IF YOU GIVE...

Series Teaching Guide

Over 40 activities to use with:

- If You Take a Mouse to School
- If You Give a Mouse a Cookie
- If You Take a Mouse to the Movies
- If You Give a Pig a Pancake
- If You Give a Pig a Party
- If You Give a Moose a Muffin
- If You Give a Cat a Cupcake
- If You Give a Dog a Donut

WRITTEN BY
Laura Numeroff

ILLUSTRATED BY
Felicia Bond

HarperCollinsChildrensBooks

www.mousecookiebooks.com
About the Books

Laura Numeroff and Felicia Bond have created eight irresistible tales depicting characters that will delight young readers with their antics. Mouse, Moose, Pig, Cat, and Dog each experience everyday situations and the consequences that tumble like dominoes through the pages of these amusing picture books. The cyclical story lines entertain while providing students with early experiences in sequential thought, story structure, author and artist style, and predictability.

This activity guide is designed to provide the classroom teacher with teaching tools and activities that focus on the topics and skills addressed in this series. The activities that follow can be used in conjunction with one or all of the books in the series.

Prereading Activities

Show students the covers of the If You Give… books and engage the class in a discussion about art. When reading the books, have them compare and contrast the text in relation to the pictures. Ask them to identify instances when the art is depicting the story and when it takes the reader beyond the actual story. How does the art add to the text’s meaning? How does the art make the book more fun?

Often Mouse and the other characters get sidetracked. Play a simple game of telephone with your students to introduce them to the basic structural idea behind the books and demonstrate how something may begin as one thing and end up as something entirely different. Often the thing you end up with is much more fun than what you began with!

About the Author and Illustrator

Laura Numeroff is the author of many books for young readers in addition to the If You Give… series, including The Chicken Sisters and Laura Numeroff’s 10-Step Guide to Living with Your Monster. She loves to play tennis and travel and lives in Los Angeles, California. A portion of her royalties will be donated to First Book, a national nonprofit organization that promotes children’s literacy. You can visit her online at www.lauranumeroff.com.

Felicia Bond is the illustrator of numerous books for children. In addition to the If You Give… series, she has also illustrated, among other titles, Big Red Barn by Margaret Wise Brown and Little Porcupine’s Christmas by Joseph Slate. She’s the author and illustrator of the Poinsettia books; The Day It Rained Hearts; The Halloween Play; Tumble Bumble; and Big Hugs, Little Hugs. She lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico.
If You Take a Mouse to School

When is school an adventure?  
When Mouse goes to school, of course!

Getting Ready. Hold a class discussion about getting ready for school: What is it like for you to get up and at ‘em in the morning? How is your lunch packed? What do you bring? Do you buy your lunch? Who helps you get ready in the morning? Does it take long? Why? Is your routine the same each day or does it change? Students can compare and contrast getting-ready experiences.

In the Bag. Bring in a knapsack filled with items from the story. Have students consider the uses of the items prior to reading and try to predict outcomes. As a group, put the items in order of appearance in the book to set up a sense of anticipation.

Let’s Go Shopping! Note: To complete this activity, students should feel comfortable manipulating play money and corresponding values. You may wish to change prices to reflect skill levels of the group, and round off numbers if necessary. Collect store circulars from local shops and/or collect pictures of items from newspapers, magazines, and the internet. Have students create shopping lists of supplies needed for school along with the prices of the items. Using a given amount of money, prompt students to decide if they have enough money, how much they will need, and how much is left. Activity Extension: Create a store in the classroom for children to practice shopping for the various items.

Mapping Mouse. Discuss, write, or draw the places Mouse goes in the story. Then, as a class, create a map of the story, complete with a map key using symbols of the places. With students working either alone or in pairs, have them follow your example and create a map of the different areas Mouse visits. Each student or set of partners can be responsible for mapping a single event in the story, and the class can come together and piece the story back together with their individual maps. Activity Extension: Have students create maps of their school or classroom and mark all of the places where the school day takes them.

