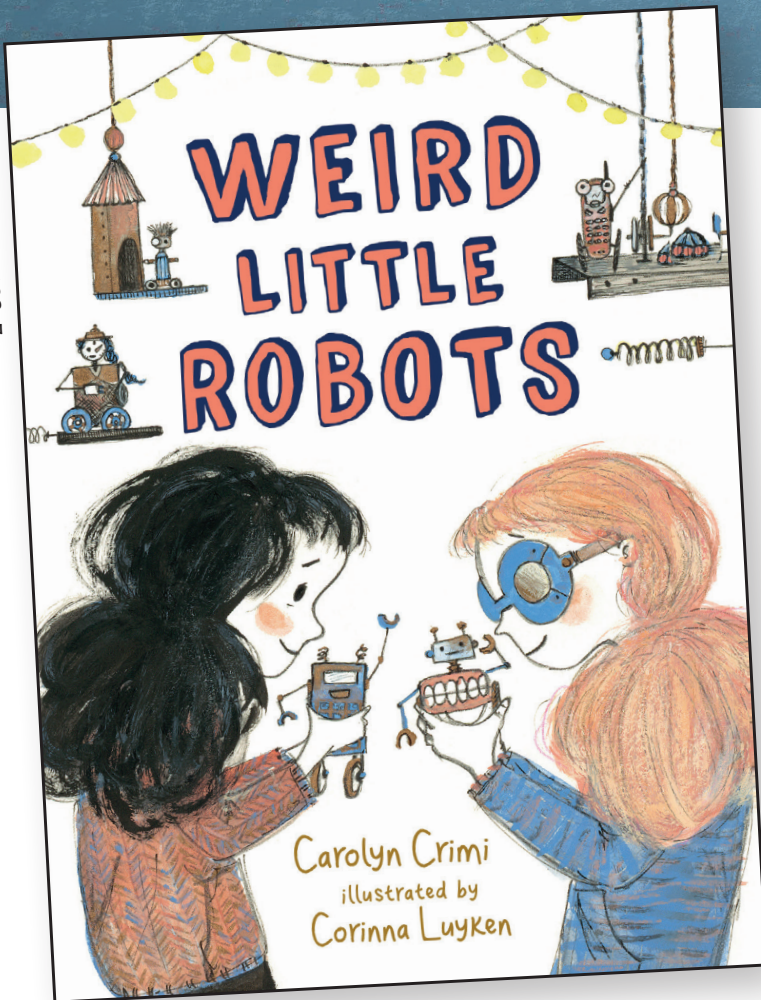


CLASSROOM GUIDE

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WEIRD LITTLE ROBOTS

by
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illustrated by
Corinna Luyken



PENNY ROSE HAS JUST MOVED to a new town, and so far the little robots she builds are her only company. But with a little bit of magic, everything changes: she becomes best friends with Lark, has the chance to join a secret science club, and discovers that her robots are alive. Penny Rose hardly remembers how lonely she used to feel. But a fateful misstep leaves her having to choose between the best friend she's always hoped for and the club she's always dreamed of. In the end, it may be her beloved little robots that pay the price.

Quirky and wonderful, this illustrated chapter book shows that making your own space in the world—and making a true friend—is a kind of magic all its own.

“A contemplation on the magic of friendship told with sweetness, simplicity, and science.”—Kirkus Reviews

carolyncrimi.com










corinnaluyken.com












The Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) addressed by the discussion questions, activities, and worksheets in this guide are noted throughout. For more information on the Common Core, visit corestandards.org. To learn more about NGSS, including Engineering Design standards (MS-ETS), visit nextgenscience.org.

