



# Stone Soup

by Marcia Brown

## Teacher's Guide

Written By Elanna Grover

CLASSROOM  
FAVORITES

by Marcia  
Brown

A Perma-Bound Production

*Note to the Teacher: Even though this book has no page numbers, this guide will refer to certain pages by number. Therefore, you may find it convenient to number the pages in your copy of the book, starting with the page showing the backs of the three soldiers as they walk down the road as page 1 and ending with the page showing the three peasants and the motto, "Such men don't grow on every bush," as page 41.*

## Synopsis

Three tired and hungry soldiers go to a village asking for food, only to be told at house after house that there is no food available. So the soldiers inform the villagers that they will make stone soup, and proceed to fill a huge kettle with water; they then add three stones to the boiling water. As the soup is cooking, the soldiers mention to the watching villagers how much better the soup would be if they only had a few carrots. And soon one of the villagers arrives with an apron full of carrots. In the same way, potatoes, cabbage, beef, barley, and milk are added to the soup. Soon the whole village is sitting down to a banquet. After sleeping in the best beds the town has to offer, the soldiers go on their way the next day. They leave with many thanks from the villagers, who say, "We shall never go hungry, now that we know how to make soup from stones."

## Author Sketch

Marcia Brown was born in 1918 in Rochester, New York. Because she was the daughter of a minister, her family moved frequently. Her family encouraged her interest in painting, drawing, and reading. She remembers getting paints, crayons, and drawing paper at Christmastime, and searching out the public library in each new town where they moved, even before the boxes were unpacked.

Miss Brown originally planned to be a doctor, but eventually decided to become a teacher and artist instead. She attended New York College for Teachers, and

received a scholarship to the Woodstock School of Painting in the summers. After graduation, Marcia Brown taught high school English and drama for three years. She then went to work in the New York Public Library in order to learn more about children's books. In 1948, two years after her first book was published, she left her job at the library to work full time as an author/illustrator.

Miss Brown has traveled widely, often getting ideas for her books on her journeys. She is also very interested in music, ballet, and nature photography.

She is best known for her linoleum and wood cuts, and her gouache paintings. Gouache is a way of painting with opaque colors ground in water and mixed with a preparation of gum. A longtime resident of New England, Miss Brown moved to California in 1993.

## Critic's Corner

An author and illustrator of more than thirty children's books, Marcia Cross is one of only two people ever to win the Caldecott Medal three times. She is also the winner of the 1977 Regina Medal, a six-time recipient of the Caldecott Honor (including for *Stone Soup* in 1948), and the winner of the 1992 Laura Ingalls Wilder Medal.

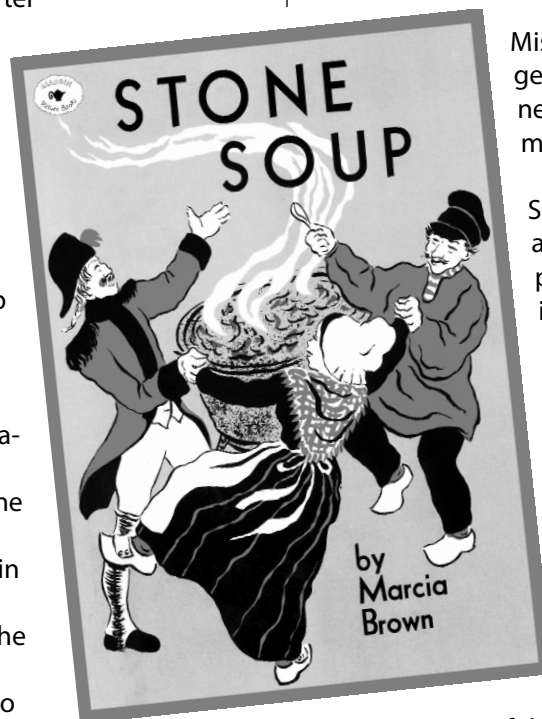
## Timeline

### Beginning

Three soldiers enter a poor peasant village. The soldiers haven't eaten for three days. They go door to door asking for food, but no one will give them any. Instead, the peasants hide their small amount of food and tell the soldiers there is none.

