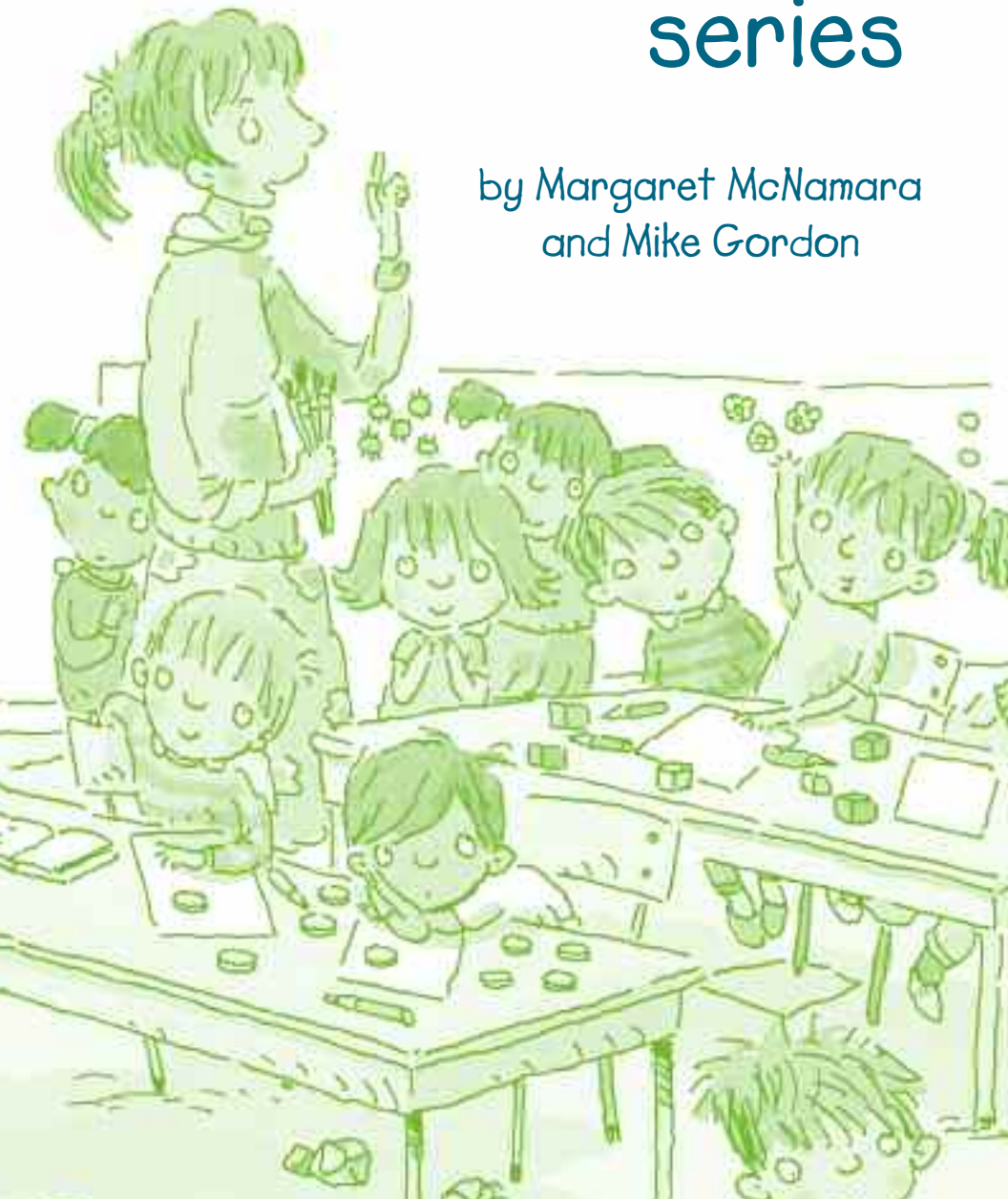


A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO

The Robin Hill School series



by Margaret McNamara
and Mike Gordon





Welcome to Robin Hill School!

This Level One *Ready-to-Read* series is the perfect introduction to reading for children ages 4–6. Featuring simple stories, increased vocabulary, and longer sentences, the Robin Hill School series provides emergent readers with a front-row seat in Mrs. Connor's first-grade class at Robin Hill School. Newly independent readers will enjoy the easy, large text and appealing illustrations as they learn more about holidays, getting along with others, self-discovery, and self-esteem.