Discussion Questions

Unless otherwise noted, all discussion questions meet the following Common Core State Standards: [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1](#)

-  The story begins on Skillington Avenue where the very last house on the corner is described as “ordinary”—with an ordinary porch swing and ordinary pots of yellow mums. How does the “ordinary” feeling of this setting shift when the backyard of 1959 Skillington Avenue is described?
-  Describe Penny Rose Mooney and what becomes of the items she discovers on her “treasure walks.”
-  Penny Rose faces the double challenge of moving to a new neighborhood and having a birthday to celebrate. Penny Rose’s parents try to encourage her to make friends with her neighbor Lark. How does Penny Rose prepare to meet Lark? How does the first meeting between Penny Rose and Lark go? What is Penny Rose’s “plan B” to connect with Lark?
-  Penny Rose has her robots and Lark has her birdhouses. Why do you think Penny Rose felt that, “From the moment she saw those birdhouses, she knew, she just *knew*, that Lark was like her”? [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3](#); [LITERACY.RL.4.3](#); [LITERACY.RL.5.3](#); [LITERACY.RL.6.3](#); [LITERACY.RL.7.3](#)
-  Penny Rose feels a hint of change when she enters her shed to prepare for her second attempt to meet Lark. What differences does she notice? As a reader, what do you think might have happened in Penny Rose’s shed?
-  What is the result of Lark and Penny Rose combining their interests? Describe the metropolis that the two create.
-  Penny Rose is happily bonding with her new friend Lark when she discovers a mysterious note tucked into her locker at school. What does this peculiar message say? What is Penny Rose’s mixed reaction to the note?
-  How do Penny Rose and Lark plan to make Halloween a “best friends” event? Why do you think that their plan is especially meaningful to Penny Rose?
-  Secrets and mysteries surround Penny Rose—from sneaky notes slid under her door to strange lights coming from the shed in her backyard. Describe what Penny Rose sees when she goes to investigate the strange goings on in the shed. What is Penny Rose’s reaction to what she witnesses?

-  How does Lark show that she is a good friend to Penny Rose when Penny Rose shows her the magical events that are going on in the shed? What is Lark's idea to preserve the secret bond between the girls about the robots?
-  The robots immediately show their quirky personalities by making requests of the girls. What types of things do they wish for and how do Penny Rose and Lark meet the robots' needs?
-  What do you think motivates Penny Rose to go against the pact she makes with Lark so that she can share her creations with the writers of the mysterious notes? What happens after Penny Rose sends the photo of her robots and what is her emotional reaction to this event? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3; LITERACY.RL.4.3; LITERACY.RL.5.3; LITERACY.RL.6.3; LITERACY.RL.7.3**
-  Describe the character of Jeremy Boils. What is Penny Rose's first impression of her classmate and how is this impression confirmed when she meets him again at the clubhouse? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3; LITERACY.RL.4.3; LITERACY.RL.5.3; LITERACY.RL.6.3; LITERACY.RL.7.3**
-  How is Penny Rose's friendship with Lark tested when she meets the club members? Why do you think Penny Rose feels torn between her best friend and the members of the club? What is the price Penny Rose pays when she ignores her friendship with Lark?
-  There are hints from the little voice in Penny Rose's head and from the robots that something is not quite right with the club and its lengthy initiation and selection process. Penny Rose does not heed these warnings when she brings the robots to the clubhouse. What is the result of ignoring her fears and discomfort?
-  Penny Rose and Lark share a love for the robots and roboTown. How does this common bond fuel Penny Rose and Lark's plan to get even with Jeremy? How do the girls work as a team to implement their plan?
-  The robot Fraction is one of the casualties of Jeremy's anger. What does Penny Rose have to do to bring the robot back to life? How is the situation with Fraction similar to the damaged friendship between Penny and Lark?
-  At the beginning of the story, Penny Rose is a stranger to the world of friendships as evidenced by her need for the Conversation Starter notebook that she keeps and the robots she calls friends. What important lessons about friendships does Penny Rose learn through her shared experiences with Lark? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.2**



The discussion questions, activities, and worksheets in this guide were created by Leigh Courtney, Ph.D. She teaches in the Global Education program at a public elementary school in San Diego, California. She holds both master's and doctoral degrees in education, with an emphasis on curriculum and instruction.

