

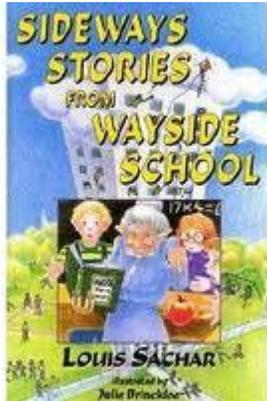


# Mosswood Connections

## *Sideways Stories from Wayside School by Louis Sachar Lesson and Activities*

"Wayside School was supposed to be composed of thirty classrooms, on one story. However, the builder constructed a thirty story building with an extra-large playground (He said he was very sorry). Consequently, everything about Wayside School is topsy-turvy. The higher one climbs, the stranger the people and the weirder the incident.

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This book is made up of thirty tales (one for each student and teacher who work on the thirtieth story, as well as one each for the cafeteria lady and Louis the yard teacher) and a brief introduction. With each story, the characters leave reality behind and enter a world where people who sleep in class learn more than those who do not, dead rats walk into classrooms wearing raincoats (and talking), little girls try to sell their toes and a bite in the arm with missing teeth hurts a lot. Everyone adheres to the literal translation of conversations, but things somehow make sense and the people follow appropriate paths and have good (if slightly skewed) morals.

This is a laugh out loud children's book that adults can enjoy as well."

### Key Ideas and Details

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- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.1** Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.3** Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

### Craft and Structure

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- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.6** Compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are narrated, including the difference between first- and third-person narrations.

### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

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- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.7** Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text, identifying where each version reflects specific descriptions and directions in the text.

### Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

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- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.10** By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, in the grades 4–5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.



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## **Discussion Questions:**

### *Chapter 1- Mrs. Gorf*

1. What was the children's problem?
2. How did they solve it?
3. How does Mrs. Gorf feel about her job and children?
4. What does she do about it?
5. What do you think about what happened to Mrs. Gorf?

### *Chapter 2- Mrs. Jewls*

1. Compare and contrast Mrs. Jewls with Mrs. Gorf.
2. How does Mrs. Jewls react when she sees the students? Why?
3. How do the children respond?

### *Chapter 3- Joe*

1. How does Mrs. Jewls end up contradicting herself?
2. Why is it important to know how to count?

### *Chapter 4- Sharie*

1. Why does Mrs. Jewls let Sharie sleep in class?
2. Should Sharie be allowed to sleep in class?
3. What would your teacher do if you fell asleep in class?

### *Chapter 5- Todd*

1. Todd tells the robbers that "Knowledge is much more valuable than money" Do you agree with him? Why?
2. Why does Todd always get sent home on the kindergarten bus?
3. Is it fair?
4. How could he solve his problem?

### *Chapter 6- Bebe*

1. Mrs. Jewls tells Bebe and Calvin that art is judged by the quality of the art, not the quantity of the art. Is Mrs. Jewls right or are Calvin and Bebe right?
2. Why? How would you define "art?"

### *Chapter 7- Calvin*

1. What was Calvin's problem? How did he solve it?
2. Was it a good solution? Why or why not?

### *Chapter 8- Myron*

1. In the first paragraph it says: "Other presidents were good speakers. Myron was even better. He was a good listener" Do you think it is more important to be a good speaker or a good listener? Why?
2. How is Myron's ideas of what a class president should do different from Mrs. Jewls' idea?
3. What would you expect a class president to do?



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## Chapter 9- Maurecia

1. Would an ice cream flavor based on a person be a good idea? Why or why not?
2. What ice cream flavor would you be?
3. Mrs. Jewls has a unique solution for Maurecia's problem. What is the problem?
4. How is it solved?

## Chapter 10- Paul

1. Did Leslie make the right choice by yelling the third time? Why or why not?
2. The pigtales talk Paul into doing something that he shouldn't do. What should Paul have done?
3. What would your hair say if it could talk?

