



The Mitten

by Jan Brett

The Mitten was published in 1989. It has continued to win national awards since its publication. A recent honor was given in 2007 when members of the National Education Association named it a “Top 100 Children’s Books of 2007.” Check out its popularity on www.goodreads.com where it has received more than 36,000 ratings and almost 500 reviews. Readers love Ms. Brett’s version of this folktale with elegant illustrations rich in the culture of Ukraine. Note the cultural details in the clothing, the furniture, and the house. Many of the reviewers mention her birchbark panels that are the background of each full page spread and the intricate decorations bordering each central illustration. When you look at the sidebar illustrations, you will notice hints about additional story action taking place. The expressive faces of the animals and their human-like reasoning personify these delightful forest animals.

Even though this is a folktale, you’ll see life science information about animals and their habitats. You’ll want to learn more about moles, snowshoe rabbits, and hedgehogs. The text uses appropriate terms, such as: muzzle, burrow, and talons. The Reading Comprehension Best Practice that works well with this story is **Answering Questions During Reading**. As your listener and you study the illustrations in the First Reading, keep track of your questions. You’ll look for textual evidence to provide answers to your questions during the Second Reading.

Conducting an internet search on *The Mitten* will yield a wealth of sites full of school-like activities from phonics worksheets to sequencing the appearance of the animals in the story. There are informative videos on the animals and a www.youtube.com reading of the entire text.

Spoiler Alert: Ms. Brett’s last illustration will bring a smile!