Activities for Students

BUILD A BETTER ROBOT

Penny Rose is a collector of bits and pieces of discarded objects that she creatively transforms into robots. Try your hand at creating an engineering design for a robot constructed from found items. When working on your design plan, define a problem that will be solved by your robot. Develop more than one possible solution for how your robot will solve its task. Build your robot and test your solutions. Improve your robot based on your test results. Each phase of your design should be sketched and labeled. Results and design questions should be written along with your design. Make a display of your class's engineering plans and robots. As a class, build a roboTown for your robots to inhabit! **NGSS.3-5-ETS1-2; NGSS.3-5-ETS1-3; NGSS.MS-ETS1-1; NGSS.MS-ETS1-2; NGSS.MS-ETS1-2; NGSS.MS-ETS1-3; NGSS.MS-ETS1-4**

FROM THE BIRDS

Penny Rose is initially doubtful about Lark's claim that she receives "presents" from crows. But after watching a news report about these smart birds, Penny Rose is convinced that Lark is telling the truth about the materials the crows give her. Research crow behavior, including their interactions with humans. Compile your research into a short, informative report about the relationship between crows and humans. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.2**

FOUND POEM

Penny Rose made her robots from objects she found. Make a poem about one of the characters in *Weird Little Robots* from words you find in the book. Select a character and hunt through the story to locate words, phrases, or even whole sentences that capture the personality and experiences of your selected character. Use these words and phrases to create a "found poem" by arranging them on paper in the format of a poem, paying special attention to where you place line breaks and how you organize and write the words. Share your character found poem with others in your class. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.4**

CHARACTER SCRAPBOOK

Choose a character from *Weird Little Robots* (different from your found poem selection) and design a scrapbook that represents the character's traits, interests, and accomplishments. Complete the character scrapbook worksheet on the following page. Find examples in the book to answer the character questionnaire and identify quotes and page numbers where story information supports your examples. Compile all this information, along with character "artifacts" you design such as letters, notes, awards, maps, and drawings, to create your scrapbook. The five questions from the worksheet should each comprise at least one page of your scrapbook: personality traits; meaningful moments; favorite places; best friends; favorite things. Create an illustrated cover for your scrapbook with the character's name prominently featured. Add quotes from the story to each page to support the character aspects that you've described. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3; LITERACY.RL.4.3; LITERACY.RL.5.3; LITERACY.RL.6.3; LITERACY.RL.7.3**

Name: _____

CHARACTER SCRAPBOOK WORKSHEET

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3; LITERACY.RL.4.3; LITERACY.RL.5.3; LITERACY.RL.6.3; LITERACY.RL.7.3

Character Questionnaire

Character's
name

1. What are your character's personality traits? _____

Quote/s from book to support your answer _____

Page number/s where information can be found _____

2. What are some of the most meaningful moments or events in your character's life? _____

Quote/s from book to support your answer _____

Page number/s where information can be found _____

3. What are your character's favorite places? Why? _____

Quote/s from book to support your answer _____

Page number/s where information can be found _____

4. Who are your character's best friends and supporters? _____

Quote/s from book to support your answer _____

Page number/s where information can be found _____

5. What are some of your character's favorite things? Why are they favorites? _____

Quote/s from book to support your answer _____

Page number/s where information can be found _____

Name: _____

CONVERSATION KICK STARTERS

Penny Rose struggles with how to make new friends, so she makes a list of Possible Conversation Starters. Being prepared with what to say seems to calm Penny Rose. Think of your own list of conversation starters that could be used in a variety of situations that might help you reach out and make a new friend. List your ideas under each scenario.

AT RECESS ON THE PLAYGROUND

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

AT LUNCH IN THE CAFETERIA OR LUNCH TABLES

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

ON THE SPORTS FIELD

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

ON THE SCHOOL BUS

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Name: _____

ROBOTS ON THE LOOSE

Penny Rose is amazed to discover that her robots have come to life and are able to move and communicate. Imagine what the robots might say and do as they play in roboTown. Create a four-panel comic strip that depicts in illustrations and speech bubbles what the magical robots do when no one is looking.

