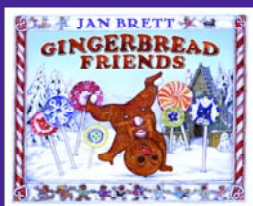


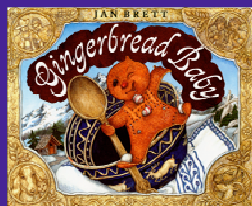
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A GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

**GINGERBREAD
FRIENDS**

JAN BRETT



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ABOUT THE BOOK



*“I’m the Gingerbread Baby,
Happy as can be,
Until Mattie goes out,
Then it’s lonely here for me.”*
—*Gingerbread Friends* by Jan Brett

Confident and cocky, the Gingerbread Baby sets out to find a friend just his size, but instead he has an adventure he’ll never forget. He happens upon a bakery, where all is not as it seems. The sugar cookie girl and the other sweet treats stare straight ahead, not saying a word, as he dances and prances in front of them. Not only does Gingerbread Baby not find a friend, but he is chased by a long line of creatures—a cat, a dog, a fox—as he races home. But thanks to Mattie, a fantastic surprise awaits the discouraged Gingerbread Baby—gingerbread friends!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Jan Brett lives in a seacoast town in Massachusetts, close to where she grew up. During the summer her family moves to a home in the Berkshire hills.

As a student at the Boston Museum School, she spent hours in the Museum of Fine Arts. “It was overwhelming to see room-size landscapes and towering stone sculpture, and then moments later to refocus on delicately embroidered kimonos and ancient porcelain,” she says. “I’m delighted and surprised when fragments of these beautiful images come back to me in my painting.”

Travel is also a constant inspiration. Together with her husband, who is a member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Jan Brett visits many different countries, where she researches the architecture and costumes that appear in her work. “From cave paintings to Norwegian sleighs, to Japanese gardens, I study the traditions of the many countries I visit and use them as a starting point for my children’s books.”

Please visit Jan Brett at www.janbrett.com

GINGERBREAD FRIEND ACTIVITY

Jan Brett’s *Gingerbread Baby* and *Gingerbread Friends* are great books to use in lessons to orient young students to their new classroom and classmates. Photocopy the next page and hand one sheet out to each student in your class. Invite your students to decorate their Gingerbread Friends. Suggest that they include pictures that represent themselves and their hobbies and/or interests in the space around the figure. Help your students cut their new Gingerbread Friends out and hang them around the room or on your classroom door. Try hanging them side-by-side in a line down the hallway from the front door of the school to your classroom (or from the library or cafeteria) so that students who may not yet know their way around the school can use the trail of Gingerbread Friends as a map to their classroom.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION PROMPTS & ACTIVITIES ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Gingerbread Friends lends itself to many areas of study and can be easily incorporated into Social Studies, Language Arts, Math, Art, and Science lesson plans. Use the questions and activities below to encourage the application of critical thinking strategies and skills and to foster a deeper connection for students with the text, illustrations, and story.

MAKING PREDICTIONS

“But then he heard some singing, and a trail of cupcakes caught his eye. He climbed the stairs, and you’ll never guess what he found!”

—*Gingerbread Friends* by Jan Brett

- Read *Gingerbread Friends* aloud to your class. Before turning to the very last page, invite students to work in groups to make predictions about what the Gingerbread Baby might find at the top of the stairs. Encourage them to think deeply about what the Baby has been looking for and what might excite him the most to find. Each group should record their predictions on individual white boards or pieces of paper. Ask each student to read and share his or her prediction of how the story will end—then turn the page, and find out! Guide students in confirming and adjusting their predictions after examining the final spread.

**Create
Your Own
Gingerbread
Friend!**



SOCIAL STUDIES

- Discuss the concepts of community and friendship with your students. How are they similar and how are they different? How is your classroom like a community? What does it mean to be a friend? Where and how can you develop friendships within your community? Ask students to imagine taking their decorated Gingerbread cut-out around your community and introducing their Gingerbread Friend to each person they meet. Who would they meet at the post office, library, bank, park, or museum? What sorts of activities or games might they play or conversations might they have with the people they meet in each of these places? Extend this activity by asking your students to actually take their new Gingerbread Friend to one of the places listed above and then report their experience to the class.
- Have your students create a second Gingerbread Friend that resembles themselves (hair color, eye color, favorite outfit). Guide your students in writing a friendly letter on the back of their cutout. Suggest that they include three things about themselves in their letter. Coordinate with another class in your district or school to use the gingerbread cutouts as the basis for a pen pal program. Match each student in your class with a student in the other participating class and facilitate the mailing of their Gingerbread Friends to each other. This is a great opportunity to teach students how to address envelopes and write letters!

LANGUAGE ARTS

- The Gingerbread Baby speaks in rhyming verse. Explore rhyming words within the context of poems. Give examples of other places where rhymes are used, such as songs (“Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star”) or other books. Students should then each write their own four-line verse. In a shared writing activity, guide your students in making a list of rhyming words. Record the words on sentence strip cards and display them in a pocket chart in the front of the room. Students can use the words as a reference, similar to a word bank, when they write their own poems.
- Model writing a descriptive sentence using one of the characters or objects on the last page of the story as your subject. Prompt your students to take turns guessing which character or object you’ve described. Students should then each write their own descriptive sentence about a different character or object on the page. Encourage them to use creative adjectives in their writing. In small groups, students can take turns reading their sentences and guessing which characters or objects their classmates have described.

MATH

- The special side borders on each page of *Gingerbread Friends* include a recipe for making gingerbread cookies. Emphasize to your students the importance of paying attention to detail and carefully reading instructions. Using large chart paper, guide your students in a shared writing activity as you reread the story and record the recipe and directions to make gingerbread cookies. Then review math measurement units with your class, focusing on the units used in the recipe. Bring in gingerbread ingredients and cooking tools to make Gingerbread Friends out of *real* gingerbread! Let each child decorate his or her own cookie.
- Ask your students to examine the last page of the book, which features the many friends that Mattie has baked for the Gingerbread Baby. How many friends do they count? How many are gingerbread people, and how many are animals? Create a graph or chart detailing your class’s findings.

ART

- Jan Brett’s art helps bring a beauty and emotion to her story plots, making her books instant classics. Collaborate with your school’s art teacher to develop a lesson connected to the artwork in *Gingerbread Friends*. What colors are most used? Do any elements reappear throughout the pages? Guide a discussion about the different characters the Gingerbread Baby meets as he is searching for a new friend. Distribute sheets of paper so that students can participate in a drawing activity. Ask them to use their imaginations to create a brand new character, not seen in *Gingerbread Friends*, but who could be a good friend for the Gingerbread Baby.

SCIENCE

- Weather plays a big part in the settings of *Gingerbread Baby* and *Gingerbread Friends*. Both books are set in the winter, which is the season when people traditionally bake gingerbread cookies. Ask your students to imagine that the story was set first in spring, then summer, and then fall. In each season, what would be different about the story? What might the cover of the book look like without snow? What would they see in the village if the grass, trees, and homes weren’t covered in snow? Instead of skiing and skating, what other activities would Mattie do with his friends?