

Educational Materials
to be used with:
Manoli the Greek Mouse
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Higher order questions:

1. Compare and contrast how Manoli changes from the beginning of the story to the end of the story. Find evidence to support your answer.
2. What did the Big Cheese mean when it said to Manoli, “Your talent, your gift...it is not what it seems”?
3. If someone were to ask you what makes you special, what would you say?
4. Toad is a good friend to Manoli, why?

Character Traits:

Paper bag activity:

Activity: Give each student a paper lunch bag. Ask them to identify and give examples of Manoli’s physical characteristics (example: furry, big eyes, tail), and have them draw a picture of Manoli on the outside of the bag. Then, have them identify and give examples of his inner characteristics (example: brave, kind, giving). Have them write those words on index cards and place them inside of the bag. For older students, they can do this same activity by creating two lists, instead of using a paper bag.

Note: when discussing inner character traits, it is helpful to cite the text from the book where Manoli says, “But what makes me special was always inside.”

Retell:

Through Role-play (Theatre activity):

Activity: Have the children act out each section of the book so that they can retell the events of the story and understand sequence. Roles can be assigned and students can play Manoli, Toad, The Narrator, etc.

Extension activity: Teachers can spring off into an “imaginary journey”. This is where teachers would go beyond the text to create imaginary circumstances from various moments in the book.
For example: When Manoli goes out to make a wish on the big cheese in the sky, the teacher could lead an imagination journey to space. Have a spaceship appear and tell the students to get on it. Then count down as the

spaceship takes off and travels to the moon. Once there, have the students get out and explore. On the moon they could walk around, taste the cheese, meet an alien - the possibilities are endless. Let them give ideas and have them commit to each moment. Eventually have them get back on the spaceship and come back down to earth.

Through sequencing:

Activity: Have sentences typed on separate strips of paper that retell the story. Have students work alone or in pairs to put the sentences in the correct order.

For Example:

- Manoli, a mouse, lives on a hill with his family
- Manoli feels like he is not special
- The big cheese tells Manoli, "Your talent, your gift...it is not what it seems"
- Manoli leaves home to go out and find what makes him special
- Manoli finds toad who is lost and scared
- Manoli and Toad visit Papou Donkey who is lonely
- Manoli gives money to Baba Bee Spiro
- Manoli reunites Toad with his Mama
- Toad tells Manoli that his is special because of his generous heart
- Manoli realizes that his talent and gift was inside him all along

Extension Activity: Once the sentences are in sequence, have the students incorporate time order words. For example: In the beginning, then, next, after, finally.

Writing:

When teaching writing, this book can be used as an excellent mentor text to show how to vary sentence structure. Examples:

Dialogue : "Hello Papou Donkey, how are you?" they said. "Alright," murmured Donkey, "except for my head."

Action: He tiptoed outside and did not make a peep.

Inner Thought: *I'll give them my time and whatever I can. I'll make that my mission; I'll make that my plan.*

Narration: In a village in Greece, up a road, on a hill, lived Manoli Pontikis, in a house made of dill.

Writing activity: Have the students write what they think happens to Manoli after the end of the book. For example: What happens when he gets home? What does he say to his family/what do they say to him? What does Manoli do with his newly discovered talent? Where does he go? Students should vary their sentences using dialogue, action, inner thought and narration. They do not need to make the sentences rhyme.

Vocabulary:

The book contains numerous tier 2 words that are geared to expand vocabulary. Gaining a better understanding of these words and learning how to use them properly is the goal.

Activity #1: This activity is for action words. Teach the meaning of the tier 2 word using a synonym that the students understand. Then attach a specific physicality to the word. For example, for the word “peep”, hold your hands to your eyes like they are binoculars and say the word and its meaning. Then have the students repeat the word and copy the physicality. Continue by having students work in pairs to create a sentence using the new word and the physicality. Share with each other and share with the group.

Tier 2 words from the book with physicality suggestions:

- Farewell --- Right hand waving
- Seek --- Put hand straight across forehead like you are looking for something
- Stumbled --- Trip in place
- Wandered --- Take 3 steps slowly in a meandering way
- Tumbling --- Do a somersault on the ground
- Murmured --- mumble quietly with hand next to your mouth

Activity #2: Take a piece of paper and fold it in half. On one side of the paper write a tier 2 word from the book, and write a synonym for that word (Example: stumbled/trip). On the other side of the page, write a new sentence using the tier 2 vocabulary word. For Example: I was walking down the street and I stumbled over a rock.

More examples of tier 2 vocabulary words from the book are: patient, vowed, ignored, chimed, village, rarely, mission, spare, concerned, hero, onward.

Greek Vocabulary:

The book contains a few Greek words. Here is a closer look at some of those words and their meaning.

- **Pontiki** (*pone-tee-kee*) – means mouse in Greek, which is where Manoli’s last name comes from. His last name is Pontikis because most Greek names end in an “s”.
- **Drachma** (*drak-muh*) – The former monetary unit of Greece.
- **Petra** (*peh-truh*) – means rock in Greek.
- **Papou** (*pah-poo*) – means Grandfather in Greek. In this book it is used as a respectful way to address Donkey, who is two generations older than Manoli and Toad.

Rhyming:

Activity #1: Have the students identify the rhyming words in the book with the same spelling pattern. For example: dill/hill, road/toad

Then, have the students identify the rhyming words in the book that do not have the same spelling pattern. For example: stars/ours, bed/said.

Note: you can also point out an example of a “soft rhyme” in the book (example: home/alone)

Activity #2: Have students create their own sentences using a pair of rhyming words from the book. For example, use the words “see” and “tree” to say: When I look out my window I love to **see**, the bluebirds that live in the big maple **tree**.

Activity #3: Take a pair of rhyming words from the book and have students come up with additional words that rhyme with them.

Examples: bright/ light, in/grin, money/honey

Fluency:

Because of the rhyming verse and natural rhythm that is present in the book, it is a great tool for teaching fluency.

Activities:

1. *Echo:* Read two sentences at a time so the students can hear the rhymes, and have them repeat them back.
2. *Choral:* Have the students read lines from the book out loud together.
3. *Buddy:* Have the students pair up and take turns going back and forth reading the lines out loud.
4. *Independently:* Have the students read sections of the book out loud alone, so that they can feel the rhythm and get comfortable reading aloud.

Extension activity (Theatre/Music activity): In pairs or small groups, have the students rap the lines from the book to develop fluency. They can also make up a tune and sing the lines. Encourage them to incorporate dance moves or action to enhance the exercise. *Note: this exercise will also help them to discover the natural rhythm that is written into the lines.*