dremel, solemn, befuddled, practicality
27	Scholar, belligerent, insightful, brute, morbid, dutifully, merited, chide
28	Involuntarily, submerged, assurances, curdling
29	Foreboding, engage, rickety
30	Recoiled, sobering, surmised, skulk, espionage, wayward, scullery, consort
31	Dismantling, scant, ransacked, belatedly, indicated, bellows, cascade, faltered
32	Acquit, tactics, adrenaline, unbidden, solidarity, siege, plunder, appalled, bewilderment, amended, reconnaissance
33	Vertigo, shakos, silhouette, pantaloons, skirmishes, deposed, carnage
34	Tremulous, solace, accusingly, manipulate
35	Fortnight, abashedly, skittish, industrious, sitar, djinn, arabesque, oblivious, synchronicity
36	Amend, treason, disperse, bemused, gallivanting
37	Entourage, scimitars, involuntarily, sumptuous, novelty, admonished, fulcrum, insolence, uncouth, protocol
38	Marveled, suitors
39	Incisors, gnashed, bluff
40	Unveiling, ludicrous, memoriam, monocle, affectation, invigorated, accolades
41	Immodest, bedraggled, harbingers, Apocalypse, crevice, credentials, cacophony
42	Behest
43	Dangled, fruitful, shrewdly, dais, ravenously, interloper, rictus

DISCUSSION GUIDE: Book II

1. Where is Zacharias? What do you think they want from him? Do you think he should cooperate or not?
2. When Stefan went inside the alehouse he said, "...I'm seeing menace everywhere now" (chapter 21). Why does this happen in real life too? How do preconceived notions of a place or group of people limit our understanding of them?
3. Why does Ernst believe that the queen herself is the true monstrosity? What makes someone evil? What has she done?
4. List Stefan's task aboard the barge on the Danube River. How does Christian make the barge safe for open communication? What do you have to do for privacy?
5. Why do you think the mice want a toymaker? What is their purpose with them?
6. What is the rumor about the Queen of Mice? What is the evidence for it? Why is the Queen impatient for the young princes to grow up?
7. What problems is Stefan trying to solve with his bird toy? Why do you think Christian told Stefan to "carry on"?
8. Rank the skills Ernst must teach the young princes in order of importance. Be prepared to defend your choices with sound reasoning.
9. What happened to Christian Elias Drosselmeyer on the *Gray Goose*?
10. Why is Zacharias willing to be compliant with his captors? Would you be willing?
11. What is Arthur's brother's reaction to Zacharias Drosselmeyer? What is Arthur's own reaction? Why is there such a difference among them?
12. What is Stefan's new plan to save his father? Describe the transportation they use on their journey.
13. Do you think the Queen loves her sons or not? Prove your point with a key quote.
14. What are Arthur's plan for Drosselmeyer? Why?
15. Along the journey, what did Stefan learn about the wars of men? What did you learn?
16. Why did Arthur visit Zacharias? What clues have been revealed about what the toymaker is building? What do you think its purpose is?
17. Describe the Pagoda Tree and its inhabitants and entertainment. What would you most like to see here?
18. What is Arthur suffering from? What does he wish for? What do you?
19. Discuss the story of Ulysses (some call him Odysseus). Do you know his story yet? What amazed Zacharias about Arthur's knowledge of it?
20. Explain why Stefan was acting rude to squirrels with the Pater. Defend your position on which is worse: to be blatantly rude with purpose or to do so unintentionally.
21. What big questions does Stefan ask about humans and animals? What are your big questions? Do you agree with Samir's take on the world? Why or why not?
22. How does the Queen of Mice feel about the manikin? Why?
23. Describe the people, place and animals that Stefan encounters in Boldavia.

- 24.** Who came to save Zacharias? Who did he think was there instead?
- 25.** List the events in the throne room from the most important to the least important. Be ready to defend your choices with evidence to a reading partner.
- 26.** When Stefan says, "...the world was big, Ernst. This but an inch on the map, is it not?" (Chapter 44) What does he mean? Do you think this makes Stefan feel better or worse? Why?

BOOK III: The Nutcracker - Chapters 45-78

Allusions: Trojan Horse, “a rose by any other name,” cyclops, Horsemen of the Apocalypse, “pay the piper,” the hydra

CH.	VOCABULARY
45	Stout, formidable, catatonic, charade
46	Siege, decimated, oblivious, bellowed
47	Sugarplums
48	Melee, inquisitive, befuddled
49	Cower, deftly, sovereign
50	<i>None</i>
51	Kindlesmarkt, benevolent, fez, gewgaws, exhortation, jostled, belatedly, composure
52	Indignation
53	Fanatics, agitated, gnashed, rabble-rouser, escapade, treachery
54	Distressingly, stuttered, nostalgic, resplendent, corpse
55	Infiltrate, susurrations, blanched
56	Scandal, surmised, mottled
57	Swarming, tendency, increments
58	Veritable, whimsy, cajoled,
59	Reconnaissance, incomprehensibly
60	Cobblestone, vortex, hysterical
61	Tutelage, formidable, compunction, reinstated
62	Vermin, fanaticism, alchemists
63	Petrified, proximity, rouse
64	Bedraggled, steeple
65	Obscuring, underestimate
66	Haunches, ferocious, confer, contemptuous, guerilla
67	Emissary, ordeal, palanquin
68	Dismay, cavities, demoralized, fray
69	Milled, demise,
70	Contempt, robustly, orator
71	Clambered,
72	Makeshift, resurrect
73	Scabbard, impression
74	Squabbling
75	Rucksack, serviceable, doused
76	Sputtering, bellowed, mortified
77	Glinted, sieve, flanked
78	Skimming, fortuitous
Epil:	Despised, prematurely, specimen

