

## TEACHING AND CURRICULUM GUIDE

**Title:** Baldilocks and the Three Dares

**Audience:** Ages 8 – 12 • Juvenile Fiction / Action & Adventure / Survival Stories / Self-esteem / Special Needs / Science / Literature

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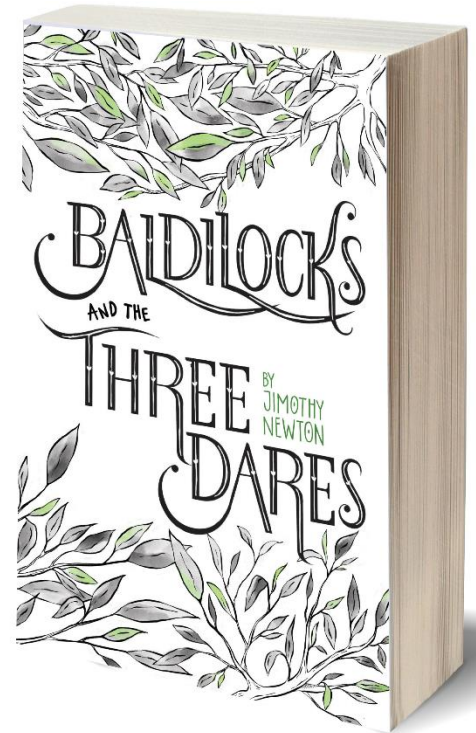
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**Illustrator:** Tricia Seibold

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### Book Description:

***“This is my hive. You want it? You’re gonna have to take it!”***

Kee, a smart and feisty honeybee, is mysteriously sabotaged by unseen forces. Disgraced, she flees the hive and bumps into an unlikely band of misfits, including a skunk who can’t stink, a mouse-intolerant snake, and a small but cheeky sidekick...who may have some attention deficit issues. Join Kee, Kyle, Noodles, and Pinky on their journey out of the woods and into the treacherous world of Baldi, Rumbler, and the rumored Dare protocol. Will they find “Lucky,” an elusive character with legendary—if not magical—powers of healing? The colony depends on it.

This is a story about teamwork, tolerance, and resilience—pushing boundaries to discover the hidden potential in all of us, regardless of what we look like.



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### About the Author

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**Author Bio:** Jimothy Newton, a California native, but shaped by his years in Florida, Texas, Australia and Greece, came to children’s fiction via a somewhat unusual path—a Summa Cum Laude honors degree in Electrical Engineering, followed by fifteen years of mind-numbing software development. Science has always been one of his favorite subjects which is why he spends a lot of time researching and including the science behind his stories and characters.

When not writing, he can be found running music outreach programs he created for elementary schools and Boys & Girls Clubs in the Bay Area.

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## GUIDE OVERVIEW

This guide is meant to serve as a tool to help teachers conduct a holistic unit of study using *Baldilocks and the Three Dares* as the core classroom text. It is broken into individual tasks, grouped by educational theme, so that educators can easily select and use as many or as few units as necessary to fulfill a given lesson plan.

## AUTHOR MOTIVATION

For the past fifteen years, Jimothy has volunteered with organizations that serve children who are battling chronic and life-threatening health issues. *Baldilocks and the Three Dares* is a labor of love meant to honor the courage, compassion, and endless sense of humor these kids display every day. His hope is that it will inspire the rest of us to be just a little more like them.

He was particularly moved by Kira, an amazing thirteen-year old girl from Edinburgh, Scotland, who loves WWE wrestling, doing a little “Lean and Dab” with friends, and who happens to be battling neuroblastoma...for the second time. They met through Dreamflight, an equally amazing organization that takes kids with serious illnesses or disabilities on a ten-day journey of fun and self-discovery—one that pushes boundaries, empowers, and builds self-esteem.

## CURRICULUM USE

This guide is designed for use with grades 3 to 7. *Baldilocks and the Three Dares* is intended to be used as part of a broader curriculum that asks students to read stories and literature, as well as more complex texts that provide facts and background knowledge in areas such as science and social studies. Students will be challenged and asked questions that refer back to what they have read. This develops critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills that will be utilized throughout life.

