

Where the Wild Things Are

• Library Lessons •

by | Lynne Farrell Stover

Grades
K-4

Introduction

This 1964 Caldecott-winner was once considered too dark and disturbing for young children, but the lyrical story and delightfully detailed illustrations have withstood the test of time. In fact, during the 2009 White House Easter Egg Roll President Obama declared *Where the Wild Things Are* “one of [his] favorite books,” and read it to more than 1,000 guests.

Story Synopsis

A wolf suit is the perfect outfit for wild young Max to wear as he nails holes in the wall and torments his dog. No wonder his exasperated mother sends him to his room without any supper. But Max is not going to let his confinement stop him for acting out. Soon he is imagining a forest and an ocean trip to the land of the Wild Things. Using his magic powers Max soon becomes their king, and he and his subjects have a riotous time romping around and making a ruckus. Before long, Max gets homesick and returns to find his supper waiting for him . . . and it is still hot.

Lesson I

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Making Mischief

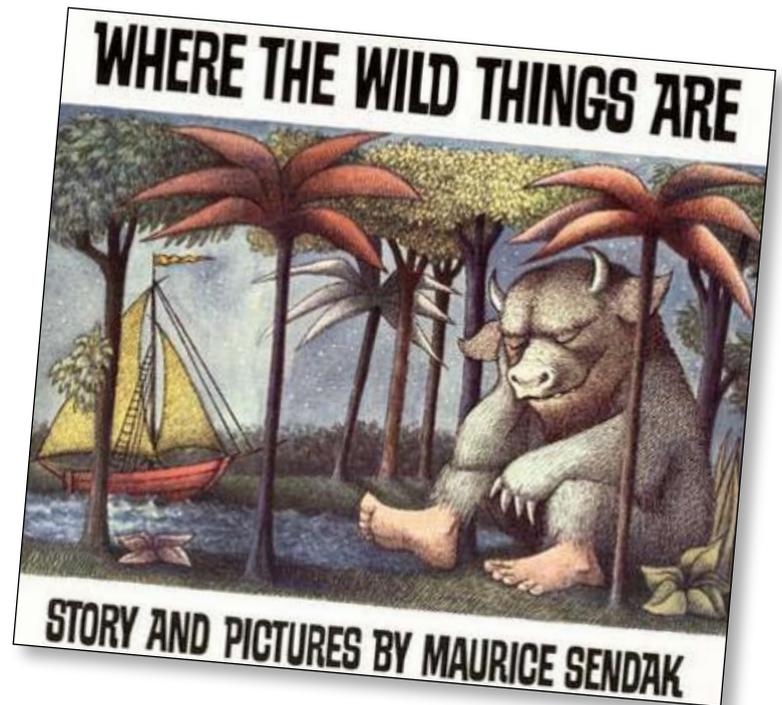
Working Out With Words

Introduction

Today’s lesson is brought to you by the letter “M!” Get your students involved in a “wild rumpus” in the library. This activity works well as either introduction or review.

Grade Level: K-3

Time Allocation: 10-15 minutes



Materials:

- *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak
- (Optional) Visual: “Making Mischief: Working Out With Words” (see end of article for visual)

Objective:

- Students will listen and react to a narrative read by the teacher

McREL Standards

Language Arts

Listening and Speaking

Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes

Procedure:

1. Prepare a poster or transparency of “Making Mischief: Working Out With Words” if you want the students to read along with the narrator. Otherwise, simply print out a copy for yourself to read aloud.
2. Read *Where the Wild Things Are* to the students.

Library Lessons

3. Introduce the lesson by asking the students to say the consonant sound at the beginning of the words Max, Monsters, and Mischief. Tell the students that you are going to review the story they've just heard and that they are to listen for words that begin with the letter "M."
 4. Tell students that every time they hear the letter "M" at the beginning of a word, they are to stand up if they are seated, or sit down if they are standing. When they hear the phrase "THE END," they are to turn around three times, sit down, and clap their hands to show appreciation for everyone's participation.
 5. Read the narrative to the students, dramatically stressing the "Ms" If time permits, go through this word workout a second time.
 6. Be prepared for bright and excited students who will be energized for the rest of the class period.
- The student will complete an activity sheet to demonstrate understanding.

