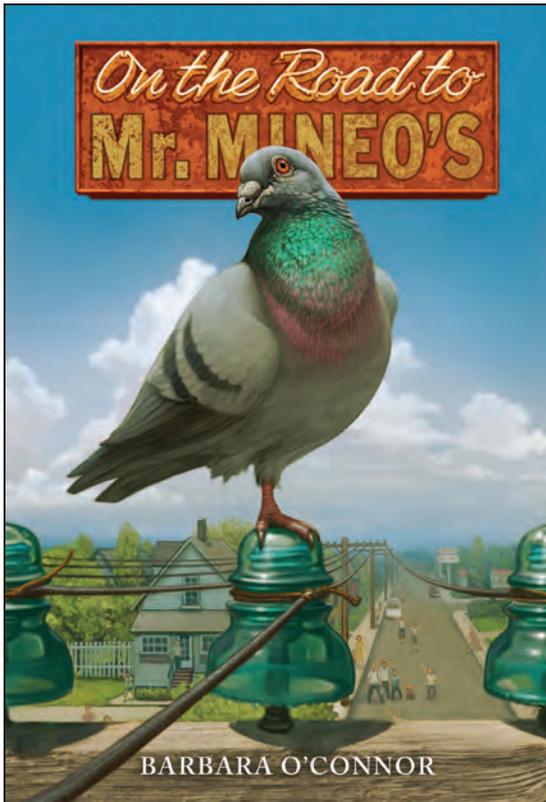


# On the Road to MR. MINEO'S



## A Teacher's Guide for *On the Road to Mr. Mineo's* by Barbara O'Connor



Grades 3 to 7  
HC: 978-0-374-38002-1  
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### ABOUT THE BOOK

Stella just wants a dog, but her parents won't let her have one. So when she spots a one-legged pigeon on the top of her best friend Gerald's garage, she decides it's the next best thing and convinces Gerald to help her try to catch it. But too bad for Stella and Gerald, because they're not the only ones who want that pigeon. Stella's brother Levi and his scabby-kneed, germ-infested friends saw it flying around town, too, and Levi says finders keepers. And Mutt Raynard, the town liar, told the truth for once, and now he needs to catch the pigeon to prove it. It seems like all of Meadville, South Carolina, is caught up in the bird chase—but what no one knows is that the pigeon already has a home way across town. Barbara O'Connor has delivered another ingeniously crafted story full of Southern charm, kid-size adventures, and quirky, unforgettable characters.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Barbara O'Connor** is the author of fourteen novels and biographies for children. Drawing on her South Carolina roots, Barbara's novels have a distinctly Southern voice. Her books have received many awards, including the Massachusetts Book Award and Parents' Choice Award, and have been nominated for young readers' awards in thirty-eight states.



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## PRE-READING

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Is there something you've wanted more than anything else in the whole world? What is it? How did you try to convince your parents that you should have it? Can something else make up for that one thing or not? Why?

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

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1. Describe life in Meadville, South Carolina. Would you like to live there yourself or not? Why?
2. What do Stella and Gerald like to do together? What do you like to do with your best friend?
3. Why are Stella's good ideas often bad in the end? Why does Gerald go along with them anyway? What's her plan?
4. Who is Mr. Mineo? Why is he so aggravated? How does he handle this feeling? How do you?
5. Describe Ethel and Amos. Why do they argue so much? Do they bicker over important things or not?
6. Explain why no one ever believes what Mutt Raynard says. Why is this suddenly a problem for him?
7. Who is Levi and why is he so mean to Stella and Gerald? Would you consider him a bully or not? Why? What's the worst thing he does in the story? What's the best way to deal with a bully?
8. Why is Ethel always waiting for Amos to fall asleep? What does she do?
9. List the things Mr. Mineo does to try to find Sherman (the pigeon). Which ones are the best ideas? Why?
10. Explain why each person who is looking for Sherman thinks he or she should have him. Who do you want to find the bird? Why?
11. Luther and Edsel are best friends. What things do they like to do together? Are they looking for Sherman too?
12. What does Stella really want more than anything? Will Sherman be able to fill that spot for her or not? Why?
13. Why do you think Ethel looks forward to seeing the pigeon and the dog so much each day? What do you most look forward to at the end of your day?
14. How do things escalate (or get really intense) between Levi and his friends and Gerald and Stella? What would you do about it?
15. Do all of these characters know one another? What do they all have in common? What makes them different?
16. Do you think Amos would get along well with Mr. Mineo or not? Explain why you think what you do, using examples from the book to back up your argument.
17. Where does the pigeon spend time? Does he stay? Are you disappointed or relieved when he escapes? Why? What helps Sherman escape each time?
18. Who do you think would take the best care of Sherman besides Mr. Mineo? When do you think Sherman is in the greatest danger? Who absolutely does not deserve to have him? Why?
19. How do all the characters finally meet? What happens when they do? In the end, what happens? Are you surprised by the ending or not?
20. Which scene is your favorite? Why? Which character would you most like to go on a picnic with out at the lake? Why?

