



Objectives

1. To introduce the artistic and writing skills of Kevin Henkes through a study of several of his books.
2. To provide students with opportunities for written and artistic expression.
3. To allow personal reflections of materials read.
4. To integrate technology and mathematics with literature.
5. To increase reading comprehension through a variety of activities such as reading for detail, sequencing and finding the main problem of a story.

Chester's Way • Julius, Baby of the World



Kevin Henkes

American author Kevin Henkes excels in two areas—writing and illustrating. He writes both novels and picture books and enjoys going back and forth between the two types of books.

He was born in Racine, Wisconsin, on Nov. 27, 1960. He was the fourth of five children. Since his youngest sibling wasn't born until six years later, he was able to experience being the youngest for quite a while. During his childhood he would go to the library often. He enjoyed reading books by Crockett Johnson, Garth Williams and William Steig. He took art lessons at a museum. It wasn't until junior high school when a teacher encouraged him, did Kevin think much about writing, as he was always more interested in illustrating. In high school he pursued writing. He went to the University of Wisconsin in Madison. At age 19 he flew to New York with a portfolio of his work, hoping to find a publisher. Within a couple of days he signed with Greenwillow. When he was 21, *All Alone* was published.

Henkes lives in Madison with his wife, Laura, who is a painter, and their son Will. He has a dog and a cat.

Kevin Henkes uses everyday incidences in his story. His characters reflect childhood emotions. He thought mouse characters would add more humour to his stories. He doesn't know exactly why he chose mice but as a child, he did have a cup with a mouse head and eyes that moved. While on a book tour, waiting in an airport, he saw a little girl with a plastic purse driving her father crazy. He thought the purse would be perfect for Lilly and wrote *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*. He dedicated it to his son, Will. His inspiration for *Julius, the Baby of the World* came from his niece who didn't like becoming an older sister. He remembered feeling jealous when his youngest sibling was born. When writing picture books, Henkes tries to avoid any excess words to tell the story concisely, and keep the young reader's interest.

Henkes has received some awards for his writing. In 1986 *Weekend With Wendell* was named Children's Choice Book by the Children's book Council. In 1988 *Chester's Way* was a notable book by the American Library Association. In 1997 he received the Elizabeth Burr Award for *Words of Stone*.

Sheila Rae, The Brave • A Weekend With Wendell •

Chrysanthemum • Owen • Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse

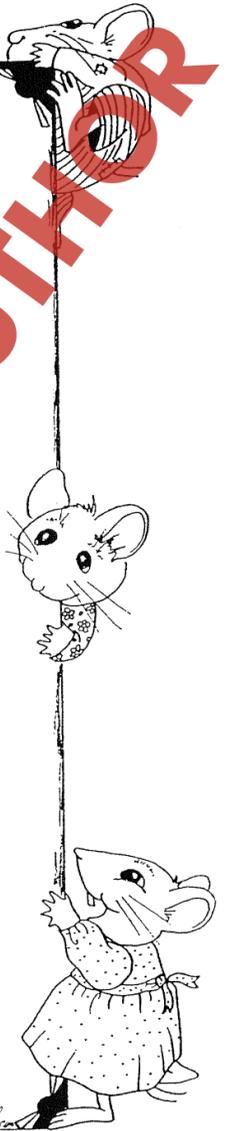
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Books by Kevin Henkes

All Alone	Greenwillow ©1981
Bailey Goes Camping	Greenwillow ©1986
The Biggest Boy	Greenwillow ©1995
Chester's Way	Greenwillow ©1988
Chrysanthemum	Greenwillow ©1991
Clean Enough	Greenwillow ©1982
Grandpa and Bo	Greenwillow ©1986
Jessica	Greenwillow ©1989
Julius, the Baby of the World	Greenwillow ©1990
Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse	Greenwillow ©1996
Margaret and Taylor	Greenwillow ©1983
Once Around the Block	Greenwillow ©1987
Owen	Greenwillow ©1993
Return to Sender	Greenwillow ©1984
Sheila Rae, the Brave	Greenwillow ©1987
Shhhh	Greenwillow ©1989
Two Under Par	Greenwillow ©1987
A Weekend with Wendell	Greenwillow ©1987
Words of Stone	Greenwillow ©1992
The Zebra Wall	Greenwillow ©1988



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Chester's Way • Julius, Baby of the World



Story Summaries and Themes

Seven of Kevin Henkes's books with his mouse characters have been chosen for this unit. Below is a brief story summary of each and themes with which they could be used.