Questions for Discussion

1. After reading several books in the Robin Hill School series, have a class discussion about Robin Hill School, where all of the stories in the series take place. Is Robin Hill School similar to your school? Is it very different? How so?
2. In *The First Day of School*, Michael finds it difficult to leave his treasured dog, Cookie, at home while he goes to school. Why do you think Michael feels this way? What was hard for you to leave at home when you first started school? What does Michael finally realize at the end of the story?
3. Michael says “Nobody told me!” when he finds out he has to leave Cookie at home. What do you feel nobody told you about starting school?
4. In *One Hundred Days (Plus One)*, Hannah gets a cold and has to miss the one hundredth day celebration with her class. Have you ever missed something special at school because you were not feeling well? How did that make you feel? Why do you think Mrs. Connor and Hannah’s classmates celebrated 101 days of school instead of 100 days?
5. Reza is afraid of Sparky, the class bunny, in *First-Grade Bunny*. Why do you think Reza is scared? Talk about Mrs. Connor’s special project for Reza. How does drawing a picture of Sparky help Reza? Is there something that you are scared of that you would like to share with your classmates?
6. In *The Pumpkin Patch*, the first-grade class at Robin Hill School takes a field trip to a pumpkin patch. Talk about field trips. Why do students go on field trips? What are your favorite field trips? Where would you like to go on a future field trip?
7. Katie thinks her pumpkin is perfect until a classmate expresses a different opinion. What do you think of Katie’s reaction to her classmate’s comment? What is your opinion of Katie’s pumpkin? Is there such a thing as a “perfect” pumpkin?
8. It’s the girls vs. the boys in *The Playground Problem*, until the kids figure out a way to get along together. Do you think Emma is right to get mad about what happens on the playground? What do you think of the boys’ behavior? Have you ever dealt with a similar problem at your school? Talk about this with the members of your class.
9. In *Election Day*, the students running for class president make some compelling campaign promises. Do you think they can actually keep those promises? Why do the students in the class ultimately decide to vote for Becky, the new girl in their class? Do you think they made the right decision?

10. Working together as a class is a theme in many of the Robin Hill School books. Talk about how the first-grade class works together in a positive way in the following books: *The Counting Race*, *Too Many Valentines*, and *Election Day*.
11. Neil claims that he is “very, very sure” he does not want to receive valentines from his class in *Too Many Valentines*. Why do you think he feels this way at first? Do you think he changes his mind? How do Neil’s classmates come up with a good solution while at the same time respecting his feelings about Valentine’s Day? How would you feel if you didn’t receive any valentines on Valentine’s Day?
12. Discuss the illustrations in the Robin Hill School series. How do they help your students understand what’s going on in each story? Are there things happening in the pictures that are not mentioned in the story? What details do the illustrations add to enhance and expand the text?
13. In *Groundhog Day*, the students in Mrs. Connor’s class learn about signs in nature that signal the changing of seasons. Along with your class, have a general discussion about other signs in nature that signal a change of season. Then divide your class up into four groups. Assign each group a season (spring, summer, winter, and fall) and ask the group to brainstorm ideas about the signs of changing seasons. Then, ask each group to present their ideas to the rest of the class.

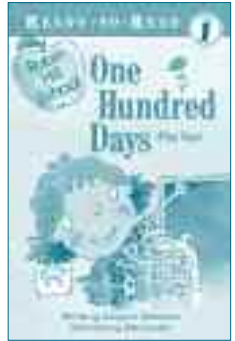


Activities and Research

1. Does your class have a student who is new to your school? If so, brainstorm some ways your class can help make this new student feel welcome. For example, make a class list of the things your students like best about your school. Or, assign a buddy to the new student each day. What other “welcoming” activities can your students think of?
2. Hannah brings in 100 buttons (plus one extra on her favorite sweater!) for her classroom’s 101 days celebration in *One Hundred Days (Plus One)*. If your students were asked to bring in 100 (or 101) pieces of one item to share with your class, what would each student bring? Consider hosting a similar celebration in your classroom. Some ideas: Blow up 100 balloons. Have your students string 100 cheerios on a yarn necklace. Practice different ways of counting to 100. Try to imagine what life will be like in 100 years.
3. Host a mock Election Day in your classroom. As in the book *Election Day*, ask each student in your classroom what they would promise to do if they were elected class president.

