

Monica Kulling Illustrated by David Parkins

Aligns with
Common Core
State Standards

TEACHER'S GUIDE



DEAR EDUCATOR

In the Bag! Margaret Knight Wraps it Up is the story of a woman who devoted herself to inventing. Best known for her clever, practical paper bag, she had ninety inventions to her credit and over twenty patents upon her death in 1914. With its playful, informative text and lively illustrations, *In the Bag!* is a splendid introduction to biography and to an amazing and inspiring woman.

In the Bag! can be used in the classroom in a number of ways, including

- Exploring conceptual and thematic connections such as perseverance, family, role, creativity, originality, history, innovation, form, function
- Introducing the genre of biography
- Enriching a science and technology unit
- As a whole class read-aloud or for independent reading and/or research

This activity guide includes a variety of discussion questions as well as whole class, small group, and independent activities and prompts to elicit a meaningful understanding of the text for children from five to eight years of age. The suggested activities can be adapted to suit the needs of your students. Where applicable, activities have been aligned with Common Core State Standards.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The third book in the Great Idea Series of early-reader biographies introduces the fascinating Margaret Knight. Known as Mattie, she was different from most American girls living in 1850. She loved to make things with wood and made the best kites and sleds in town. Her father died when she was only three and, by the time she was twelve, she was working at the local cotton mill alongside her two older brothers. One day she saw a worker get injured by a shuttle that had come loose from the giant loom, and the accident inspired her to invent a stop-motion device. It was to be the first of her many inventions. Margaret devoted her life to inventing and is best known for the clever, practical paper bag.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Monica Kulling was born in Vancouver, British Columbia. She received a BA in creative writing from the University of Victoria. She has published over forty fiction and nonfiction books for children, including picture books, poetry, and biographies. She is best known for introducing biography to children just learning to read and has written about Harriet Tubman, Houdini, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Amelia Earhart, among others. Monica Kulling lives in Toronto, Canada.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

David Parkins is the award-winning illustrator of over fifty children's books. He began his career at Dyfed College of Art in Wales, studying wildlife illustration. He then went to Lincoln College of Art for three years, and has been a freelance illustrator since his graduation in 1979. He spent several years at the beginning of his career producing illustrations for educational publishers, and has earned most of his keep drawing for the British cartoon, *The Beano*. David Parkins lives in Ontario with his wife and daughter.



PRE-READING DISCUSSION / ACTIVITIES

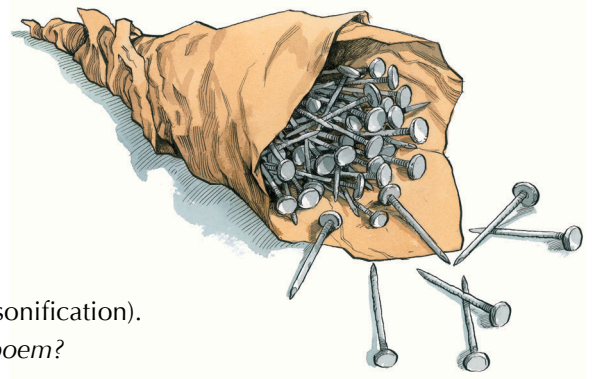
1. Introduce or review the genre of biography with the class. Take out a few simple biographies from the school library as examples. Give students the opportunity to quickly skim some of the books. Introduce the idea of biography told in a picture-book format. As a class, make a list of the essential elements of a biography.
2. Discuss the difference between fiction and nonfiction. *Can a book have both fiction and nonfiction elements in it? Can you think of an example of this?*
3. Write out the title, *In the Bag! Margaret Knight Wraps it Up*. Cut up the title into its individual words and place into an envelope. Repeat this a few times so you have enough for one envelope for every small group. Inform the groups that they have been given a title of an inventor's biography and they have two minutes to put together the words to form a title. Once the title has been solved, ask students to hypothesize what the biography is about. Provide the following guiding discussion questions:
 - o Who is Margaret Knight?
 - o What did she invent?
 - o What does the title mean?
4. Take a picture walk of the book. *What is the approximate time period in which Margaret lived? How do you know? Why do you think that there were not very many successful female inventors in Margaret's lifetime?*
5. An inventor must be careful to protect their great idea. *What step should they take to make sure nobody else takes credit for it?*

(RI.1.7, RL.2.7)

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. Bag Magic

- Read the poem "Bag Magic."
 - o How many stanzas are in the poem?
 - o The author writes about the bag as if it were a live person (personification).
What are three examples of how the bag is personified in the poem?
 - o Why was Margaret Knight's bag special?



