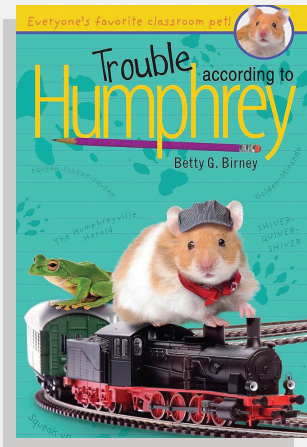


Book Club for Kids



Trouble According to Humphrey by Betty Birney

Recommended Ages:
7-12



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Summary: Humphrey loves to solve problems for his classmates in Room 26, but he never meant to create one! No one knows about Humphrey's lock-that-doesn't-lock, but when Humphrey is caught outside of his cage, Golden-Miranda, one of his favorite students, gets blamed. Humphrey manages to help Pay-Attention-Art and Sit-Still-Seth and even survives a trip to the vet, but can he clear Miranda's name without giving up his freedom forever?

Discussion Questions:

1. In the story, the students of Room 26 build a model community called Humphreyville. Why did they decide on that name? Where did the name of your town come from? If you were going to build a town or a street, what would you call it and why?
2. Art is really good at imagining things while Paul is really good at understanding numbers and math. How did Paul's math skills help Art solve a problem? How could Art's creativity help Paul?
3. Did you ever try something and think you weren't good at it the first time? Have you ever tried something that you were good at right away? What are some ways in which you have gotten better at doing things?
4. Was Mrs. Brisbane wrong to accuse Miranda of leaving the cage door open? How do you think Miranda handled the problem? Is there anything else she could have done?
5. Have you ever been accused of something you didn't do? How did you feel? How did the problem work out?
6. Humphrey is nervous when he visits the veterinarian for the first time because he's never been to a doctor before. Can you remember a time when you were nervous about going somewhere for the first time? How did it turn out?
7. Seth's grandmother can remember her town before a lot of modern changes were made. Ask adults in your area what changes they've seen in your community. What changes do they see as being good? What changes do they see as being bad? What changes do you think will happen in the next 25 years? One hundred years?

Activities:

- Create a drawing or model of one of the streets or buildings in Humphreyville or create your own town from scratch. Make sure to consider what buildings would be there, what they would look like, and how everything would be organized.
- Write your own Help Wanted ad. Write one for the job of a classroom hamster. Describe all of the jobs Humphrey does in Room 26. Write an ad for your dream job. What are the qualifications for a job you think you'd like? Write an ad for a job as a character in your favorite book or in a fairy tale or legend.

Adapted from Penguin.