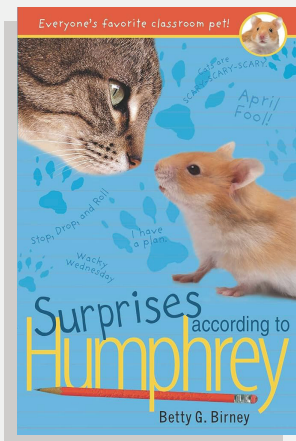


Book Club for Kids



Surprises According to Humphrey

by Betty Birney

Recommended Ages:

7-12



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Summary: Being a classroom hamster means having to be ready for anything—but suddenly there are a lot of big surprises in Humphrey's world. Some are exciting, like getting to roll around in a hamster ball and some aren't so good, like a run-in with a cat. Even with all that's going on, Humphrey makes time to help his classmates—but will he be able to make sure that Mrs. Brisbane doesn't stop teaching?

Discussion Questions:

1. Humphrey says there are surprises that are fun and surprises that aren't so much fun. Describe a surprise that you think would be especially wonderful (a gift, a party, a visitor) or a surprise that wouldn't be so great (a bad grade, an injury, a cancelled trip). How would you feel in each situation?
2. The P.E. teacher is very strict about following the rules. Sometimes Humphrey finds this annoying. Why might we need rules? Think of a few examples of rules and explain why each one might be important. Would it ever be a good idea to disobey a rule? If you thought a rule was unfair, what would you do to change it?
3. How does Garth feel when A.J. doesn't pick him for his team? Why does A.J. do what he does? What are some other ways each of them could have handled the situation?
4. Because of a movie he's seen, Humphrey lets his imagination run away with him when he thinks that Aldo has been abducted by aliens. Have you ever let your imagination run away with you? Are there times that having a big imagination would be good? Are there times it would be bad?
5. What does Humphrey think of Sweetums? How do you think Sweetums feels about Humphrey?

Activities:

- Humphrey doesn't know what's going on when Aldo starts speaking Spanish. Do you know any Spanish words? Make a list of five Spanish words you know and their English meanings. If you don't know any words, ask a friend or look it up. If you already speak Spanish, list five words that are the same in English and Spanish.
- Do a dictionary drill. Use words that you don't know from the book and write down both the definition and a sentence using each word correctly. Once you do that, you will have a dictionary book, just like Humphrey does.

Adapted from Penguin.