Lunchtime. Read or reread If You Take a Mouse to School, focusing on the lunchbox section. Talk to students about lunchboxes and show them pictures of the lunch boxes of old. Have each child bring in (or you can supply) empty baby-wipe containers and cover them in white contact paper or plain white paper. Then have students draw scenes from the story on the different sides of the box. Children can share results with the class, and they can use the boxes to hold their own school supplies at their desks.

Animal Friends at School. Animal friends, including Dog, Cat, Moose, Mouse, and Pig, populate the If You Give… books. In honor of Mouse (or another favorite character), have your students bring their own special stuffed animals to school for a day. In preparation for the big day, reread If You Take a Mouse to School and have students create invitations to bring home to their animal friends. On the day itself, read several favorite If You Give… books with your students and their animals and arrange activities for everyone to do together. Activity Extension: Have a “pack a suitcase race” in which the children must gather items as in a scavenger hunt. Pack the items in a suitcase, follow a map to another area of the room, and unpack. First to finish wins!
If You Give a Mouse a Cookie

What happens if you give a mouse a cookie? Much more than you'd imagine! This is the classic book that started it all.

Milk Mustache. In the story, Mouse checks in the mirror for a milk mustache. Have children make milk or yogurt mustaches on themselves and look in the mirror. Take silly photos and create a funny classroom gallery or display!

How Many Chips? Give each child a cookie and ask them to estimate the number of chips in it. Discuss with the class estimating techniques and the best way to go about finding out how many chips are really in the cookie. Students can try to count and then (of course!) eat the cookies.

Mouse Murals. Divide the class into groups and have each one choose a favorite scene from the book. Then have the groups paint their scenes on large butcher paper. The final result will be a huge mural of the various scenes from If You Give a Mouse a Cookie, which can be hung in the hallway, the classroom, or even the cafeteria.

Mirror, Mirror in My Hand. As a class, discuss how the various characters in the stories use mirrors. From here you can also discuss symmetry in nature—for example, the human face, butterflies, snowflakes, etc. Give students a hand mirror and half of an illustration (either an image from one of the If You Give... books or a different kind of illustration found elsewhere) to experiment with symmetry. Have them complete the picture by drawing the other half. Activity Extension: Give children a drawing of half a butterfly, snowflake, or human face and ask them to draw the matching half.
On with the Show. Ask students to create puppets of the boy and the mouse from the story. Students can cut out their puppets from oak tag and glue them to craft sticks, decorate paper bags, or design another type of puppet. Then have the students create a puppet show retelling the story. The students can also use their puppets to engage in more adventures with these characters.

Mice Are Nice. Have a discussion about the concept of large and small, as well as perspective. Where would a mouse fit best? What can be used to furnish his home? Have each child glue a whole, unshelled walnut to a small piece of cardboard to keep it steady. Then, using craft items such as pipe cleaners, bits of fabric, beads, sequins, and string or thin wire, the children can design their own mouse pets. If they wish, they can create “birth certificates” naming their little friends. For an added treat, have students read stories to their mice and share a snack of cookies!

Holiday Decorations. Mouse uses paper, glue, and glitter to make ornaments to decorate a Christmas tree. Provide the same materials to your students and have them create their own holiday decorations, looking at the illustrations in the book for inspiration and ideas. Note that children do not only have to make Christmas decorations—all holidays are more fun with a bit of glitter! Activity Extension: Bring in bags of popped popcorn (unbuttered and unsalted!), large plastic needles, and string so that students can make their own decorative popcorn strings!

Movie Showing. As a special holiday treat, host a movie showing in your classroom or library. In honor of Mouse, consider showing a movie starring a mouse, such as Stuart Little, The Tale of Despereaux, or anything with Mickey Mouse. To get students excited for the big day, tell them about the movie in advance of the screening and have them create their own “Now Showing” movie posters to decorate the classroom.
If You Give a Pig a Pancake

Pig wants more than just a pancake, of course. She wants to visit the farm where she grew up, and tap-dance, and even build a tree house!