### Then

The soldiers announce they are going to make stone soup. They put a large pot to boil in the village square, then put three large stones in the pot. They



tell the watching villagers that some carrots would go well with the stone soup. Soon, a peasant woman comes back with an apron full of carrots. On they go, until the soup is full of vegetables, grain, and meat.

**Afterward** The soldiers and the villagers sit down to a feast.

**Finally** The soldiers leave the next day, after having slept in the village's finest beds. The peasants thank them: they will never go hungry again, because now they can make soup from stones!

## Bibliography

- "Marcia Brown Teacher Resource File," [falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/marciabrown.htm](http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/marciabrown.htm)
- "Marcia Brown Biography," [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcia\\_Brown](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcia_Brown)
- "Marcia Brown Reading Room at the University of Albany," <http://library.albany.edu/speccoll/marcia-brown.htm>
- "Marcia Brown at the University of Albany," [www.albany.edu/feature/marcia\\_brown/](http://www.albany.edu/feature/marcia_brown/)
- "About the Illustrator," [http://www.albany.edu/museum/wwwmuseum/Brown/about\\_2.html](http://www.albany.edu/museum/wwwmuseum/Brown/about_2.html)

## Selected Other Works by Marcia Brown

*The Little Carousel*  
*Cinderella, or the Little Glass Slipper*  
*Three Billy Goats Gruff*  
*Shadow*  
*Bun: A Tale From Russia*  
*Once a Mouse*  
*Walk With Your Eyes*  
*Dick Whittington and His Cat*  
*Touch Will Tell*  
*Henry Fisherman*  
*Listen to a Shape*  
*Skipper John's Cook*  
*Lotus Seeds*  
*Puss in Boots*  
*All Butterflies*  
*The Steadfast Tin Soldier*  
*Of Swans, Sugarplums, and Satin Slippers*  
*The Wild Swans*  
*How the Ostrich Got a Long Neck*  
*Anansi, the Spider Man*  
*Backbone of the King*

*How, Hippo*

## Goals and Objectives

1. To recall details, make interpretations, read critically, and respond creatively to the book
2. To expand students' vocabulary through the use of context clues, class discussion, word games, and activities
3. To make available a variety of writing experiences
4. To respond to the book through the use of art
5. To look at a situation from more than one point of view.

## Related Reading

### Books about Tricksters

*The Three Billy Goats Gruff retold by Paul Galdone*  
*Puss in Boots retold by Paul Galdone*  
*Do Not Open by Brinton Turkle*  
*The Hungry Fox and the Foxy Duck by Kathleen Leverich*  
*Teeny Tiny and the Witch Woman by Barbara K. Walker*  
*The Cock, the Mouse, and the Little Red Hen by Lorinda Bryan Cauley*  
*Too Much Noise by Anne McGovern*  
*The Emperor's New Clothes by Hans Christian Andersen*  
*Mrs. Piggle Wiggle by Betty McDonald*

### Books About Soup

*Alphabet Soup by Kate Banks*  
*Growing Vegetable Soup by Lois Ehlert*  
*Chicken Soup With Rice by Maurice Sendak*  
*Spectacular Stone Soup by Patricia Reilly Giff*  
*Toni and the Tomato Soup by Mark Haddon*  
*The Glorious Christmas Soup Party by Linda Hale*  
*Mexicale Soup by Kathryn Hitte*  
*Soup for the King by Leonard Kessler*  
*Simon's Soup by Beverly Komoda*  
*Lentil Soup by Joe Lasker*  
*Soup for Supper by Phyllis Root*

### Books about Stones

*Everybody Needs a Rock by Byrd Baylor*  
*All Upon a Stone by Jean George*  
*Alexandra the Rock-Eater by Dorothy Van Woerkom*  
*Sylvester and the Magic Pebble by William Steig*

### Books about Soldiers

*Angelo, the Naughty One by Helen Garrett*  
*Drummer Hoff by Barbara Emberly*  
*Sam the Minuteman by Nathaniel Benchley*  
*Soldier, Soldier, Won't You Marry Me? by John Langstaff*  
(also a trickster book)

