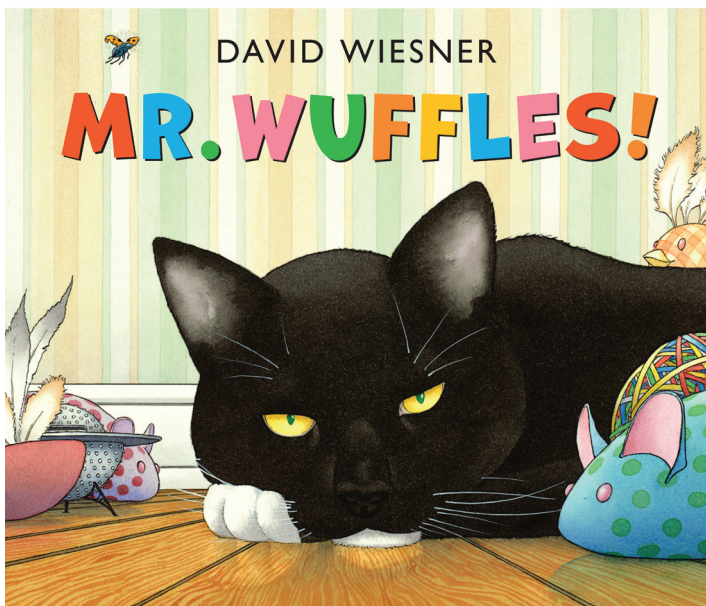


DAVID WIESNER

Ideas for Classroom Use

**About the author**

David Wiesner grew up in suburban New Jersey, known to his classmates as “the kid who could draw.” He went on to become a student at the Rhode Island School of Design and he soon discovered that picture books were the perfect vehicle for his work. Three of the picture books he both wrote and illustrated won the prestigious Caldecott Medal, making him only the second person in the award’s long history to have won three times. He has also received two Caldecott Honors.

Wiesner generally spends several years creating each new book. Many versions are sketched and revised until the story line flows smoothly and each image works the way he wants it to. He creates three-dimensional models of objects he can’t observe in real life, such as flying pigs and lizards standing upright, to add authenticity to his drawings. David Wiesner lives with his family outside Philadelphia.”

Mr. Wuffles!

David Wiesner has done it again with *Mr. Wuffles!* When the finicky cat, Mr. Wuffles, mistakes a small spaceship for a toy, the results are nearly disastrous for the tiny green travelers inside. Forging a quick alliance with unlikely friends (the household insects), the travelers manage to fix their ship and escape—to Mr. Wuffles’s great annoyance. This nearly wordless, action- and emotion-packed book will inspire kids of all ages. It lends itself well to an exploration of point of view (what’s happening from Mr. Wuffles’s perspective? What’s happening from the insects’ perspective?). You may also use this book to discuss dialogue, or how action moves the plot along. You might use it as an exploration of character—in this story, the characters are much more than they initially seem to be. Use it as an exploration of setting in fiction writing—Wiesner has created a fully realized world complete with rules, technology, history, and language. Your students may even be inspired to invent their own worlds.

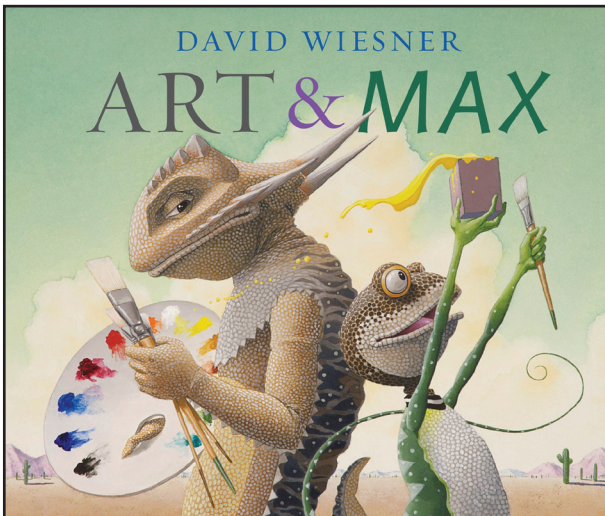
Activities Based on *Mr. Wuffles!*:

- Ask students to translate the travelers’ and the ants’ coded speech bubbles into dialogue.
- Ask students to tell the story from the perspective of Mr. Wuffles and then to switch and tell the story from the perspective of one of the travelers, or one of the insects.
- The ants record their history in pictures. Ask students to study those pictures and write the stories they tell.
- As in many of David Wiesner’s books, things are not always what they seem. What looks like a cat toy is actually a spaceship!—a world inside a world. Ask students to choose an ordinary object to think and write about in this extraordinary way—who or what might inhabit the pencil sharpener? What if the basketball is a planet populated by creatures too tiny to see? What if the school bus is actually the toy of a giant?
- In this story, simple ants are wise historians, little green travelers can repair sophisticated machinery with a pencil eraser and a marble, and ladybugs are involved in complicated plans. People are not always who they seem. When students are developing characters for a story, ask them to think and write about what’s beneath the surface.
- Ask students to design, plan, and create their own comic or graphic novel. How do the pictures tell the story? If they choose to add dialogue, how does the dialogue move the story along?



