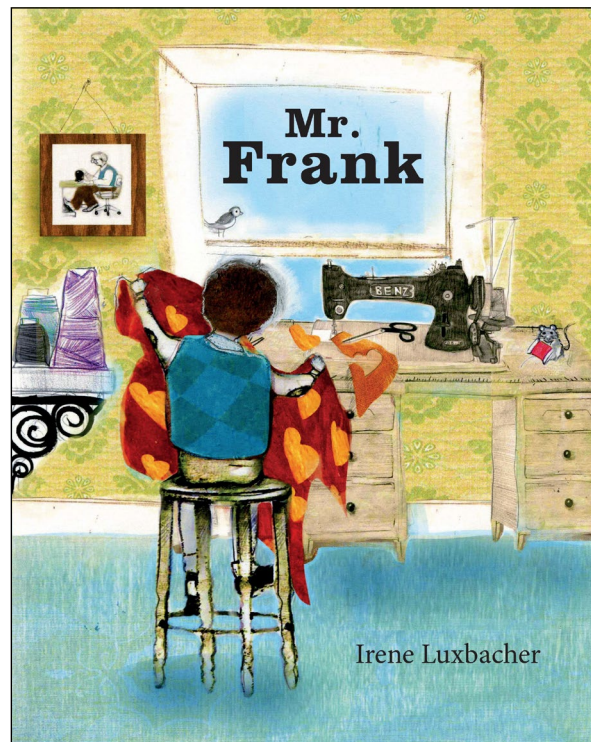




GROUNDWOOD STUDY GUIDES

Mr. Frank

Written and illustrated by
Irene Luxbacher



On his last day before retirement, Mr. Frank is sewing the most wonderful outfit of his long career. Who could it be for?

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Ages 5-8 / Grades K-3

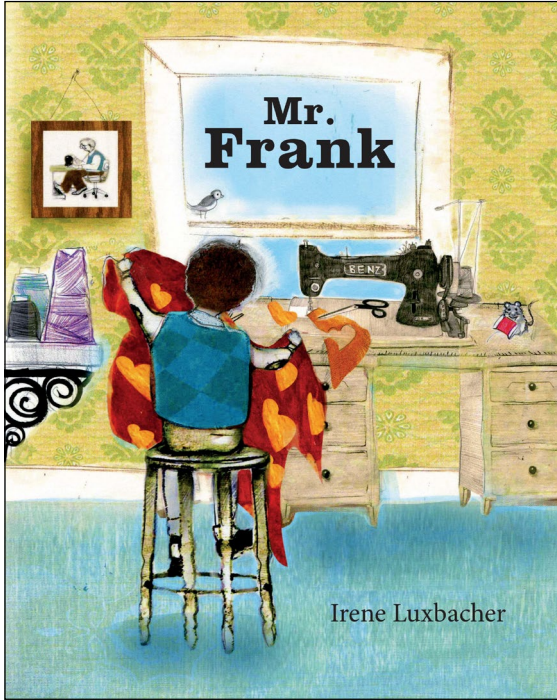
JUVENILE FICTION / Clothing & Dress / Careers

Full-color illustrations throughout / 7.875 x 9.75 / 32 pages

Hardcover with jacket / \$16.95 / 978-1-55498-435-0

Ebook / 978-1-55498-436-7

groundwoodbooks.com



BOOK DESCRIPTION

Mr. Frank is a tailor who has stitched all kinds of clothes — from uniforms in the forties to stylish suits in the fifties to wild and weird designs in the sixties and seventies. He has seen (and sewn) just about everything. But on his last day of work, Mr. Frank receives an order for the most important outfit of all — one that is especially close to his heart.

OBJECTIVE

Students will listen to the teacher read the book aloud, extend vocabulary, participate in a class discussion and complete individual activities inspired by the book.

PRE-READING

Hold the book up and show the front and back cover, title page and front and back jacket flaps to the class, explaining what is commonly done in each of those places. Ask the students to guess what the book is about from clues on the front cover, back cover and title page. Then read the front jacket flap aloud. Were any of the guesses correct? Do they think the person on the cover looks like a man, or a boy? Are they surprised that a boy would be sitting by a sewing machine and not a girl?

