



BOOK STATS

Grade Level Equivalent: 3–5

Ages: 8+

Lexile Measure®: 810L

Pages: 128

Genre: Mystery, Humor

Subject/Theme: Animal Characters, Olympics

Common Core State Standards	Reading	Writing	Listening & Speaking	Language
Grade 3	RL.3.1, RL.3.3, RL.3.4, RL.3.7	W.3.3	SL.3.1, SL.3.4	L.3.4, L.3.5
Grade 4	RL.4.1, RL.4.3, RL.4.4, RL.4.7	W.4.3	SL.4.1, SL.4.4	L.4.4, L.4.5
Grade 5	RL.5.2, RL.5.3, RL.5.4, RL.5.7	W.5.3	SL.5.1, SL.5.4	L.5.4, L.5.5

Teaching the Book

“I, Geronimo Stilton, am not a sportsmouse. Running? Sweating? Not for me!” The learned and brainy Geronimo Stilton claims that he is just the shy editor of *The Rodent’s Gazette*. But millions of his fans know better! *Geronimo Stilton #33: Geronimo and the Gold Medal Mystery* provides an opportunity to teach students how to read text features in a graphically rich text. Activities engage students in researching the Olympics, writing newspaper articles, and engaging in wordplay.

Genre Focus: Mystery/Humor

Comprehension Focus: Text Features

Language Focus: Wordplay

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Geronimo Stilton is the publisher of *The Rodent’s Gazette*, Mouse Island’s most famous newspaper. He is Rattus Emeritus of Mousomorphic Literature and Neo-Ratonic Comparative Philosophy. In his spare time, Mr. Stilton enjoys collecting antique cheese rinds, playing golf, and telling stories to his nephew Benjamin. He lives in New Mouse City, Mouse Island.

Visit Geronimo online at <http://bit.ly/WqEakW>.

OVERVIEW

Book Summary

Geronimo is just settling down to a peaceful day of work when he is rudely interrupted by his grandfather’s order to fly to Athens to cover the Olympics. “Moldy Mozzarella!” says Geronimo. However, he reluctantly hops on a plane, encounters his good friend Hercule Poirat, and quickly becomes enmeshed in a mystery of Olympic proportions.

The two detectives uncover a diabolical scam cooked up by the evil Cyrus von Snootrat who plans to win every Olympic competition by using an ingenious machine that can transfer the traits of one animal to another. By the end of the book, Geronimo exposes von Snootrat as a fake, is honored as a hero at the Olympics, and returns home to fame and adoration.

The book is chock full of nonfiction sidebars about ancient Greece and the Olympics, graphic features that complement and enhance the text, and creative type faces that make reading a fun text even more delightful.



Get Ready to Read

Pre-Reading Activities

Geronimo! Engage students' interest and build background knowledge by talking about the Geronimo Stilton series. Ask students if they have read any of the books or are familiar with them. Then visit the Scholastic website and scroll down through the Geronimo Stilton titles, reading several aloud. Find the list at <http://bit.ly/W4exdi>. Then ask students:

- What kind of stories does Geronimo write?
- Who are the characters in the books?
- Do you think the books are funny or serious?

You may wish to explore other parts of the Geronimo Stilton website with students including the video introduction, the games and activities, or *The Rodent's Gazette*.

Preview and Predict Display the cover illustration showing Geronimo being carried on the shoulders of athletes in a stadium. Ask students to predict what the setting of the story is and give evidence for their predictions.

Vocabulary

Puns and Wordplay Knowing the meaning of the words and phrases below increases students' understanding and enjoyment of the word play in the book. Encourage them to look for clues in the text or in the special typefaces to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words. Explain that some words and phrases are puns on popular idioms.

Use **Resource #1: Vocabulary Cards** on page 7 and distribute copies to students.

enormouse (p. 4)	shatter (p. 9)
suffocate (p. 14)	elegant (p. 55)
palm of our paws (p. 61)	holey cheese (p. 68)
sluggish (p. 72)	devastated (p. 80)



BIG QUESTION

Critical Thinking Ask students to think about this question as they read and be ready to answer it when they have finished the book. Write the question on chart paper or have students write it in their reading journals.

How does Geronimo become an Olympic hero?

As You Read

Reading the Book

Modeled Reading Read aloud the first chapter of the book, asking the class to follow along. Project the text on a whiteboard or screen, if possible. Point out the words that have unusual typefaces. Ask students to describe how the typefaces provide clues to the meaning of the words. Also ask them to give examples of Geronimo's mouse world, such as *The Rodent's Gazette*. Remind students to look at the illustrations as they read for more clues about what is happening in the story.

Paired Reading Assign partners to read the book together. Encourage them to share questions and reactions with each other.

Comprehension Focus

Text Features Explain to students that the Geronimo Stilton series contains many kinds of text features. A text feature is a special kind of text that is different from the main writing in the book. The genre of this book is fictional mystery. The text features make the book more fun to read and contain additional information to help readers understand the story. Examples of these text features include illustrations, maps, flags, character descriptions, nonfiction text, and chapter headings.

