

Mr Men & Little Miss Big Reading Adventure Extension activities

The main aim of the *Mr Men & Little Miss Big Reading Adventure* is to get young children excited about sharing stories, and we hope that the stories and activities we have provided will do just that.

However, we think that the competition provides an excellent opportunity for further learning across all areas of literacy and beyond, so we've put together a few ideas for extension activities based around the Mr Men & Little Miss stories and activities.

Exploring characters

The Mr Men & Little Miss stories are very character-driven and therefore provide great opportunities for introducing the idea of characterisation to the children in a simple way.

Character detectives

Before you read each of the stories, project an image of the featured character onto your whiteboard, or use the mask/puppet template provided for that character. Discuss with the children what you might be able to deduce about the character based on what they can see. You could use the spotlight tool on your whiteboard to focus on the different details.

First Lines drama

Once you have read each of the stories, talk briefly with the children about what they now know about the character – were their initial assumptions right? Try a drama activity where you put the children in pairs and ask them to assume the role of one of the characters. Give one of the children a “first line” (something that their character might say), and ask the children to improvise the rest of the conversation in character.

Creating a new Mr Men or Little Miss character

Through talk and discussion, as a class or in small groups, children create their very own new Mr Men or Little Miss character, and then draw their own interpretation of this character and write a short character profile. Lower attaining children could annotate their picture with key words.

Writing a new Mr Men or Little Miss story

Task the children with writing their own Mr Men or Little Miss story based on the character they have created. Alternatively, they could write a new story featuring one of the existing characters. To support children to do this, you could, as a class, create a story map for one of the existing stories – a visual depiction of the main ideas, characters and plot – which can be used to inspire their new story.

Developing vocabulary

The Mr Men and Little Miss characters can be used as a stimulus for exploring vocabulary. You could use the characters to...

Play around with superlatives

Many of the Mr Men and Little Miss characters' names can be used to apply the "est" suffix. Ask the children to complete this sentence for various different characters:

"_____ is the _____est person in the whole world."

For example, "Mr Mean is the meanest...", or for higher attaining children, "Little Miss Busy is the busiest..." – looking at words where the spelling changes.

Learn about synonyms and antonyms

Project the poster that we have provided onto the whiteboard. Then...

- Challenge the children to come up with alternative names for some of the characters. For example, Mr Strong becomes Mr Tough, Mr Muscular or Mr Burly.
- Ask the children to imagine that Mr Topsy-Turvy has completely muddled up the world of Mr Men and Little Miss, so that everything is back to front. How might that change the characters?

Alternatively you could use the poster for a pairs-style game. Many of the Mr Men and Little Miss characters have an opposite character, and/or a similar character. Ask the children to either match up the opposite (for example Mr Tall with Mr Small), or the similar characters (Mr Happy with Mr Cheerful).

Friendship: a common theme

Across the stories featured in the Mr Men & Little Miss Big Reading Adventure, there is a common theme of friendship. In the Mr Happy story, his friends work together to throw him a surprise birthday party; Mr Bump's friends protect him from harm in his story, and in the case of Little Miss Princess, our heroine is rescued from her snowed-in castle by her helpful friend, Mr Tall.

Why not use these stories as a stimulus for discussion about friendship. What qualities does a good friend have? Why are friends important? What's the nicest thing the children have ever done for a friend? You could then, as a class, write a recipe for a "good friend" potion.

A couple of the stories also provide a basis for discussion about how, sometimes, we behave in a way that doesn't make us such a good friend. In the Little Miss Princess story, Little Miss Chatterbox is a great talker, but not such a great listener. In the Mr Tickle story, Mr Tickle had a wonderful time tickling people, but the people he tickled didn't always fare so well. Use these stories as a starting point for discussing the importance of empathy.

And finally...

Here are a couple of fun activities relating to specific stories that you might like to use.

King or Queen for a day

In the Little Miss Sunshine story, the King of Miseryland makes a list of orders that everyone must abide by. Ask the children to imagine another alternative land and then write a list of appropriate rules that they would make if they were King or Queen of that land.

To get the children in the mood you could first get them to make the crown from the handout that accompanies the story.

Party time

In the Mr Happy story, Mr Happy has a birthday party. Use the story as a stimulus for the children to share their experiences of the best party they have been to and then ask them to write a simple recount of that experience.

You could leave the Mr Happy story until last in your Mr Men & Little Miss Big Reading Adventure, taking the opportunity to finish off the challenge with a party of your own...