Show the author's name on the front cover and ask if students understand that because there is only one name, she is both the author and the illustrator of the book. Show them that the back jacket flap has her biography on it (but don't read it aloud yet.) Do students know what an author does, and what an illustrator does? Does one of them have a more important job? Does one of them have more fun? Do they think that illustrators would rather draw pictures for their own story, or someone else's? Do they think the authors of picture books wish they could draw their own pictures?

Explain that there may be unfamiliar words in the book. As these come up in the reading, ask students if they can guess the meaning from the illustrations or the context. Define them and keep a list to review again after finishing.

DURING THE READING

As you read the story aloud to the class, make sure to allow time for them to study the intricate illustrations.

After reading the page where Mr. Frank covers up his sewing table and prepares to turn off the light switch for the last time, pause and ask students to predict what happens next. Can they guess what the special item is that he has made and who it's for? Does this page make them sad? Does Mr. Frank look sad? Do they think the story will have a sad ending?

Next, turn the page and show students the wordless page with grandpa and grandson, and then the final two pages.

POST-READING CLASS DISCUSSION

Discuss the final pages of the book. Were students surprised? What can they tell you about what is happening here, even though there are very few words on these final pages? Did they think it was a satisfying ending? Are they pleased that it wasn't a sad ending?

Read aloud the author/artist's biography from the back jacket flap. How do students feel about the story after learning that her father, a tailor, was the inspiration? Have students learned anything special from a grandparent, aunt, uncle or other family member? Can they imagine writing a story about it?

Explain that Mr. Frank's occupation is something that many people do as a hobby. Can students suggest other jobs that are also hobbies? Do students know anyone whose hobby is sewing, knitting or quilting? Do any of them have any of these skills? Has anyone ever made clothing for them? Have they made clothing for themselves?

Look again at the pages in the book describing clothes Mr. Frank made in the past: uniforms, suits, dresses and tutus. How are these clothes, and others, a clue to time periods? How are they a clue to vocations? Have students seen photos of their parents or grandparents in clothes that seem “funny” because they are outdated? Have any students dressed up for Halloween in old clothes or hats? Show them the last double-page spread of the book again. Are costumes just for Halloween?

Return to the list of unfamiliar words and review the words and their definitions with the class. Can students suggest other words that could be used instead? Talk about the words that are specific to Mr. Frank’s vocation: measuring, cutting, stitching, sewing, mending and pressing. Can students think of other words that fit?

Page through the book again, pausing to look at some elements in the illustrations. Do the photos on the walls reinforce the idea that this is a real family story? Does some of the art make students think of fabric? Do they think this is done deliberately by the author/artist? Do they like these pictures? Would a different kind of art have been just as good for the story?

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES

Did students like the book? Why or why not? Have them write a brief essay giving support to their answer, including details from the story or the illustrations.

Have students compose a short family story about themselves and one of their relatives that involves learning about something the relative likes to do. Then mix up the stories and have each student read one (not theirs) to the class. Can the other students guess whose story it is?

Ask students to choose a profession and design a scrapbook “wall” like those pictured on Mr. Frank’s walls in the book. They could include photos, drawings, sketches and other “clues” to what the profession is. Bonus points for designing the uniform or outfit that goes along with the profession.

AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR BIOGRAPHY



Irene Luxbacher is an artist and author living in Toronto. With more than fifteen years' experience as an illustrator, Irene has received many awards for her children's books. She has written and illustrated *Deep Underwater* ("Masterful artwork and nuanced verse" — *Kirkus*, starred review) and *Mr. Frank*, which was selected for the USBBY Outstanding International Books Honor List. Her illustrations for *Malaika's Costume* and *Malaika's Winter Carnival* by Nadia L. Hohn have also been highly acclaimed, and her illustrations for *The Imaginary Garden* by Andrew Larsen were shortlisted for the Governor General's Literary Award.