

Based on

The Cricket in Times Square

By George Selden

About the Book:

Chester Cricket is a country cricket from Connecticut. But when he decides to get greedy and steal some liverwurst from a picnic basket, he ends up trapped in the basket and is shipped off to New York City! While at the Times Square subway station, Chester makes two friends: Tucker Mouse and Harry Cat. Together, these creatures stir up quite a bit of trouble. They are responsible for missing money from a newspaper stand and even setting it on fire! When Chester gets jailed by his owner's mother, all hope seems lost. But Chester has a hidden talent, and it is soon realized that the country cricket may just be able to teach even the toughest New Yorkers a thing or two.

Set the Stage:

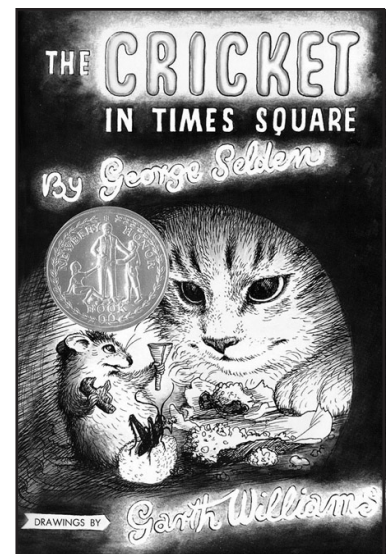
Use the following to get the students ready to read:

- What do you know about crickets?
- Have you ever been to Times Square in New York City? What are some sights and sounds that you would experience there?
- Do you have any pets? Have they ever gotten into trouble? What trouble did they cause?
- What is a talent that you have? How do you feel when you share this talent with others?
- Have you ever felt homesick? Describe where you were and why you felt this way.
- What is your definition of fame? Do you believe all famous people are happy? Explain your answer.

Review:

After reading the book, discuss the following:

- Describe Tucker Mouse's home.
- What things are sold at Papa Bellini's newsstand? Is it a profitable business?
- What actions show that Mario cares for Chester? If you have or have had a pet, what things have you done to care for it?
- How did Chester Cricket end up in New York?
- Define the word *ironic*. What is so ironic about Tucker and Harry's friendship?
- What is the one familiar thing that Chester sees in New York City?
- How does Mama Bellini feel about Chester? Give details to support your answer.
- What gifts does Sai Fong give to Mario?
- Chester causes trouble when he accidentally eats a two dollar bill. How does this tragedy happen? Who helps Chester solve the problem? How?
- How does the newsstand catch on fire? What does Chester do in order to take control of the situation?
- Mama Bellini finally accepts and learns to like Chester. What does Chester do that causes her to change her opinion?
- How do the people of New York come to realize Chester's talent? How does this help the Bellinis?
- How does Chester feel about his fame?
- What souvenir does Chester take from the newsstand to remember his time in New York City?



Student Activity (found on the last page of this PDF):

Students will write and illustrate the story in their own words.

Related Activities:

To extend students' enjoyment of the book, try these:

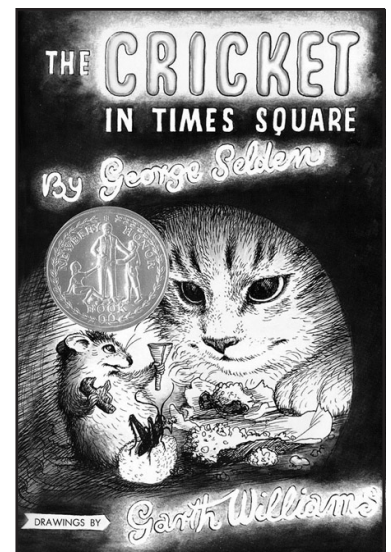
- **In a New York Minute:** Chester's life changes drastically the minute he begins chirping to Mama Bellini. This is how many famous people get their start: in a minute. Ask students to think of someone famous whose life changed in what seemed to be a minute. Who is this person? What event(s) led to the change in their life? Have students draw a picture of this famous person and write a paragraph about their fame.
- **Animal Attraction:** Three of the main characters in *The Cricket in Times Square* are animals. Animals add a special element to books and movies alike. Ask students to list three animals that portray the main character from other books or movies.
- **Fact or Opinion?:** A fact is something that can be proven. An opinion is based on feelings. Share the examples of facts and opinions from *The Cricket in Times Square* below. Then, ask students to find two more examples of each from the story. Have them include the page numbers where they found each.

Examples:

FACT: "For breakfast Mario had brought a crust of bread, a lump of sugar, and a cold brussel sprout." - page 32

OPINION: "But crickets are good luck—Mario began." - page 89

- **The Science of Crickets:** Ask students to research crickets at their local library. How are the different body parts of a cricket helpful to them? What interesting facts did they find about them? Have students draw a picture of a cricket. Then they can write a journal entry showcasing interesting things they discovered.
- **Operation: Opera!:** Chester Cricket loved to perform opera music for his audience. Ask students: What is your opinion regarding opera music? Have them compare this variety of music to another genre of their choice. Find a famous opera song and record it. Ask them to share it with their classmates. Take a survey to find out the favorite types of music in your class. With students, record the findings on a bar graph.

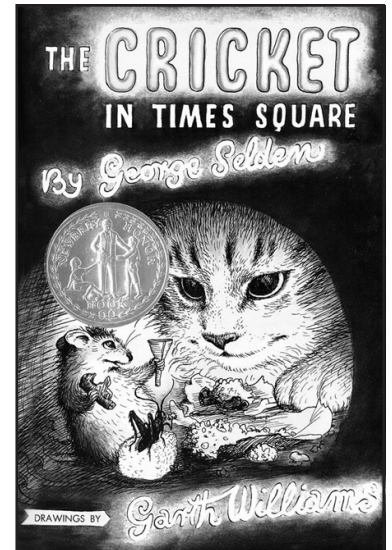


Name _____

A Comic of a Cricket

Based on *The Cricket in Times Square* by George Selden

Directions: Chester Cricket and his friends Tucker Mouse and Harry Cat experience many adventures during their time spent together in New York City. Make a list of 12 important story events, retelling the story in your own words. Then divide a large piece of construction paper into 12 equal sections. In each section, draw a picture to illustrate the events in the order they happened. Include a caption above or below each picture describing the story event.



Important Story Events:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