### Other Books by Marcia Brown

*The Little Carousel*

*Henry Fisherman (Caldecott Honor Book)*  
*Dick Whittington and His Cat (Caldecott Honor Book)*  
*Skipper John's Cook (Caldecott Honor Book)*  
*The Steadfast Tin Soldier (Caldecott Honor Book)*  
*Cinderella (Caldecott Medal)*  
*The Flying Carpet*  
*Felice*  
*Shadow*  
*Tamarindo!*  
*Once a Mouse (Caldecott Medal)*  
*How Hippo!*  
*The Bun*

**Introductory Activities**

1. Read the title and look at the cover of the book together. Do you think you would like to eat stone soup? Why do you think anyone would make soup out of stones? Write all of the reasons the class can think of on a chart or an overhead transparency.
2. List all the different kinds of soup you can think of. Put a star by the ones you have tasted. Put a 1, 2, and 3 in front of your three favorite kinds. Make a graph showing the class favorites.

**During the Reading**

Most of these questions involve students in making predictions about what might happen next in the story. You may want to have students confirm their predictions after they have read on in the story. Make sure that you convey to students that they are not wrong just because their predictions differ from the author's telling of the story.

1. (after p. 7) What other excuses do you think the peasants might give to the soldiers when they ask them for food?
2. (after p. 9) Do you think the soldiers believed the peasants when they said they had no food?
3. (after p. 10) The peasants say that they have no food. How many other ways can you think of that the soldiers might get something to eat?
4. (after p. 10) What do you think the soldiers said to each other when they talked together?
5. (after p. 23) What do you think the soldiers will say next?

**Comprehension Study**

1. Look back at the reasons listed for making soup out of stones. (Introductory Activities #1) Compare the reason the soldiers made stone soup to the reasons the class listed before reading the story. Choose one of these other reasons and use it as

- the basis of a new story about stone soup.
2. Compare the personalities of the soldiers and the peasants.
  3. Suppose the soldiers had searched the peasants' houses and forced them to give up their food. What do you think would have happened? How would the ending of the story have been different?
  4. Do you think the peasants ever realized they have been tricked into sharing their food? Support your opinion with facts from the story. What do you think might happen if the peasants try to make stone soup again, now that the soldiers have gone?
  5. Do the soldiers in this story remind you of a character in any other story you have read? Tell who the character is and how this character is like the soldiers. How is this character different from the soldiers? (You may want to introduce the term "trickster" at this point, and read some of the "trickster tales listed in the Making Connections to Other Books section of this guide.)
  6. In what country do you think this story takes place? Even though there is no country mentioned in the book, what clues can you find that help you decide where the story takes place? See if students can find the following evidence: (1) What country are the soldiers' uniforms from? Since it says on page 1 "Three soldiers trudged down a road in a strange country," the uniforms will only tell you what country it is not. (2) The Library of Congress cataloging information on the copyright page lists this book under the heading Folklore-France. (3) What language are the peasants' names? (4) In what countries did male peasants wear smocks like those in the illustrations? (5) Many of the peasants wear wooden shoes. What country does this remind you of! (6) The man in the picture on the page before the title page is playing bagpipes. What country do you associate with bagpipes?

**Student Involvement Activities**

1. Make stone soup. Each student should bring a different vegetable and the teacher can provide the stones (wash thoroughly first), and perhaps some meat. It is easy to cook the soup in the classroom if you use a crock pot. Act out the story as you add each of the vegetables to your soup.
2. Discuss point of view with the students, and talk about the differences in the viewpoints of the soldiers and the peasants in this story. Then have stu-