McREL Standards

Reading

Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process

Writing

Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process

Thinking and Reasoning

Understands and applies basic principles of logic and reasoning

Art

Uses basic art materials to express ideas

Lesson II

In and Out of Weeks

Introduction

In *Where the Wild Things Are*, Max sails "through night and day and in and out of weeks and almost over a year" to where the wild things are. When he returns, he sails "back over a year and in and out of weeks and through a day."

Grade Level: 2-4

Time Allocation: 20-25 minutes

Materials:

- *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak
- "In and Out of Weeks" visual
- Transparency marker
- Activity sheets
- Time Sort card sets
- Writing tools
- Optional: markers or colored pencils

Objectives:

- The student will be introduced to various idioms pertaining to time references.
- The student will sort a set of cards ordering time intervals from least to greatest.

Procedure:

1. Prepare the materials prior to class. The Time Sort Cards can be duplicated on card stock to allow for multiple uses. If possible, run off each set on a different colored paper to help you keep the sets separate. Note: If time is limited, you may want to adjust the Time Sort cards so that each set has just six or nine cards instead of twelve.
2. Introduce the lesson by reading *Where the Wild Things Are* to the class. Display the visual. Read the contents to the students. Solicit answers to the ranking of the expressions. While answers can vary, the most common ranking is: Quick as lightning, In forty winks, On the double, From time to time, and Slow as a turtle.



3. Distribute activity sheets and Time Sort card sets (see end of article for reproducibles). Students may work individually or in small groups.
4. Allow students a few minutes to sort the cards and then discuss their rankings. Explain that there is no right or wrong solution due to the subjectivity of the expressions.
5. Encourage students to complete the activity sheets and share their sentences and illustrations with class members.

Extension Activity

Students who enjoy puzzles may wish to have a more concrete group of time cards to sort. Create a second card sort to have available for those who finish the activity sheets and like a challenge.

always	usually	frequently
often	generally	sometimes
occasionally	once in a while	rarely
seldom	now and then	Never

Lesson III

Max's Crossword Puzzle

Introduction

Max was sent to his room without supper because of the cross words he said to his mother. While there, he could have spent his time doing this crossword puzzle!

Grade Level: 2-4

Time Allocation: 10-15 minutes

Materials:

- *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak
- Activity Sheet: Max's Crossword Puzzle
- Writing tools

Objective:

- The student will demonstrate understanding of word meaning by completing a crossword puzzle

McREL Standards

Reading

Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process

Procedure:

1. Prepare the materials prior to class.
2. Introduce the lesson by reading *Where the Wild Things Are* to the students.
3. Distribute crossword puzzles to the students. They may work independently or in pairs.
4. Check for understanding. Answers: ACROSS 3. rumpus, 5. supper, 6. wild DOWN 1. gnash, 2. forest, 3. roar, 4. mischief

Extension

This lesson can be extended by instructing students to use the words in the word box to write a story on the back of the activity sheet. Encourage the students to choose one of the following titles, or to make one up of their own.

1. **Why My Master Got In Trouble** (from Max's dog's point of view)
2. **The King of the Wild Things** (from a wild thing's point of view)
3. **My Mom is Forgiving** (from Max's point of view)

Extension Activities

ART

Making a "Wild Thing" monster sock puppet is fun, easy, and inexpensive. Collect tube socks, buttons, ribbon, wrapping paper, egg cartons, etc. Make them available to students, along with markers, glue, and scissors. Encourage students to be creative and "let the wild rumpus start!"

BIOLOGY

The wild things in this story do not look like any animals we know. They appear to be a combination of mammals, reptiles, birds, and fish. Have students create an imaginary creature that has at least one characteristic of each of the four vertebrates listed above. Direct them to draw an illustration of this creature. What is this creature's name? What is its natural habitat? What does it eat? What interesting things does it do?

CREATIVE WRITING

At the conclusion of Max's adventures he finds himself back in his room with his supper waiting for him. What do your students think the wild things eat? Instruct the students to create a **Wild Things Menu**. The rules are that the food choices should be something strange that a wild thing may like, and that the selected foods should be written as an alliterative description. For example: Slimy Snail Salad; Moldy Mouse Meat; Nasty, Noxious Noodles; or Terrible, Toxic Tea.

READING

Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak won the 1964 Caldecott Medal. A list of all Caldecott and Caldecott Honor winners can be found at: www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/caldecottmedal/caldecottwinners/caldecottmedal.cfm. Have students read at least three other of these titles, and be prepared to give a book talk about their favorites.

