

The Gruffalo

Written by Julia Donaldson
Illustrated by Alex Scheffler

1999 Macmillan Children's Books (32 Pages)

NOVEL STUDY

The Gruffalo by Julia Donaldson

SUMMARY

The story of Mouse's walk through the woods unfolds in two parts; in both, Mouse uses clever tricks to escape danger. On his way Mouse encounters several dangerous animals (Fox, Owl, and Snake). Each of these animals, clearly intending to eat the mouse, invites him back to their home for a meal. Cunning Mouse declines each offer. He tells each animal that he has plans to dine with his friend, a "Gruffalo", a monstrous creature whose favourite food happens to be that animal, and describes the features of the Gruffalo. Frightened that the Gruffalo might eat it, each animal runs away.

After getting rid of the last animal, Mouse is shocked to meet a *real* Gruffalo – with all the frightening features Mouse thought that he was inventing. The Gruffalo threatens to eat Mouse, but again Mouse is cunning: he tells the Gruffalo that he is the scariest animal in the forest. Laughing, the Gruffalo agrees to follow Mouse. Mouse and the Gruffalo walk through the forest, encountering in turn the animals that had earlier had tried to eat Mouse. Each is terrified by the sight of the pair and runs off – and each time the Gruffalo becomes more impressed with Mouse's apparent toughness. Mouse threatens to eat the Gruffalo, who runs away, terrified.

CHARACTER REVIEW

Mouse

Fox

Owl

Snake

The Gruffalo

SEL THEMES IN THE BOOK

- Feelings – Private, happy, scared, surprised, worried, calm, brave
(*Surprised- Comfortable and Uncomfortable for older children i.e. Yr2/P3*)
(*Private – for older children i.e. Y2/P3*)
- Self - control /calming down
- Friendship



STUDY QUESTIONS

Pages 1-2

- **Look at Mouse's face. How do you think he is feeling as he sets off on his walk?** *Use the feeling face cards to match his expression.*
- **How do you feel when you're out for a walk?** *Ask the children for some examples of how they feel and what types of things make them feel that way.*
- **Why do you think mouse is going for a walk? How does exercise make us feel?**

Activities

- **Exercise Activity** - Do a little exercise (star jumps, stretches, etc.) and then ask the children to look at each other's faces and decide how the exercise has made everybody feel.
- **Looking and Listening Activity** - Go for a walk just like Mouse and see how many animals you can see, hear or find.

Pages 2-13

- **How do you think Mouse feels when Fox/Owl/Snake asks him to come and have lunch in his underground house?** *Look at his face each time.*
- **He is not showing how he is feeling.** *Discuss that Mouse is probably feeling scared on the inside but he isn't showing that feeling on the outside (Discuss with older children Y2/P3 we call this feeling 'Private')*
- **Do you think Fox/Owl/Snake look very friendly? Would you want to be their friend?**
- **Do you think Mouse really likes all the animals, Fox, Owl and Snake?**
- **Why do you think all the animals wanted Mouse to visit their homes? Do they really want to be friends with Mouse?** *Remind children what real friends do refer to Friendship poster - they HELP, SHARE and PLAY.*
- **How do you think Fox/Owl/Snake feel when Mouse says no and tells them about the Gruffalo?** *Discuss the feeling of surprised, look at Fox/Owl/Snake's facial expression. Is surprised a comfortable or uncomfortable feeling? For older children Y2/P3 you can discuss that it can sometimes be both.*
- **Why do you think Mouse told Fox/Owl/Snake he was going to have tea with Gruffalo?**
- **How do you think Fox/Owl/Snake feel when they hear the description of the Gruffalo?**
- **Did the terrible teeth, poisonous wart etc. make you feel scared?** *Discuss what other things make them feel scared.*
- **Is scared a comfortable or uncomfortable feeling?**

Activities

- **Friendship Activity** - Create a poster/picture showing what good friends do e.g. HELP, PLAY, SHARE.
- **Drawing Activity** - Design and draw your own scary monster like a Gruffalo (teeth claws, eyes etc) – try to make him as scary as you can! Show your monster to a friend and ask how the monster makes them feel.

Pages 14-15

- **How does Mouse feel when he meets the Gruffalo for the first time? Show me a surprised face.** *(For older children Y2/P3) - Was this a comfortable or uncomfortable surprise? Discuss what eyes and mouth look like when you have an uncomfortable surprise. Extend to a comfortable surprise.*



- **Why was Mouse now worried? Have you ever felt worried?**

Pages 16-17

- **Mouse is very clever, he calms down and comes up with a plan.**
- **How do you think he calmed down and felt brave again? E.g. stopped and took a deep breath. Practice 'Doing Turtle' together with your children.**
- **What was his clever plan?**

Activity

- **Calming Down Activity - Draw a picture of what/who helps you to calm down and feel brave again e.g. 'Doing Turtle', talking to your Mummy, hugging your favourite teddy bear.**