To help teachers use this guide as a flexible lesson planner, guide activities are identified by one or more Curriculum Learning Tasks (CLT). CLTs are listed for six main categories of English Language Arts: Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking, Viewing and Presenting.

## LITERATURE

### Vocabulary

Neuroblastoma, foreboding, mum, wee, lad, undulated, mimed, disgruntled, vantage point, colony collapse, mite, perplexed, solemn, derange, berate, brood cells, dilemma, muster, harassing, akimbo, bewilderment, prolific, snidely, mange, contempt, concealed, saline, culprit, abdomen, emerge, pungent, topsy-turvy, intolerant, cardiac arrest, somber, acoustical, damping, stupor, regurgitate, abode, respiration, wincing, dissuaded, resolve, hooligan, muddled, uncouth, fricasseed, hubbub, cacophony, remorse, imminent, haunches, stoic, coronate, careen, aspiring, successor, ominous, roiled, oblivious, defiant, maternal

### Reading Aloud

**CLT-Reading:** *Read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings.*

- Read Aloud Performance: Students take turns reading a favorite excerpt. After reading, ask each student to describe what it is about their chosen excerpt that they like.
- Organize RAP Concert for another class, or school event.

### Responding to the Text

#### Creative Responses

**CLT-Presenting:** *Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, images, music, sound) and visual displays in presentations to clarify information.*

- Create a story timeline of the book.
- Create a map of the journey made by Kee, Kyle, Noodles and Pinky throughout the story.
- Choose one scene from *Baldilocks and the Three Dares* to turn into a graphic novel or zine.
- Write a journal from the viewpoint of Kee, Kyle, Noodles or Pinky.
- Using Spotify or another list-building music service, create a class soundtrack to *Baldilocks and the Three Dares*

#### Themes

##### *Dealing with Challenges*

- How is Kee's life changed by the loss of her wing?
- What challenges do you think Kyle would face as a skunk who cannot stink?

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- How do these two characters accommodate their disabilities and adapt to their new circumstances?

#### *Courage and Resilience*

- Why do you think Noodles doesn't disclose her gender until the end of the story? In what ways can avoiding reality help us when we are mourning? In what ways can it limit us?

#### *Friendship*

**CLT-Reading:** *Understand that patterns of language interaction vary across social contexts and types of texts and that they help to signal social roles and relationships*

- The story opens with a girl and her pet mouse, and then we see the friendship between Kyle and Kee, and Pinky and Noodles. What does *Baldilocks and the Three Dares* suggest about friendships between unlikely people?

### Examining Literature

#### *Voice*

- Why does Kee's story begin in verse form and then transition into prose? What effect does this have on the way you read *Baldilocks and the Three Dares*?

#### *Characterization*

- Create character profiles for each of the four main characters—Kee, Kyle, Noodles and Pinky.
- Create Venn diagrams of characters (social and physical traits, food, environmental). Do the same for you and a friend.

#### *Plot Development*

**CLT-Reading:** *Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts)*

**CLT-Reading:** *Discuss how authors and illustrators make stories exciting, moving and absorbing and hold readers' interest by using various techniques, for example character development and plot tension*

- Read the opening chapter of the story.

- How does the author signal that this character is not human?
- How do we get a sense of the scale of this character?
- What animal do you think this is before the revelation that it is a mouse?  
What leads you to think this?
- What information are we given about the girl in the prologue?
- Do you think that it's significant that we are not told her name or what she is specifically suffering?
- What clues are given that Kee is a queen bee before it's revealed to us? Go through the early chapters of *Baldilocks and the Three Dares* and see how many clues you can find. Why do you think the author signposts Kee's status before her big reveal?
- What clues are given that Kyle cannot stink before he admits it to Kee?

### Literary Style

#### *Poetry and verse*

- As a class, read the verse sections of Chapters 1 and 2 aloud, then consider the following questions on rhythm and meter:
  - How do the lines of poetry maintain their own rhythm?
  - How many beats can you hear per line?
  - Does this change as the verse section progresses?
  - What affect does this have on the way you read the poetry?
  - Rhyming patterns (Refer to Blackline Master 1)

Select one stanza from *Baldilocks and the Three Dares*.