RESEARCH

How much do your students know about monsters? Direct them to choose one of the listed monsters here, then look it up in an encyclopedia, and write five interesting facts about it. Remind them to cite their source(s).

Abdominal Snowman, Big Foot, Cyclops, Dragon, Frankenstein, Gorgon, Giant, Goblin, Hydra, Loch Ness Monster, Minotaur, Ogre, Sea Serpent, Troll, Vampire, Werewolf, Yeti



Lynne Farrell Stover has more than thirty years of experience as an educator and is currently a Teacher Consultant at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. She has taught many teacher workshops and won Teacher of the Year in 1999 from the Virginia Council of Economic Education and from the Virginia Association for the Gifted. She is the author of *Magical Library Lessons*, *More Magical Library Lessons*, *Magical Library Lessons: Holiday Happenings*, and *From Snicket to Shakespeare* from UpstartBooks.



Making Mischief

Working Out With Words

Max was **making mischief** and being **mean**.

His **mother** got **mad**.

She **made** him **march** to his room without his **meal**.

Max used his **marvelous** imagination.

Max **made** a **magnificent** forest grow.

Soon he was **moving** on a **mighty** ocean.

Then Max **met** **mean** monsters.

He tamed the **monsters** with **magic**.

The **monsters** **made** Max their **monarch**.

Together they **made** a **madcap** rumpus.

Max **missed** his **mother**.

He told the **monsters** he **must** go home.

Max **made** his way back.

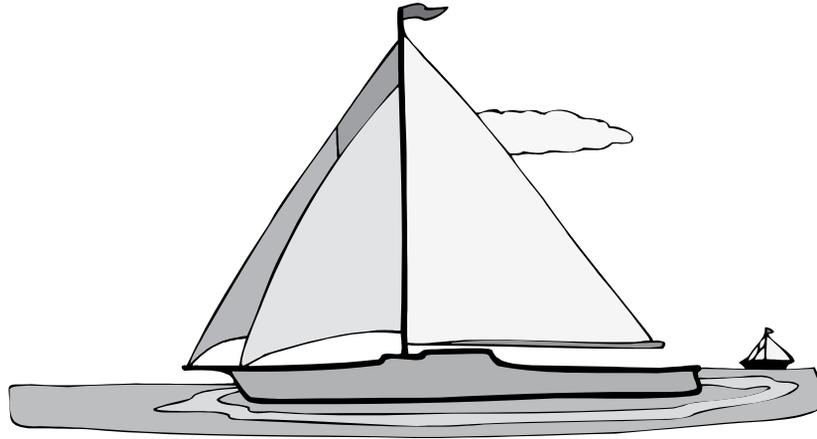
His **mother** had **made** a **meal** for him.

THE END

WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

In and Out of Weeks

When Max returned home after his time with the wild things, he “sailed back over a year and in and out of weeks and through a day.”



We are not always exact when we are talking about time. Sometimes, we use expressions called idioms. An idiom is a phrase that does not mean what it literally says.

Rank these expressions about time from the shortest amount to the longest.

Slow as a turtle
On the double
Quick as lightning
From time to time
In forty winks

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

In and Out of Weeks

An **idiom** is phrase or expression that means something different from the literal meaning. For instance, the idiom “shake a leg” means hurry up.

PART I

Time Cards Sort

Sort the Time Cards according to what you think means the least amount of time to the one that you think means the greatest amount of time. Be prepared to discuss your choices.



PART II

Creative Writing

Pick three of the cards and use the expressions of time that you select in sentences about Max and his mischief making.



1. _____

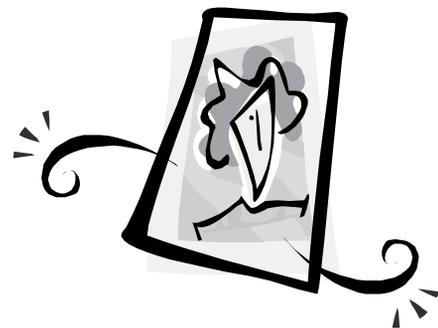
2. _____

3. _____

PART III

Illustrating

Choose your favorite idiom, or expression, and draw a picture of it. For example, a picture of the expression “shake a leg” might show a person shaking his or her leg. Use the back of this paper for your illustration.



