



Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs

by Judi Barrett, illustrated by Ron Barrett

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Teacher's Guide
Written By Kathleen Greenholdt

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Synopsis

The narrator and her brother Henry listen as their grandfather spins a tall tale:

"In the town of Chewandswallow, food came from the sky in place of rain, snow, clouds, and storms. There were no food stores in the town, because people just went outside to get all the food they needed."

Things were fine until the "weather took a turn for the worse.

Unappetizing, unhealthy food began to come down, and larger and larger portions caused damage to buildings and the environment.

Even the school was closed when a huge pancake fell on it.

Finally, the townspeople decided to leave Chewandswallow because it was too dangerous to stay. They built rafts out of stale bread and peanut butter and sailed off to a new land.

They eventually found a town where they could live, and they built homes out of the stale bread rafts. For food, they had to learn to use the supermarket.

The day after the grandfather tells the story, the narrator and her brother go sledding. They cannot help noticing, however, that the snowy hill with the sun rising above looks like a giant serving of mashed potatoes with butter.

Timeline

Beginning The narrator and her brother, Henry, listen to their grandfather tell a tall tale

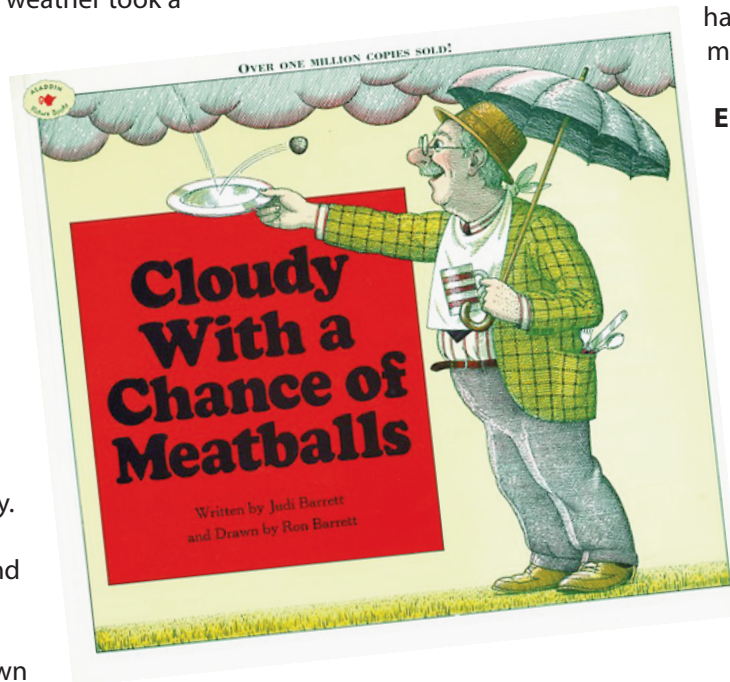
about the town of Chewandswallow.

Middle

The children hear the story of Chewandswallow, where food came down from the sky instead of ordinary weather. All was well until the weather got worse and bad, outsize food starting falling, damaging buildings and causing problems. Finally, the townspeople moved away and had to learn to use the supermarket.

End

The children go out to play. They notice that the snowy hill in the sun looks like mashed potatoes and butter.



Author/Illustrator Sketch

Judith Barrett was born in 1941, and resides in New York City. She received a bachelor's degree in advertising design from the Pratt Institute in 1962. In addition to writing children's books, she has worked as an art teacher, a free-lance designer, and a *New York Times* reviewer of children's books. Ms. Barrett has received several awards for her contributions to children's literature, including the Children's Book Showcase Award from the Children's Book Council and the American Institute of Graphic Arts Book Show Award, both for *Benjamin's 365 Birthdays* (1973-74), which was illustrated by Ron Barrett.

Ron Barrett is married to the author. Born in 1937, he received a bachelor's degree from the Pratt Institute in

1959. He has worked as a children's book illustrator, an advertising agency art director, a college instructor, and the consulting art director and editor of the *Electric Company Magazine*. He has exhibited his artwork at The Louvre in Paris, France.

Critic's Corner

Cloudy With A Chance Of Meatballs was written in 1978 and has been a best-seller ever since. The book was honored by the American Institute of Graphic Arts Book Show Awards.