## Chapter 11- Dana

1. How was arithmetic used to solve Dana's problem?
2. Do you think the same solution would work for you?

## Chapter 12- Jason

1. Did Jason deserve the gum on his chair? Why or why not?
2. Jason seemed to think that the solutions were worse than the problem. Was he right?

## Chapter 13- Rondi

1. How does Rondi feel about people liking the things she does not have?
2. Why do you think she feels that way?

## Chapter 14- Sammy

1. What kind of person is Sammy? Describe his appearance and personality.
2. If you were trying to play a prank in your classroom, what would you?

## Chapter 15- Deedee

1. Describe the problem and the solution in the story.
2. What do you think will probably happen with Deedee's problem in the future?
3. Have you ever had a problem like Deedee's?

## Chapter 16- D.J.

1. Choose a quote from the chapter and describe how it relates to D.J.'s story.
2. How do you feel when someone smiles at you? Do you usually smile, too?

## Chapter 17- John

1. John gets rid of one problem, but gains a new one. Which problem do you think is the worse one to have? Why?
2. What other solutions might work for John?

## Chapter 18- Leslie

1. Leslie is offered many suggestions for what she can do with her toes. Put the suggestions in order from the best idea to the worst idea.
2. Explain why you put them in the order you did.



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## *Chapter 19- Miss Zarves*

1. Why is the 19th chapter so short?

## *Chapter 20- Kathy*

1. How is Kathy "right all the time but still wrong" (pg. 84)?
2. How does Kathy create a self-fulfilling prophecy?

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## *Chapter 21- Ron*

1. Why don't the other kids want Ron to play?
2. Are they being fair?
3. What should they do?
4. How does Ron respond when Louis says he doesn't play well?
5. Why do you think he responds that way?

## *Chapter 22- The Three Erics*

1. "All three Erics had nicknames. It was better that way" Do you agree with the quote? Why or why not?
2. Compare and contrast the three Erics.

## *Chapter 23- Allison*

1. Think of at least 3 adjectives that describe Allison. Explain why you picked each adjective.
2. Mrs. Jewls tells Allison that children are really smarter than their teachers, is she right? Why or why not?

## *Chapter 24- Dameon*

1. Why did Dameon have to go up and down the stairs so often?
2. What could he have done differently so he wouldn't have to?

## *Chapter 25- Jenny*

1. Does Jenny get to school on time?
2. Where do you think everyone is?
3. What would you do if you went to your class and no one was there?
4. What does Jenny decide to do?
5. Why wasn't any one else in class?

## *Chapter 26- Terrence*

1. What does "Terrence was a good athlete but a bad sport" mean?
2. How does Terrence show that in the story?
3. Do you agree with what Louis does to Terrence?
4. What would you do?

## *Chapter 27: Joy*

1. What did Joyce forget to bring to school?
2. What did she do with Dameon's lunch?



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3. Who does Dameon blame for eating his lunch?
4. Why do you think that things tasted like porridge to Joy for the rest of the school year?

## Chapter 28: Nancy

1. Why didn't Nancy like his name? Do you agree and does it matter?
2. Why was Nancy shy and quiet?
3. What did Mac and Nancy decide to do?
4. What did the other kids decide to do?

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## Chapter 29: Stephen

1. What was different about Stephen?
2. Who appeared on the blackboard?
3. What did Stephen do to Mrs. Gorf? Why?
4. *What happened to Mrs. Gorf?*

## Chapter 30: Louis

1. Who is Louis?
2. Why wouldn't Louis allow the kids to out and play in the blizzard?
3. Are blizzards fun?
4. What does Louis do to entertain the kids?

## **Writing Prompts:**

- Write about what you think makes a bad teacher and what you think makes a good teacher.
- Think about something that most teachers would not let you do in class, make up a way or a reason for how it could make you a better student.
- If you could be really fast at one thing, what would it be and why?
- Write about what you would do as your job if you were class president.
- What is the most important job in the classroom? Write about what it is and why it is the most important job.
- If you were a teacher, rather than using mosquito bites, how would you teach arithmetic? What would you use to help the students learn? Why?
- Make up a plan to get Jason out of his seat and why that would work.
- Make up a plan on how you would get to recess early to get the green ball.
- Write about your reasons for being happy.
- If there was a 19th story and a Miss Zarves, write about what she and what her classroom would be like.
- Write about a time when you met someone who did not like anyone. What did you do?
- Is it more important to you to play for fun or play to win? Why?