4. In *A Tooth Story*, Jamie is upset because he hasn't lost any teeth yet. Research why we lose our baby teeth. At what age do most kids start to lose their teeth? How many teeth do they ultimately lose? What is the origin of the tooth fairy? Create a tooth chart for your class, similar to the one Mrs. Connor has for the Robin Hill School's first-grade class.
5. In the Robin Hill School books, the first-graders learn how to get along with one another and become friends throughout the course of the school year. To foster new friendships in your classroom, institute a "student of the week" project at the beginning of the school year. Each Monday, select a student as the student of the week. Interview this student about their family, their interests, and their favorite things. Post their answers on a bulletin board in the classroom.
6. If your students had the opportunity to write another Robin Hill School book, what would it be about? Encourage your students to write their ideas down. Then have everyone share their story ideas with the class.
7. Stage a Thanksgiving parade in your school! As in the book *Happy Thanksgiving*, have your students dress up as pilgrims, Native Americans, and turkeys. Then parade through the halls of your school the day before Thanksgiving break!
8. After reading several Robin Hill School books, introduce the concepts of "self-discovery" and "self-esteem" to your students. Talk about the following characters: Michael (in *The First Day of School*), Emma (in *The Playground Problem*), Katie (in *The Pumpkin Patch*), Reza (in *First-Grade Bunny*), and Becky (in *Election Day*). What do these characters learn about themselves during the stories? How do the characters feel about themselves at the beginning and at the end of each story?
9. Find out more about Valentine's Day. When did the holiday start, and why? Why do people traditionally give each other cards on this day?
10. Sparky is the classroom bunny in Mrs. Connor's class, and it's a lot of work to take care of him! Do your students have pets at home? If not, would they like to own a pet? Have each student draw a picture of a current—or future—pet. Then ask them to list or talk about what they need to do to take care of this pet.
11. In the autumn, visit a pumpkin patch and find some "perfect" pumpkins! Compare and contrast everyone's pumpkins when you return to school. Talk about how everyone has a different view of what is "perfect."
12. Find out more about the origin of Groundhog Day. When and why did this day begin? Does it always happen on February 2? Conduct further research on groundhogs. Why is the groundhog a symbol of the beginning of spring?

Books in the Robin Hill School Ready-to-Read Series



The Counting Race
ISBN-13: 978-0-689-85539-9 (PB)
ISBN-10: 0-689-85539-7

Election Day
ISBN-13: 978-0-689-86425-4 (PB)
ISBN-10: 0-689-86425-6
ISBN-13: 978-0-689-86426-1 (Lib. Ed.)
ISBN-10: 0-689-86426-4

Fall Leaf Project
ISBN-13: 978-1-4169-1537-9 (PB)
ISBN-10: 1-4169-1537-0
ISBN-13: 978-1-4169-1538-6 (Lib. Ed.)
ISBN-10: 1-4169-1538-9
Available October 2006

The First Day of School
ISBN-13: 978-0-689-86914-3 (PB)
ISBN-10: 0-689-86914-2
ISBN-13: 978-0-689-86915-0 (Lib. Ed.)
ISBN-10: 0-689-86915-0

First-Grade Bunny
ISBN-13: 978-0-689-86427-8 (PB)
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Groundhog Day
ISBN-13: 978-1-4169-0507-3 (PB)
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ISBN-13: 978-1-4169-0508-0 (Lib. Ed.)
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Happy Graduation!
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ISBN-10: 1-4169-0509-X
ISBN-13: 978-1-4169-0510-3 (Lib. Ed.)
ISBN-10: 1-4169-0510-3
Available June 2006

Happy Thanksgiving
ISBN-13: 978-1-4169-0505-9 (PB)
ISBN-10: 1-4169-0505-7
ISBN-13: 978-1-4169-0506-6 (Lib. Ed.)
ISBN-10: 1-4169-0506-5

**One Hundred Days
(Plus One)**
ISBN-13: 978-0-689-85535-1 (PB)
ISBN-10: 0-689-85535-4

The Playground Problem
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The Pumpkin Patch
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ISBN-10: 0-689-85874-4

Too Many Valentines
ISBN-13: 978-0-689-85537-0 (PB)
ISBN-10: 0-689-85537-0

A Tooth Story
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