"Barrett's books for children have received high praise for quality of text and illustration. The greatest share of her books have been created with her illustrator husband, Ron Barrett ... A sense of whimsy is the common element in [her] work ... [Her] stories serve as more than entertainment, however. Each conveys some message to young readers about the state of the world around them." (From *Something About The Author* 26, Gale Research Company, pp.34-35)

Selected Other Works by Judi Barrett

Old MacDonald Had an Apartment House, 1969
Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothing, 1970
An Apple a Day, 1973
Benjamin's 365 Birthdays, 1974
Peter's Pocket, 1974
I Hate to Take a Bath (illustrated by Charles B. Slackman), Four Winds Press, 1975
I Hate to Go to Bed (illustrated by Ray Cruz), Four Winds Press, 1977
The Wind Thief (illustrated by Diane Dawson), 1977
Animals Should Definitely Not Act Like People, 1980
I'm Too Small, You're Too Big, 1981
A Snake Is Totally Tail, 1983
What's Left?, 1983
Pickles Have Pimples, and Other Silly Statements, 1986
Pickles to Pittsburgh: The Sequel to Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs, 1997
Old MacDonald Had an Apartment House, 1998
The Things That Are Most in the World, 1998
I Know Two Who Said Moo: A Counting and Rhyming Book, 2000
Which Witch Is Which?, 2001

Bibliography

Something About The Author 26, Gale Research Company, pp.34-35)

"Judi Barrett at Simon & Schuster," <www.simonsays.com/content/destination.cfm?tab=1&pid=353372>
"Judi Barrett," <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judi_Barrett>

General Objectives

1. To learn about tall tales
2. To explore nutrition and cooking
3. To learn about weather and weather reports
4. To examine the effects of human actions on the environment
5. To show the versatility of men's and women's roles in life

Specific Objectives

1. To show the value of the grandfather as a part of his grandchildren's lives
2. To explore the non-traditional family in the book

Cross-Curricular Resources

"SCORE Teacher Guide, *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*," <www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/SCORE/Cloudy/cloudydg.htm>
"Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs Lesson Plan," <www.teachnet-lab.org/miami/2004/sardinas/index.htm>

Meaning/Spelling Study

incident - an unusual event

potato - (-oes)

refrigerators

frankfurters

spaghetti

pasta - the noodles in Italian dishes

chaos - lacking all sense of order

Gorgonzola cheese - a blue-veined cheese with a strong smell

mayonnaise

broccoli

brussels sprouts - buds on a type of cabbage stem

maple syrup

stomachache

tomato (-oes)

tornado (-oes or -os)

necessities - things that are badly needed

Class Discussion Questions

1. Show particular pictures and passages in the book where food replaces the following: rainstorms, snow, tornado, and fog.
(Examples: picture with giant Jell-O and accompanying passage show a rainstorm that eventually clears; cream cheese and jelly sandwiches replace snow-drifts; tomatoes become a tornado; and pea soup picture replaces fog, because pea soup is so thick.)
2. Do people in Chewandswallow eat nutritious meals?
(Yes. See examples of breakfast, lunch and dinner menus that feature main courses, side dishes, beverages, and desserts. Discuss the four main food groups and the number of servings of each children need daily: breads and cereals, four servings; fruits and vegetables, four servings; meats and protein foods, two servings; and dairy products, three servings.)
3. Why does the “weather” become a problem for the people in Chewandswallow?
(The portions of food become too large to eat, and the meals become unappetizing as well as unbalanced. For example, the broccoli comes down overcooked and without anything to accompany it. Overcooked broccoli loses its nutritional value, and three other foods from the three remaining food groups need to accompany the vegetable. As another example, brussels sprouts come down with peanut butter and mayonnaise. The combination of those three foods does not taste very good)
4. In good weather, how does the town dispose of its waste?
(Excess food is collected by the Sanitation Department, just as our kitchen garbage is collected. However, Chewandswallow’s collectors give the food to animals to eat and put the remainder back into the earth to make the soil richer. This process of returning organic matter to the earth is called biodegradation, and the matter is called biodegradable.)
5. Referring to the illustration where the bread rolls float on the sea, explain what the sight resembles in real life.
(It looks like photographs of when pollution, such as oil is floating on the ocean and people cannot go in to swim.)
6. What are the roles of men and women in the town of Chewandswallow?

(There are no specific roles, rather women and men both share the work in the town. Example illustrations: man and woman building a stale bread raft, woman driving a taxi woman pushing a baby stroller while being chased by giant doughnuts, male weather reporter on television/female news reporter at school disaster, male and female Sanitation Department workers, men and woman shoveling snow, and man and woman grocery shopping together in new land)