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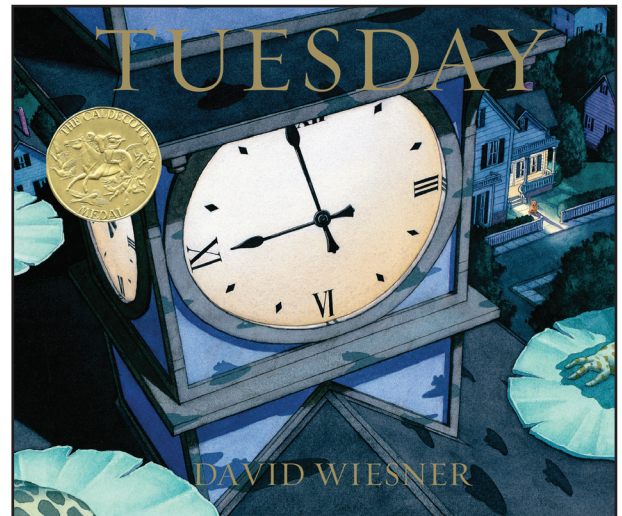
Ideas for Classroom Use

**Art and Max**

Art and Max are both artists—Art, a skilled and practiced painter, and Max, an enthusiastic novice. When Max misunderstands and paints all over Art, his anger reveals his true colors. As Art disappears, layer by layer, Max must figure out his own way to re-create his friend. Use the spontaneity found in this story to inspire your students' own work!

Activities based on *Art and Max*:

- Enjoy the spontaneity of drawing collaboratively with your students. Choose a familiar person or object and draw its outline. Have students come up one by one to add details. Enjoy your exciting and unexpected finished product!
- Discuss what would happen if people lost their shape and color. How would students re-create their friends? Have them draw and write.
- If your students were to re-draw/paint Arthur, as Max does, what would they change?
- Ask your students to tell the story of the smaller lizard characters that appear in the background. What are they thinking and feeling?

**Tuesday**

In *Tuesday*, David Wiesner takes a perfectly ordinary evening and creates a whimsical world populated by frogs soaring through neighborhoods on levitating lily pads. The story of the frogs' night out is told almost entirely with pictures, with a sneak peek at the following Tuesday's remarkable events at the very end. Students of all ages will be inspired by this imaginative story.

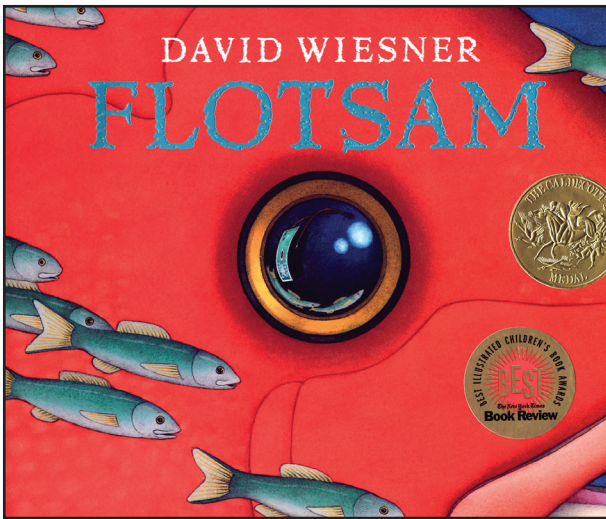
Activities based on *Tuesday*:

- Ask students to pick a day of the week and tell, write, and illustrate the story of magical events that take place only on that day.
- Ask students to choose one character from an image in *Tuesday* and write and illustrate the story from that character's perspective.
- Ask students to write words to go along with Wiesner's pictures. Discuss how they might add as much detail and expression to their words as Wiesner has added to his pictures.
- Ask students to study the last page of *Tuesday* and to write and illustrate a story that continues where Wiesner leaves off. What happens on the night that pigs fly?



