



Educator Discussion Guide

The Terrible Two

by Mac Barnett & Jory John
Illustrations by Kevin Cornell

Louisiana Young Readers Choice Nominee 2018
Grade 3-5

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ABOUT THE BOOK

Moving to a new town and school is not always easy for a kid. Miles Murphy, AKA the “prankster”, has moved to a boring new town called Yawnee Valley. Yawnee Valley, located in Mississippi, is known as the cow capital of the United States. Miles doesn’t know quite how to handle the move and the fact that Yawnee Valley has a prankster of its own, Niles Sparks.

Yawnee Valley’s prankster, Niles, wants to team up with Miles to become legendary pranksters, but Miles wants nothing to do with him. Not until many of Mile’s pranks go wrong does he want to take Nile’s offer and become legendary pranksters together.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mac Barnett

Mac Barnett is a young, award winning writer of children’s books from California. He is a *New York Times* bestselling author of popular books called *Extra Yarn*, and *Sam and Dave Dig a Hole*, both of which are winners of the Caldecott Honor. He is also known for the Brixton Brothers series of mysteries, and the *Terrible Two* novels. For more information, you may visit www.macbarnett.com and <https://twitter.com/macbarnett>.

Jory John

Jory John is a *New York Times* bestselling author for children and adult books. Some of the books he is known for is *Goodnight Already!*, the book *All My Friends Are Dead*, and *The Terrible Two* novels. Jory John is also known for being a two-time E.B. White Read-Aloud Honor recipient.

For more information, you may visit www.joryjohn.com and <https://twitter.com/joryjohn>.



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

From Pennsylvania, Kevin Cornell is an illustrator of children's books, comic books, and websites.

Besides *The Terrible Two*, some of his illustrations can be found in the book *Count the Monkeys*, and *Mustache!* He is also a nominee for the Bluebonnet Award, and the Good Reads Choice Awards Best Picture Books. For more information, you may visit www.bearskinrug.co.uk.

BOOK AWARDS

2015 E. B. White Read Aloud Award Honor, Middle Reader

Capitol Choices 2016

Amazon.com Best Books of the Year 2015, Ages 9–12

Chicago Public Library Best Books of 2015, Fiction for Older Readers

ILA Children's Choices, 2016 Reading List

Children's Book Committee Bank Street College of Education Best Children's Books of 2016, Humor

OTHER TITLES IN SERIES

The Terrible Two Get Worse, (2016)

The Terrible Two Go Wild, (2018)

PREREADING ACTIVITIES

Pranks

Ask your students what a prank is. According to Wikipedia, a prank is also known as a practical joke. It is a mischievous trick played on someone, generally causing the victim to experience embarrassment, perplexity, confusion, or discomfort. Ask them to think of a time he/she pranked someone or got pranked. Call on volunteers to share their stories. How does being the victim of a prank make you feel? How does pranking someone make you feel? Explain to students what a practical joker is. Have students work with a partner to come up with a prank. Be sure to warn students that there is a fine line between pranking and bullying someone. Here is an article about pranking versus bullying to help explain, <https://steemit.com/society/@lazariko12/when-do-pranks-cross-the-line-to-become-bullying>.

Moving/New School

Ask students if they have ever moved to a new house. Next, ask students if they have ever changed schools? Call on volunteers to share stories of a time they moved. Also, have students work with a partner to come up with different ways to welcome students to their new school.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Yawnee Valley is also known as the cow capital of the United States. What can you infer about the town of Yawnee Valley?
2. What makes you think that Miles is upset about moving in chapter two?
3. What evidence in chapter three proves that Miles does not like his new room?
4. List three ways the author has described Miles at his old school.
5. The author includes a number of details about Miles. What does the author want you to understand about Miles?

6. From the description that the author gives about Yawnee Valley in the book, what do you think the town looks like?
7. On the first day of school, the principal was angry. What are some of the actions of the principal that made readers believe he was angry?
8. On page 35, fact number three states that cows have a 360 degree panoramic vision. If you had this kind of vision, what types of jobs could be done easier? How does this vision help a cow survive?
9. How does the main character, Miles, change throughout the story?
10. How does the author show Miles' feelings after the birthday party?
11. From the author's description of Yawnee Valley in the book, do you think it sounds like an interesting place?
12. On page three of the story, the author mentions that a cow was elected mayor of Yawnee Valley twice. Since a cow was elected as mayor twice, what does this tell you about the job of mayor?
13. What supporting details does the author include to show why did Miles and Niles need each other?
14. In chapter nine, Niles says, "There's Ms. Shandy's desk." Why does Miles say, "Is this the doorknob?"
15. How does Niles change throughout the story? Who do you think is the real Niles, the boy at the beginning of the story or the boy at the end of the story?

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

Language Arts:

Students will write short journal entries from a character's perspective, referring back to the book for text evidence. They will pick one of the following prompts:

1. Miles writes about his first year at Yawnee Valley.
2. Miles or Niles write about their 2nd April Fool's Day prank.

Encourage students to share their entries with the class.

Prankster Oath

We will review our prereading activity about pranks. Students will view a short video about the prankster's oath on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=simJG3Omyvw>. Next, students will write their own prankster oath.

Science:

Students will be paired up with a partner and conduct research about cows using the following websites or databases or books:

<https://aipl.arsusda.gov/kc/cowfacts.html>

<http://www.greenmeadowfarms.com/cooldairyfacts.htm>

<http://lifestyle.iloveindia.com/lounge/facts-about-cow-1564.html>

Students are required to find ten facts that interest them about cows. Next, students will work together with their partner to create a brochure about cows.

Math:

Cow fact number two on page 35 states that a dairy cow can produce more than 25 gallons of milk in one day, or 400 cups. How much milk will a dairy cow produce in one week, one month, and one year? Calculate in a variety of measurements including gallons, cups, liters, ounces, etc.

Social Studies:

The teacher and students will view the Interactive Map Project website and view the Dairy Cattle Inventory map.

<http://nefbmap.org/map.php?P=37&PV=0>

Conduct a whole group discussion about the following topics:

1. Identify the highest milk producing states and discuss the factors which could contribute to this.
2. Locate where your state is and discuss its' rank in dairy cattle production.

From the same website you can search under maps and share the Cattle Drive Path map and the Beef Cow map with the class.

Social Studies/Math:

In pairs, students will map one location to another and determine the distance between them. Students will receive a map of the United States. Discuss how to use the scale on the map to calculate distance. The teacher will give students three locations to map to and from. Students will use the scale on the map and figure out what the shortest distance from one place to another. They will also have to determine which two locations are closest and which two are farthest.

Vocabulary:

Idyllic	prank	prankster
Dread	contingency	potential
Dour	reputation	huddling
Stooge	herd	

RELATED WEBSITES

Teachingbooks

<https://www.teachingbooks.net/tb.cgi?tid=41957&a=1>

This website provides resources for books.

DOGO books

<https://www.dogobooks.com/the-terrible-two/book-review/1419714910>

This website contains book reviews for kids by kids.