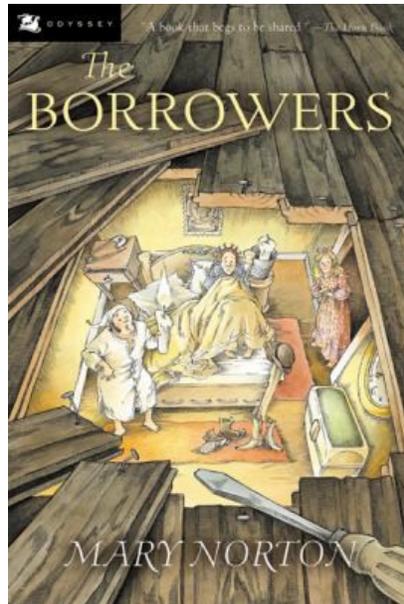


The Borrowers



By

Mary Norton

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

The Borrowers

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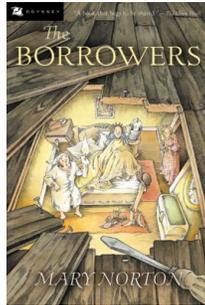


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Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two chapters of **The Borrowers** and is comprised of five of the following different activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language Activities
- Extension Activities

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters . . . respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking. Students will also be expected to provide clear answers to questions and well-constructed explanations. It is critical as well that students be able to relate events and the feelings of characters to their own lives and experiences and describe their own interpretation of a particular passage.

A strength of the unit is that students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A **portfolio cover** is included (p.7) so that students may organize their work and keep it all in one place. A **Student Checklist** is also included (p.6) so that a record of completed work may be recorded.

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include fantasy, societal prejudices, families and friendships, loyalty, trust and survival, the early 1900s.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words / phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homonyms
3. Identifying / creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *foreshadowing*.
7. Identify *personification*
8. Use of singular / plural nouns
9. Listing compound words
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identification of root words
13. Identify/create *similes*
14. Identify *anagrams*

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Complete Five W's Chart
4. Identify *cliffhangers*

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Relating personal experiences

Creative and Critical Thinking

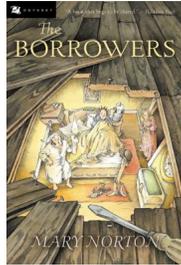
1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Write a description of personal feelings
6. Write a book review
7. Complete an Observation Sheet

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Create an Information Card
4. Design a cover for the novel
5. Create a comic strip

The Borrowers

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Synopsis

Underneath the kitchen floor is the world of the Borrowers – Pod and Homily Clock and their daughter, Arrietty. In their tiny home, matchboxes double as roomy dressers and postage stamps hang on the walls like paintings. Whatever the Clocks need they simply *borrow* from the *human beans* who live above them. It's a comfortable life. Comfortable – but boring if you're a kid.

Only Pod is allowed to venture into the house above, because the danger of being seen by a human is too great. Borrowers who are seen by humans are never seen again. Yet Arrietty won't listen. There is a human boy up there, and Arrietty is desperate for a friend... (The publisher)

A complete synopsis and other helpful reviews can be found on the following website:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Borrowers

(Wikipedia plot summary may contain spoilers)

Author Biography

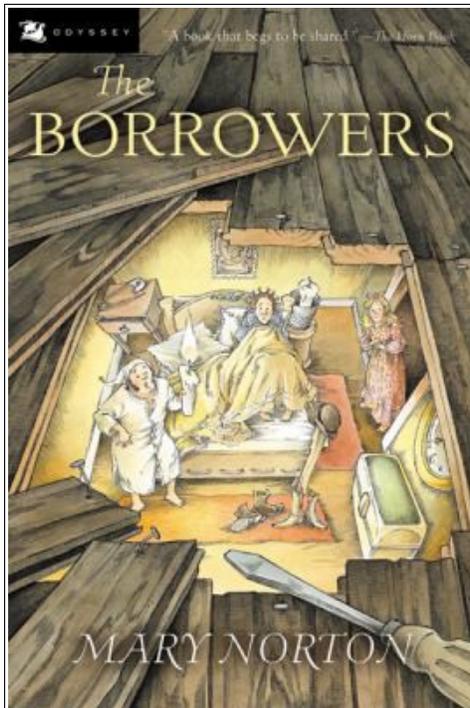
Mary Norton

Mary Norton was born in Leighton Buzzard, England in 1903. Her father was a doctor and she was raised in an old Georgian house which apparently is the setting of *The Borrowers*. In 1952 she won the Carnegie Medal recognizing *The Borrowers* as the outstanding children's book by a British subject.



