

CLASSROOM GUIDE

Grades
K-3

RICKY RICOTTA'S **MIGHTY ROBOT**

STORY BY
DAY PILKEY ART BY
DAN SANTAT



SCHOLASTIC

Meets Common Core State Standards—SEE INSIDE

RICKY RICOTTA'S MIGHTY ROBOT



RICKY RICOTTA'S MIGHTY ROBOT #1
 PB: 978-0-545-63009-2 • \$5.99/\$6.99 CAN
 RLB: 978-0-545-63106-8 • \$15.99/\$17.99 CAN
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RICKY RICOTTA'S MIGHTY ROBOT VS. THE JURASSIC JACKRABBITS FROM JUPITER #5
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ABOUT THE BOOKS

Ricky Ricotta is a little mouse with BIG problems! Every day he is picked on by the neighborhood bullies. He lives in Squeakyville with his mother and father, and being an only mouse, he is often lonely. That is until SOMETHING BIG HAPPENS! A giant flying robot enters Ricky's life and an unlikely friendship is born! Together, Ricky and his Robot must save the planet from a galaxy bursting with bad guys!

Note: While it is best to allow students to read an entire text before engaging in a detailed study of the work, it is not necessary for this series to be read in order.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



PHOTO BY KAI SUZUKI

When Dav Pilkey was a kid, he suffered from ADHD, reading challenges, and behavioral problems. Dav was so disruptive in class that his teachers made him sit out in the hallway every day. Dav loved to draw and make up stories, so he spent this time creating his own original comic books.

In second grade, Dav created a comic book about a superhero named Captain Underpants. His teacher ripped it up and told him he couldn't spend the rest of his life making silly books.

Fortunately, Dav was not a very good listener.

Dav has written and illustrated many bestselling books for children, including the Captain Underpants series, the Ricky Ricotta series, and *The Paperboy*, a Caldecott Honor Book.

Dav grew up in Ohio and now lives with his wife in the Pacific Northwest. You can learn more about him at www.pilkey.com.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR



PHOTO BY DAN SANTAT

Dan Santat attended the University of California, San Diego, where he received a degree in biology. Thankfully, he had a change of heart and went on to pursue an illustration degree from the Art Center College of Design, where he graduated with honors.

After a few years of designing art for video games, Dan switched his attention to children's books. Since then, Dan has written and illustrated several bestselling books for children, including *The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend* and *Sidekicks*. Dan also created the Disney animated hit *The Replacements*.

Dan was born in Brooklyn, New York, and now lives in Southern California with his family. You can find out more by visiting his website at www.dantat.com.

DAV PILKEY AND DAN SANTAT ON RICKY RICOTTA'S MIGHTY ROBOT



ART BY DAN SANTAT

DAV PILKEY

How did you come up with the idea for Ricky Ricotta and his Mighty Robot?

The Ricky Ricotta books were inspired by my childhood. I always thought it would be so cool to have a gigantic robot as a best friend.

What would be the best parts about having an oversized robot for a best friend?

We could fly around the world together, and if bullies ever gave me a hard time, he would protect me. I just thought it would be kind of fun—I even think it would be fun now!

Dan Santat has done the artwork in these new editions—what do you think of what he's created?

The way that Dan Santat has brought these characters to life has exceeded my childhood imagination. His full-color illustrations have given the series a completely new dimension.



ART BY DAN SANTAT

DAN SANTAT

What would you have thought about Ricky Ricotta and his Mighty Robot when you were younger?

If I were a kid, I could only dream of having a robot of my own to fight bad villains from different planets across the solar system.

Can you share a favorite part of these books with us?

One of my favorite things about the series is the touching moments that Ricky and the robot share—they are almost like brothers.

Were you able to collaborate with Dav Pilkey to put some new touches on these new editions?

I'm a huge fan of doing comics, and in our revision of this series, there are mini-comics!

What has it been like to work on this series?

I'm so honored and thrilled to be a part of this exciting project, and to have the opportunity to work with one of my favorite authors. I have been a fan of Dav Pilkey for so many years. I hope that readers of all ages will fall in love with this series like I have.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE AND THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

SOMETHING BIG IS HAPPENING! The Ricky Ricotta's Mighty Robot series, written by Dav Pilkey and illustrated by Dan Santat, can be used in classrooms to help students achieve Common Core State Standards!