Use **Resource #2: Informational Text Features** to model how to identify text features and their purpose. Project the resource on a whiteboard or pass out copies for students and then model how to fill in the organizer for the introductory pages.

Model: I can tell that the introductory pages are a special text feature because they come before the story begins. On the first page is a welcome to the world of Geronimo Stilton. Then the next two pages show the editorial staff of *The Rodent's Gazette*. On the next page, there are pictures and descriptions of the characters in the Geronimo Stilton series. The purpose of all these things is to acquaint me with the funny and strange world where the book is set. All these things give me information about the series before I even begin reading. I see that everybody in Geronimo's world is a mouse! And I can tell that Geronimo is an important person at *The Rodent Gazette*.

Have students fill out the rest of Resource #2 as they read. Discuss how they can synthesize the text feature information with the rest of the book.

After You Read

Questions to Discuss

Lead students in a discussion of these focus story elements.

1. Mystery/Humor What do you think the author's purpose is in writing the Geronimo Stilton books? Are they mainly mysteries or are they mostly humorous? Explain your answer. (*Sample answers: I think they're mostly humorous. The mystery part keeps the action going, but it's not very scary or mysterious.*)

2. Text Features The text about the ancient Greeks and the Olympics is all true information. How are these pages illustrated? Do the illustrations really match the text? (*Sample answer: No, the illustrations show mice doing the things that the real Greeks did.*)

3. Word Play Explain the wordplay in this quote: "Sometimes you have to know when to throw in the cheesecloth." (*Sample answer: It is a play on the phrase, "throw in the towel."*)

Questions to Share

Encourage students to share their responses with a partner or small group.

1. Text-to-Self If you could, would you choose to compete in the Summer Olympics or the Winter Olympics? Explain the reasons for your choice.

2. Text-to-World What was the most recent Olympics that you watched on television? Which athlete or event was your favorite?

3. Text-to-Text Geronimo Stilton is a mouse who is a newspaper editor and detective. What other animals are fictional characters that act like humans?

WORDS TO KNOW

Word Play

Read aloud the following descriptions for the vocabulary words. Ask students to hold up the vocabulary card that matches each description. Then help them understand the wordplay or analyze the typeface for each word.

1. This word means very big in New Mouse City. How is it usually spelled? (*enormouse; enormous*)
2. This phrase means having something right in front of you. What is the word play based on? (*in the palm of our paws; in the palm of our hands*)
3. This is an interjection that means wow! What is the wordplay? (*holey cheese; holy cow*)
4. This word means to break into a thousand pieces. How do the letters look in the book? (*shatter; the letters are broken apart into little pieces*)
5. This word means very fancy. How do the letters look in the book? (*elegant; the letters are curvy and very fancy*)

Continue to ask students about the meanings of the rest of the vocabulary words and how their letters show their meaning in the text.

Extension Activities

Reading/Writing Connection

Online Newspaper Article Ask students to write an online newspaper article that reports on Geronimo Stilton's adventures at the Olympics in *Geronimo and the Gold Medal Mystery*. Remind them of the 5 Ws that are a part of a newspaper article: what, when, where, who, and why. They can handwrite their article on paper, or they can go to the Scholastic website and use the newspaper template on the Geronimo Stilton site at <http://bit.ly/10WJ4O3>. Encourage students to share their articles with a partner after writing them. Have each partner find the 5 Ws in the article they read.

Don't forget the



BIG QUESTION

Critical Thinking Give each student an opportunity to answer the big question. Encourage students to support their answers with details and evidence from the text. Tell them there is more than one right answer.

How does Geronimo become an Olympic hero?

Content Area Connections

Math Metric Conversion Give students the opportunity to practice metric conversion by using the track and field events from the Olympics. Go to the official Olympic website for a listing of the events at <http://bit.ly/WZbS4c>. Ask students to list five to ten track and field events in the metric system. Then have them convert the distances of the events to yards or miles.

Geography Greece Ask students to locate Greece on a map of the world or use Google Maps. Have them compare a map of modern Greece with the map of ancient Greece in the book on page 11. Have students locate the countries that share borders with Greece, Athens, and the island of Crete. Also have them point out the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea on the map.

Sports/History Olympic History Encourage students to choose one aspect of the Olympics to research. It might be their favorite sport, such as pole vaulting or diving, or a favorite athlete, such as snowboarder Arielle Gold or swimmer Michael Phelps. Have the students research information on the Internet or in books, write a short report on their topic, and deliver it orally to the class. If technology is available, suggest that they create a digital presentation with photographs.

Arts Olympic Flag Ask interested students to research more about the Olympic flag and then draw their own version on paper or using the computer. Remind them to color the five intertwined circles the appropriate colors. At the bottom of the flag, ask students to write five important facts about the flag, such as who invented the design and what the rings and colors mean.

