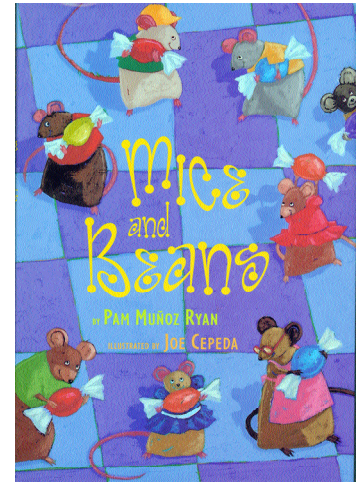


IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES TO USE WITH
MICE AND BEANS
BY PAM MUÑOZ RYAN, ILLUSTRATED BY JOE CEPEDA



Before Reading:

1. Talk about the different punctuation marks in Spanish and the pronunciation of the letter “j.” See if the students know any Spanish words or names and list them on the board. If you have Spanish speakers, have them teach the class how to say some common phrases.

2. See if the class can predict what might happen with mice and beans. Keep a list and refer to it at the end of the book. Remember that all logical predictions are great. Just because the author had a different idea, it doesn’t mean it is better.

During Reading:

3. Tell students to raise a hand when they hear something that might be a clue to something mysterious happening. Make a list on the board.

After Reading:

4. Show a list of Spanish words from the book. (Make a transparency of the **Spanish Words in Mice and Beans**). Read each word and see if the students can give the meaning in English. See if the students can tell how they know the meaning and what kind of clues were given in the book.

5. Notice the glossary and pronunciation guide in the back of the book. This is unusual with fiction, but often found in nonfiction books. Discuss their uses.

6. Let the students choose some Spanish words that they would like to learn. Think of some actions to go with them to help them remember them (“Silly me!” might be shown by hitting the side of the head with the palm of the hand. Decide on some as a class and practice them together. Then have students pair up to quiz each other.

7. Make a **Magic Book** with some of the Spanish words. Let each student choose four words they want to learn. The Spanish word goes on the front. When the book is opened, the English equivalent is written and an illustration drawn to show the meaning. (see attached directions.) After the books are finished, the students can quiz each other by sharing their books.

8. See if the students can list the events in order by day. Have them fold a blank paper into fourths. They should write “Mice and Beans by Pam Muñoz Ryan and illustrated by (student name)” in the upper left section. In the upper right section they should write “Sunday.” In this section they should draw a picture of what happened on Sunday and write a sentence under the picture explaining the illustration. They then continue with the bottom left for Monday, bottom right for Tuesday, and so on, continuing the same order on the back or on a separate sheet.

9. Use the **Events from Mice and Beans** page (attached). Students work in pairs to put the events in the correct order.

10. Have students complete one of the character pages for Rosa María: **Character Frame, Character Profile, Character Map, Character Comparison**, (compare her with themselves or someone they know). These pages are in the back of the packet.
11. Work as a class, in pairs, or individually to fill out the **Story Element Grid**. Characters would be Rosa María and the mice.
12. Rosa María is forgetful. Have the students pretend that they are helping her plan the party. Make a list of the tasks she needs to complete to get ready for the party. See if the students can think of mnemonics or memory devices to help Rosa María remember. It can be something using the first letter of the tasks in order, an illustration with the tasks in order, a funny drawing of what she needs to do, or anything else the students can create. They can work in small groups and then share ideas.
13. Compare the Spanish version (*Arroz con frijoles . . .y unos amables ratones*) with the English version. Notice the absence of the glossary and pronunciation guide, differences in punctuation, and the use of “the” before days of the week (which are not capitalized). There are also no definitions of Spanish words in context.
14. Read: *Top Secret* by Ted Dewan
Compare the clever way the mice fill the piñata in *Mice and Beans* with the way the Night Brigade collects a tooth from under a pillow in *Top Secret*.
15. Read: *Two Bad Ants* by Chris Van Allsburg.
Let students imagine what it would be as tiny as an ant. Have them imagine that when they come to school they suddenly become miniaturized. How do ordinary things look? How do they manage to get around? What problems do they have? What advantages do they have? They can give themselves strength and the ability to climb (similar to an ant) if they want. Students can use the **Point of View Chart** for planning if they wish.
16. Read: *I Love Saturdays y domingos* by Alma Flor Ada
Compare *Mice and Beans* with this book which also includes a birthday party with a piñata.
- Notice the beginning punctuation in Spanish, the different way of marking quotations, and the lack of capitals for the days of the week.
 - Make a list of Spanish expressions and their meanings (or use the **Spanish Words in I Love Saturdays y domingos** sheet). How did the students figure out the meaning? Context clues, illustrations, guessing, checking a dictionary are possible ways. Have students choose a favorite expression and illustrate it. They should write the expression in Spanish at the bottom of the illustration.
 - Notice how each of the girl’s grandparents has a different culture to share. Have students fold a paper into fourths. In each box they should illustrate something that each grandparent does with the granddaughter and/or how they contribute to her birthday. They should write a phrase or sentence under the illustration to explain it.
17. Talk about the Mice in *Mice and Beans*. What newborn baby mice called? Brainstorm names for other animal babies. Then read the book, *A Pinky is a Baby Mouse* by Pam Muñoz Ryan. See if the students can guess the riddle before you read the answer. Give credit for clever, imaginative answers even if they aren’t accurate (such as goblet for baby turkey). After reading the book, you may want to have the students use the **Baby Animal Chart** to see how many names the students can remember or already know.