Following the story summaries are suggestions for follow up activities (vi-xi) which can be used after reading several Henkes books.

Chester's Way

Chester and his friend, Wilson, are very much alike. They decide they don't like Lilly because she is very different. However, they learn that differences can be good. They also find out that they have things in common with Lilly.

Themes: Values, Friendship, Differences

Chrysanthemum

Chrysanthemum's love of school is spoiled by kids teasing her about her name, until she meets Mrs. Delphinium Twinkle, who thinks Chrysanthemum's name is perfect.

Themes: Names, Differences, School

Julius, the Baby of the World

Lilly's jealousy of her new baby brother is very difficult to overcome until Cousin Garland scoffs at Julius. Lilly comes to her brother's defence and realizes she loves him, and that he is the baby of the world.

Themes: Family, Babies, Jealousy

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Mousing Around on the Net

Go to this web site:

www.acs.ucalgary/~dkbrown/k6/henkes.html

1. Find out the title of Henkes' first book.
2. In what year was it published?
3. Which of his books was named the Children's Choice Book?



Mousing Around on the Net

Go to the Caldecott Home Page at:

www.ala.org/also/caldecott.html

1. **Name the link** you would use to find out why the Caldecott Medal is given.
2. Go to that link. **Read and explain** why the Caldecott Medal is given.
3. Go to the link **Past Caldecott Medal Winners and Honor Books**. Kevin Henkes' book "Owen" was an honour book for the 1994 Caldecott Medal. What story won in 1994?
4. Who was the author?



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Chester's Way • Julius, Baby of the World

A Helping of Henkes!

Character Study

Tell how you think each of these characters would behave in the following situations.

1. If Owen got lost, instead of Sheila Rae?

2. The kids at school made fun of Wendell's name instead of Chrysanthemum's?

3. If Chester had the baby brother instead of Lilly?

4. If the parents took the blanket away from Lilly, instead of Owen?



Sheila Rae, The Brave • A Weekend With Wendell •

Chrysanthemum • Owen • Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse

CHARACTER STUDY

Chester's Way • Julius, Baby of the World

A Helping of Henkes!

Evaluation

Henkes features many mouse characters in his stories.

Julius	Lilly	Victor
Owen	Chrysanthemum	Sheila Rae
Chester	Wilson	Wendell

Using the mouse characters from the box, place the characters in order, starting with your most favourite.

Give reasons for your choice for number one.

1. My favourite is _____ because _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____



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EVALUATION

Chester's Way • Julius, Baby of the World

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Character Study / Narrative Writing

Sheila Rae and Lilly are both very strong characters. Although some of Henkes' characters have appeared together in his stories, these two have not met yet.

Write a story having Sheila Rae and Lilly meeting for the first time. Think of an interesting setting where they can meet. Think of how they will react to each other. Decide if they will become friends.



Sheila Rae, The Brave • A Weekend With Wendell •

Chrysanthemum • Owen • Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse

NARRATIVE WRITING

Chester's Way • Julius, Baby of the World

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Evaluation / Procedural Writing

Write a letter to the author, Kevin Henkes, telling him what you think about his stories. Tell him which story and character you liked best, and why. Give suggestions for a new story idea he might try. Which character or characters would you like to see in another story?

Dear Mr. Henkes,

Yours truly,



Sheila Rae, The Brave • A Weekend With Wendell •

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PROCEDURAL WRITING