- dents write diary entries for one of the soldiers and for one of the peasants describing what happened in the story from each point of view.
3. Write directions for making stone soup.
  4. Read other versions of this story and make a comparison chart of the similarities and differences. Some of these other versions include *Nail Soup* by Harvey Zemach; *The Soup Stone* by Iris VanRynback; *Stone Soup* by Tony Ross; *Stone Soup* by Anne McGovern. Decide which version you like best and why.
  5. Marcia Brown is famous for her wood and linoleum cuts. Let students try this art technique. Since it would be dangerous for young students to use the sharp knives and other instruments necessary to do a wood or linoleum cut, try using the foam meat trays that groceries use to package a variety of foods. These are readily available and students can bring them from home. The meat trays can be "carved" with blunt instruments such as ballpoint pens, pencils, cuticle sticks, etc. Then use a roller to ink the foam tray and make a print.
  6. Make a board game based on the book. Incorporate the setting and the characters from the story into your game in some way.
  7. Make stick puppets of the characters from the book and give a puppet show of the story. Your local paint store maybe willing to give you some wooden paint stirrers, if you explain that you are a teacher and need them for a school project. These make a wonderful base for your stick puppets.
  8. Write to Marcia Brown and ask her what country she had in mind when she wrote *Stone Soup*. (Discussion Question #5) In your letter, explain the evidence you have collected from the book, and the conclusions you have drawn. You can send your letter c/o Macmillan Publishing Co.; 866 Third Ave.; New York, NY 10022.
  9. Read all of Marcia Brown's award-winning books and vote on the ones you think were most deserving of the Caldecott Medal. Then compare your results to the actual medal winners.
  10. Make animals by gluing small stones together along with sticks, buttons, yarn or any other odds and ends you can find. Paint your stone animals. Or make vegetable animals by cutting various vegetables and sticking them together with toothpicks to form unusual creatures.
  11. Make stone mosaic pictures by gluing various colors of aquarium gravel onto heavy cardboard to form a picture.

## Word Study

Note to the Teacher: Following is an extensive list of vocabulary words which may be unfamiliar to your students. This list is not necessarily meant to be discussed in its entirety. It is here merely as a reference for the teacher. Most students should be able to get a general idea of the meaning of the unfamiliar words in *Stone Soup* by using the context of the story. For example, even though they don't know exactly what "barley" is, students should be able to deduce from the context that it is something to eat. This ability to get a general idea of a word's meaning so that you can read on and make sense of the story is a valuable reading skill. Therefore, it is suggested that none of the vocabulary words listed for this book be discussed before the reading is done. Explain to students that they should try their best to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words by reading on in the story. The vocabulary words that will be tested are marked with an asterisk.

- \*trudged p. 1
- impossible p. 2
- \*loft p. 2
- \*peasants p. 2
- \*barley p. 4
- bins p. 5
- \*harvest p. 6
- spare p. 7
- \*grain p. 8
- sighed p. 10
- stared p. 13
- village square p. 16
- generally p. 20
- fetch p. 24
- entertained p. 27
- \*broth p. 27
- torches p. 29
- \*banquet p. 30

Word Study Activities (To be done after reading the story):

1. Let students give generalized definitions of the following words based on the context in which they are found in the story:
    - trudged p. 1 (walked)
    - peasants p. 2 (people)
    - barley p. 4 (something to eat)
    - bins p. 5 (some sort of container)
    - grain p. 8 (something to eat)
    - village square p. 16 (a place)
    - banquet p. 30 (food)
- Discuss how using these generalized definitions can

keep you from having to slow down and lose track of the meaning of the story. Now you may want to find out a more exact meaning for some of these words.

2. Bring in some barley so that students can see what it looks like. Cook the barley and let each student have a taste.
3. One of the soldiers said it was impossible for them to get a good dinner and a bed to sleep in (p. 2), but he was wrong. There is a well-known saying that "nothing is impossible." Try to think of three things that really are impossible. Trade your list with a classmate's and try to think of a way to accomplish the "impossible" things on your partner's list. Based on this activity, do you agree that "nothing is impossible"?
4. Write the following words on cards: trudged (p. 1); stared (p. 13); sighed (p. 10); fetch (p. 24). One student chooses a card and writes the page number on the chalkboard. The rest of the class turns to that page in the book, and the student acts out the word on the card silently. The rest of the class tries to guess which word on the designated page is being dramatized. If you wish, the class can be divided into teams with points awarded for each correct answer.
5. Try to find the following words in the illustrations: loft (p. 4); torches (p. 28, 29, 30); peasants (almost all of the pages); broth (p. 22, 27, 28); village square (p. 28-29); banquet (p. 30-31).
6. Do the crossword puzzle found at the end of this guide.

