

THE FANTASTIC FLYING BOOKS OF MR. MORRIS LESSMORE



AUTHOR: WILLIAM JOYCE

ILLUSTRATOR: WILLIAM JOYCE

See a video of the book read aloud here: [The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore](#)

**** REMEMBER: HAVE FUN AND THE KIDS WILL TOO! ****

OVERVIEW

ABOUT THE BOOK

The story, in a nutshell, concerns the titular book-loving Mr. Morris Lessmore, whose personal library is blown away in a terrible wind but who finds meaning caring for the books he finds in a marvelous library. Filled with both literary (Shakespeare, Humpty-Dumpty) and film references (*THE WIZARD OF OZ*, *THE RED BALLOON* and Buster Keaton), the picture book version of Joyce's story has a quiet contemplative charm that demonstrates the continuing allure of the printed page. Paradoxically, the animated books of the film and app are captured as though in a series of frozen frames. The motif of the bound, printed book is everywhere. Even the furnishings and architectural details of the old-fashioned library in which the books "nest" like flying birds recall the codex. The unifying metaphor of life as story is a powerful one, as is the theme of the transformative power of books. The emphasis on connecting readers and books and the care of books pays homage to librarianship. Rich in allusions ("Less is More") and brilliant in depicting the passage of time (images conflate times of day, seasons and years), Joyce's work will inspire contemplation of the power of the book in its many forms.

<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/william-joyce/fantastic-flying-books-mr-morris->

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

William Joyce was born in Shreveport, Louisiana in 1957. He is a writer, illustrator and filmmaker who won an Academy Award for Best Animated Short film. His first short story was in fifth grade when he entered a classroom contest. The teacher did not think that Billy's Booger was a good subject for a story, so he got sent to the principal's office!

THE READ ALOUD

BEFORE READING

Use these questions before reading the story to help students activate background knowledge and make predictions:

- Tell the children a little about the writing of the book (found at the back of book – inside jacket)

DURING THE STORY

Use these questions while reading the story to help students interpret the action and content.

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LESSMORE

TOPICS & THEMES:

- Magical libraries
- The adventure within books
- The wonder of words
- Life's upsets

Tips for every book!

POWER PHRASES:

I WONDER...

I NOTICE...

TELL ME MORE...

DIGGING DEEPER:

"Tell me more, why do you think that?"

"How do you know that?"

"Why do you think they feel like that?"

"Interesting, did you notice anything else?"

Emergent Literacy: (Comprehension - connections to world/self - print referencing - open ended questions - phonological awareness).

- (P.1) What do we already notice about Morris' life from just this first page?
- (P.7) What happened to cause Morris to wander?
- (p.9) I've noticed something about the use of color in the story? Does anyone else notice that? What did the brown images indicate? The color images?
- (P.11) What do you think amiable means?
- (p.11) What picture clues tell us the meaning of the word urged?
- (p. 12) What do you think this building might be?
- (p.20) What does "becoming lost in a book," mean? (p.35) Why are some people in gray?
- (p.45) I wonder where Morris will go when he moves on?
- (p.52) Why is the girl gray?
- What is your prediction of what will happen?

AFTER READING

Use these questions while after reading the story to help students understand what they just read.

- How did you feel after reading the story?
- Has anyone helped you find a love of reading?

BRING BOOK TO LIFE

- What can books teach us?
- Have you ever had an upset?
- I find it hard to decide which book is my favorite. Do you have a favorite?

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

- Morris loved words. Turn to your partner and think of words that make you feel happy/ words that make you feel sad/ words that make you feel silly. Does your classmate have the same ones or different? Share a few with the class.

SMALL-GROUP IDEAS

1. DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

Use these questions before reading the story to help students activate background knowledge and make predictions:

- William Joyce tells stories with pictures. Could you tell the stories even if you did not have the words? Let's review the book and cover the pages with text and see if we can tell the story using our own words, take it in turns and ask the children to be as descriptive as possible, helping the children to come up with the best possible vocabulary.
- It is said that every book needs a reader to bring it to life. What do you think?
- How did the ending of the book make you feel?

Suggested Optional Activity:

1. Choose another book and covering the words read it to a partner, using the best vocabulary you can think of!

2. WRITING ACTIVITY

Use these questions while reading the story to help students interpret the action and content.

- The lovely lady had a favorite book. Write a paragraph or poem describing your favorite book, include why you like the book and how it makes you feel when reading it. You may draw a picture to illustrate what you have written.

3. EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Use these questions while after reading the story to help students understand what they just read.

- If you are able, show the video of the book. Discuss the differences between the book and the video.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIIJqbMAa9Y>
- If you are not able to show the video to the full group, do the following activity as small group:
- Design a cover for a book you would want to write.
- Have an 'About the Author' section and write about what you would want others to know about you.

COMMON CORE LINKS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL 3.1,3.2,3.3,3.4,3.6,3.7