

BUG *in a* VACUUM



Mélanie Watt



EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



About the Book

A bug flies through an open door into a house, through a bathroom, across a kitchen and bedroom and into a living room ... where its entire life changes with the switch of a button. Sucked into the void of a vacuum bag, this little bug moves through denial, bargaining, anger, despair and eventually acceptance—the five stages of grief—as it comes to terms with its fate. Will there be a light at the end of the tunnel? Will there be dust bunnies in the void? This funny, suspenseful and poignant look at the travails of a bug trapped in a vacuum can be used in a number of ways, including

- Exploring concepts such as perspective, survival, adventure, courage, fear, loss, fate, emotion and feelings
- As an instructional tool for different genres of writing
- As an entertaining read-aloud

Where applicable, activities have been aligned with Common Core State Standards.

About the Author

MÉLANIE WATT is the bestselling creative genius behind many beloved picture books for children, including the Scaredy Squirrel series, the Chester series, *You're Finally Here!*, *Have I Got a Book for You!* and *Augustine*. Mélanie's books have received numerous starred reviews from journals such as *Publishers Weekly* and *Kirkus*, and have won many state awards in the US, including the Virginia Readers' Choice Award, North Carolina's Children's Book Award and Maryland's Black-Eyed Susan Award. In Canada, she is a multiple winner of the OLA's Blue Spruce Award and the Ruth & Sylvia Schwartz Children's Book Award. The Scaredy Squirrel animated television series based on her books airs on the Cartoon Network in the US and YTV in Canada. Mélanie lives in Montreal, Quebec.

Links

WWW.PENGUINRANDOMHOUSE.CA

WWW.MELANIEWATT.BLOGSPOT.CA



Pre-Reading Discussion / Activities

- Look at the cover of the book. What do you think will happen with the bug and the vacuum? Do you think the story will have a happy ending?
- Is the bug flying into or out of the vacuum? How do you know?
- Do the illustrations on the front and back covers of the book remind you of anything?
- If you were a bug, what are some of the dangers you might encounter on a daily basis?
- Write about times when you felt denial, bargaining, despair, anger and acceptance.

(SL.K.1, SL.K.6, SL.1.1, SL.2.1, SL.3.1)

Learning Activities



1. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Vocabulary to introduce and/or review: **glitch, denial, disbelief, bargaining, despair, acceptance.**
- Who are the main characters in the story? How would you describe them?
- What is the problem in the story that needs to be solved? How is it solved?
- What life-changing event does the bug experience?
- Why does the vacuum cleaner stop working? What happens to it?
- What kinds of things does the bug see while trapped in the vacuum?
- How does the story begin and end? Where do you think the bug will go to next?
- Why do you think the author refers to the bug as “it” and not as a “he” or “she”?



(RL.K.1, RL.K.3, RL.1.1, RL.1.3, RL.2.1, RL.2.3, RL.3.1, RL.3.3, SL.K.1, SL.K.2, SL.K.6, SL.1.1, SL.1.2, SL.2.1, SL.2.2, SL.3.1)

2. JOURNEY OF A BUG

- Every story needs a clear beginning, middle and ending. Break the story into three parts. Using drawings, writing or a combination of the two, summarize what happened in the beginning, middle and ending of the story. Remember the difference between retelling and summarizing; when you summarize, you don't need to include all of the details, just the main points.
- Introduce and/or review the concept of a bird's eye view map. Draw a bird's eye view map of the house in the story. Label different rooms and include some of the bigger pieces of furniture or items that play a role in the story. The exact location of the rooms in the house is not known so not everybody's map will look the same. How does the illustration show that the bug is moving? Use the same technique to show the journey the bug took from the beginning of the story (“The bug started here.”) to when it is picked up at the curb. Younger students can work together as a class to draw their map.
- What are three different words used by the author to describe the flight of the bug (soared, buzzed, zigzagged)? What action would you use to describe what these words mean? What are some other words that might describe how a bug flies around?

- Once the bug is sucked up into the vacuum, the story flips back and forth between showing what is happening inside the vacuum to what is happening outside the vacuum. Select your favorite scene from the middle or ending of the story (i.e., when the bug is trapped), and on a paper divided into two, show what is happening from two different perspectives: inside and outside the vacuum. Explain aloud to a partner, small group or the class what is happening in your picture and why it is your favorite part.
- Use both the illustrations and text to make a list of items (some recognizable, some not) that the bug sees once trapped inside the vacuum. What might be found in your vacuum at home?
- Do you think the bug learned anything from this experience? Design a poster that warns other bugs about what they can do to prevent a similar experience from happening to them.
- The story begins and ends with almost the same line. Why do you think the author chose to begin and end the story this way?

(RL.K.1, RL.K.3, RL.K.7, RL.1.1, RL.1.3, RL.1.7, RL.2.1, RL.2.5, RL.2.7, RL.3.1, RL.3.7, SL.K.6)

3. THE OTHER CHARACTER

- Besides the bug, who is the other main character in the story? What is his name? When does he enter and leave the story? What is his problem that needs to be solved? How does he try to solve the problem?
- What role does the dog play in the bug's ultimate escape from a tragic fate? What happens to the dog's toy?
- Retell the story in drawings, writing and/or aloud but tell the story from the dog's perspective. Try to include all the important events in the story but remember that the dog's perspective would be different from the bug or third person narrator.
- The illustrations play a key role in telling the story of the bug and the vacuum. Find three examples in the story where the illustration (not the text) gives the reader important information.



