



# If You Take a Mouse to School

Script  
by  
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Based on the book written by Laura Numeroff, illustrated by Felicia Bond

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## Classroom Guide Grades 4 - 5

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## How to Use This Guide

This classroom guide for *If You Take a Mouse to School* is designed for Texas students in kindergarten and Grade 1. It offers activities to help you integrate a performance of *Mouse* into English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, social studies, music, art, and theatre curricula.

All activities in this guide are linked to Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) content standards.

For students outside Texas, this guide's ELA and math activities also are linked to Common Core standards. At the back of this guide, you will find a list of the guide activities and their related Texas and Common Core standards.

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## 1: Discussion Questions

### *Before the Performance*

*If You Take a Mouse to School* is a stage play. What is a stage play?

- How is a play similar to a TV show or movie?
- How is it different?

Who performs the parts (roles) in a play?

- What kinds of skills do you think performers need to have to perform in plays?
- Who else works on plays? (Remember: you may not see them on stage!)

The play is based on a book: *If You Take a Mouse to School*, written by Laura Numeroff.

- Have you read *If You Take a Mouse to School* as a class or by yourself?
  - Based on what you read, what do you think may happen in the play?

### *During the Performance*

When you watch a play, you are a member of the audience. What kinds of things should you do as an audience member? Examples:

- Pay attention
- Laugh when something funny happens
- Clap if you enjoy something

What kinds of things should you *not* do as an audience member? Examples:

- Talk to your neighbor
- Use a cell phone during the performance
- Yell at the actors (unless they ask you to!)

### *After the Performance*

What did you think of the play?

- If you read *If You Take a Mouse to School* beforehand, how was the play similar to the book?
- How was it different?

Describe the performers in the play.

- What did they do to make their characters special (different from the other characters)?
- How did they use their bodies to play their characters (using voice, movement, etc)?
- Did you see anyone else who worked on the play besides the performers on stage?

Describe the characters' costumes.

- What did each character's costume tell you about that character?
- Did any of the performers change costumes?
  - If so, why do you think they needed to change costumes?

Describe the set of the play.

- Did it have a lot of locations?
- Did it look like a place you've been to before?
- How did different lighting change how the set looked for different scenes?

Did the play have music in it?

- If so, was it only in the background, or did it help tell the story?
- What instruments did you hear in the music?

If you were going to direct *If You Take a Mouse to School*, how would your production be different from the play you saw by Magik?

**2: Etymology: Word Origins**

All of these words appear in *If You Take a Mouse to School*, by Laura Numeroff. First, label each word as a noun, verb, adjective, or adverb, depending on how Laura Numeroff used it in her story. Next, use print or online references to find the linguistic (language-related) origin of each word. Look for answers to these questions:

- What is the linguistic root of the word?
- What language does that root come from?
- How old is the word you looked up? (Example: How long has “mouse” been used?)
- What languages of origin occur most often among these words?

Finally, create a timeline showing when each word first began to be used.

	<b>Noun, Verb, or Adjective?</b>	<b>Linguistic Root</b>	<b>Language of Origin</b>	<b>Age of Word</b>
mouse				
school				
sandwich				
snack				
pencil				
share				
locker				
around				
math				
spell				
two				
science				
experiment				
bathroom				
lunch				
house				
furniture				
clay				
paper				
tuck				
bell				
ring				
bus				
soccer				
skateboard				

**3: Write Your Own Story**

In *If You Take a Mouse to School*, a boy agrees to take his mouse to school. Using the worksheet below, plan a story about a character who does something nice for a friend, with unexpected consequences. On a separate sheet of paper, write a first draft of your story. After sharing your story with your class and your teacher, gather feedback and use it to revise your story. When you finish, share your final story with your class again. How are your classmates' stories similar? How are they different?

**CHARACTERS**

Main character:

Age:

Male or female?:

Physical description:

Personality:

Friend character:

Age:

Male or female?:

Physical description:

Personality:

Other characters:

**SETTING**

Where:

When:

**PLOT**

How does your story begin?

How does your main character meet the guest?

What is the main conflict between your main character and the friend character?

What is the climax of your story?

How does your story resolve? (What happens after the climax?)

#### **4: Word Problems**

If you bring a mouse to school, he's going to want to play basketball, and he'll probably be pretty good at it. In the first quarter he scores 56 points, 72 points in the second quarter, 95 points in the third, and a whopping 122 points in the fourth. How many points did the mouse score in all? (Would you pick the mouse to play on your team?)

Mice are really good at writing books because they pace themselves. On Monday the mouse wrote 300 words, Tuesday he wrote 400 words, Wednesday he wrote 500 words, Thursday he wrote 600 words, and Friday he wrote 700. How many words did the mouse write over these 5 days?

Mice have huge families resulting in huge family reunions. There are 7,000 mice in the Runtkerton family, but only 5,967 were present during the reunion. How many Runtkertons were absent?

Making clay furniture takes a ton of effort because you need so many jars of play-dough. Mouse used 6,593 jars to make a set of outdoor furniture for the boy's house. Then, unfortunately, it rained. After the downpour, 2,438 jars worth of play-dough were washed away. How many jars worth of play-dough were left?

In order for Neal to go to summer camp, Mom has to pay \$290 per week. If there are 12 weeks this summer, how much must Mom pay?

900 seats fill a mouse soccer stadium and there are 42 mouse stadiums in the nation. How many seats does that equal?

There are 500 students who need a bus ride to school. Each bus can hold 50 students. How many buses will be needed to get all the students to school?

If you take a mouse to school, he'll want to go to the computer lab. If he goes to the computer lab, he's going to log into Mousebook and friend as many mice as possible. If he receives 195 responses from 15 different friends, how many responses did each friend send assuming that each friend sent the same amount?