  - What rhyming pattern does this stanza have?
  - What other poems can you find that share this rhyming pattern?
- Use the verses in *Baldilocks and the Three Dares* as a starting point and research some famous poems.
  - Which ones have a distinct meter, and which ones do not (e.g. sonnets versus free verse)?

- Stage a class debate about whether it is important for all poems to have rhythm.
- To what extent does *Baldilocks and the Three Dares* share the structure and function of a traditional fairy tale? Consider, for example, the introduction of the heroine, Kee.
  - What function does Kyle play?
  - What about Pinky, Noodles and Rohan?
  - How does Kee's showdown with the wicked queen simultaneously mimic and subvert traditional fairy tales?

## SCIENCE

### Zoology

- In small groups, research bees.

*CLT-Writing: Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.*

- What different types of bees are there?
- Where in the world can they be found?
- How do bees make honey?
- Do all bee species make honey?
- How have bees come under threat in recent decades? What measures are being taken to save them?
- What social hierarchy do bees have in their hives?
- Kee is a queen bee — what is the function of a queen bee?
- Can a hive survive without a queen? Why/why not?
- How is a queen bee selected from the hive?
- What are the functions of drone bees like Rohan and worker bees?
- Draw a diagram of the social hierarchy on a hive.
- Why and how do skunks smell? Discuss the physiology of skunks. Where does their smell come from? What do they use their stinky ability for?

- How could Lockie, a duck, be raised by a snake? Research how ducks and other birds imprint upon their parents when they hatch. What other unlikely duck parents can you find?

### Ecology

- What is a symbiotic relationship? Would you classify the relationships between Kyle and Kee, and Pinky and Noodles as symbiotic relationships? **Extension question:** Can you find more examples of symbiotic relationships in nature? Choose one and present it to the class in a short 5-minute presentation.
- What is a predator and what is prey? How do ecosystems revolve crucially around the interactions of predators and prey? As a class, choose an ecosystem, such as a coral reef, a mangrove or a prairie. Use Blackline Master 2 to discuss the following:
  - What sorts of birds and animals make their homes in these ecosystems?
  - Which of these are prey and which are predators?
  - Remove one predator and one prey from your list. What would happen to that ecosystem?

## SOCIAL SCIENCES

### Discussion

As a class, discuss the three dares: Share, Shear and Shed.

- How can these three dares be used to overcome adversity in our lives?
- Think of a time in your life when you have felt overwhelmed or helpless. Using Blackline Master 3, see if you can apply the three dares to that situation. How do they help you process and overcome the difficult stage in your life?

### Taking action

- Jimothy Newton was inspired to write *Baldilocks and the Three Dares* by his experiences with children's medical charities Dreamflight, MDA, SNAP and Solving Kids' Cancer. Divide the class into four groups and assign a charity to each group. Go to the website of each charity and use the information you find there to create a poster about that charity.
  - [www.dreamflight.org](http://www.dreamflight.org)
  - [www.mda.org](http://www.mda.org)



- [www.snapkids.org](http://www.snapkids.org)
- [www.solvingkidscancer.org](http://www.solvingkidscancer.org)

Some questions to consider:

- When was the charity founded, and by whom?
- Where and how does the charity operate?
- Who is the charity trying to help?
- How does the charity raise its money?

You might even think about organizing a class fundraiser for these four charities in your school, and involve the wider school community in your project.

## RESOURCES

### Science

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Curriculum Standards

[U.S. Common Core](#)

[Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills \(TEKS\)](#)

[Australian Curriculum](#)

[U.K. National Curriculum](#)

[International Baccalaureate \(IB\) Primary Years Programme](#)

[Connecting IB to the Common Core](#)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THIS GUIDE

Radhiah Chowdhury earned her Bachelor of Arts (Literary Studies and History) and her Doctor of Philosophy (Children's Literature) from the University of Sydney. After five years teaching Literature, History and Cultural Studies at the University of Sydney, she made the transition into trade publishing. Since then, she has worked for publishers Scholastic Australia and Allen & Unwin as a children's editor, and created educational resources for, among others, Simon & Schuster, David Fickling Books, Scholastic Press, Allen & Unwin, Scholastic Australia, Omnibus Books, Penguin Random House, Walker Books and Oxford University Press. She can be reached at [ampersandhedera@gmail.com](mailto:ampersandhedera@gmail.com).