Making Sense of Our Senses. List and discuss the five senses. Provide different sensory items with which the students can experiment (for example, a cut onion for smell, sandpaper for touch, a bell for hearing, maple syrup for tasting, a copy of the book for sight). Read If You Give a Pig a Pancake to the children. Then give them a piece of paper with symbols for each sense. Read the story again and let students check off on the sheet how many senses or times a particular sense is used by Pig in the story. Activity Extension: Read the story again and have the children motion the different senses as you read the story (stick out tongues when Pig eats, cup ear when the girl plays music, etc.).

A Friendly Adventure. Pack a canvas bag or a knapsack with the various If You Give... books, a stuffed dog, cat, mouse, moose, and pig, and some items from the stories (e.g., clothes, puppets, a lunchbox) as well as a journal. Have children each take a turn having a friend over and send the knapsack home with the student whose turn it is. Friends can record their activities and adventures in the journal either through words or pictures. (Encourage them to take a photo by enclosing a disposable camera in the bag.) Students can share the journal entries with the class before handing off the bag to the next student.

Comic Creator. Re-create If You Give a Pig a Pancake in comic strip form. Draw boxes so students can see how the events in the story are linked and why the order of events is important. Then give students an opportunity to create their own comic strip using ReadWriteThink’s simple Comic Creator. Students can print and share their comic strips with the class. (To find the Comic Creator, go to www.readwritethink.org and click on Classroom Resources, then click on Student Interactives.)
If You Give a Pig a Party

After a ride on the bumper cars, a game of hide-and-seek, and a pillow fight, who has the energy for a party? Pig and her friends certainly do!

Party Time! Have a party, just like Pig! Here’s a great idea for a party game: Gather all the necessary materials—gift wrap in varying colors and textures, tape, scissors, and a prize of your choice. Before the game begins, wrap the present several times with different colors and textures of gift wrap. Gather your party guests (class) in a circle and give one child the wrapped present. Play music, and have the guests pass the present around the circle. When the music stops, the child holding the present removes a layer of wrapping paper and passes it on. The child who unwraps the last layer of the present then shares the prize with the group.

Alliteration Iterations. Introduce your students to the concept of alliteration by challenging them to think of other items beginning with the letter P that they could give Pig. Instead of a pancake or a party, how about a pickle? Or a potato? Or a plane? Activity Extension: Extend this game to the other If You Give… books by asking your students to name things beginning with the letter M that they could give Moose or Mouse, things beginning with the letter C that they could give Cat, and things beginning with the letter D that they could give Dog.

Give-a-Book Drive. Instead of giving a pancake, a party, a cupcake, a muffin, a cookie, or a donut, why not give books? Have your class sponsor a schoolwide book drive. While you set up donation bins and arrange for a local organization to accept the donated books, your students can create fliers and posters to publicize the event. Get the book drive highlighted in your school newspaper and set a goal of having one new or gently used book donated for every student in the school. After the book drive is over, make plans for delivering the books to the organization.
Mix It Up! Write out sequential parts of If You Give a Moose a Muffin on separate strips of paper. Then mix them up and arrange them (taped to the board or a large piece of paper) in random order. Read the mixed-up story with your class, and then figure out together how to put the story back in its proper order. (This can also be done by students individually. Distribute individual packets of sentence strips so that the children can work on the mix-up at their seats. They can put the story in order on pages of a blank book, and, once they’ve checked with you, they can glue the corrected sequence down and illustrate the story.)

Healthy Choices. Donuts, cupcakes, muffins, cookies, and pancakes are all fine in moderation, but remind your students that being healthy means making healthy choices. Plan a nutrition lesson for your class, teaching dietary guidelines and the importance of eating foods from all of the food groups. Challenge your students to come up with a list of healthy snacks as well as a list of dishes that incorporate all the food groups.