## PROJECTS

### READING

Good readers always make predictions about what is going to happen next as they read a story, but they don't just guess! At the end of each chapter, think about the clues that the author left in the story (like the cracker crumbs that Levi and his friends tried to capture Sherman with) and then write a question that you hope gets answered. Here are a few questions to get you started.

Ch. 1: How will something be different in Meadville?

Ch. 2: What will Stella do with that net?

### WRITING

Barbara O'Connor is a master at bringing characters to life by showing how they relate to other people, how they act and talk. You can learn a lot by using any of her books as a mentor text, especially for writing dialogue. One thing she does is tuck "beats" inside the conversations between characters. These little descriptions about what a character is doing really tell so much about them! Reread any scene where two characters are talking (or even Mr. Mineo with his dog, Ernie) and notice these small descriptions that show up between what characters say. Next, you try it! Write a short scene where two characters talk about something (and they probably shouldn't agree—it's more interesting) and use at least four beats. It's fun, and your writing will sound so professional!

### ART

Draw a map (or make a three-dimensional version out of stuff around the house) that brings to life the town of Meadville, South Carolina. Be sure to use the book as your guide!

Draw, paint, or create a collage of your favorite scene. In a short paragraph, explain why this scene was important to the story and why it was your favorite. Also explain why you used the colors, shapes, and textures that you did to bring your piece of art to life!

## VOCABULARY

When you run into a word you don't know it's best to try to figure out what it means by its context in the sentence. Study the following sentences from the book and see if you can figure out what the underlined words mean. Then use them in new sentences of your own that prove you understand them.

Sentences from <i>ON THE ROAD TO MR. MINEO'S</i>	Vocabulary Word
Stella <b>rummaged</b> through the garden tools, climbed over a rusty lawn mower, and peeked under a torn blue tarp. (Ch. 2)	rummaged
He's liable to get into a <b>tussle</b> with a hawk again and lose that other leg." (Ch. 4)	tussle
The morning <b>plodded</b> along. Minute after boring minute." (Ch. 10)	plodded
"Tell them to get off your garage," she said. Gerald didn't say a word. His face was pale. His chin <b>quivered</b> . (Ch.11)	quivered
Gerald knew he should have been embarrassed when his mother hollered at Levi and his scabby-kneed, germ-infested friends. But instead he was <b>relieved</b> . (Ch. 14)	relieved
Suddenly a <b>ruckus</b> started across the street. Stella and Gerald and those three troublemakers on skateboards were in the alley between the bank and the post office. (Ch. 15)	ruckus
Amos said the last thing they needed was a <b>mangy</b> old stray hanging around. (Ch. 16)	mangy
When he turned down the path that led to his favorite fishing spot, way back in a <b>secluded</b> cove, he looked up again. (Ch. 17)	secluded

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

## VOCABULARY

When you run into a word you don't know it's best to try to figure out what it means by its context in the sentence. Study the following sentences from the book and see if you can figure out what the words in boldface mean. Then use them in new sentences of your own that prove you understand them.

Stella **rummaged** through the garden tools, climbed over a rusty lawn mower, and peeked under a torn blue tarp. (Ch. 2)

**rummaged:** \_\_\_\_\_

**New Sentence**

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He's liable to get into a **tussle** with a hawk again and lose that other leg. (Ch. 4)

**tussle:** \_\_\_\_\_

**New Sentence**

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The morning **plodded** along. Minute after boring minute. (Ch. 10)

**plodded:** \_\_\_\_\_

**New Sentence**

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"Tell them to get off your garage," she said. Gerald didn't say a word. His face was pale. His chin **quivered**. (Ch.11)

**quivered:** \_\_\_\_\_

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Gerald knew he should have been embarrassed when his mother hollered at Levi and his scabby-kneed, germ-infested friends. But instead he was **relieved**. (Ch. 14)

**relieved:** \_\_\_\_\_

**New Sentence**

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Suddenly a **ruckus** started across the street. Stella and Gerald and those three troublemakers on skateboards were in the alley between the bank and the post office. (Ch. 15)

**ruckus:** \_\_\_\_\_

**New Sentence**

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Amos said the last thing they needed was a **mangy** old stray hanging around. (Ch. 16)

**mangy:** \_\_\_\_\_

**New Sentence**

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When he turned down the path that led to his favorite fishing spot, way back in a **secluded** cove, he looked up again. (Ch. 17)

**secluded:** \_\_\_\_\_

**New Sentence**

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