



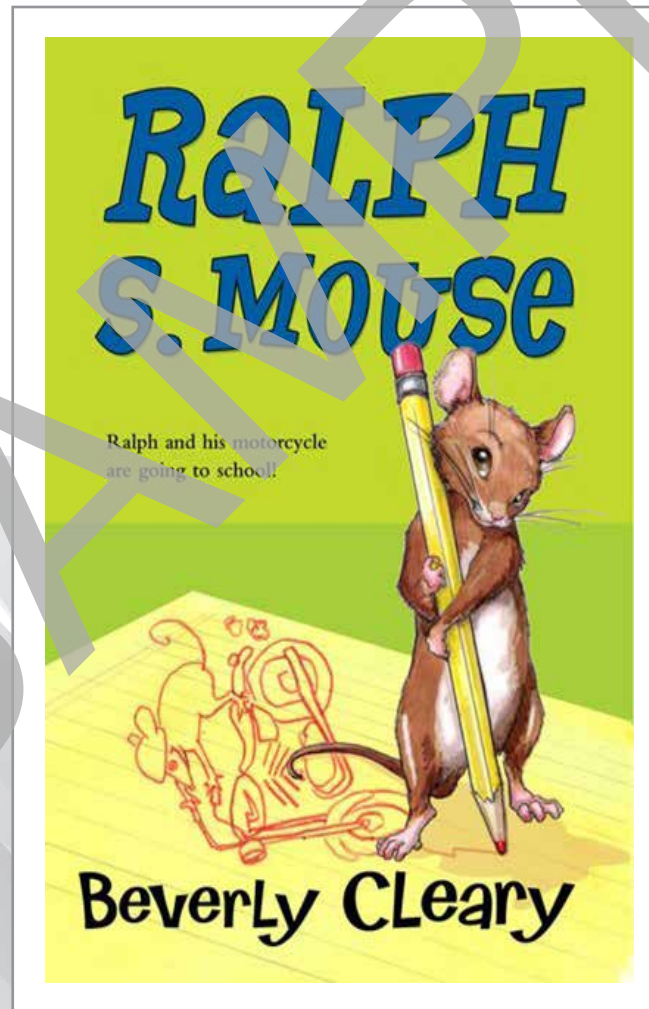
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 3-5**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# Ralph S. Mouse

Beverly Cleary



**READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT**

# Ralph S. Mouse

Beverly Cleary

## TEACHER GUIDE

**NOTE:**

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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## Skills and Strategies

### Thinking

Classifying and categorizing,  
evaluating, analyzing details,  
synthesizing ideas

### Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing,  
comparison/contrast,  
inference, cause/effect

### Vocabulary

Antonyms/synonyms,  
context, multiple meaning  
words

### Writing

Description, narrative, haiku,  
reports, limerick, newspaper  
article, business letter

### Listening/Speaking

Participation in discussion,  
drama

### Literary Elements

Character, setting, plot  
development, story map,  
mood, conflict

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## Summary of Ralph S. Mouse

Ralph is a mouse who lives in the Mountain View Inn in Cucaracha, California, with his mother and assorted brothers, sisters, and cousins. He enjoys watching television and chatting with his friend Ryan, the son of the head housekeeper. Most of all, he delights in riding his little red motorcycle around the hotel at night. One snowy evening, while Ralph is doing figure-eights through the lobby puddles, his little relatives begin pestering him—as usual—to let them ride. Ralph yells at them and thinks about running away from home.

The next morning Ralph overhears the hotel manager threaten to fire Matt, the nice handyman, because of the dirty floor and mousy smell. When the discussion turns to cats and electronic mousers, Ralph decides it is best for all concerned that he go, and he convinces Ryan to take him and his motorcycle to school.

Despite his promise to stay out of sight, Ralph peeks out of Ryan's pocket and is spotted by Melissa, who alerts the class. Ryan's teacher decides that Ralph can be the focus of a learning experience for the class, and a mouse exhibit is scheduled for Friday. She suggests that Ryan work with Brad—a loner who isn't very friendly to Ryan—on a maze for testing Ralph's intelligence. When it is time to go home, Ryan tells an indignant Ralph that he will not get his motorcycle back until he runs the maze.

Later, Ralph breaks his promise to stay in Melissa's boot. While exploring the school, he snacks on paste, split peas used for mosaics, and other tidbits, then falls asleep inside of a bag. The next day, from his perch in Ryan's pocket, Ralph hears Miss K announce that a reporter and photographer from the local newspaper will be writing an article about the mouse exhibit. Miserable, Ralph worries about how well he will run the maze.

Friday arrives and Ralph is dismayed to find himself put on display in a glass fishbowl. Several children read mouse poems, reports, and stories, the reporter and photographer appear briefly, and at last Ralph faces his moment of truth—the maze trial.

Confused by the classroom odors and noises, afraid that Ryan will not return the motorcycle, and angry that he has to prove his intelligence in such a humiliating fashion, Ralph suddenly leaps onto the top of the partitions and races to the peanut butter at the end of the maze. Angry that Ralph has not followed directions, Ryan gets into a fight with Brad, and Ralph's motorcycle gets broken.