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- Write about your nickname and how you got it. If you do not have a nickname, write about a nickname you wish you had and why.
- Write about a time when you were right and a teacher was wrong. What happened? Did the teacher listen to you?
- Write about a time you missed out on something fun because you had to do something else.
- Write about what you would do if you came to school and no one was there.
- Come up with a creative plan you would do if you forgot your lunch at home.
- If you could change your name, what would you change it to? Why?
- Write about what the best Halloween party would be like. Include lots of details.
- Write a story that you think Louis would tell the Wayside School students about your classroom.

## Activities:



- Make an apple doll. Instructions can be found at <http://www.appledolls.org/page2.html>
- Have the students make their own Wayside School out of cardboard.
- Have the kids do "Reader's Theater". You can find a script here: <http://www.aaronshp.com/rt/RTE32.html>
- Make Freezer Bag Ice Cream; give the ice cream different names. You can find the instructions here: <http://www.food.com/recipe/homemade-ice-cream-in-a-bag-34257>
- Create your own instrument using found objects. Give your instrument a made up name and then perform a song for your class.

## Vocabulary:

**Opinion:** a belief, judgment, or way of thinking about something: what someone thinks about a particular thing

**Investigate:** to try to find out the facts about (something, such as a crime or an accident) in order to learn how it happened, who did it, etc.

**Flabbergasted:** to be shocked or surprised (someone) very much.

**Bushel:** a unit for measuring an amount of fruit and grain that is equal to about 35.2 liters in the U.S. and to about 36.4 liters in the U.K. (bushels : a large amount *of* something)

**Discipline:** control that is gained by requiring that rules or orders be obeyed and punishing bad behavior or a way of behaving that shows a willingness to obey rules or orders

**Contradiction:** the act of saying something that is opposite or very different in meaning to something else; a difference or disagreement between two things which means that both cannot be true

**Overcoat:** a long coat that is worn to keep a person warm during cold weather



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**Triumphantly:** to act in a way that shows that one is celebrating victory or success

**Masterpiece:** something done with great skill

**Quantity:** an amount or number of something

**Quality:** how good or bad something is; a characteristic or feature that someone or something has; something that can be noticed as a part of a person or thing

**Established:** to make firm or stable

**Unconscious:** not awake especially because of an injury

**Tempting:** causing an urge or desire to have or do something

**Satisfied:** to be happy or pleased; to provide, do, or have what is required by (someone or something)

**Adorable:** very appealing or attractive; very lovable

**Horrified:** to feel horror or shock; to be greatly upset and shocked

**Attaché Case:** a small, thin suitcase that is used especially for carrying papers and documents

**Apiece:** for each one; individually

**Scrawny:** very thin in a way that is not attractive or healthy

**Runt:** the smallest animal in a group that is born to one mother at the same time; a very small or weak person

## Match the vocabulary word with the definition

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. ___ PUCE         | A. Italian word for "children"              |
| 2. ___ BRINE        | B. Sudden wish or urge, inclination         |
| 3. ___ BAMBINI      | C. Someone passionately devoted to a cause  |
| 4. ___ CRUMPET      | D. Full and complete, not shortened         |
| 5. ___ RUTABAGA     | E. Popular ride at insect amusement parks   |
| 6. ___ IMPULSE      | F. Pleasing combination of elements         |
| 7. ___ ZEALOTS      | G. Thick, round, turnip-like root vegetable |
| 8. ___ HARMONY      | H. Dark reddish, brownish, grayish purple   |
| 9. ___ UNABRIDGED   | I. Small, flat round of toasted bread       |
| 10. ___ BUMBLESHOOT | J. Solution of salt dissolved in water      |



# *Mosswood Connections*