

TEACHING GUIDE FOR
DESMOND & THE NAUGHTYBUGS

1. Story Discussion

Desmond is a sweet boy, usually—at least until the Naughtybugs show up. Are the Naughtybugs real or imaginary? List the different types of Naughtybugs. What sorts of things do they cause Desmond to do? Does he try to resist them? How?

2. Structure/Sequencing

Writers try to build suspense in their stories—they want readers to keep asking “What happens next?” In the case of Desmond, the story builds up over the course of a week. It begins on Monday, when Desmond has his first encounter with the Naughtybugs. Describe how the suspense builds as the week progresses. How and when is the story resolved? Do you like the ending? Can you come up with other ways it might end?

As a class, discuss other ways the story might be structured. Over a day? A year? How would it change the story?

3. Writing from experience

Have the Naughtybugs ever “visited” you or someone else in your house or classroom? What kind of Naughtybug was it? (It doesn’t have to be one mentioned in the book.) What happened? Were you (or the other person) able to resist? Write about the incident.

4. Using your imagination

Make up your own Naughtybug. What sorts of trouble does it cause? Draw a picture for a classroom mural or Field Guide.

Imagine that you *are* this Naughtybug. Write a description of yourself to go along with the picture. When would you be most likely to show up? Where? What do you cause people to do? What’s the best way for them to get rid of you?

5. Studying the art

Look closely at the Naughtybugs. How does the artist show the particular characteristics of each bug and the trouble it causes? Which Naughtybug looks the funniest? Which do you like the best? Why?

How does the artist convey Desmond's struggles with the Naughtybugs? How does his expression change with their arrival? How does his dog, Buster, react?

Look at Desmond's lunch box, and at his room before the Naughtybugs show up. What details do you notice (in the bedspread, for example)?

6. Language

The story has examples of alliteration—words with the same initial consonant located close together. Examples include “**D**awdle **D**ust” and “fiddle with his fork” and “**F**oamy-**F**ace.” Can you find other examples in the book? Look around your classroom. Can you come up with some examples of your own to describe things you see? (For example, a puny pencil, a battered book.)

When the author wrote that Desmond “crawled like a snail,” she was using a simile, a way of comparing one thing to another using the words “like” or “as” (as in “hungry as a horse”). Where else in the story could she have used such a phrase? For example, the Sloggies might have “swarmed like bees” or, at the restaurant, Desmond might have “bounced like a ball” or “sat as still as a statue.” Come up with a list of your own similes.

7. Behavior discussion

Sometimes we do things we know we're not supposed to do. We might talk loudly in the library, hit our brother or sister, or say something mean to a friend. Why do you think we do these things? Certain circumstances seem more likely to make the “Naughtybugs” show up—like when we're bored, for example, or tired, hungry or angry. When are you most likely to be bothered by “Naughtybugs?”

Sometimes, we figure out strategies that help us NOT to do these things. For example, Desmond pretended he was a statue to keep from fidgeting in his chair at the restaurant. Did this work? Do you have any strategies that help you when you're tempted to do something you're not supposed to do? As a class, come up with a list and post it in the classroom.

DESMOND & THE NAUGHTYBUGS

Written by Linda Ashman; illustrated by Anik McGrory
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DESMOND WORD SEARCH/VOCABULARY BUILDER

Circle the words listed below

(words can go up, down, across, backward or diagonal)

D E R R L L Y E V R
I U E E E A T C A A
S T S S S U H I N E
C A C T A G G R I P
O T U A E H U O S P
V S E U S T A C H A
E G A R D E N I A S
R T L A G R I L E I
E H C N A L A V A D
R E Z T I R P S P Y

AVALANCHE

DISAPPEAR

DISCOVER

EASEL

GARDENIA

LAUGHTER

LICORICE

NAUGHTY

RESCUE

RESTAURANT

RILE

SPRITZER

STATUE

VANISH

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