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Activity Guide

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Henry and Mudge and the Careful Cousin

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ABOUT THE STORY

Henry's cousin Annie is coming to visit, and Henry and Mudge are excited about meeting her. When Annie arrives, though, she is all dressed up, and she doesn't seem glad to meet Mudge. Then Annie discovers she has a special skill, and to Henry's relief, she decides that maybe she doesn't need to be quite so careful.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cynthia Rylant has written many other books about Henry and Mudge, including *Henry and Mudge in Puddle Trouble* and *Henry and Mudge Get the Cold Shivers*, both Live Oak Readalongs. Her books have won dozens of awards; in 1993, she received the Newbery Award for her novel *Missing May*. She has always loved big, drooly dogs, just like Mudge, and lives with two of them in her house in Eugene, Oregon.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Sucie Stevenson knows all about Mudge-like dogs, too – she has two of her own. She has illustrated all the other Henry and Mudge tales.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children if any of them have cousins or other relatives whom they have never met. Have them describe what they think their relatives might be like. Then tell them that this book is about a boy who is meeting his cousin for the first time.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- "How is Annie dressed when she arrives?"
- "How does Annie feel about Mudge at first?"
- "What does Annie think of Henry's room?"
- "What game do Annie and Henry play?"
- "How well does Annie play the game?"
- "In what way does Annie change?" (*Compare and contrast*)
- "Why do you think Annie changes?" (*Draw conclusions*)

Vocabulary

Write these boxed vocabulary words and sentences on the chalkboard. Ask children to copy the sentences, filling in the blank with the word that best complete the sentence.

- frilly hanky worried shiny drool whizzed
- Cousin Annie's dress was clean and _____.
 - Annie was _____ about Mudge.
 - She did not want Mudge to _____ on her.
 - Annie used her _____ to wipe her face.
 - Annie kept her shoes and purse _____.
 - When Annie threw the Frisbee, it _____ though the air.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Physical Education: Frisbee Toss

If children have access to an outdoor play area, have them compete in a Frisbee toss. Each child can throw the Frisbee as far as possible. The farthest throw in a straight line wins. You can also have winners who throw the farthest up in the air or off to the side or who skip the Frisbee along the ground.

Language Arts: A Letter from Annie

Invite children to imagine that they are in Annie's place. Have them write a note to Henry and his parents thanking them for the overnight visit. The note can mention how Annie felt about the things he did at Henry's house.

Music: Musical Frisbees

Children can play a game of Musical Frisbee, similar to Musical Chairs. Play a piece of music they all enjoy as children stand in a large circle, gently tossing a Frisbee around circle. When you stop the music, the child with the Frisbee is "out". The last child not caught with the Frisbee is the winner.

Drama: Act It Out

Children might enjoy performing the scenes between Henry and Annie. Have them work in pairs – or groups of three, if one child wants to play the part of Mudge – to prepare a short scene from the book. When they are ready, children can perform their scenes for the rest of the class.

INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

Frisbee How-to

Have children use the keyword *Frisbee* to learn all about how to play Frisbee. Have them write a description of one kind of Frisbee throw and read it to the class.