Pages 18-22

- **How do you think the Fox, Owl and Snake feel when they meet Mouse and Gruffalo? How can you tell? Scared and surprised. Explain/discuss - It is possible to feel 2 feelings at once.**
- **Can you think of a time when you felt more than one feeling at the same time?**
- **Who do you really think the Fox, Owl and Snake are afraid of? The Mouse or the Gruffalo?**

Page 23

- **Who is the Gruffalo afraid of at the end of the story? How can you tell? Can you think of a time when you felt afraid?**

Pages 24-25

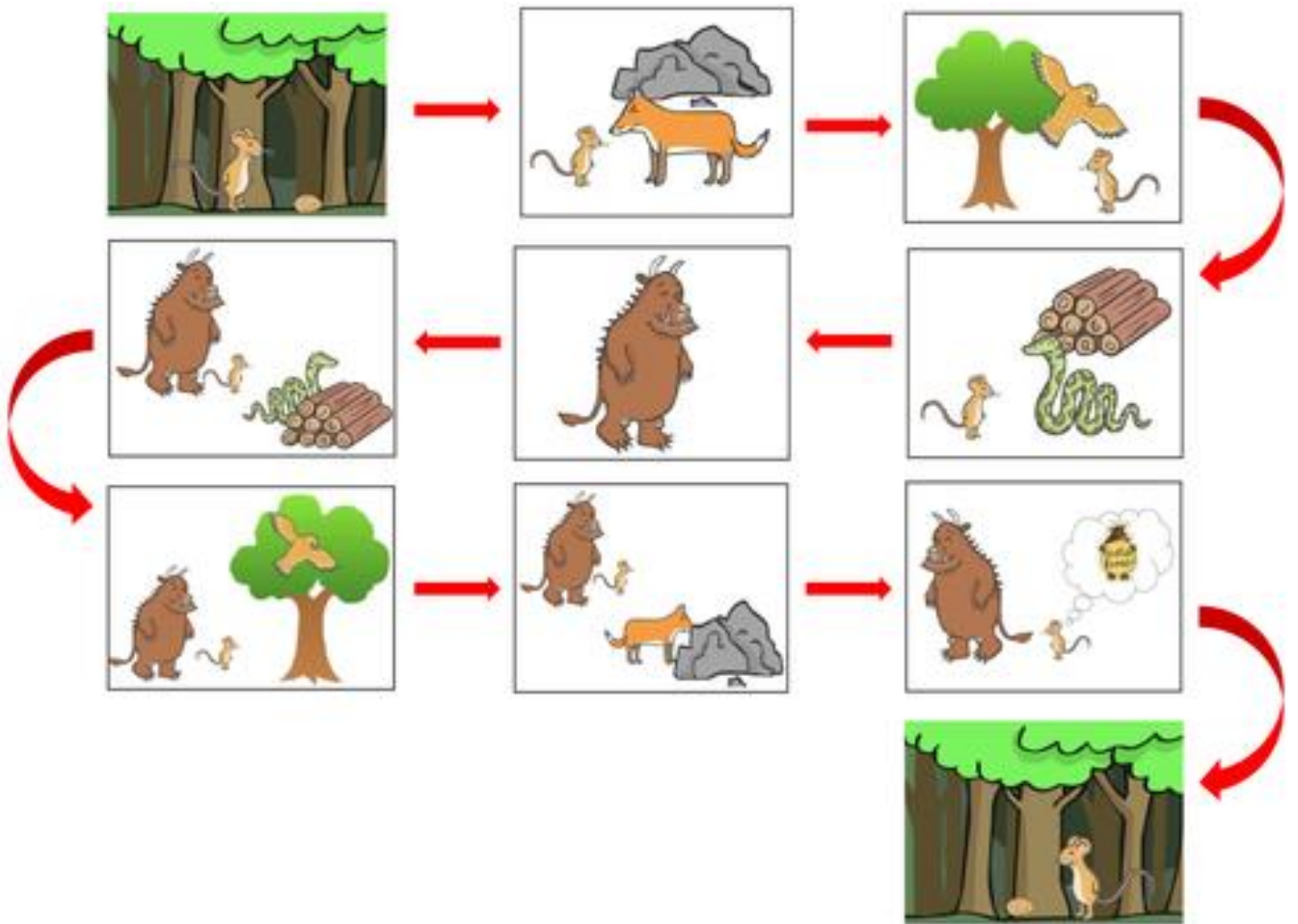
- **How do you think Mouse feels at the end of the story eating his nut? How can we tell?**
- **What makes you feel calm and relaxed?**
- **What helps you to feel brave?**
- **Where is your quiet happy place?**

Activities

- **Create a Calm/Quiet Place Activity. Create a quiet happy place in your house/garden/bedroom. Think about what you would put in there? Where would it be? Who goes there? When might you go there? Why might you go there?**
- **Feelings Role-play Activity - Retell the story from the 'Story Map' in Appendix A. Act out the scenes from the story. Put on special character voices to show how the characters feel and also show on your face and body.**



Appendix A



(Picture source TES.com)