Moose Meteorologists. Each day, have students observe the different weather indicators: temperature, precipitation, and sky. The class can record its findings as a group on a weather calendar, and the children can then record these findings in individual folders kept at their desks. If this is begun and continued as a daily practice, students will have a terrific record as the year progresses. This record also works as a great jumping-off point for other activities centered on climates, animals, habitats, etc.

Please, Mr. Postman. Talk about how to write a friendly letter, and have the class brainstorm different elements that can be included. Have students write friendly letters to Moose (or other favorite characters in the stories) telling him something about themselves. On the reverse side, have them draw pictures from a part of the story. Activity Extension: Children can design stamps using adhesive labels, and you can start a discussion about how letters are mailed and how the United States Post Office works. Take the activity one step further by arranging a pen-pal program with another class in the school or far away.
If You Give a Cat a Cupcake

When does a cupcake with sprinkles lead to an exciting day at the beach, the park, and the museum?
When you give a cat a cupcake!

Cause and Effect. What if Cat were to ask for something other than sprinkles to go with his cupcake? If that one event were to change, would the story take an entirely different course? Explore the cause-and-effect process with your students by trying out an alternative version of Cat's story. Have your students sit in a circle while you sit in the middle holding a ball. After you say the opening words “If you give a cat a cupcake, he’ll ask for,” pass the ball to a student and have him or her fill in the next part of the story. Perhaps Cat will ask for a fork to eat his cupcake with or a bib to tie around his neck. After the student makes a suggestion, have him or her pass the ball back to you. Continue the story with the new idea. So if Cat asks for a fork, you say, “When you give him the fork, he might,” and then you pass the ball to another student, who provides the next part of the story. Keep passing the ball (and the ideas!) back and forth and see how silly and creative your students can be.

Is the Price Right? Teach your students about money and the pricing of various consumer products with this activity. Bring in pictures or actual samples of the following items from the story: a cupcake, a jar of sprinkles, a bathing suit, a pail, a treadmill, a ticket for the merry-go-round, a ticket to the science museum, and a pair of shoes. Show students one item at a time and have them guess how much each item costs. See whose guess is closest to the actual retail price. After going through the items, have students add up all the true costs to see how much Cat’s adventures would cost in your town or city.

Working Out. Cat may enjoy eating cupcakes, but he stays healthy by working out on the treadmill, lifting weights, taking karate, and rowing. Plan a day of physical fitness for your students to remind them of the importance of taking care of their bodies. Go for a walk or a jog as a class, have students complete an obstacle course, or have them play a sport, like Frisbee or kickball. Consider inviting a qualified parent volunteer to visit your class to teach aerobics, karate, tai chi, yoga, or Pilates.

Museum Scavenger Hunt. Cat visits the dinosaurs and the Hall of Apes when he goes to the science museum. Organize an informational scavenger hunt for your students to complete during a field trip to a local museum. Go to the museum in advance of the scheduled trip and create a series of questions for your students to answer based on the various exhibits and displays. If the museum includes a dinosaur exhibit or a Hall of Apes, be sure to include them in your scavenger hunt.

The Art of the Cupcake. Celebrate If You Give a Cat a Cupcake with a cupcake party! Bake cupcakes for your students, but leave the treats undecorated. Then set up a station in your classroom with frosting, sprinkles, and candies and invite each student to decorate his or her own cupcake. Alternatively, give each student a piece of card stock with an outline of a cupcake on it. Then have students decorate their cupcakes with markers, crayons, glitter, confetti, and other art materials. After students cut out their personalized creations, decorate a wall in your classroom with these delectable works of art.
If You Give a Dog a Donut

If you give a dog a donut, he'll ask for some apple juice to go with it. Then, before you can say, "Woof," Dog is off on a backyard adventure!

Costume Party. Show students the page with Dog dressed as a pirate. Ask them to describe Dog's costume (two plastic cups, a stick, and a bandanna). Challenge the students to collect household items to create a costume of their own. Tell them these items should not be purchased but instead should be items already found in their homes.