In and Out of Weeks

Time Sort Cards

Once in a blue
moon

Just around
the corner

On the spur of
the moment

On the double

Quick as a flash

In the blink
of an eye

As slow as
molasses

In a jiffy

From time
to time

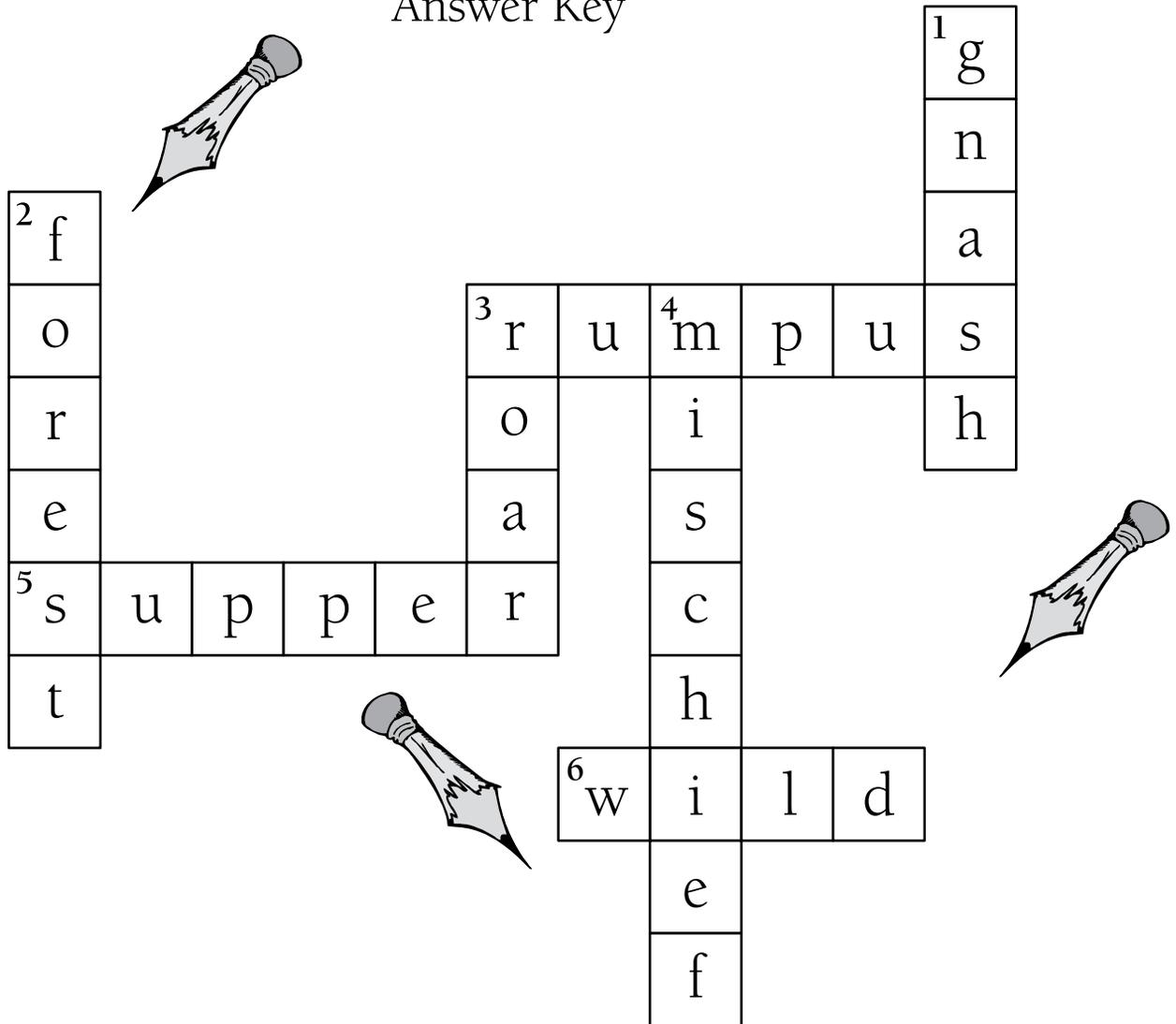
At the drop
of a hat

As slow as
a snail

A month of
Sundays

Max's Crossword Puzzle

Answer Key



ACROSS

- uproar
- evening meal
- not tame

DOWN

- grind together
- wooded area
- growl
- bad behavior

Word Box

wild	roar	mischief
supper	gnash	rumpus
forest		