(RL.K.1, RL.K.2, RL.K.3, RL.K.7, RL.1.1, RL.1.2, RL.1.3, RL.1.7, RL.2.1, RL.2.6, RL.2.7, RL.3.1, RL.3.3, RL.3.7, RL.4.1, W.1.3)



4. FIVE STAGES OF GRIEF

- Once inside the vacuum, the bug experiences many emotions. Re-read the parts of the story when the bug is trapped and make a list of all the emotions you think he may be feeling. Refer directly to the illustrations and text to support your thinking.
- “The five stages of grief, also known as the Kübler-Ross model, introduced in 1969, are a series of emotions commonly experienced when facing a life changing event.” According to this theory, what are the five stages of grief? What life changing event did the bug experience? How does the bug's behavior demonstrate each of the five stages? What life changing event did the dog experience? How does the dog's experience and behavior connect to the five stages?

(RL.K.1, RL.1.1, RL.2.1, RL.2.3, RL.3.1, RL.3.3, RL.4.1)

5. READ (AND WRITE) ALL ABOUT IT!

- Does the reader know what kind of a bug the main character is in the story? What do you think it is? Explain your thinking.
- What is a biography? Imagine you have been asked to write a biography of the bug in the story. As a class, in partners or individually, research some basic facts about the type of bug you guess the bug in the story to be. Write an imagined biography of the bug, including the incident with the vacuum. Include information from interviews with other living things that know the bug. Keep in mind that most bugs don't live very long!
- What is a blog? If the bug had a blog, what would his entry on the day of the vacuum incident say?
- Write a newspaper article about the famous bug and vacuum incident. Include first-hand accounts (from the dog, the homeowner, the garbage collector, the birds, etc.) about the incident and perhaps include a few words from the bug himself. Alternatively, prepare a TV or radio news report to broadcast to the class, in small groups or with partners.

(W.1.2, W.1.3, W.2.2, W.2.3, W.3.2, W.3.3, W.4.2, W.4.3)

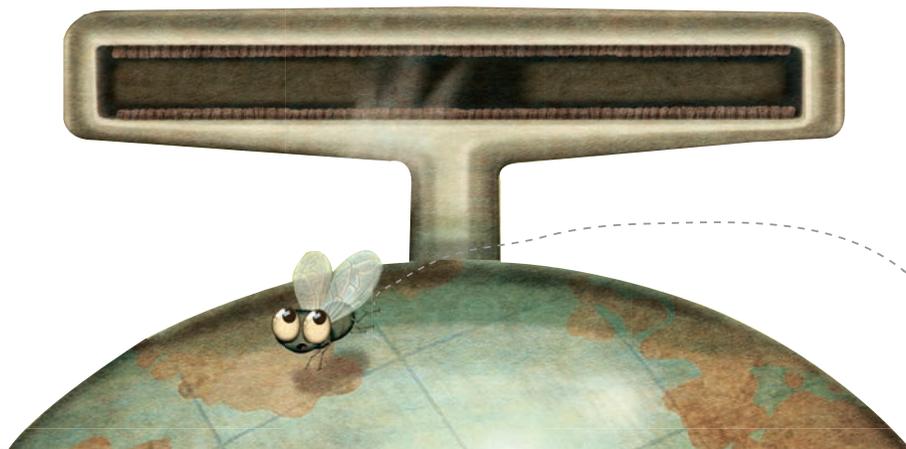
6. WORD PLAY

- What is a noun, a verb and an adjective?
- Many words have more than one meaning, often depending on what role they play in a sentence (i.e., part of speech). Both the words “bug” and “vacuum” are examples of words that have multiple meanings. What two definitions for each of these words are given at the beginning of the book? What parts of speech are they? Can you think of any other meanings for the word “bug?” When you are reading a sentence, how do you know which meaning the writer intended? In a two minute timed exercise, make a list of all of the words you can think of that have multiple meanings.
- “It was on top of the world when it happened.” What does this line literally mean in the story? “On top of the world” is also an example of an idiom. This is when a phrase has a figurative meaning. “On top of the world” is a way of saying that you feel wonderful, fantastic or elated! Locate the following idioms in the story and describe their meaning based on how they are used in the story:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • Wipes out the ugly truth | • My life's a mess |
| • Ready for a clean slate | • I'm at the end of my rope |
| • I wouldn't hurt a fly | • No light at the end of the tunnel |
| • Time flies | • My dreams are crushed |
| • Cleaning up my act | • Thanks for lending an ear |

Select one of the idioms from the list. Divide a piece of paper into two sections. In the top section, draw the literal meaning of the idiom. On the bottom section, explain its figurative meaning.

(L.3.1, L.3.5, L.4.5)



Appendix: Common Core State Standards



READING: LITERATURE

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.1** With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.2** With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.3** With prompting and support, identify characters, settings and major events in a story.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.7** With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts).
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.1** Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.2** Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.3** Describe characters, settings and major events in a story, using key details.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.7** Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting or events.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.1** Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.3** Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.5** Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.6** Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.7** Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting or plot.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.1** Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.3** Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.7** Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.1** Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

WRITING

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.2** Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic and provide some sense of closure.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.3** Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order and provide some sense of closure.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.2** Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points and provide a concluding statement or section.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.3** Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order and provide a sense of closure.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details and clear event sequences.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

Appendix: Common Core State Standards (continued)

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.1** Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.2** Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.6** Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.1** Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.2** Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.1** Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.2** Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

LANGUAGE

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.3.1** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.3.5** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.5** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

