Based on

Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH
By Robert C. O’Brien

About the Book:
Mrs. Frisby and her four young mice are facing a serious dilemma. They must move from their home in order to survive. Even more troubling is that Mrs. Frisby’s youngest son Timothy is sick with pneumonia and unable to move in the cold weather. On a quest for help, this brave, widowed mother encounters special helpers in the forest. She realizes that what she once thought were her enemies are truly remarkable creatures who come to her aid. Mrs. Frisby also learns secrets of her late husband’s past that prove that he was a very unique and brilliant creature of his own.

Set the Stage:
Use the following to get the students ready to read:

- Do you think rats are intelligent? What are your feelings about these creatures?
- Many people believe that animals can’t take care of themselves. Make a list of five animals. Write the ways they take care of themselves and the ways in which they depend on others for survival.
- Have you ever had to move? What preparations had to be made? What do you consider to be the most difficult part of moving?
- What animals do you think are the most intelligent? Why?
- Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH received the John Newbery Medal. What is the significance of this award? Can you name any other books that have received this honor?

Review:
After reading the book, discuss the following:

- Why do Mrs. Frisby and her children need to move?
- Who is Mr. Ages? How does he help Mrs. Frisby? What is his relationship with the rats of NIMH?
- What is pneumonia?
- Many of the animals change their attitude toward Mrs. Frisby once they learn of her late husband. Why was Mr. Frisby so special to the others?
- Who are the two main villains in Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH? In what ways do they present problems for the mice?
- Describe the rats’ living quarters. What parts of their establishment could be real and what parts are imaginary?
- Dr. Schultz was a neurologist. What is a neurologist? What experiment was he conducting with the captured rats and mice?
- How do the rats and mice eventually escape the laboratory?
- What is the meaning of the book The Rat Race? What effect does it have on Nicodemus?
- How are Nicodemus and Jenner different? Which rat do you think is the wisest? Explain your answer.
- Why are the humans so afraid of the rats?
- How does Mrs. Frisby end up saving the rats?
Student Activity (found on the last page of this PDF):
In this activity, students will complete a chart that outlines how each animal assists Mrs. Frisby.

Related Activities:
To extend students’ enjoyment of the book, try these:

• Rat Race: Dr. Schultz conducted many experiments on the mice and rats to determine their intelligence and longevity. Have students research rats and mice at the library. Ask them: Based on the facts, which do they believe to be the superior creature? Have students debate the subject with a classmate.

• Math Blaster: What is the average number of rats born in a litter? Based on this information, have students solve the following problems:
  
  ▶ 5 x average number of rats born in a litter = __________
  
  ▶ If a mother rat loses two of her babies, how many rats are left?
  
  ▶ Rats commonly have 4 feet. How many feet would there be altogether if there is a group of 68 rats?
  
  ▶ A rat runs through a maze in 15 seconds. If the maze is extended by eight times its original size, how long would it take the rat to complete it? ___________ seconds is equal to ______________ minutes.

• I’m a Survivor: Just as rats and mice depend on many factors in order to survive, so do humans. Some things we are able to do on our own, yet for other things we are dependent upon others. Ask students to think of a time in their life when they needed to depend on others in order to survive. Have them write a journal entry about this experience and how it made them appreciate the kindness of others.

• She’s My Heroine: Mrs. Frisby is a heroine. What is the dictionary definition of a heroine? Ask students to write a definition of heroine in their own words. Have them think of a heroine whom they admire. Then, ask them to write three paragraphs about this person and why they are a heroine in their eyes. Have them draw a picture of this person to go with their paper.

• Create a Collage: Many mice and rats are characters in books and movies. Ask students to create a collage from magazines of the names of some of these critters that have made it big. Include the book or movie that they starred in underneath each character.
Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH focuses on animals working together in order to survive. Although different species often battle each other in the "survival of the fittest" game, the creatures in this story build relationships and depend on one another.

**Directions:** Complete the following chart outlining how each animal assists Mrs. Frisby in her dilemma. Then, write three ways in which Mrs. Frisby repays their favors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Plan to Assist Mrs. Frisby</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Ages</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Crow, Jeremy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Owl</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Justin</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Arthur</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. Frisby</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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2. __________________________
3. __________________________