With the help of these books and this guide, young readers can develop reading skills as they make meaningful connections with the main characters and explore familiar settings and plots. Students will become careful, reflective readers without sacrificing the joy they gain from reading. They can delve into big issues such as bullying, family, and responsibility. They will come away with an understanding of how forming meaningful connections with characters enhances their reading experience and allows them to reflect on important issues presented in the text.

Though the questions and activities in this guide correlate with the Common Core State Standards for grade 2, the exciting storylines and appealing qualities of Ricky and his Mighty Robot will capture the interest of readers in grades K–3, and equivalent standards in other grades may equally be referenced. For more detailed information, see below.

GUIDE TO THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS CITED IN THIS GUIDE

Reading Literature

Key Ideas and Details

RL. 2.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

RL. 2.2 Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

RL. 2.3 Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

Craft and Structure

RL. 2.4 Describe how words and phrases supply rhythm and meaning in a story, song, or poem.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RL. 2.7 Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, and plot.

RL. 2.9 Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story by different authors or from different cultures.

Reading Informational Text

Key Ideas and Details

RI. 2.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

Craft and Structure

RI. 2.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 2 topic or subject area.

RI. 2.5 Know and use various text features to locate key facts or information in a text efficiently.

Reading Foundational Skills

Phonics and Word Recognition

RF. 2.4 Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

Language

Conventions of Standard English

L. 2.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Knowledge of Language

L. 2.3 Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

L. 2.5 Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

SL. 2.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

SL. 2.2 Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

SL. 2.3 Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to clarify comprehension, gather additional information, or deepen understanding of a topic.

Writing

Text Types and Purposes

W. 2.2 Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

W. 2.7 Participate in shared research and writing projects.

W. 2.8 Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Introduce students to unlikely friendships by visiting the website <http://vimeo.com/24175704> to view a short video clip about Mzee, a tortoise, and Owen, a baby hippo, who became great friends after a tsunami separated Owen from his family. Ask students if they know of any other unlikely friendships. Have them “turn and talk” to share their ideas with one another. Hide the cover of *Ricky Ricotta’s Mighty Robot* and take a picture walk through the book. Have students predict which characters they think may form an unlikely friendship.

Ask students to list the qualities they look for in a good friend on a piece of paper. Create a chart listing these qualities and post the chart in class. Encourage students to revisit the chart after reading each *Ricky Ricotta* book so that they may place a mark next to each word they feel matches a quality of Ricky or the Robot.

Correlates to Common Core State Standards in Speaking & Listening-Comprehension and Collaboration SL. 2.1, SL. 2.2

THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

BULLYING

Ask students to define bullying. In *Ricky Ricotta’s Mighty Robot*, Ricky and the Robot are both bullied. Ask students to cite passages in the story where Ricky and the Robot experience bullying. Compare and contrast the ways in which each character deals with the bullies each encounters. How do Ricky and the Robot show that they are fearless? Explain the ways in which the neighborhood bullies change by the end of the story.

RESPONSIBILITY

In the beginning of *Ricky Ricotta’s Mighty Robot vs. the Voodoo Vultures from Venus*, Ricky’s parents are upset because Ricky and the Robot have been late for dinner three times that week. They feel that Ricky and the Robot are not being responsible. Discuss what Ricky means when he says, “Responsibility is doing the right thing at the right time.” Describe the responsibilities that Ricky and the Robot have in the story. Are they responsible for planet Earth? Explain. Have students imagine what might happen if Ricky and the Robot were late for supper at the end of the story. Ask students to debate whether or not they think Mr. and Mrs. Ricotta would think that Ricky and the Robot were once again irresponsible.

Have them defend their position with evidence from the text. How do Ricky and the Robot demonstrate responsibility in the fourth book, *Ricky Ricotta’s Mighty Robot vs. the Mecha-Monkeys from Mars*? What challenges do they face as they try to defeat the Mecha-Monkeys from Mars?

FAMILY

Discuss how families work together to support and help one another. Consider whether or not the Robot can be considered a member of the family. Describe Ricky’s relationship with his cousin, Lucy. Discuss how Ricky and Lucy help each other in *Ricky Ricotta’s Mighty Robot vs. the Jurassic Jackrabbits from Jupiter*. Examine Ricky’s opinion of Lucy at the beginning and at the end of the story. Based on what students know, how can they prove that Ricky’s feelings for Lucy have, or have not, changed?

