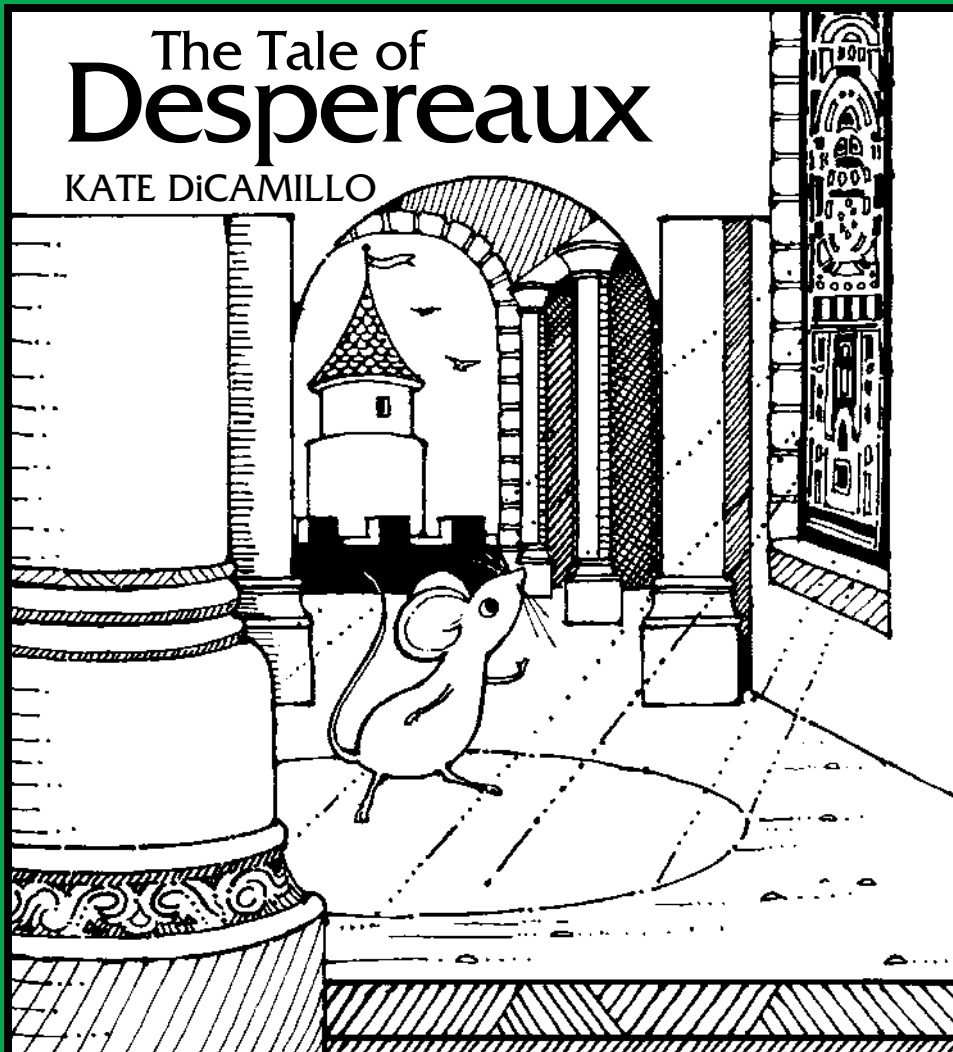


Novel·Ties



The Tale of **Despereaux**

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A Study Guide

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LEARNING LINKS

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide to use in conjunction with the book *The Tale of Despereaux* consists of lessons for guided reading. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel at its reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for reading development by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits, formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques, will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

CHAPTERS 1 – 8

Vocabulary: Draw a line from each word on the left to its definition on the right. Then use the numbered words to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

- | | |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1. rodents | a. behave like others |
| 2. siblings | b. move hurriedly |
| 3. conform | c. mammals that gnaw |
| 4. indulge | d. difficult experience |
| 5. scurry | e. brothers and sisters |
| 6. ordeal | f. yield to |

.....

- Mice, rats, squirrels, and porcupines are all common forms of _____.
- Climbing the steep mountain on a hot summer day was a terrible _____.
- If I _____ in rich food before bedtime, I know I will have bad dreams.
- As soon as we turned on the light, we heard the mice _____ back into their hole.
- Soldiers must dress in the same way and _____ to the same set of rules.
- My parents, _____, and I always enjoy our summer family vacation at the beach.

Read to find out how Despereaux Tilling got his name.

Questions:

- Why did the mother mouse name her last baby Despereaux?
- Why did Despereaux’s siblings and other relatives view him as such a disappointment?
- What amazing discovery did Despereaux make when Merlot took him into the castle library?
- Why did Lester call a special meeting of the Mouse Council?
- How did Despereaux break two of the most basic and ancient of all mouse rules? Why did he break each rule?
- Why did King Philip object so strenuously to Princess Pea’s behavior?

Chapters 1 – 8 (cont.)

- III. *Simile*—A simile is a figure of speech in which two unlike objects are compared using the words “like” or “as.” For example:

“Oh,” he said, “it [music] sounds like heaven. It smells like honey.”

What is music compared to in this simile?

How do these similes help you understand Despereaux’s feelings about music?

- IV. *Personification*—Personification is a figure of speech in which an author grants life-like qualities to a nonhuman object. For example:

The April sun, weak but determined, shone through a castle window and from there squeezed itself through a small hole in the wall and placed one golden finger on the little mouse.

What is being personified?

Why is this better than saying, “The sun shone on the mouse”?

Internet Activity:

Learn more about castles by visiting these sites on the Internet:

<http://www.castlesontheweb.com>

<http://42explore.com/castle.htm>

Share the information by drawing a diagram, building a model, or writing a report.

Writing Activity:

Despereaux’s love for music is such a powerful force that he loses his head and acts against his mouse instincts to keep himself hidden from humans. Write about a time when you felt swept away by music. Tell what you were listening to and how this music made you feel.