An Apple a Day. Bring in three different types of apples (e.g., Red Delicious, Granny Smith, and Golden Delicious) and cut them into slices so students can do a taste test. Make a graph of their favorite apples and have them interpret the graph by answering comparison questions (e.g., "How many more students liked Red Delicious apples than Granny Smith apples?"). Activity Extension: Expand this apple study by having students read about Johnny Appleseed, visit an apple orchard, or make homemade applesauce.

Let's Go Fly a Kite. Discuss how certain objects need air to operate. Have students design a small kite (using tissue paper and thin, flat wooden sticks), a whirligig (cutting paper in a spiral shape), or a parachute (taping strings to each corner of a napkin and attaching the strings at the bottom to a paper clip). Have students try out their creations and observe why and how air helps them operate.

Fact or Fiction? Discuss the difference between fiction and nonfiction. Ask students to describe how the boy cared for the dog in this story, and discuss why this story is considered fiction. Then ask students how to care for a real dog. Write a nonfiction story as a class about how to take care of a dog or another pet.

Batter Up. Divide the class into two teams and designate spots in the classroom for first, second, and third base and home plate. When the first team is "up," each student must step up to the plate and "bat" by answering a math question. If the student is correct, he moves to first base. Students move around the bases until each person on the team has had a turn and the runs are tallied. Then the other team takes a turn at bat. The team with the most runs scored is the winner.
If You Give... Series Activities

**Survey Says?** After reading the If You Give... books with your students, use the books to explore the concepts of surveys, data, and graphs. Poll each of your students to find out which of the books is his or her favorite. Compile the data and share it with your students in a table format. As a class, convert the data first into a bar graph and then into a pie chart, labeling both graphs appropriately.

**Your Vote Counts!** Share all of the If You Give... books with the class. Assign each book to a small group of students and then have them prepare a campaign for their book. This can include making posters about their book, preparing a brief “campaign speech” touting their book, or creating oak tag buttons or bookmarks advertising their book. Then prepare a ballot and have students vote for their favorite book. Tally or graph the election results. Ask students if they were persuaded to choose a certain book, and discuss why they think the winning book was chosen.

**If You Give a Mouse an Alphabet.** Divide a large piece of poster board or paper into twenty-six sections and label each section alphabetically with a letter. Have students take turns coming up with words from any of the If You Give... books and write the words under their corresponding letters (“B” for blackberry, “M” for mouse, moose, etc.). Discuss the letters with the fewest and/or most words. The final product can be displayed or bound and put into the class library for future use.

**Sweet Treats.** Look up a recipe for a delicious snack on www.mousecookiebooks.com or in Mouse Cookies & More: A Treasury. Bring in a copy of the recipe, along with all the necessary ingredients and baking tools. In your school’s cafeteria or kitchen, teach your students how to follow a recipe as you all make cupcakes, muffins, cookies, or pancakes together. Bon appétit!

**Story Starters.** Create a cookie-jar display in the classroom. On small papers shaped like cookies (or pancakes, muffins, cupcakes, or donuts), write creative writing ideas or topics. The children can reach in the cookie jar and pull ideas out if they are experiencing “writer’s block.” Some ideas could be: A mouse [pig, moose, cat, dog] would [not] make a great pet because...; My favorite meal would include...; If I were in charge at home, I would...; The best season of the year is... because...

**If You Give...** Have students describe the pattern author Laura Numeroff uses for the titles of the If You Give... series. Then have students brainstorm other titles that follow this pattern (for example, If You Give a Bear a Banana). Have pairs of students select one of these new titles and then compose and illustrate a story with this title.

Activities created by Mary Moriarty, a first-grade teacher in Mahopac Central Schools, Mahopac, New York; Sue Ornstein, a first-grade teacher in the Byram Hills School District in Armonk, New York; and HarperCollins Children’s Books.
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