2. Margaret's Great Idea

- *In the Bag!* tells the story not of Margaret Knight's first invention but her first patented invention. Retell the ups and downs of her story in a different format (e.g., short skit, comic book, poem, painting, model, song, etc.). Younger students can create a wordless picture book. Make sure to include the following information:
 - o What was the patent for?
 - o What problem did she want to solve?
 - o How did her idea improve people's lives?
 - o What steps did she take to design her invention?
- As a class, discuss
 - o How often do you use paper bags?
 - o What do you use instead? Why?
 - o How could the bags used today in stores be improved upon?
- In small groups, design a new kind of bag that will fulfill a certain need. Consider materials, shape, and size. Present your design to the rest of the class as if you were applying for a patent. (RI.1.1, RI.2.1)



LEARNING ACTIVITIES (continued)



3. Obstacles

- Margaret faced many obstacles as a young girl. *What were some of the challenges she faced?*
- As a class, brainstorm as many words as you can think of that would describe Margaret's personality. Write the words on sticky notes and have each student or pairs of students select one of the words. Using examples from Margaret's story, write a paragraph explaining how this word applies to Margaret. Alternatively, each student or pair of students draws a picture of Margaret exemplifying one of the chosen words without revealing which word has been selected. Explain what is happening in the picture and challenge the class to guess what word you are trying to show.
- *How was Margaret's life as a child similar and different to your own experiences?* Use a Venn diagram to record your thoughts. Younger students can use pictures to show the differences and similarities.

4. Characters

- In small groups or as a class, reread *In the Bag!* Make a list of the people who played a role in Margaret's life. Discuss whether each of the people listed played a major or minor role in Margaret's life. Give reasons for your thinking citing evidence from the book.
- State three reasons in writing as to why Charles Annan thought he would be able to get away with stealing Margaret's idea.

(W.2.1)

5. Stop-motion Device

- Margaret didn't invent the paper bag but, instead, she created a new kind of paper bag. *What was her innovation? Why do you think it became so popular?*
- Margaret's first invention was a stop-motion safety device that helped keep the mill workers safe. This was the first of many inventions to come. Using at least three different resources, research some of Margaret's other inventions. *Which inventions do you feel were most important? Why?*
- Using a dictionary, determine the difference between an innovation and an invention. *Were Margaret's ideas inventions, innovations, or both?*
- Select one of Margaret's inventions and write a description of how the invention worked. Create a model of her invention using found materials.
- Margaret kept an inventions notebook that documented all of her ideas. After researching some of Margaret's inventions, recreate what you think her invention book may have looked like.

(W.1.1, W.2.2, W.2.7, W.3.1, W.3.2, W.3.7)



LEARNING ACTIVITIES (continued)

6. Patents

- As a class, write a definition for the word “patent.” Discuss
 - How do you think Margaret felt when she learned Charles Annan had already applied for the patent?
 - Why did Margaret have to fight so hard to prove that the patent for the paper-bag machine was hers?
 - In the end, how did she convince the judge?
- Pretend you are Margaret standing before the court. Write a speech that would convince the court that you were responsible for the idea.
- Visit the following website to see the patent model for Margaret’s paper bag making machine:
<http://www.smithsonianlegacies.si.edu/objectdescription.cfm?ID=92>

(SL.2.4)

7. Role Model

- Margaret was a role model for other independent and ambitious women in her time. What personality traits and achievements may have acted as inspiration to other women?
- For each of these traits, try to think of somebody in your own life who exemplifies them. Select one of these people and paint their portrait. Consider using the pen, ink, and watercolor style David Parkins used in the book. Underneath the portrait, briefly explain how they exemplify the trait.