DAVID WIESNER

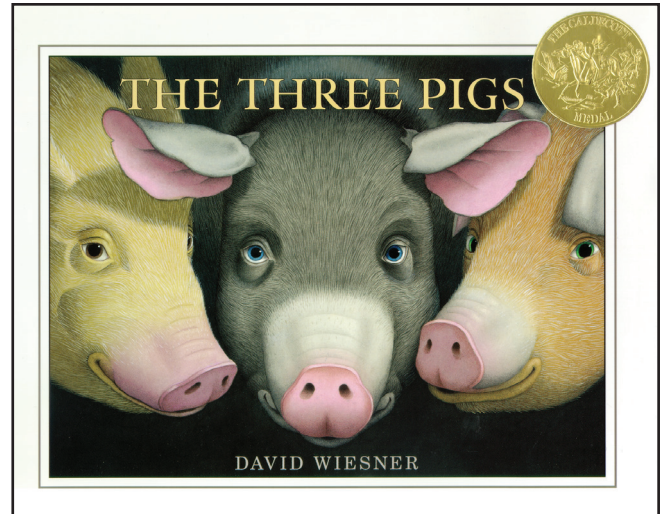
Ideas for Classroom Use

**Flotsam**

Flotsam is another almost completely wordless picture book and tells the story of a curious boy who finds an old underwater camera washed up on the beach. After getting the film developed, he is astounded to discover pictures of extraordinary events taking place below the sea—a puffer-fish hot-air balloon, an octopus lounge, a clockwork fish. He also finds a photographic record of the camera's previous finders. Delighted, the boy reloads the camera, adds his own face to the record, and tosses it back in. *Flotsam* can inspire art projects, writing activities, and even science inquiries!

Activities based on *Flotsam*:

- Ask students to envision their own fantastical versions of what really happens under the sea, using Wiesner's images as inspiration. Have them draw and/or write.
- Ask students to collect their own piece of "flotsam" and write a backstory.
- Bring in (or ask students to collect) ordinary objects from nature to observe carefully, as scientists do. They might then draw or write their observations.
- Discuss with students what we can learn from the clues in the photographic portraits of children the boy finds in the camera. Have them take photographic portraits of someone at home (using a shared disposable camera), then trade pictures and discuss what they learn about the subject from the clues in the picture.

**The Three Pigs**

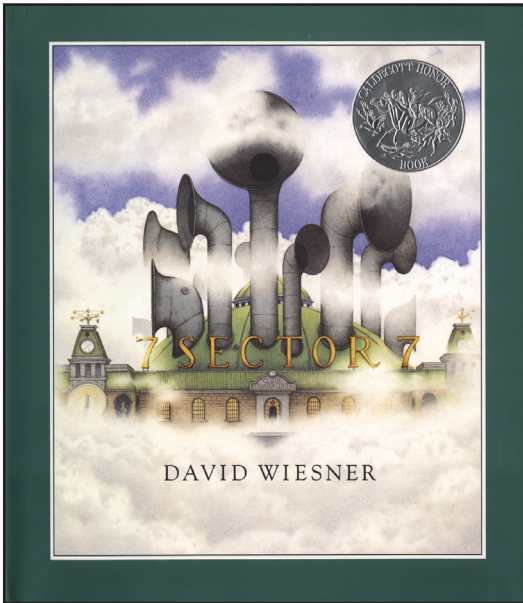
We've all heard the story of the three pigs, and Wiesner's version starts in a familiar way . . . until the wolf blows the first little pig clear out of the story! The three pigs have adventures outside of their own story, jumping in and out of other tales and bringing some new friends along with them when they finally head home. Told only with Wiesner's expressive pictures and a bit of dialogue, this book offers a delightful new twist on an old story.

Activities based on *The Three Pigs*:

- Ask students to pick their own familiar fairy tale or folktale and to imagine what might happen if their characters could leave the story. Ask them to draw or write it.
- After reading *The Three Pigs* out loud, discuss with students how Wiesner's art changes as the pigs move in and out of different stories. Why did he make the choices he made?
- Ask students to study the way Wiesner draws his characters coming out of the page. Have them practice this technique, and have them try it out in the context of their own stories.
- Have students tell stories using only pictures and dialogue.



Ideas for Classroom Use

**Sector 7**

What starts off as a routine field trip turns into a dramatic adventure for the young artist in *Sector 7* as he meets a new friend at the top of the tall city building his class is visiting. His friend is no ordinary friend, but a young cloud! The boy visits the place where clouds are designed and dispatched and adds some creative new designs of his own, changing the skies above his city to the amazement of the people below.

Student activities based on *Sector 7*:

- Have students choose a natural object—a tree, rock, lake, etc.—and redesign it as the boy in *Sector 7* does with clouds. Have them sketch and write about their new-and-improved creations! They might also imagine how people might react to encountering these surprisingly different objects.
- Study the names of clouds with your students, as well as the science of cloud formation.
- What kinds of clouds appear in *Sector 7*?
- Go on cloud-watching and cloud-sketching field trips. What shapes do students see in the clouds? What stories do they tell?

Guide written by Zoe Ryder White

