

Ribbon Rescue

By Robert Munsch

Illustrations by Eugenie Fernandes

Big Books are a wonderful way to share picture books with a group of children. Every teacher and every group is different; this guide is designed to provide a few suggestions for using Robert Munsch's *Ribbon Rescue* with your students.

For a general guide to using big books in the classroom, go to www.scholastic.ca/bigbooks

Summary:

Jillian's grandmother makes her a beautiful ribbon dress. While Jillian is outside enjoying her new dress, a bride and groom and a group of frantic wedding guests race by on their way to the church, exclaiming that they are lost and going to be late. Jillian helps each one by sharing the ribbons from her dress to fix their problems. Unfortunately, Jillian ends up being a mess, and risks missing the wedding herself.

Background:

Robert Munsch was inspired to write this story when the real Jillian came to watch him tell stories wearing her new ribbon dress. Later he found out that it was a traditional Mohawk costume, and he visited her where she lives on the Kahnawake reserve near Montreal. He took lots of photographs to help inspire Eugenie Fernandes with the illustrations.





Before Reading

Show the front cover. Ask questions like:

- What do you think the title *Ribbon Rescue* might mean?
- What do you notice about the lettering used in the title?
- Who is the author? The illustrator?
- What do you think the story might be about?
- Where do you think everyone is going in such a hurry?
- What questions do you think this story might answer?

Show the back cover.

(Note: Conceal or omit reading the story description, and consider having the students write their own “blurbs” after you have read the story.)

- What do you think is happening in the illustration?
- Whose photographs do you think are shown below?

Share the information about the author and illustrator with the class.

Read the dedication page.

- Who do you think Jillian is? Who do you think that Robyn, Julia, Alexandra and Katherine might be?

Write the students' answers on the board or on a flip chart, with their initials next to each answer. Leave these up as you read the book.

Sharing the Book

Now you are ready to read *Ribbon Rescue* aloud to the group. Robert Munsch is first and foremost a storyteller, and his books are perfect for dramatic reading. Use your voice to emphasize the refrain:

“I’m late, I’m lost!
I’m late, I’m lost!
I’m going to miss the wedding!”

Now go back to the thoughts that the students shared with the group before you began reading. Let the children find their initials on the board; read their predictions, and discuss what really happened. There are sure to be matches, and this is an opportunity to praise the children’s predictions.

Take time to let the students express their reactions to the book. Recap the story with the group. Note what happened first, next and last.

You can ask questions like:

- Why did the author call this story *Ribbon Rescue*?
- What part of the story did you like best?
- What illustrations did you especially like?
- Did something similar ever happen to you?
- Looking at the illustrations, do you think this story takes place in the city or the country?

Re-Reading

Now read *Ribbon Rescue* again with the group, but this time stop for questions and comments on every page. Read a page, then invite comments on the story and the illustrations. When questions come up, ask the other students to suggest answers, and discuss the varying opinions. Take your time and examine each page closely.

- Title page: Note the frogs on this page, and see if the children spot them – and all the other wildlife — throughout the book.
- pp. 2-3: You could explain to the students that this is a traditional Mohawk dress that Jillian's grandmother has made for her. Ask the students if they can find any other aboriginal symbols on these pages. How many ribbons does Jillian's dress have?
- p. 9: How many ribbons does Jillian's dress have now? As you read the story, you might want to keep a tally on a chart of each time she gives a ribbon away.
- p. 21: What *do* you think Jillian's grandmother would say?
- pp. 22-23: What does the man at the door see when he looks at Jillian?
- pp. 26-27: What do the bride and groom see when they look at Jillian?
- p. 28: Now that Jillian's grandmother sees what has happened, what do you think she will do?

When there are disagreements, go back to the book. Re-read and listen for clarification. Be open to alternative ideas and make sure all the children's ideas are treated seriously and thoughtfully.

On subsequent re-readings, encourage the children to chime in. Some will read along with you; others will join in on the refrain. Try some *oral cloze*. When you come to a part you think most will remember, pause and let the children "fill in" the words for you. You can also use little sticky notes to cover up individual words and practice *written cloze*, again allowing the children to fill in the missing words.





More Ribbons! (Language arts activity)

☉ Imagine that there are more ribbons on Jillian's dress, and brainstorm other problems that Jillian might solve with them. Make a list on chart paper. Encourage the children to choose one item from the list, copy it onto a piece of paper, and illustrate it. You could put them together to create your own classroom album of "Jillian's Problem Solving."

Mural Map (Social studies activity)

☉ Discuss maps with the students. Ask: What is a map? What are maps used for? What different kinds of maps have you seen? Explain that you are going to create a mural map showing the route from Jillian's house to the church.

☉ Brainstorm the landmarks you will see along the way: e.g. storage shed, pond, trees, houses. Record these on chart paper. Show the students how to place Jillian's house at one end of the mural paper and the church at the other end.

☉ Divide the students into pairs or small groups, and have them make their own maps of the route, drawing on the landmarks or using pictures cut from magazines. Encourage them to add their own landmarks.

☉ Have the groups share their maps. Compare and contrast their maps and discuss similarities and differences.



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