7. Why is this story called a “tall tale”?
(It stretches the truth by turning everyday, ordinary life into a larger-than-life fantasy that cannot be believed. Tall tales are an important part of American folklore, and many stories are available for reading in the library.)
8. Why is the grandfather in the story an important part of the lives of his grandchildren?
(He cooks for the family, he entertains them with bedtime stories, and he plays outside with them. He also loves them, as evidenced by his kiss goodnight. Although he is older than the children, they love his company. Additionally, the children do not have a father at home. The grandfather serves as a parent as well as a grandparent.)
9. At the end of the book, the narrator and her brother Henry imagine a giant pat of butter at the top of the hill as well as the scent of mashed potatoes. Why?
(Their grandfather told them the fantastic story about giant food the night before. The narrator and her brother Henry now imagine that the hill of snow is a giant mound of mashed potatoes, and the rising sun is a pat of butter.)
10. How do you think the grandfather came up with the idea for his tall tale?
(While flipping pancakes for breakfast, one of them went flying into the air and landed on Henry’s head. The grandfather probably thought about food falling from the sky, and what a great story that idea would make. We even see pancakes in his story, like when a giant one covers the school)

Student Involvement Activities

1. Learn about cooking well-balanced meals by preparing lunch in the classroom. Discuss overcooking and undercooking, selection of foods at the store, and safe storage and food preparation.

2. Create newspaper front pages like the one illustrated in the story. Write headlines, photo captions, and articles, and select names for the newspapers. Also draw "photographs" depicting food "weather" disasters. This project may be completed by individual students or groups.
3. Clip photographs from newspapers and magazines showing men and women in a variety of occupations. Create a classroom collage using each student's contributions.
4. Study the weather by reading daily weather reports in the newspaper, watching television weathercasts, watching films that deal with the subject, and performing experiments that monitor the weather. Examples of weather experiments include recording accumulations of precipitation and building a weather vane to test wind direction.
5. Gather biodegradable materials (such as food and paper) and plant them in a plot of ground. Monitor the plot over time to see how well the materials break down in the soil.
6. Study oil spills and other forms of water pollution to determine their effects on the environment. Use magazine and newspaper clippings to illustrate recent crises, such as the Exxon oil spill.
7. Invite elderly storytellers to visit your class to present oral histories.
8. Interview older Americans about life when they were growing up, happy and sad times in their lives, and how they view society today. Write reports that explain what students learned from the interviews.
9. Take a field trip to a retirement home to visit with elderly people.
10. Write poems about food falling from the sky in the town of Chewandswallow.

Vocabulary Test

Circle the letter of each correctly spelled word.

1. a. stomach ache b. stomachache c. stomache ache
2. a. chaos b. choas c. chaus
3. a. broccli b. broccoli c. broccolli
4. a. tomatos b. tomaetos c. tomatoes
5. a. spaghetti b. spagetti c. spahgetti
6. a. necessities b. necesities c. neccessities
7. a. refridgerator b. refrigerator c. refrigerater
8. a. maynnaise b. mayonaise c. mayonnaise
9. a. mapel syrup b. maple suryp c. maple syrup
10. a. insident b. incident c. encident

Comprehension Test A

True or False (25 points)

Mark each statement "T" for "True" or "F" for "False."

- ___ 1. The narrator's brother is named Harold.
- ___ 2. The name of the town in the grandfather's story is Chewandgobble.
- ___ 3. There are no food stores in the town.
- ___ 4. Men do most of the work in the town, and women take things pretty easy.
- ___ 5. Dinner one night features a Jell-O setting, in the sky.
- ___ 6. Extra food is cleaned up by the Health Department.
- ___ 7. One day chicken soup causes a thick fog.
- ___ 8. A giant pancake covers the school, and the building must be closed.
- ___ 9. A great potato tornado blows across the town.
- ___ 10. The townspeople sail away on rafts made of stale bread and cream cheese.

Multiple Choice (25 points)

Write the letter of the correct answer in each blank.

- 1. The type of story the grandfather tells is a _____.
a. fairy tale b. fantasy tale
- 2. At the end of the book, the narrator and her brother think they almost smell _____.
a. ice cream b. mashed potatoes c. scrambled eggs
- 3. The grandfather gives the narrator a _____ kiss.
a. good-night b. good-morning c. goodbye
- 4. A newspaper reports that the town is all tied up by _____.
a. pasta b. ropes c. stale bread
- 5. Some of the extra food is put _____.
a. back in the sky b. back in the earth c. back in the garbage
- 6. Townspeople can _____ to learn about what kind of food they will probably eat the next day.
a. listen to the radio b. talk to their friends c. watch television
- 7. One day a hurricane of _____ hits the earth, leaving behind a mess of floating objects on the sea.
a. pancakes b. potatoes
- 8. Lunch one day brings fifteen-inch drifts of _____.
a. pancakes b. sandwiches
- 9. It never rains _____ in the town.
a. rain b. soup c. juice
- 10. In the new land, the people build houses out of _____.
a. hamburgers b. stale bread

Food for Thought (20 points)

List the four food groups and the number of servings required for a healthy diet:

FOOD GROUPS	NUMBER OF SERVINGS
1. a.	b.
2. a.	b.
3. a.	b.
4. a.	b.

Essay (30 points)

In a paragraph or two, explain how the grandfather in the story makes life happier for the narrator and her brother.

Comprehension Test B

Fill in the Blank (25 points)

For each sentence, fill in the blank with the letter of the correct answer from the list below.

1. In the beginning of the book, the grandfather hits the narrator's brother in the head with a _____.
 2. In Chewandswallow, it sometimes rains _____.
 3. When they arrive in the new land, the old residents of Chewandswallow must go to the _____.
 4. Henry is the narrator's _____.
 5. A giant pancake falls on the _____ in the town of Chewandswallow.
 6. _____ soup causes the sky to be very foggy one day.
 7. The narrator's happy family does not include a _____.
 8. The Sanitation Department gives some of the extra food to the _____.
 9. One day, a big _____ sets in the sky after dinner.
 10. A Chewandswallow newspaper photo shows the town tied up by _____.
- a. brothe r f. supermarket
b. Jell-O g. father
c. pancake h. school
d. pasta i. dogs and cats
e. pea j. soup

Multiple Choice (25 points)

Write the letter of the correct answer in each blank.

1. Every child needs _____ daily servings from the breads and cereals food group.
a. two b. three c. four
2. High drifts of cream cheese and jelly sandwiches must be moved like _____ in Chewandswallow.
a. ice b. snow c. rain
3. The townspeople build sailing rafts of peanut butter and _____ bread.
a. homemade b. stale c. wheat
4. Every day, a child should eat two servings from the _____ food group.
a. meats and protein b. dairy products c. fruits and vegetables
5. A tomato _____ blows through Chewandswallow.
a. hurricane b. earthquake c. tornado
6. Some of the extra food goes back into the soil, because food is _____ .
a. biology grade b. biological c. biodegradable
7. A kid needs to eat three servings daily from the _____ food group.
a. meats and protein b. dairy products c. fruits and vegetables
8. The _____ weather report predicts the food for each day in Chewandswallow.
a. radio b. television c. newspaper
9. The narrator and her brother think that they see a _____ on the top of a snowy hill.
a. pat of butter b. cherry c. cookie
10. Each day, a child needs to eat servings _____ from the fruits and vegetables group.
a. two b. three c. four

Menu planning (25 points)

In the space below, plan three meals for a day. Be sure to include enough servings from each of the four food groups to meet your nutritional needs.

BREAKFAST

LUNCH

DINNER

Essay (25 points)

In paragraph form, discuss the roles of men and women in the town of Chewandswallow. Mention specific examples from the illustrations in the book.

Answer Key

VOCABULARY TEST

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. b | 6. a |
| 2. a | 7. b |
| 3. b | 8. c |
| 4. c | 9. c |
| 5. a | 10. b |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

True or False (25 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. F |
| 2. F | 7. F |
| 3. T | 8. T |
| 4. F | 9. F |
| 5. T | 10. F |

Multiple Choice (25 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. c | 6. c |
| 2. b | 7. c |
| 3. a | 8. b |
| 4. a | 9. a |
| 5. b | 10. b |

FOOD FOR THOUGHT (20 POINTS)

- | | |
|------------------------------|------|
| 1. a. breads and cereals; | b. 4 |
| 2. a. fruits and vegetables; | b. 4 |
| 3. a. meats and protein; | b. 2 |
| 4. a. dairy products; | b. 3 |

Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

Comprehension Test B

Fill in the Blank (25 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. c | 6. e |
| 2. j | 7. g |
| 3. f | 8. 1 |
| 4. a | 9. b |
| 5. h | 10. d |

Multiple Choice (25 points)

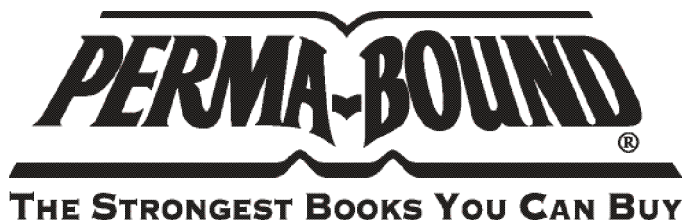
- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. c | 6. c |
| 2. b | 7. b |
| 3. b | 8. b |
| 4. a | . a |
| 5. c | 10. c |

MENU PLANNING (25 POINTS)

Answers will vary.

ESSAY (25 POINTS)

Answers will vary.



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