

HC: 978-0-7636-6145-8
Also available as an e-book

Common Core Connections

This teachers' guide, with connections to the Common Core, includes discussion questions, language arts activities, vocabulary instruction, and more to accommodate the learning needs of most students in grades 2-5. This guide is intended for use after students read the entire book independently, as a group, or a combination of both.

Notes throughout the guide correlate the discussion and activities to specific Common Core Language Arts Standards. For more information on specific standards for your grade level, visit the Common Core website at www.corestandards.org.

SMASHIE McPETER AND THE MYSTERY OF ROOM 11

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illustrated by

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About the Book

The day the hamster disappears from Smashie McPerter's classroom begins like any other. Well, except for the fact that the teacher is out sick and Smashie's class is stuck with Mr. Carper, the worst substitute in the world. And except for the mysterious business with the glue. And except for the fact that Smashie is wrestling with a terrible problem, which only partly stems from her extreme aversion to hamster feet. As the peaceable and productive days of Room 11 turn into paranoia-fueled chaos, as natural suspects produce natural alibis and motives remain unmotivated, Smashie and her best friend, Dontel, are forced to the limits of their parlor-room detecting to set things right.

Who stole the hamster from Room 11? A once-happy class is set on edge in this humorous, highly relatable mystery perfect for middle-grade readers.



CANDLEWICK PRESS

COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

CCR Anchor Standards for Reading

Key Ideas and Details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCR Anchor Standards for Language

Conventions of Standard English

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCR Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.



CCR Anchor Standards for Reading

Craft and Structure

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

CCR Anchor Standards for Writing

Text Types and Purposes

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Discussion Questions

1. How are Smashie and Dontel alike? How are they different? How do both their similarities and their differences make them best friends?
2. What is a circular? Why does Mr. Carper want to be the model for TrueYum Grocery Mart? What makes him think he is perfect for the job?
3. When Smashie goes back to Room 11 to get her hoodie, she tells Dontel that she has an eerie feeling. How does this scene foreshadow what happens next?
4. Why does Smashie wear her suits? How do they help her?
5. Why does everyone automatically assume that Billy is the cause of anything bad that happens in Room 11? Are the accusations justified? Why or why not?
6. How did Smashie deduce that Patches was taken and didn't run away? What qualities make Smashie a good candidate to investigate Patches's disappearance? Why would some of her classmates think that she might not be the best person for the job? At one point even *she* thinks that she may have stolen Patches! How does Dontel talk her out of this theory?
7. What does Ms. Early mean when she states, "We've worked all year so far to make a wonderful community. Let's not spoil that now with false accusations and worry" (page 130)?
8. Why does Mr. Carper call the students in Room 11 by vague nicknames? What does this say about him?
9. Smashie proved that there are a lot of crazy goings-on at Rebecca Lee Crumpler Elementary School. Ask your students to list a step-by-step explanation as to how Smashie figures out that Mr. Carper stole the brooch and Billy hid Patches.
10. Did you figure out the mystery of Room 11 before Smashie? If so, what clues in the book helped you solve it? If not, who did you think was the perpetrator?

Voluminous Vocabulary

The author uses sophisticated language throughout *Smashie McPerter and the Mystery of Room 11*. Review the following list of vocabulary words found in the book. First ask students if they can guess each word's meaning by rereading it in the context of the story. Then have them use dictionaries to check their answers and/or define each word. Since there are so many vocabulary words, you may choose to review these words over a few class periods and assign some for homework.

Abashed	Apropos	Casualness	Confer
Accusations	Archenemy	Caveat	Confiscated
Afoot	Arduous	Circular	Contrite
Aghast	Askance	Clomped	Convene
Allotted	Balaclava	Cohorts	Crestfallen
Amiably	Barrister	Comeuppance	Custodial
Anguish	Basking	Conceal	Defect
Approbation	Boast	Concisely	Despair

COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

CCR Anchor Standards for Language

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials as appropriate.
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

CCR Anchor Standards for Writing

Text Types and Purposes

- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCR Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

- Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.



CCR Anchor Standards for Reading

Key Ideas and Details

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Despondent
Deteriorated
Devising
Dolorous
Earnestly
Emitted
Emphatic
Ensnorced
Exonerate
Fervently
Fiends
Foil
Forlorn
Forthwith
Fortify
Glower
Gnashing
Grudges

Gruffly
Gusto
Hastily
Havoc
Hectic
Hesitant
Hunch
Indignant
Inevitable
Kerfuffle
Looming
Macramé
Marsupial
Methodical
Ministrations
Mirth
Miscreant
Morosely

Nemesis
Offhandedly
Overrated
Palpable
Peaky
Penetratingly
Persevered
Rashly
Reckoning
Rekindle
Resolute
Robustly
Roiling
Rueful
Seething
Sentiments
Sham
Shoddy

Sleuth
Snarling
Solvent
Sorely
Strenuous
Subdued
Swashbuckle
Throng
Triumphant
Vouch
Wan
Whist
Woo
Wrathful
Writhed

After your class is familiar with the vocabulary list, invite them to choose fifteen to twenty of the words to use in writing their own mystery stories.

