

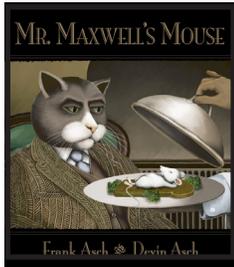


CRUCHLEY'S COLLECTION

Diana Cruchley is an award-winning educator and author, who has taught at elementary and secondary levels. Her workshops are practical, include detailed handouts, and are always enthusiastically received.

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MR. MAXWELL'S MOUSE



Mr. Maxwell is celebrating his promotion by ordering a live mouse for dinner at a fancy restaurant. How does the mouse escape his fate?

Frank and Devin Asch, Kids Can Press, 2004, ISBN 978-1-55337486-2

GETTING OUT OF A STICKY WICKET

Mouse uses several strategies to delay and evade being eaten. Have students record his various methods as a listening skill:

- Speaks to Mr. Maxwell
- Suggests salt; sneezes at pepper
- requests grace
- suggests fine glass of wine
- mentions his family in the prayer
- suggests a blindfold - then puts the tail in place

GOOD MANNERS

Excellent manners are displayed by everyone in the book: Mr. Maxwell, the waiter, and the mouse.

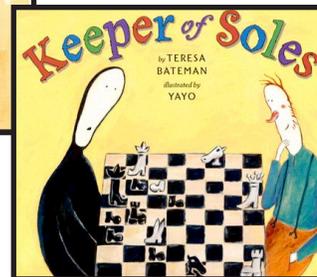
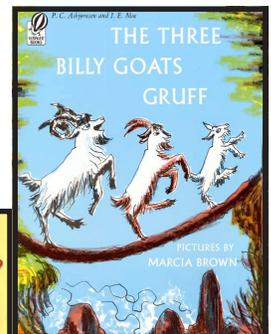
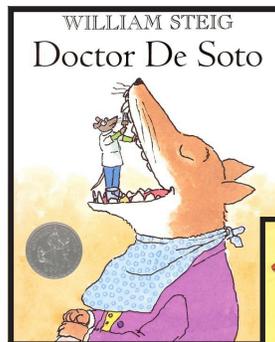
- “Good afternoon, sir,” said Clyde with a gracious bow.
- *Congratulations, sir,* said Clyde.
- “Excellent choice, sir. Would you like us to kill it for you?” asked Clyde.
- “Gesundheit,” said Mr. Maxwell. “Thank you!” said the mouse. “It’s very comforting to know that I’m serving such a courteous customer.” and so on.

Students might enjoy writing in a similar style, with a problem between two students, or a problem with a teacher and a student, or a parent, or bus driver etc., where there is a conflict, but everyone is excruciatingly polite.

AVOIDING DEATH BY BEING CLEVER

There are several picture books and classic stories about avoiding death by being very clever:

- *Dr. DeSoto*
- *Three Billy Goats Gruff*
- *The Devil and Daniel Webster (short story)*. There’s a YouTube of *The Devil and Daniel Mouse* available in 3 parts.
- *Keeper of Soles* (I did a set of lesson ideas for this one.)



PERSONAL WRITING (EXTREME WRITING)

Some topics for personal writing might be:

- Stories about favourite restaurants and restaurant foods
- Mice and other small pets (hamster/ guinea pig) - yours, at school, a friend’s
- Good manners and bad manners. What makes them?

TALKING BACK

Students might enjoy writing a story about a conversation with an inanimate object, or a pet, that provides lots of reasons not to do what you want to do with it, or otherwise delays the procedures in various ways:

- an eraser that doesn’t want to disappear
- a pet that doesn’t want to have a bath
- a ruler that has a “fear of being broken”

AN ARGUMENT

In some ways this picture book is a little “disturbing” because it is about potentially killing and eating your “live” food. There is an argument to be made perhaps for Mr. Maxwell...what would it be?

MR. MAXWELL'S MOUSE, P. 2

VOCABULARY OF RESTAURANTS

Because this picture book is about the making of a restaurant, it may be a good time to introduce some of the vocabulary of eating in a restaurant:

- Appetizer
- Amuse bouche
- Entree
- Waiter
- Menu
- Beaujolais(in the book)
- Chardonnay (in the book)
- Sorbet
- Dessert
- tip
- hors d'oeuvres
- reservation
- entre

EATING RAW MEAT

Mr. Maxwell plans to eat the mouse raw. There are some meats that we eat without cooking - usually because of the introduction of ethnic foods from around the world:

- sashimi (raw fish of variuos kinds)
- steak tartare (raw ground steak)
- raw egg (in hollandaise sauce - less done now)
- crudo (italian style sashimi. It is raw fish with lemon and olive oil)
- oysters (eaten out of the shell. Dangerous during red tide.)
- carpaccio (raw thinly sliced beef).



crudo



sashimi

FOOD ADVICE FROM YOUR PARENTS

Mr. Maxwell's mother said, "Don't fraternize with your food."

Ask the students to brainstorm in groups parental rules/ advice/ sayings about food and eating food. For each one they should be ready to present the logic behind it.

- Don't play with your food.
- Don't chew with your mouth open.
- Eat everything on your plate.
- Just try it.
- Don't bite off more than you can chew
- Easy as apple pie
- A piece of cake
- Like taking candy from a baby
- It's good for you.
- A dish fit for a king
- A watached pot never boils
- Take that with a grain of salt
- As alike a two peas in a pod
- You are what you eat
- Man does not live by bread alone



NOTE OF APOLOGY

The mouse sends a note of apology to Mr. Maxwell. Analyze it with the students to identify its characteristics, before they practise an imaginary apology themselves. It might be fun for them to write a story that ends with an apology, or write a story that is an extended apology for a whole series of mishaps.

- It must be sincerely felt and must include the words "I am sorry" or "I apologize".
- The apology cannot be followed by the word "but.."
- It should be short.
- It should identify the thing that happened and what you are apologizing for.
- It should offer to make up for it in some way, if possible.
- It should end with the hope for the future.
- It needs to include a salutation, and an ending. Dear... and Sincerely...

How good is the mouse's apology?