FRIENDSHIPS AND PETS

In the first book, Ricky’s parents agree to let him keep the *Mighty Robot* as a “pet”—is the Robot more like a pet or a friend? Have students describe the ways in which Ricky benefits from having the Robot around. How does Ricky take care of the *Mighty Robot*? Are there ways in which the Robot takes care of Ricky? Have students support their opinions with evidence from the text.

It takes a lot of responsibility to take care of another person or a pet. Which character would make a better pet: the Robot or one of the *Jurassic Jackrabbits* from Jupiter? Discuss the advantages each pet would offer. Cite examples from the text.

All Thematic Connections correlate to Common Core State Standards in Reading Literature-Key Ideas and Details RL. 2.1, RL. 2.2, RL. 2.3, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas RL. 2.7, RL. 2.9; Language-Knowledge of Language L. 2.3; Speaking and Listening-Comprehension and Collaboration SL. 2.1, SL. 2.3



CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

LANGUAGE ARTS

The author uses alliteration throughout the series to create interesting sentences that are fun to say and enjoyable to hear! For example, in *Ricky Ricotta's Mighty Robot vs. the Mutant Mosquitoes* from *Mercury*, he states that "Then he broke up the buggy battle with a big blast from his bionic boot!" Challenge students to find other examples of alliteration throughout the Ricky Ricotta series. Have students write and illustrate alliterative sentences describing the settings and characters in the Ricky Ricotta series.

Correlates to Common Core State Standards in Reading Literature-Craft and Structure RL. 2.4

LANGUAGE ARTS/DRAMA

Review how important vivid verbs are in sentences. Refer to *Ricky Ricotta's Mighty Robot* chapter 4 where Dr. Stinky says, "Jump, Robot! Jump!" and "Now stomp, Robot, stomp!" Have students identify the verbs in the chapter. Give students the opportunity to "act out" the scene themselves. Then substitute weaker verbs in place of "jump" and "stomp." Have them "act out" the new chapter or illustrate a new series of comic strips with the new verbs in place. Discuss which verbs create a stronger impact. Have students work together to create sentences containing vivid verbs. They should write as either Ricky or the Robot. When they have finished, they should "act out" their sentences for one another!

Correlates to Common Core State Standards in Reading Foundational Skills-Phonics and Word Recognition RF. 2.4; Language-Vocabulary Acquisition and Use L. 2.5, L. 2.5b, Conventions of Standard English L. 2.1

Have students work in partnerships or groups to compare and contrast books in the Ricky Ricotta series using story maps. Guide them to consider the feelings and actions of the main characters. Have them include settings, problems, events, and solutions as they analyze text. Are they able to see a pattern in the way Dav Pilkey has organized the books? Ask the student pairs or groups to create a Venn diagram of what they've brainstormed and have them present their findings to the class.

Correlates to Common Core State Standards in Reading Literature-Key Ideas and Details RL. 2.1, RL. 2.2, RL. 2.3, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas RL. 2.7, RL. 2.9

SCIENCE

Divide students into groups of four. Have each group create a KWL (Know/Wants to Know/What Has Been Learned) chart based on one of the planets featured in the Ricky Ricotta series that they would like to learn more about. Ask your students to find information and explore facts about their assigned planets using books from the library or the following recommended websites: <http://www.nasa.gov/audience/forkids/kidsclub/flash/> and http://www.kidsastronomy.com/solar_system.htm.

How far away is each planet from Earth? Is it hot or cold on each planet? What would you weigh on each planet? Is there water present? Encourage students to add new information they discover to their KWL charts.

After doing research, have students identify what planet facts the author has incorporated into the Ricky Ricotta books and what details were fictionalized (for example, the existence of jackrabbits on Jupiter!). Have students write a letter from their planet's point of view. How would the planet describe itself? What would it think about having a villain as a citizen? Encourage students to incorporate facts in their letter. Students should share finished work with the class.

Correlates to Common Core State Standards in Writing-Text Types and Structures W. 2.2, Research to Build and Present Knowledge W. 2.7, W. 2.8; Reading Informational Text-Key Ideas and Details RI. 2.1, Craft and Structure RI. 2.4, RI. 2.5