DISCUSSION GUIDE: Book III

1. Where are the men headed? Why are they leaving Boldavia?
2. Analyze the weaknesses of the new King of Mice's plan. What would you do instead?
3. Summarize chapter 47 and explain why it is printed in italics.
4. Explain how Stefan buys them time with Stefan's wooden dove?
5. What attacks the mice? How does Arthur respond? Who would you consider more brave: Arthur or Stefan? Why?
6. How would you describe Stefan's relationship with his mother? What are the clues? What is the inspiration of the dove he created?
7. Why did Samir visit Professor Blume? Was his trip successful or not? What did he leave behind?
8. What is Talitch's quest? Why? What inspired him recently?
9. What happened to Ernst? Why? Do you think he was betrayed or not? Why?
10. Where does Christian take Stefan? Who is he reunited with at last? How is he recognized?
11. How has Arthur changed? What is his last and only hope?
12. Why did Clara disguise her name when they met? What happens with the attacking mouse?
13. Explain how Gullet attempts to help Christian in the Cogworks.
14. What do they learn both true and false from the mouse named Dusker?
15. Describe the onslaught at the botanical garden. What does it show of the mice's thirst for revenge?
16. How did Ernst play a clever hand of cards with Snitter? Could you be this coy or not? Why?
17. What disturbing view does Gullet reveal to Christian? What tool does he offer the clockmaker? Why?
18. What do Clara and Stefan see outside her home? What is their only hope of defense?
19. Samir, Christian, and Zacharias must use what to travel by? Why?
20. Why does Stefan feel he must confront the mice alone? Is this a wise plan? Would you ever be willing to do so? Why or not?
21. Why don't the mice agree on how to execute the plan? Who surprises them and how?
22. Why are the mice all willing to fight, especially Stefan? Is it ever honorable to fight? What makes you think so or not?
23. Describe the combat between Stefan and the siege engine. What is the outcome?
24. What did Zacharias bring to the fray that helped stem the tide of the attack?
25. Analyze the counsel that Ernst, the tutor, gives the princes in the hour of their greatest need. Why does he propose this?

- 26.** What are the mice doing inside Clara's house? What is Stefan's weapon?
- 27.** How do the princes confront Stefan? Are they justified?
- 28.** What's the plan by the princes to defeat Stefan?
- 29.** Summarize the fight between the princes and Stefan. Who has the best weapon? Advantage?
- 30.** Explain what the prince's last words reveal about his character? How, in the end, was it finally over?
- 31.** What is Christian's plan to have it finished once and for all? Is he correct in doing so in your opinion or not? Why?
- 32.** In the end, what happened to Stefan and his family? What about Marie?
- 33.** Where, in the end, is Ernst? What do we know about his fate?

PROJECTS

Reading/Vocabulary

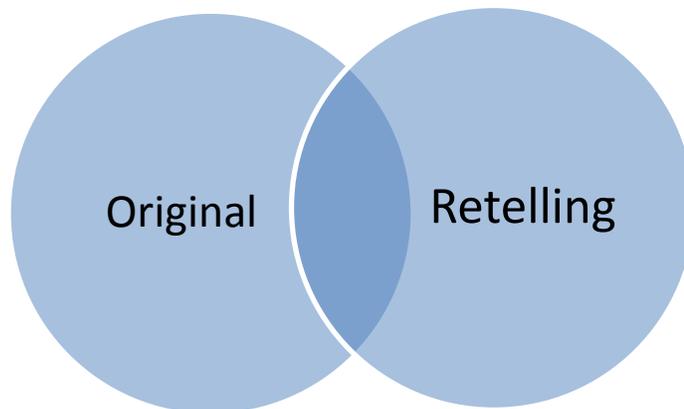
Before reading each section of the book, sort the words into this chart:

No Familiarity	Heard it before	Could define it myself	Could write a new sentence using it correctly:

Then, define at least 10 new words for you for each section. Create flashcards that have the following information on them: definition, part of speech, a picture to help you remember the definition, root language, synonyms, and antonyms.