Our Perfect Class Pet

Except for Smashie, all the students in Room 11 think Patches the hamster is the best class pet ever. Ask your students which animal they would choose if they could have a class pet. Make a list of their responses on the board and have them vote for their favorite. Then, as a group, name your new class pet.

After you have chosen your new class pet and its name, help your students make their own stuffed version. Give each student a large sheet of paper and have them fold it in half. Ask them to draw an outline of their animal, color it in, and then add details like whiskers, ears, nose, teeth, fur, hooves, or claws. After they are finished decorating, have them cut out their animal.

Since the paper is folded, each student will be cutting out two identical pieces. Ask them to draw the details that would be on the back of their pet, such as a tail, fur, and back of ears or claws. When they're done, help your students staple the two pieces together around the edge. A little more than halfway before they finish stapling, have students rip small pieces of newspaper and stuff them between the two pieces. When their animal shape is filled and puffy, they can finish stapling around the entire perimeter. Now students will have their own stuffed class pet! Ask each student to write a narrative story starring the new class pet and share their story with the class.

She Said What?

The author uses figurative language throughout the book. Explain to your class the difference between figurative and literal language. Ask your students to choose a chapter in *Smashie McPerter and the Mystery of Room 11* to reread and note all the figurative language they can find.

Ask your students: Why do you think the author chooses to use figurative language where she does? How does figurative language add to the story? How would *Smashie McPerter and the Mystery of Room 11* be different if the author did not use any figurative language?

COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

Craft and Structure

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

CCR Anchor Standards for Language

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCR Anchor Standards for Writing

Text Types and Purposes

2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCR Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

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5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Then ask your class to think of another time when they have seen, heard, or used figurative language. Have them share their examples with the class as you write them on the board.



A Smashing Suit

Smashie loves creating suits for all occasions. Her mother even says, “There is nothing like a suit to turn a frown upside down” (page 102). Invite your students to create their own suits for an occasion of their choosing.

Ask your students to draw themselves in their suits or bring in pictures of themselves wearing their suits at home. Then have them write a paragraph explaining why their specific occasion calls for a special suit and how they created it. Encourage students to share their suits and explanations with the class.



License Plate Lingo

Miss Dismont loves kangaroos so much that she even has a license plate with the word KANGA-RU on it. Write this word on the board and ask your students: What does Miss Dismont's license plate say about her? What other kangaroo items of Miss Dismont's do you remember from the story?

Then have your students create their own license plates. Invite each student to choose a word for their license plate. Ask them how they might change the spelling (or even use numbers!) to fit it on a license plate. Then have them write a paragraph explaining why they chose their word and what it says about them.



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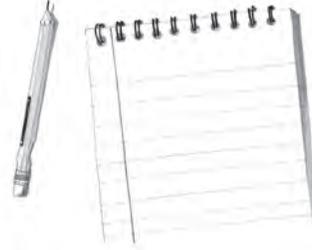
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An Ad Fit for a Thief

Mr. Carper never misses a chance to tell people about the time he was featured in an ad for the town dentist. He wants to be a model for TrueYum Grocery Mart so badly that he steals Miss Dismont's kangaroo pin. Ask your students to list Mr. Carper's qualities. Then have them come up with an ad campaign that Mr. Carper would be the perfect model for. Ask them to design the art for the ad as well as its text, then have them take turns presenting their ad campaign to the class.



Investigation Notebooks

Have your students create Investigation Notebooks like Smashie's and Dontel's. Ask them to recall all the Investigator Language used in *Smashie McPerter and the Mystery of Room 11*. Then instruct them to define each word or term and write an original sentence for each one in their notebooks. The full list of words is:

- | | | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Suspect | 6. Access | 10. Circumstantial evidence |
| 2. Detective | 7. Alibi | 11. Stolen goods |
| 3. Investigate | 8. Tax someone with their crime | |
| 4. Motive | 9. Caveat | |
| 5. Exonerate | | |

Next ask your students to investigate something in their own lives. It may be something that happened in school or something they read in the newspaper or saw on the news. Instruct them to add a Suspect List to their notebooks, then write a fictional narrative about how they approached solving the mystery.