BIG ACTIVITY

Playing Around With Words Assign students to write a note to Geronimo Stilton using different shaped and colored letters for certain words—just like the typeface in the book. Suggest that they tell Geronimo that they like his books or that they think he did a great job on the case of the Gold Medal Mystery. Brainstorm some words that can be written with shapes and colors that reflect their meaning. For example, jump could be written with the middle letters higher; loud could be written in big bold letters in red, and —run could be written on a slant with lines coming from the back of the letters. Encourage students to check the book for other words and ways to use word play in their notes.

Name: _____ Date: _____

BIG ACTIVITY: Playing Around with Words

Write a note to Geronimo Stilton. Make some of the words in the note look like their meanings; for example, jum^p!

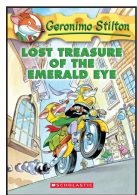
Dear Geronimo,

Yours Truly,

READ MORE AND LEARN MORE

Use these books and other resources to expand your students' study of the book or theme.

Series Connections



Geronimo Stilton #1: Lost Treasure of the Emerald Eye

Geronimo Stilton

Ages: 8–10

Grades: 2–4

Lexile Measure: 530L

Pages: 128

Guided Reading Level: O

Geronimo Stilton is working hard at his newspaper when his sister shows up with a treasure map. Then they head out to sea toward the deserted island. Just getting to the treasure may take every ounce of courage this fearless journalist can muster! Seasickness, bad clams, sinking ships—Geronimo and his sister encounter them all! **Available as a Storia eBook**



Geronimo Stilton #37: The Race Across America

Geronimo Stilton

Ages: 8–10

Grades: 2–4

Lexile Measure: 670L

Pages: 128

It should come as no surprise that Geronimo Stilton is not a big fan of races. After all, he likes to take his time and smell the cheese. But when his friend Bruce Hyena invites him to race across America on a bicycle, even this scaredy-mouse reporter can't resist. And holey cheese, what an adventure they have! **Available as a Storia eBook**

Theme Connections



Thea Stilton #11: The Blue Scarab Hunt

Thea Stilton

Ages: 8–10

Grades: 2–4

Pages: 176

Newspaper correspondent Thea Stilton is heading off to Egypt to write a story about her former journalism students—five girls known as the Thea Sisters. The Thea Sisters are in Egypt to help their history professor look for a pharaoh's temple and its legendary treasure. But some thieves are also after the hidden treasure . . . and it's up to Thea Stilton and the girls to stop them!

Available as a Storia eBook



Infinity Ring #1: A Mutiny in Time

James Dashner

Ages: 8–12

Grades: 3–6

Lexile Measure: 800L

Pages: 192

Guided Reading Level: V

Best friends Dak and Sera discover a device called the Infinity Ring. Joining a secret society known as the Historians, they discover that history is broken—and only they can set it right by using the Infinity Ring to travel through time. Their first mission starts with Christopher Columbus, who is about to be thrown overboard by a mutinous crew.

Available as a Storia eBook



Secret Attic #3: Panic at Pompeii

L. A. Peacock

Ages: 7–9

Grades: 2–3

Lexile Measure: 340L

Pages: 96

Guided Reading Level: R

Jess and Josh are 10-year-old twins with a startling secret—they are time-traveling adventurers! When their time-traveling Uncle Harry needs their help, he leaves them clues and a magic time compass. This time the compass points to the ancient Roman city of Pompeii in the year 79 AD, when the volcano Mount Vesuvius is scheduled to erupt. Seconds count—they must flee the city before the volcano covers everything in fire and ash. **Available as a Storia eBook**



Spy Academy #2: Mission Twinpossible

Hugh Ryan

Ages: 8–10

Grades: 2–4

Lexile Measure: 740L

Pages: 96

Guided Reading Level: Q

Kim's a nerdy tech genius, and her twin brother, Ken, is a martial arts master. Their principal at St. Perfidius, a secret spy-training boarding school, sends them on a mission to rescue a graduate who has disappeared. The twins are in for a pulse-pounding lesson in cooperation! **Available as a Storia eBook**



Stuart Goes to School

Sara Pennypacker

Ages: 8–10

Grades: 2–4

Lexile Measure: 430L

Pages: 64

Guided Reading Level: M

Stuart is about to start second grade with a whole new class, and he has lots of worries. Stuart brings his special cape to school with him, hoping that the powers of the cape will help him make friends. But when magical things start to happen, they all happen in the wrong place—and at the wrong time. Has his cape lost its powers? Or can it still help save the day? **Available as a Storia eBook**

To find PDF versions of the Storia teacher guides and links to purchase the related books, visit:

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/ereading-resources/>

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Name: _____ Date: _____

RESOURCE #2: Text Features

Look through the book to find each of these text features on the pages. Describe its purpose and the kind of information it provides.

Text Feature	Purpose	What Information Does It Give?
Introductory Pages		
Different Kinds and Colors of Type		
Illustrations of Story		
Map of Greece (p. 11)		
The Ancient Greeks (pp. 31–33)		
Count Cyrus von Snootrat (p. 57)		
Facts About the Modern Olympics (pp. 89–111)		