8. Reflection

- Some of the most successful inventors failed many times before achieving success. It took two years for Margaret to create a wooden model that would successfully make a flat-bottom bag. How do you think she felt each time she failed? How do you think she felt once she succeeded?
- Write a short story about an experience you had when you failed more than once before succeeding. If you can’t think of a personal experience, interview a classmate or family member to learn and write about one of their experiences. Consider using a story map to plan out the story before writing the first draft. Ensure the story includes a solid beginning, middle, and end.

(W.1.3, W.1.8, W.2.3, W.3.3)



WRAP-UP DISCUSSION AND EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Create a paper bag journal (instructions can be found online). Fill the journal with text and pictures about Margaret’s life as told in the book.
2. Revisit some of the ideas from the classroom discussion that was had before reading Margaret’s story about why there were so few successful female inventors. *What did you learn from Margaret’s experiences? Were any of your beliefs confirmed to be true or false?*
3. Revisit what was discussed in the pre-reading discussion about what would need to be done if attempting to produce a new product. *What have you learned from Margaret’s story?*
4. At the beginning of the book, we learn that Margaret made the best kites in town. Create a kite celebrating Margaret Knight and her achievements!



PRAISE FOR *In the Bag! Margaret Knight Wraps It Up*

"... In clean, straightforward prose, Kulling explains how Knight's interest in and knack for machines was present even at a young age... Paired with Parkins's detailed and handsome pen-and-ink illustrations, the book focuses on Knight's invention of a paper bag-manufacturing machine and her legal fight to protect her creation after her idea was stolen."

– ***Publishers Weekly***

"... a delightful picture book biography of a little known inspiring woman... I love stories about smart and determined young women and Kulling's lively text tells an inspiring story about this determined woman who 'never gave up without a fight.' David Parkins' charming illustrations are filled with carefully drawn period details and engaging humor... Don't miss this really excellent book that opens the door to a multitude of curricular uses."

– **Bookends, a *Booklist* Blog**

"This is the wonderful story of an early female inventor. Margaret Knight began inventing at the age of 12, when she was working in a cotton mill and created a device that made looms safer. But her most famous invention is one we're all familiar with – she created a machine that made flat-bottomed paper bags."

– **Ten Great Science Books for Kids, *Smithsonia.com***

LINKS

www.monickulling.ca

www.davidparkins.com

www.women-inventors.com/Margaret-Knight.asp

OTHER BOOKS IN THE GREAT IDEA SERIES:

It's a Snap! George Eastman's First Photograph

All Aboard! Elijah McCoy's Steam Engine

Going Up! Elisha Otis's Trip to the Top

Making Contact! Marconi Goes Wireless

Spic-and-Span! Lillian Gilbreth's Wonder Kitchen

To the Rescue! Garrett Morgan Underground

Clean Sweep! Frank Zamboni's Ice Machine

Zap! Nikola Tesla Takes Charge

AWARDS FOR *In the Bag! Margaret Knight Wraps It Up*

- Finalist, Canada Council for the Arts' Governor General's Literary Award – Children's Illustration
- Finalist, *ForeWord Reviews'* Book of the Year Awards - Juvenile Nonfiction
- Finalist, Ontario Library Association's Silver Birch Express Award
- Finalist, Ontario Library Association's Golden Oak Award
- Honor Book, The Simon Wiesenthal Center - Museum of Tolerance Library and Archive's Once Upon A World Children's Book Award
- Top Ten List, Feminist Task Force of the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association's Amelia Bloomer Project
- Preliminary List, Children's Literature Roundtables of Canada's Information Book Award
- Nominated, Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Shining Willow Award
- Selected, *Smithsonian Magazine's* Ten Great Science Books for Kids
- Selected, Ontario Library Association's Best Bets List of Top Ten Canadian Children's Book in Non Fiction
- Starred Selection, The Canadian Children's Book Centre's Best Books for Kids & Teens
- Selected, Canadian Toy Testing Council's Great Book for Children



APPENDIX: Common Core State Standard

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.1** Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.7** Use the illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.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.2.7** 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.W.1.1** Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, 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.1.8** With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.1** Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.
- 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.2.7** Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations).
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.1** Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.
- 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.3.7** Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.4** Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences.