

# The Mitten: A Ukranian Tale

by Jan Brett

## Classroom Favorites



Teacher's Guide by Kathy Sammis

A Perma-Bound Production

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### SYNOPSIS

Jan Brett uses delightfully detailed pictures framed by elaborate borders and side panels to retell a traditional Ukrainian folktale. Each double-page spread illustrates the scene described by the text. Mitten-shaped windows on the right and left of each spread disclose additional action not mentioned in the text. The boy Nicki and his grandmother Baba live in an old-style Ukrainian peasant cottage and wear traditional old-style Ukrainian clothing. Nicki has been begging Baba to knit him a new pair of snow-white mittens, which Baba has not wanted to do because a dropped white mitten will be hard to find in the snow. Finally, though, Baba does produce the snow-white mittens, and Nicki tucks them into his belt as he goes out to explore the wintry, foresty landscape around their cottage. Sure enough, one of the mittens drops in the snow. Nicki does not notice this, and he continues on his adventure without it.

A mole discovers the mitten and crawls in, finding it a cozy and warm home. As Nicki continues on his walk, shown in the left-hand mitten window illustrations, he unwittingly disturbs a number of forest creatures, one at a time. In the right-hand mitten window illustrations, we see each creature leave its den, and on the following double-page spread, that creature comes across the mitten and decides to crawl into it, too, while the accompanying mitten windows show the next creature getting ready to enter the story. As each new creature decides to wriggle into the mitten, the existing residents yield because of the newcomer's larger size and/or physical attributes. The mole yields to the rabbit's powerful back legs. The mole and rabbit admit a prickly hedgehog. This trio decides not to argue with an owl's glinty talons. The stuffed-in quartet then admits a badger, with his powerful and clawed front diggers.

Next, a fox is attracted to the cozy, stuffed mitten, and the mole, rabbit, hedgehog, owl, and badger move over because of the fox's sharp, shiny teeth. Then a great bear comes along and noses his way into the warm, packed mitten—after all, what animal would argue with a bear? Finally, a tiny meadow mouse wriggles in and settles down on the bear's nose. Ticked by the mouse's whiskers, the bear gives an enormous sneeze, which propels the mitten up into the sky and scatters the animals in all directions. Nicki catches the mitten on the way home. In the last, wordless picture, a very puzzled Baba compares the two white mittens, one a regular size and the other enormously stretched out.

### TIME LINE

early winter	Nicki asks Baba to knit new snow-white mittens.
later	Baba finally knits the snow-white mittens.
one winter day	Nicki takes a walk, drops one white mitten
next	In succession, eight animals squeeze themselves into the mitten.
then	The bear sneezes, the animals scatter, the mitten flies up into the air.
day's end	Nicki returns home with his new mittens, one of them strangely stretched-out.

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jan Brett was born in 1949 and grew up in Hingham, Massachusetts. Her mother, a teacher, encouraged Jan and her siblings to use their creativity, and from an early age, Jan knew she wanted a career as a children's book illustrator. She also loved animals and had many pets, a love reflected by the frequent appearance of animals and nature in her books. Brett attended Colby-Sawyer College from 1968 to 1969 and then the Boston Museum of Fine Arts School in 1970. She says that images from the museum's collection often inspire her work. Brett married Daniel Bowler in 1970; the couple had one daughter and then divorced in 1979. Some of Brett's works were published under the name Jan Brett Bowler. In 1980, Brett married musician Joseph Hearne. They live in Norwell, Massachusetts, near Hingham and the sea. During the summer they stay in their cabin in the Berkshire Mountains, where Hearne plays at Tanglewood with the Boston Symphony and Brett, inspired by the tranquil rural setting, paints. The couple also travels extensively, which gives Brett fresh and varied material. Brett began to fulfill her childhood dream in 1978, when she provided the illustrations for an author's book of fables. In 1981, Brett published her first self-written and -illustrated book, the award-winning *Fritz and the Beautiful Horses*. Since then, she has continued to illustrate both her own and other authors' stories.

### CRITICS' CORNER

Critics admire Brett's work and find many recurring qualities in her themes and artwork, many of which appear in *The Mitten*. Her stories frequently deal with animals and the natural world, which Brett illustrates in striking naturalistic detail. She often focuses on Old World settings, folklore, and folk art motifs. Her use of detailed framing borders and side panels to extend the textual action and add to the mood is a hallmark of her style. Brett says she uses this technique because of her runaway imagination; the borders "contain the overflow of thoughts." They also

act as an "exercise in seeing," designed to add the fun of discovery for young readers. Brett sums up her approach to her work by saying, "I create books that appeal to me, and I am pleased when children enjoy them also." *Publishers Weekly* has called her "a contemporary illustrator of consummate skill" and admired *The Mitten's* "magnificent paintings." Other critics found the artwork in *The Mitten* "delightful" and the overall effect "splendid." *Horn Book* stated of this book, "Jan Brett is at her best, using details to establish setting and characterization." *School Library Journal* wrote, "The illustrations and book design...are exquisite, perfectly capturing the wintery setting....As always,...it's Brett's animals that really steal the show....An ideal choice for story hours, and a charming lap book to be pored over again and again."

#### OTHER BOOKS BY JAN BRETT

##### Self-Illustrated Children's Books

*Fritz and the Beautiful Horses* (1981)

*Good Luck Sneakers* (1981)

*Annie and the Wild Animals* (1985)

*The First Dog* (1988)

*The Wild Christmas Reindeer* (1990)

*Berlioz the Bear* (1991)

*The Trouble with Trolls* (1992)

*The Christmas Trolls* (1993)

*Armadillo Rodeo* (1995)

*Comet's Nine Lives* (1996)

*The Hat* (1997)

*Hedgie's Surprise* (2000)

##### Books Retold and Illustrated by Brett

*Goldilocks and the Three Bears* (1987)

*Beauty and the Beast* (1989)

*Town Mouse, Country Mouse* (1994)

*Gingerbread Baby* (1999)

##### Selected Books Illustrated by Brett

*Woodland Crossings* by Stephen Krensky (1978)

*St. Patrick's Day in the Morning* by Eve Bunting (1980)

*In the Castle of the Cats* by Betty Boegehold (1981)

*Some Birds Have Funny Names* by Diana Harding Cross (1981)

*The Valentine Bears* by Eve Bunting (1983)

*Some Plants Have Funny Names* by Diana Harding Cross (1983)

*The Mother's Day Mice* by Eve Bunting (1986)

*The Twelve Days of Christmas* (1986)

*The Owl and the Pussycat* by Edward Lear (1991)

*The Night Before Christmas* (1998)

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Booklist*, September 15, 1989, p. 172.

*The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, December 1989, pp. 79-80.

*Contemporary Authors*, New Revision Series, Vol. 41. Detroit: Gale Research, 1994.

Holtze, Sally Holmes, ed. *Sixth Book of Junior Authors & Illustrators*. NY: H.W. Wilson Co., 1989.

*Horn Book*, November/December 1989, p. 777.

*Publishers Weekly*, July 14, 1989, p. 77.

*School Library Journal*, November 1989, p. 97; February 2000, p. 61.

*Something About the Author*, Vols. 42 & 71. Detroit: Gale Research, 1986, 1993.

#### Internet

"Gifted Author and Illustrator Jan Brett":

<<http://detnews.com/1997/accent/9711/08/11080005.htm>>

"Interview with Jan Brett": <<http://www.readin.org/transcripts/1999/JBrett99.htm>>

"Jan Brett," <[www.penguinputnam.com/cgi-bin/to\\_catalog.cgi?section=catalog&page=yreader/authors/190\\_biography.htm](http://www.penguinputnam.com/cgi-bin/to_catalog.cgi?section=catalog&page=yreader/authors/190_biography.htm)>

"Jan Brett: Teacher Resource File":

<[falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/brett.htm](http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/brett.htm)>

"Meet Jan Brett": <<http://teacher.scholastic.com/authorsand-books/authors/brett/meet.htm>>

"Welcome to Jan Brett's Home Page": <[www.janbrett.com/](http://www.janbrett.com/)>

#### GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To use discussion questions to recall details, interpret characters and events, read or listen critically, and respond creatively to the story and its illustrations.
2. To expand vocabulary through context clues and word study.
3. To expand responses to a book by completing a variety of related activities, some in other areas of the curriculum.
4. To exercise artistic, craft, and dramatic skills to help interpret reading.

#### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To understand why Baba objects to knitting white mittens, and what her expression tells us in the last picture in the book.
2. To recognize each animal in the story and identify why the creatures already in the mitten agree to let each newcomer in.
3. To compare the sizes of the various creatures that crawl into the mitten.
4. To identify the repeated design elements on each double-page spread.
5. To recognize what the illustrations in the "mitten" windows on the right and on the left add to the overall story.
6. To interpret the expressions on the various creatures' faces throughout the story.
7. To identify elements of traditional Ukrainian clothing and design as shown in the book.
8. To recognize how this story fits into the "tall tale" genre.

#### SETTINGS

The story is set in the Ukraine countryside, where Nicki and his grandmother live in a traditional rural Ukrainian cottage and wear old-style traditional Ukrainian clothing. The main action takes place not far from the cottage, while Nicki walks and explores in the nearby lightly wooded area on a snowy winter day. A mole emerges from beneath the snow, a snowshoe rabbit from a hollow log, a hedgehog from a ground-level burrow, an owl from a hollow tree, a badger from a burrow beneath a tree, a fox from its den under some logs, a bear from its den beneath the snow, and a meadow mouse from its burrow beneath a stump. After the bear sneezes, the animals all go back to their homes and Nicki returns to the cottage with his mittens.

#### THEMES AND MOTIFS

In discussing the book, help students understand that the story deals with these main issues and situations.

## Themes

- comparative size
- animals and nature
- knitting and mittens
- winter activities

## Motifs

- Ukrainian folk art and clothing
- grandmothers
- mottled birch bark
- ornamental borders and side panels
- naturalistic details

## CROSS-CURRICULAR SOURCES

### Winter Stories

Jennifer Armstrong, *The Snowball*

Tim Arnold, *The Winter Mittens*

David Christiana, *The First Snow*

Shirley Hughes, *Stories by Firelight*

Fusaka Ishinabe, *Spring Snowman*

Ezra Jack Keats, *The Snowy Day*

Judith B. Richardson, *Old Winter*

### Imaginative Stories

Jez Alborough, *Where's My Teddy?*

Robert Bender, *A Most Unusual Lunch*

Mary Blackwood, *Derek the Knitting Dinosaur*

Eric Carle, *The Grouchy Ladybug*

Mirra Ginsburg, *Mushroom in the Rain*

Steven Kellogg, *The Mystery of the Missing Red Mitten*

Anne Lindbergh, *Next Time, Take Care*

Ruth Martinez, *Mrs. McDockerty's Knitting*

Jean Rogers, *Runaway Mittens*

### Folklore Stories

Nonny Hogrogian, *One Fine Day*

Eric A. Kimmel, *Sirko and the Wolf*

Alvin Tresselt, *The Mitten*

Judit Z. Bodnar, *A Wagonload of Fish*

### Nonfiction Animal Books

Vee Browne, *Owl*

Moira Butterfield, *Brown, Fierce, and Furry: What Am I? and Fast, Strong, and Striped: What Am I?*

Sabrina Crewe, *The Bear*

Christian Havad, *The Fox: Playful Prowler*

C. M. Miller, *A Symphony for the Sheep*

### CD-ROM

*Blue's Treasure Hunt: A Learning Adventure* (Humongous Entertainment)

*Dr. Seuss Preschool & Kindergarten* (Learning Co./Broderbund Software)

*Folktales of the World* (Crown Media Corp.)

*The Magic Schoolbus Explores the World of Animals* (Microsoft)

*Make a Masterpiece* (Edmark Corp.)

### Internet

#### (Jan Brett Sites)

"Jan Brett" (Young Readers Catalog):

<[http://www.penguinputnam.com/cgi-bin/to\\_catalog.cgi?section=catalog&page=yreader/authors/190\\_biography.htm](http://www.penguinputnam.com/cgi-bin/to_catalog.cgi?section=catalog&page=yreader/authors/190_biography.htm)>

"Jan Brett's Activities Page":

<[http://www.janbrett.com/activities\\_pages.htm](http://www.janbrett.com/activities_pages.htm)>

"Meet Jan Brett": <<http://teacher.scholastic.com/authorsandbooks/authors/brett/meet.htm>>

"The Mitten": <[http://www.janbrett.com/newsnotes/mitten\\_newsnotes2.htm](http://www.janbrett.com/newsnotes/mitten_newsnotes2.htm)>

"Welcome to Jan Brett's Home Page":

<<http://www.janbrett.com/>>

#### (Animal Sites)

"Absolutely Whootie: Stories to Grow By":

<<http://www.storiestogrowby.com/>>

"Brown Bear": <<http://www.selu.com/bio/wildlife/mammal/bear/bear01.html>>

"Childrenstory.com": <<http://www.childrenstory.com/>>

"Hedgehog-o-Rama": <<http://neuro-www2.mgh.harvard.edu/hedgehog/hedgehogmain.html>>

"The Mole Tunnel": <<http://www.moletunnel.net/>>

"Owl Cam": <<http://members.aol.com/owlbox/owlhome.htm>>

"Snowshoe Hare": <<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/eek/nature/hare.htm>>

"ZooNet Image Archives": <<http://www.zoonet.org/gallery.htm>>

#### Video

*Animal Life for Children* (12-video series, Schlessinger Media)

*Critter Hunt* (6-video series, DAVEY/SVE, Churchill Media)

*Going to Grandma's (Around the World)* (World Kids Press)

*The Mitten* (Spoken Arts)

## MEANING STUDY

Discuss with students the meaning of the boldfaced words from the story in the following sentences.

1. Nicki wanted his new mittens made from **wool** as white as snow.  
(*Wool is the soft coat of the sheep, woven since ancient times into fabric for clothing and other useful items. Baba spins wool and knits it into mittens, caps, and other warm winter wear.*)
2. At first, Baba did not want to **knit** white mittens.  
(*Baba creates mittens by knitting—using needles to interlace wool yarn in a series of connected loops.*)
3. A **snowshoe rabbit** admired his **winter coat**.  
(*Actually a "varying hare," the snowshoe rabbit in the winter has a coat of pure white except for black ear tips. In the summer, the animal's coat is reddish-brown.*)
4. When the mole saw the rabbit's **big kickers**, he moved over.  
(*Rabbits and hares have powerful rear legs that propel them by hopping. The mole does not want the rabbit to kick him with these legs, so he makes room for the rabbit in the mitten.*)
5. A **hedgehog** came snuffling along.  
(*Hedgehogs live in Europe, Asia, and Africa. They have a coat of stiff pointed spines, with a soft fur underbelly. The rabbit and the mole do not want to get jabbed by these spines, so they make room for the hedgehog in the mitten.*)
6. When they saw the owl's **glinty talons**, they quickly let him in.  
(*The owl is a bird of prey, and it uses the claws, or talons, on its feet to catch and hold the creatures it eats. The mole, the rabbit, and the hedgehog do not want the owl to use its talons on them, so they make room for the owl in the mitten.*)
7. When they saw the **badger's diggers**, they gave him the **thumb**.  
(*Badgers have short, strong forelegs equipped with long claws, which are very effective for digging the deep chambers or burrows where they live underground. The mole, the rab-*

bit, the hedgehog, and the owl do not want the large, strong badger to use those strong digging legs against them, so they give the badger the "thumbs up" sign of agreement.)

8. It was the lost mitten **silhouetted** against the sky.  
(Nicki sees the mitten outlined against the backdrop of the sky, beginning to fall to the ground after being shot up into the air by the bear's sneeze.)

### COMPREHENSION/DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Discuss the following questions with your students. You could ask students in higher grades to write their answers to some of the questions in their own words.

1. Look at the pictures in the book, without reading the story. Write or tell a few sentences about one or more of the pictures. Describe 1) how each creature in the picture is feeling at that moment and 2) what is happening in the picture. As you read or listen to the story, see if what you wrote or told about the picture(s) was accurate.
2. Why does Baba object to knitting white mittens for Nicki? Is she right?  
(Baba says a dropped white mitten would be very hard to find in the white snow. She's right, but Nicki has no trouble finding the missing mitten after the bear's sneeze sends it up into the air.)
3. List each animal as it appears in the story. For each animal, tell why the creatures already in the mitten decide to let this newcomer in.  
(Mole is first; rabbit—its kickers, or strong back legs; hedgehog—its prickles, or spines; owl—its glinty talons, or claws; badger—its diggers, or powerful and clawed front legs; fox—its sharp teeth; bear—its great size, teeth, and claws; mouse—it's tiny.)
4. What continuing change do you notice about the animals as they crawl into the mitten one after the other?  
(They get bigger and bigger, until the tiny mouse crawls in at the end.)
5. Study one double-page illustration. What different design elements do you see?  
(There is the main, two-page, very detailed illustration with its matching text. There is a border of textured birch bark that is decorated with changing folk-art designs. There are two mitten windows that show action not mentioned in the text. The mitten windows and the main illustration are set off by woven borders.)
6. What do the left-hand "mitten" pictures show after Nicki leaves his cottage?  
(They show Nicki on his winter walk, exploring the lightly wooded area, and disturbing the various animals in their dens, although he does not notice the animals himself. These pictures let us follow Nicki on his adventure even though what he's doing is not mentioned in the text.)
7. What do the right-hand "mitten" pictures show after Nicki leaves his cottage?  
(They show each animal starting to leave its den and make its way to the mitten; the animal arrives at the mitten in the following two-page illustration. These pictures tell us what to expect on the next two-page spread.)
8. Describe the expression on the rabbit's face in the various pictures.

(Answers will vary. The rabbit variously looks annoyed, startled, wary, questioning, and resigned. Students could also identify other animals' expressions, all of which add humor to the story.)

9. How would you describe traditional Ukrainian clothing and home decoration?  
(We see a lot of color, geometric designs, and flower motifs on clothing (blouse, scarf, socks, belt, and so on) and on hearth and chimney place, plates, and household fabrics. Point out that these are elements of folk art.)
10. Describe the final picture in the book.  
(While Nicki warms his feet by the fire, Baba is looking very puzzled about the two mittens she's holding, wondering why one of the mittens is so enormously stretched out of shape.)
11. In what way is this story a "tall tale"?  
(The only animals who could actually fit into a boy's mitten would be the mole and the mouse. None of the other animals are remotely able to fit.)

### ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

#### Science

1. Create a poster or other type of illustrated report on one of the creatures that crawls into the mitten.
2. Suppose a mitten or other piece of clothing were lying in the ground in an undeveloped area near where you live. What animals might decide to move in to that piece of clothing? Then answer this question for other areas of the world, like Australia, Brazil, Kenya, and so on.
3. Find out about and report on how animals survive in areas with cold, snowy winters.
4. Create a poster or other type of illustrated report on how wool is gathered from animals and then turned into fabric or knitted items.

#### Social Studies/Geography

1. With classmates, collect a list of traditional names for grandmothers and grandfathers in cultures around the world.
2. Locate Ukraine on a world map. Then create a class display that tells about Ukraine's land and people.

#### Language Arts

1. In the story, the rabbit hops by and the hedgehog snuffles along. With classmates, make a list of other action verbs that describe how particular animals move.
2. Read and retell other tall tales from other cultures.
3. Nicki wants mittens "as white as snow." Make up other phrases like this that compare one thing with another.
4. Make up some dialogue for the animals as they squash together in the mitten.
5. Retell the story from the mitten's point of view.

#### Mathematics

1. In the end, how many animals are squeezed into the mitten?
2. Show on graph paper the length and size of the different animals that crawl into the mitten. Which is smallest? Which is biggest? What are the differences (in inches and centimeters/meters) in sizes among the creatures?

#### Art

1. Create a class display of various examples of East European folk art, or folk art from your own culture.

## TEACHER'S NOTES

2. Create a model of a traditional thatched-roof cottage like the one Nicki and Baba live in.
3. Observe or look at pictures of various living creatures and then draw or model some of them.
4. Make silhouettes of each other in class.

### STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Download the Mitten Character Masks from Jan Brett's Homepage on the Internet. Decorate the masks in any way you want. Then, wearing the masks, act out the story with classmates. You could use a sleeping bag as the mitten.
2. Here's another way to act out the story: stuff animal crackers into a mitten, or a pita bread half.
3. Try stuffing play animals, like Beanie Babies, into a mitten. Can many fit in?
4. Tell about winter activities you enjoy, especially if you once lived in a cold-winter area and now live in a warm-winter location.
5. Ask an experienced knitter to come to class and show how to spin wool and knit it into garments.
6. Go to a wildlife park to see some of the creatures that appear in this story. Or observe them on-line at zoo or park web-cam sites.
7. Read this book aloud to a group of kindergartners or preschoolers. Be dramatic!
8. If you know someone of East European background, ask them to come to class to show and talk about items they have from their traditional culture.

### ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

Depending on student ability level, you could have students write their responses to one of these assessment vehicles or simply discuss their response with you, individually or in a group setting.

1. Explain how the illustrations help to tell the full story of Nicki and his mitten.
2. List the creatures that find the mitten and why the creatures who are already there allow each new creature in.
3. Describe Nicki's home life and what he does to amuse himself.

## VOCABULARY TEST

Read each sentence. Below the sentence, find the answer that could be used in place of the word in boldface (dark) type. Write the letter of the answer in the blank in front of the sentence.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. "First I will look to see if you are safe and **sound**."  
(a) awake  
(b) healthy  
(c) hurt
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Inside the mitten it was **cozy** and warm.  
(a) snug and safe  
(b) chilly  
(c) dark
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The rabbit stopped to **admire** his winter coat.  
(a) clean  
(b) try to change  
(c) look at with delight
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. It started snowing, but the animals were **snug** in the mitten.  
(a) warm and secure  
(b) afraid  
(c) arguing
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Just the sight of the cozy mitten made the fox feel **drowsy**.  
(a) sleepy  
(b) hungry  
(c) angry
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The mitten was pulled and **bulged** to many times its size.  
(a) broken  
(b) made smaller  
(c) swollen

## COMPREHENSION TEST A

### Part I: Matching (10 points)

Read each description. Find the name of the creature on the right that matches the description. Write the letter of the name in the space in front of the description.

- |                                                       |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| _____ 1. Blonde boy with new white mittens.           | a. Baba     |
| _____ 2. Little animal that tunnels through the snow. | b. mole     |
| _____ 3. Bird with sharp talons on its feet.          | c. hedgehog |
| _____ 4. White-haired grandmother.                    | d. Nicki    |
| _____ 5. Animal covered with prickles.                | e. owl      |

### Part II: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write the letter of the ending you choose in the space in front of each sentence.

- |                                                            |                         |                        |                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| _____ 1. Nicki and his grandmother live in the country of  | (a) China.              | (b) Ukraine.           | (c) Mexico.                  |
| _____ 2. Baba knits the mittens out of                     | (a) wool.               | (b) cotton.            | (c) silk.                    |
| _____ 3. When Nicki goes out to play, he drops one of his  | (a) boots.              | (b) snowballs.         | (c) mittens.                 |
| _____ 4. The first animal to crawl into the mitten is the  | (a) mole.               | (b) fox.               | (c) badger.                  |
| _____ 5. This animal has a winter coat that is white:      | (a) fox.                | (b) rabbit.            | (c) hedgehog.                |
| _____ 6. The rabbit is larger than the                     | (a) bear.               | (b) mole.              | (c) fox.                     |
| _____ 7. The smallest animal in the story is the           | (a) hedgehog.           | (b) badger.            | (c) mouse.                   |
| _____ 8. The owl lives in a                                | (a) tree.               | (b) den underground.   | (c) barn.                    |
| _____ 9. The animals shoot out of the mitten when the bear | (a) gets mad and yells. | (b) sneezes.           | (c) falls asleep and snores. |
| _____ 10. Nicki finds his lost mitten                      | (a) on the ground.      | (b) in the bear's den. | (c) in the sky.              |

**Part III: True/False (20 points)**

Mark each sentence with a **T** if it is true or an **F** if any part of it is false.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Baba is Nicki's mother.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Nicki asks for red mittens, not white ones.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The author of this book also created the book's pictures.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The rabbit snatches the mitten away from Nicki.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The animals do not dare to argue when the bear decides to move into the mitten.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The mitten gets very, very crowded with all the animals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Nicki and Baba wear plain, undecorated clothing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Nicki finally notices he has lost one of his mittens.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Nicki finds his lost mitten just before he gets home.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. When Nicki comes home, Baba notices nothing odd about the mittens.

**Part IV: Essay (Extra Credit)**

Write or tell your answer to one of these questions to get extra points on your test.

- 1. Why do the animals in the mitten let each new animal crowd in with them?
- 2. Why does Baba say white mittens are not a good idea? What happens to Nicki's lost mitten?



## COMPREHENSION TEST B

### Part I: Matching (10 points)

Read each description. Find the name of the creature on the right that matches the description. Write the letter of the name in the space in front of the description.

- |                                                     |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| _____ 1. Woman who makes mittens.                   | a. Nicki  |
| _____ 2. Big animal with a big sneeze.              | b. mouse  |
| _____ 3. Tiny animal with whiskers and a long tail. | c. Baba   |
| _____ 4. Boy who explores in the snow.              | d. rabbit |
| _____ 5. Long-eared animal with white fur.          | e. bear   |

### Part II: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write the letter of the ending you choose in the space in front of each sentence.

- |                                                           |               |                      |                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------|----------------|
| _____ 1. The story takes place in this season:            | (a) fall.     | (b) winter.          | (c) summer.    |
| _____ 2. To make the mittens, Baba                        | (a) bakes.    | (b) cuts and pastes. | (c) knits.     |
| _____ 3. Nicki wants his new mittens to be                | (a) red.      | (b) white.           | (c) green.     |
| _____ 4. This animal tunnels under the snow:              | (a) mole.     | (b) owl.             | (c) rabbit.    |
| _____ 5. The hedgehog is covered with                     | (a) prickles. | (b) feathers.        | (c) white fur. |
| _____ 6. The owl is a                                     | (a) mammal.   | (b) fish.            | (c) bird.      |
| _____ 7. This animal has strong front paws for digging:   | (a) fox.      | (b) badger.          | (c) mouse.     |
| _____ 8. The biggest animal in the story is the           | (a) bear      | (b) hedgehog.        | (c) mole.      |
| _____ 9. The fox's fur is                                 | (a) white.    | (b) black.           | (c) red.       |
| _____ 10. The last animal to crawl into the mitten is the | (a) rabbit.   | (b) mouse.           | (c) mole.      |

**Part III: True/False (20 points)**

Mark each sentence with a **T** if it is true or an **F** if any part of it is false.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Nicki lives with his grandmother.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Nicki likes to play in the snow.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Baba knits the mittens out of cotton.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Nicki and Baba live in a large three-story house.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Baba thinks Nicki may lose his new mittens.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The other animals let the owl in because of the owl's sharp claws.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The mitten finally bursts apart when the bear tries to push inside.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Nicki never notices that he has lost one of his mittens.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. This story is a Ukrainian folk tale.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Nicki never finds his lost mitten, which makes Baba mad.

**Part IV: Essay (Extra Credit)**

Write or tell your answer to one of these questions to get extra points on your test.

- 1. What do the pictures tell you about the animals and their feelings?
- 2. Describe the everyday life of Nicki and Baba.

## ANSWER KEY

**Note:** For students who are not able to take a written test, you could present parts or all of these tests orally.

### VOCABULARY TEST

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

### COMPREHENSION TEST A

#### Part I: Matching (10 points)

- |      |      |
|------|------|
| 1. d | 4. a |
| 2. b | 5. c |
| 3. e |      |

#### Part II: Multiple Choice (20 points)

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

#### Part III: True/False (20 points)

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

#### Part IV: Essay (Extra Credit)

Answers will vary.

### COMPREHENSION TEST B

#### Part I: Matching (10 points)

- |      |      |
|------|------|
| 1. c | 4. a |
| 2. e | 5. d |
| 3. b |      |

#### Part II: Multiple Choice (20 points)

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

#### Part III: True/False (20 points)

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

#### Part IV: Essay (Extra Credit)

Answers will vary.



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