**5: Physical Characteristics**

Physical characteristics are the features of a plant or animal that help it survive in its ecosystem. Although the mouse in *If You Take a Mouse to School* is unusual, it has physical characteristics similar to a real mouse—characteristics very different from the human boy’s.

Using the table below, research and record physical characteristics of mice and humans. As a class, discuss your results, describing how each organism’s characteristics help it to survive in its usual habitat.

	Mouse Characteristics	Human Characteristics
Size		
Skin Covering (Hair, Fur, Feathers, Scales)		
Appendages (Limbs, Feet, Hands, Tails)		
Teeth		
Ears		
Other: _____		
Other: _____		

**6: If You Give a Mouse a Map**

In *If You Take a Mouse to School*, a mouse visits a boy’s school. Imagine that same mouse was going to meet you at your school. He has asked for a map of the school, and you’ve agreed to make him one. In the space below, draw a map of your school. Include:

- buildings, rooms, and hallways
- a label for each place on the map
- arrows to show the path most likely to be taken by a curious mouse
- a title for your map

Next, decide where the mouse will be coming from. Using a world, national, state, or city map, trace the mouse’s route. Use the map to write travel directions for the mouse.

- How is your route similar to the ones your classmates made?
- How is it different?

Map Title:



**7: Create a Diorama**

*Teacher: For this exercise, provide modeling materials with a variety of colors and textures, as well as structural materials, such as cardboard and glue. Equalize student access to materials by making this an in-class exercise, rather than an at-home exercise.*

A diorama is a three-dimensional (“3-D”) scene. A diorama tells a story: it includes a setting, at least one character, and some kind of action.

Using materials provided by your teacher, make a diorama that shows a scene from *If You Take a Mouse to School*. Think about what your setting should look like, who you want to be in the scene, and what you want them to do.

When you finish, share your diorama with the class. Answer these questions:

- Where does your diorama take place?
- Who is in your diorama?
- What are they doing?
- Why did you choose this scene to depict?
- What materials did you use to make your diorama? How did you build it?
- Did any of your classmates make the same scene as yours?
  - How are your dioramas similar?
  - How are they different?
- Did any of your classmates make the scene right before or after yours? Can you tell the whole story with your class’s dioramas?

Use the space below to make a planning sketch of your diorama.

## 8: Exploring Music

In the play and book of *If You Take a Mouse to School*, what begins as a simple act — a boy taking his mouse to school — becomes something much greater. The mouse's repeated requests for things keeps the boy busy and makes his school day increasingly complicated and chaotic. Finally, at the end, the story circles back to where it started: taking the mouse to school.

As an exploration exercise, play samples of several different musical pieces for your students. Encourage children to add dance/movement to their listening experience. Make sure students have room to move around. Point out different tempos and rhythms to encourage change in dance/movement. Help students find the beat of a piece by clapping, marching in place, snapping your fingers, etc.

Next, use a variety of musical instruments or everyday objects\* to lead students through a discussion of musical qualities:

- Demonstrate musical qualities
  - loud vs. soft sounds
  - high-pitched notes vs. low-pitched notes
  - fast rhythms vs. slow rhythms
- Ask students to emulate your examples using instruments, their voices, or their bodies (e.g., clapping their hands, snapping their fingers, clicking their tongues)
- Ask students to sort instruments
  - sort single-pitch instruments from low-pitched to high-pitched
  - sort single-pitch instruments separately from multi-pitch instruments
- Create a simple rhythmic pattern
  - ask students to repeat it
  - ask students to create and repeat their own simple rhythmic patterns
- Create a simple melody
  - ask students to repeat it
  - ask students to create and play their own simple melodies

As a class, create a composition that represents *If You Take a Mouse to School*. Begin with a simple rhythm or melody: the boy. Next, to represent the mouse's requests, add a rhythm or a note pattern that repeats. As that repetition continues, add more sounds to represent the consequences of the boy giving the mouse what it wants. Your piece should become increasingly complex, with some unexpected sounds thrown in. Just as your composition seems ready to careen out of control, begin to strip away sounds until you have only the patterns representing the mouse and the boy. Let the mouse pattern repeat one more time (the mouse asking for the lunchbox). Let the boy's pattern play a few times in response (circling back to the beginning). As the boy realizes he'll have to take the mouse back to school, have every student play/make one loud sound together to end your composition with a bang.

*\*Including: cardboard oatmeal can (with lid), rubber band, chopsticks, metal spoons, plastic bucket, plastic storage bin, pots and pans, pot/pan lids, wooden spoon, plastic cup with lid, filled ¼ full with dry beans or rice, cardboard tubes, glasses with different levels of water*

**TEXAS**

**Grade 4**

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
1	Fine Arts 117.16.b.5
2	ELA 110.15.b.2
3	ELA 110.15.b.15-16
4	Math 111.16.b.3-4
5	Science 112.15.b.10
6	Soc Studies 113.15.b.6-7
7	Fine Arts 117.14.b.1-2, 4
8	Fine Arts 117.15.b.1-2, 4

**Grade 5**

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
1	Fine Arts 117.19.b.5
2	ELA 110.16.b.2
3	ELA 110.16.b.15-16
4	Math 111.17.b.3
5	Science 112.16.b.10
6	Soc Studies 113.16.b.6-9
7	Fine Arts 117.17.b.1-2, 4
8	Fine Arts 117.18.b.1-2, 4

**COMMON CORE**

**Grade 4**

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
2	ELA L.4.4
3	ELA W.4.3, 5
4	Math 4.OA.3

**Grade 5**

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
2	ELA L.5.4
3	ELA W.5.3, 5
4	Math 5.OA.1-2