In 1927 she married Robert Norton and together they had four children. The Disney movie, *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* was based on her novel, *Bed-Knob and Broomstick*. Mary Norton died of a stroke on 29 August 1992.

The Borrowers

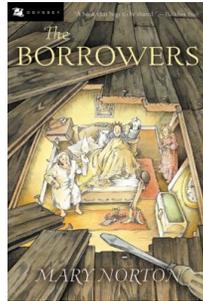


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Name: _____

The Borrowers

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Chapter 1-2



Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of *The Borrowers* is Arriety Clock, a very likeable young girl, who experiences many exciting adventures as the story unfolds. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. What do you think makes for an especially interesting **protagonist**?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

marmalade	hassock	hesitate	ancestors
interval	shrouded	intersecting	conceited
inverted	vicar		

1. That old, deserted mansion is _____ in mystery.
2. I am positive that my _____ came to Canada from Scotland.
3. Please don't spread the _____ too thickly on your toast.
4. When my son was at summer camp and he ran out of money, he didn't _____ to call home and ask for more.

5. Did you notice that the _____ lines on the graph were at right angles?
6. After her facelift, Princess Matilda became more and more _____.
7. Patrick quickly _____ the test tube, allowing the liquid to run out onto the desk.
8. We did not expect the _____ to visit so soon after my grandfather's funeral.
9. The _____ of time between goals seemed like an eternity to the fans.
10. She removed the _____ from behind the sofa and gently placed her doll upon it.

Questions



1. What event causes Mrs. May to introduce the topic of the Borrowers to Kate?

2. What additional explanation might there be for all the lost safety pins , needles, pencils and such?

3. Where had Mrs. May's brother seen the Borrowers?

4. According to the Bowerers, for what reason were human beings put on this earth?

5. The hole used by Pod, the Borrower, to enter his home was under the _____, below the _____.

6. What had Pod built to keep out the mice?

7. Research: In Pod's home there were several portraits of **Queen Victoria** as a girl. Find out what country Queen Victoria was born in; what years she reigned; what her husband's name was.

8. Match each character from these chapters with the correct description:

a	Mrs. May
b	Kate
c	Arrietty
d	Homily
e	Mrs. Driver
f	Pod

1	She loved to read and write in her diary.
2	Great-Aunt Sophy's cook. Ruled the house.
3	Her brother met the Borrowers.
4	Only he knew the passageways and could open the gates. A shoemaker.
5	Could not even say the alphabet. Pod's wife.
6	Mrs. May taught her to crochet.

9. What impressed you most about the home of the Borrowers?

10. How is the **setting** different from the start of Chapter One to the end of Chapter Two?



Language Activity

A. Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human. Here's one of many examples in *The Borrowers*: "... and to fill with a strange silvery light, their own twilight; there is a kind of sadness in them then, but as a child it was a sadness Kate liked". Here the author **personifies** the twilight (it is sad).

Why do you think personification is a popular literary device used by many authors?

Create your own example of personification.

B. Translate: The author states: *They bathed in a small tureen, which once had held pâté de foie gras.*

1. What is a **tureen** ? _____

2. Translate the phrase **pâté de foie gras** _____

C. Investigate: Choose either #1 or #2 to research.

1. Some of the books Arrietty owns are "**Tom Thumb**" editions. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet research the origins of Tom Thumb (Hint: he's been a part of English literature since 1821.)

2. In Chapter One a painting of the **Battle of Waterloo** is mentioned. Find out the following about this battle. The armies of what two countries met on this battlefield? Name the main general from each side. Which country won the battle?

Extension Activity

Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A storyboard can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel. Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first 2 chapters of *The Borr*

1	2
3	4
5	6