## Vocabulary Test

Find the correct definition, below, for each underlined word. Write the letter of the correct definition in each blank.  
(5 points each)

- \_\_\_ 1. Three soldiers trudged down a road on their way home.
  - \_\_\_ 2. The soldiers wanted some food and a loft to sleep in.
  - \_\_\_ 3. The soldiers asked some peasants for food.
  - \_\_\_ 4. The peasants said they had no food because of a poor harvest.
  - \_\_\_ 5. They said they had only enough grain for the next year's seed.
  - \_\_\_ 6. The soldiers wanted some barley to make their soup better.
  - \_\_\_ 7. The soldiers stirred the broth in the huge iron pot.
  - \_\_\_ 8. The soldiers and the peasants ate their fill at a huge banquet.
- A. a large meal  
B. the liquid part of soup  
C. poor working people  
D. walked slowly and heavily  
E. foods such as corn, wheat, and oats  
F. top part of a barn, where hay is kept  
G. gathering the crops that are ripe  
H. a small white grain often used in soups

## Comprehension Test

### Part I: Fill in the Blank (40 points)

Fill in the blank in each sentence with the correct word from the list below. (5 points each)

1. The three soldiers had not had anything to \_\_\_\_\_ for two days.
2. The soldiers went into a \_\_\_\_\_ to find a place to sleep and something to eat.
3. The peasants in the village hid all of their \_\_\_\_\_ from the soldiers~
4. When the \_\_\_\_\_ asked the peasants for something to eat, they got many excuses.
5. Then the soldiers put three \_\_\_\_\_ into a pot of boiling water to make soup.
6. The soldiers said, "If we only had a few \_\_\_\_\_, how much better the soup would taste."
7. Soon the \_\_\_\_\_ were all bringing food to add to the soup.
8. The peasants told the soldiers, "We shall never go \_\_\_\_\_ now that we know how to make soup from stones."

food

stones

soldiers

eat

hungry

peasants

village

carrots

### Part II: Essay Questions

Choose one of the questions to answer. Write a short paragraph. (20 points)

1. Explain why the soldiers decided to make stone soup.
2. What did the soldiers want when they came into the village? Compare the soldiers' goals to the peasants' goals. Tell how their goals were different.

**Answer Key**

**VOCABULARY TEST (40 POINTS)**

1. D
2. F
3. C
4. G
5. E
6. H
7. B
8. A

**COMPREHENSION TEST**

**Part I: Fill in the Blank (40 points)**

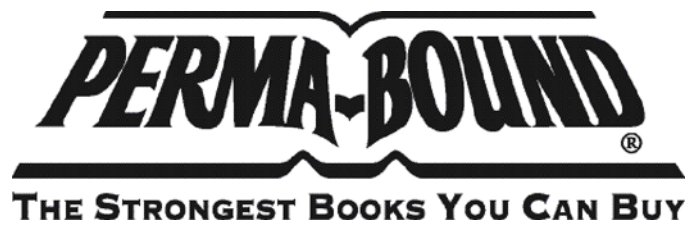
1. eat
2. village
3. food
4. soldiers
5. stones
6. carrots
7. peasants
8. hungry

**Part III: Essay (20 points)**

Answers will vary.







**Perma-Bound**

617 East Vandalia Road • Jacksonville, Illinois 62650  
Toll Free 1-800-637-6581 • Fax 1-800-551-1169  
E-Mail: [books@perma-bound.com](mailto:books@perma-bound.com)

**Perma-Bound Canada**

Box 868, Station Main • Peterborough, Ontario K9J 7A2  
Toll Free 1-800-461-1999 • Fax 1-888-250-3811  
E-Mail: [perma-bound.ca@sympatico.ca](mailto:perma-bound.ca@sympatico.ca)

Visit us online at [www.perma-bound.com](http://www.perma-bound.com)