Research

- What are the romance languages? How are they important to understanding words? What are the root languages of English? In the book, what is the root language for the mice and other critters?
- Compare and contrast the novel's first two chapters with that of the original manuscript first published by E.T.A. Hoffman in 1816. You can read it online for free from the [University of North Carolina](#).
- Then, fill out the following Venn diagram based on the two versions:



Writing

Choose one of the following writing prompts and be prepared to take it through the writing process with at least two drafts, a peer edit, and a final copy:

1. Write a letter from Stefan to Marie
2. Write a letter from Marie to Stefan
3. Write your own ballad, inspired by those in the story
4. Write a scene that explains what happens to Christian when he goes overboard
5. Choose another character and retell a scene through their point of view (like Samir)

Allusion

An allusion is a reference (like a call out that musicians make to each other) to another piece of literature, an author, or historical event. There are many allusions in the novel that you may want to research or become familiar with before reading that section.

Speaking & Listening

Inspired by Franz (how many languages does he know!?) research how to communicate these important words from three different languages of your choice:

	Language #1:	Language #2:	Language #3:
Hello			
Goodbye			
Thank you			
Yes			
No			

Curriculum Connections with *The Toymaker's Apprentice*

This guide is aligned to the common core standards for the 6th grade. If you teach a grade other than that, parallel these objectives to your own by visiting the common core websites:

www.nextgenscience.org (science), www.nafme.org (music), www.nationalartsstandards.org (the arts)

LIFE SCIENCES – MS-LS2-2

Construct an explanation that predicts patterns of interactions among organisms across multiple ecosystems.

PHYSICAL SCIENCES – MS-PS1-3

Gather and make sense of information to describe that synthetic materials come from natural resources and impact society.

ENGINEERING – MS-ETS1-1

Define the criteria and constraints of a design problem with sufficient precision to ensure a successful solution, taking into account relevant scientific principles and potential impacts on people and the natural environment that may limit possible solutions.

ENGINEERING – MS-ETS1-2

Evaluate competing design solutions using a systematic process to determine how well they meet the criteria and constraints of the problem.

DANCE – DA:Re9.1.6

Discuss the characteristics and artistic intent of a dance from a genre, style, or cultural movement practice and develop artistic criteria to critique the dance using genre-specific dance terminology.

MUSIC – MU:Cr1.1.5a

Improvise rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic ideas, and explain connection to specific purpose and context (such as social, cultural, and historical).

MUSIC – MU:Re7.1.6a

Select or choose music to listen to and explain the connections to specific interests or experiences for a specific purpose.

VISUAL ARTS – VA:CR1.1.6a

Combine concepts collaboratively to generate innovative ideas for creating art.

History/Geography:

Do a quick search to find out the significance of these three historical topics. Understanding them may help you comprehend the story on a deeper level.

Topic:	Significance (why it mattered):
Treaty of Vienna	
Ottoman Empire	
Napoleon	

Locate on a world map the location of the story. What do you know about the following topics regarding that location: weather, topography/elevation, bordering countries, and important natural landmarks.

Science

Life Sciences - Ecology. Create a chart that shows mice's natural place in an ecosystem, along with the other animals and humans mentioned in the book. Have students predict the outcomes for human, mouse and squirrel populations if the mice had won the war.

Physical Sciences - Curative foods. Like the *krakatook* nut in the story, some foods are an excellent source of curative properties. For example, willow bark was used as a fever reducer long before it became known as a pill in a bottle. Sour cherries have also been known to be a natural anti-inflammatory (reduces swelling). Research the connection between natural food-based medicines and their synthetic forms.

Engineering – Nutcrackers and Paper Birds.

Have students develop a proposal as to how they would open the *krakatook* nut, or how to make a flying paper bird or airplane. Based on their proposals, have students research, design and create nutcrackers, birds or airplanes. Hold a competition to see which devices are most successful.

Biomechanics. Animals move at different speeds. At top speed, the mice in the book are able to reach Nuremberg at the same time as the humans. Have students research the average walking and top speeds of various species.

Technology

Discuss the invention of time, and various methods for keeping time, including sun dials, hourglasses and mechanical clocks. Create a clock using one of these methods.

Math

Create a series of math problems based on the walking speeds of different animals (see Biomechanics above).

Dance

View different versions of the Nutcracker ballet and discuss different choices made in choreography and why those choices might have been made (contemporary version vs. period-specific, cultural references, etc.).

Music

Listen to music of the ballet *The Nutcracker* that was inspired by the original story. Create music to accompany the ballads in the back of the book. How would the music reflect the time period, and countries represented (Germany, fictional Boldavia) recognizing Ernst's musical tastes (Mozart, Beethoven, etc.)

Visual Arts

Have students collaborate on their version of the seven-headed mouse king, with each student creating a different head that represents the personality of that head.

Choose one of the following projects to create on your own inspired by the book:

- Create a Pagoda tree tapestry
- Engineer a soldier with joints using only household items
- Build a diorama out of a shoebox that shows your favorite setting in the novel
- Create a comic strip depicting your favorite scene in the book

This guide was a creative product of [Sherri L. Smith](#), the author of the novel and [Tracie Vaughn](#), an author and teacher, with the additional assistance of teachers [Kathryn Hendess](#) and [Alice Litt](#).