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## Using Character Attribute Webs

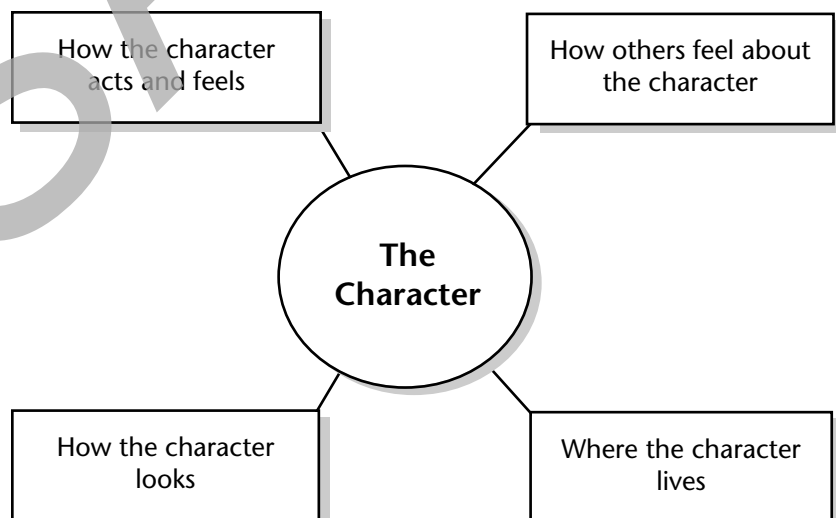
Attribute webs are simply a visual representation of a character from the novel. They provide a systematic way for the students to organize and recap the information they have about a particular character. Attribute webs may be used after reading the novel to recapitulate information about a particular character or completed gradually as information unfolds. They may be done individually, or finished as a group project.

One type of character attribute web uses these divisions:

- How a character acts and feels. (How does the character feel in this picture? How would you feel if this happened to you? How do you think the character feels?)
- How a character looks. (Close your eyes and picture the character. Describe him to me.)
- Where a character lives. (Where and when does the character live?)
- How others feel about the character. (How does another specific character feel about our character?)

In group discussion about the student attribute webs and specific characters, the teacher can ask for backup proof from the novel. The teacher can also include inferential thinking - Higher Order Thinking.

Attribute webs need not be confined to characters. They may also be used to organize information about a concept, object or place.



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## Chapter 3

### Vocabulary

vapor - p. 48	endure - p. 48	spills - p. 49
furnished - p. 49	objected - p. 50	flannel - p. 50
gnawed - p. 52	persisted - p. 53	quaking - p. 55
standard - p. 55	custodian - p. 57	maze - p. 58
diagram - p. 59	contradicted - p. 61	ventriloquist - p. 63
ultimatum - p. 64	sulked - p. 64	

### Vocabulary Activity

Have students complete analogies with selected words from the vocabulary list. For example:

AGREE is to YES as \_\_\_\_\_ is to NO  
(OBJECT)

### Questions and Activities

1. How does Ralph know Brad when he sees him? *He sees Brad get out of a tow truck and say good-bye to his father; Ryan had mentioned Brad's father drives a tow truck.*
2. What is it that the class stands up to recite? Why doesn't Ralph understand the words? How would you explain to him what the words mean? He "hoped mice were included." Why? Are they? *Ralph doesn't recognize the Pledge of Allegiance because he has never gone to school.*
3. What promise to Ryan does Ralph break? How does breaking the promise get Ralph into trouble? *Ralph has promised to stay in Ryan's pocket, but his curiosity gets the better of him. When he peeks out, other children see him.*
4. Ralph notices that Ryan's heart is beating faster. Why is his heart speeding up? *He is nervous because the teacher realizes something is going on and has asked whether he wants to "share something."*
5. How does Miss K react to Ralph? Is this how your teacher would react? Would you like to have Miss K for a teacher? Why or why not? *Miss K finds Ralph "beautiful" and wants to use him to teach the class.*
6. Miss K suggests Ryan show how smart Ralph is by using a maze. How else could Ryan show how smart Ralph is?

- 
7. Why does Miss K make Ryan and Brad partners? How do you think the partnership will work out? What is Brad like? Why, do you suppose? *Miss K is probably hoping Ryan and Brad will learn to be more friendly toward each other.*
  8. Why do Ralph and Ryan fight about the maze? Do you think Ryan is right to keep the motorcycle? *Ralph does not want to be forced to run the maze.*
  9. What is shown on page 62? How is Ralph feeling? What is he thinking? *Ralph is watching Ryan head for home. Ralph is probably feeling angry at Ryan for taking his motorcycle, and perhaps homesick, too.*

### Art Activity

1. Draw a picture of Miss K as you imagine her.
2. Pretend that you are a classmate of Ralph's. Do as Miss K says and draw a picture of a mouse.

### Writing Activity

You are Gordon. Research and write a report on mice.

Prediction: Ralph vows not to run the maze. Do you think he will?

## Chapter 4

### Vocabulary

wistful - p. 67

gourmet - p. 68

emerge - p. 71

brooding - p. 76

exploration - p. 67

plotted - p. 69

partitions - p. 72

musty - p. 76

profitable - p. 67

sullen - p. 69

memorize - p. 74

### Vocabulary Activity

Have students act out some of the words on the list and see if classmates can guess the target words. For example, students might try to demonstrate "wistful," "brooding," and "sullen" facial expressions.

### Questions and Activities

1. Who is the man with the radio? What do you think he would do if he were to see Ralph? *It is probably Mr. Costa, the custodian, who would not be happy to see a mouse.*
2. How does Ralph break his promise to Ryan? Is he wrong to do that? What excuse does he use? *Ralph does not stay in the boot, but explores the school. He feels that everyone is being mean to him and "uses the cruelty of the world as an excuse."*