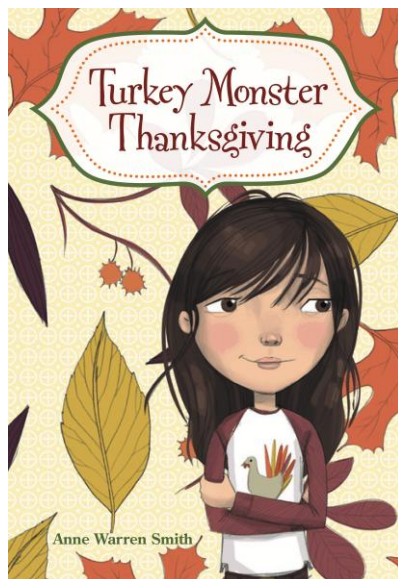


## TURKEY MONSTER THANKSGIVING TEACHER'S GUIDE



Students will love Katie Jordan, the nine-year-old fourth grader who gets great ideas that always lead to big trouble. This year instead of celebrating Thanksgiving in her family's traditional way by eating pizza in their pajamas, Katie wants to create the perfect holiday and be just like a "real" family. By Thanksgiving Day, she has invited guests Dad didn't expect, festooned the house with what may be poison oak, and set the sweet potatoes on fire. Ultimately everyone sits down to a most unusual dinner – one that succeeds because it comes from the heart.

For ages 8-12  
Albert Whitman & Co.  
978-0-8075-8126-1  
paperback, 112 pages, \$5.99

Praise for the hardcover edition:

"But don't worry; all turns out well in the simple, easy-to-digest holiday fare." – *Booklist*

"Amusing episodes will keep readers yearning for more." – *Children's Literature*

"This is a likeable and accessible story, suitable as a readaloud or an easy-going readalone when holiday frenzy strikes." – *The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*

Nominee for the 2006 Beverly Cleary Award.



## AUTHOR BIO

Anne Warren Smith is the author of the Katie Jordan series for third and fourth graders: *Turkey Monster Thanksgiving*, *Tails of Spring Break*, and the soon-to-be-released *Bittersweet Summer*, all from Albert Whitman & Co.

She teaches classes in writing fiction and memoir in Corvallis, Oregon, and has led workshops throughout the Pacific Northwest. She lives in Tucson during the winter months.

She grew up in Ticonderoga, a small town in the Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York. She plays with several grandchildren and has a dog named Lucy who will be the star of a future Katie Jordan book. When not writing, she swims laps at the pool, makes jewelry with tiny beads, knits sweaters, and walks the Oregon beaches or the trails of the Arizona desert.

She is available for virtual classroom visits on SKYPE. Learn more about her at [www.annewarrensmith.com](http://www.annewarrensmith.com).

## **TURKEY MONSTER THANKSGIVING TEACHER'S GUIDE**

### **CHARACTER**

**Knowledge:** Chapter 1 presents several details about how Katie and Claire look. Ask the children to list these details in a “Katie” column and a “Claire” column.

**Evaluation:** Ask the students what adjectives they might use when speaking of each girl. (messy, laid-back, relaxed, uptight, organized, tidy).

**Discussion:** How are the girls the same? How are they different? Which girl would the students choose for a friend?

### **SETTING**

**Knowledge:** In chapters 3 and 4, Katie sees the inside of Claire’s house and then comes back to her own house, which is quite different. Ask the students to list the differences Katie notices. List them in two columns that are labeled “Katie’s House” and “Claire’s House.”

**Evaluation:** What can we say about the people who live in each house?

**Discussion:** Which house might be more comfortable to live in? How does Katie feel about her house at this point?

### **CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING**

**Knowledge:** In Chapter 5, *Beautiful Living Magazine* and the commercials on the radio make Katie think that Thanksgiving Day must have lots of guests, and food, and fancy decorations. What is on the front cover of Katie’s copy of *Beautiful Living Magazine*?

**Discussion:** Ask whether or not magazines and commercials are usually right about what to do for a holiday celebration. What is the real purpose of commercials and advertisements? Should we always do what they tell us?

## **ACTIVITY**

In Chapter 5, Katie makes little turkey invitations. Have the students draw hand-print turkeys by placing their palm on a piece of paper and drawing around it. The thumb will be the neck and head of the turkey. Let them cut them out, add details like eyes and beaks, and color them. They should decide whether or not they want them to be mean turkeys or nice turkeys.

## **UNDERSTANDING OF CHRONOLOGY**

Knowledge: In Chapter 8, Katie has accidentally invited Ms. Morgan to dinner. Do students understand how this happened? With their help write each action on the board in the order it happened. What was the sequence of events?

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING**

Knowledge: At the beginning of the book, Katie thinks her house is fine. In Chapter 9, after Claire takes pictures, Katie becomes critical. What does she see on her front porch?

Discussion: Why does Katie begin to look at her house differently? Is she being too critical? Ask the students if this change in attitude has ever happened to them.

## **VOCABULARY**

In Chapter 11, Claire says Thanksgiving dinner is supposed to begin with appetizers. What does Katie decide to make? What appetizers have the students eaten? Do they really stimulate the appetite?

## **ACTIVITY**

Create finger foods with a variety of crackers, cheese, spreads, and small vegetables.

## **SCIENCE**

Claire says in Chapter 13 that you have to serve many different kinds of food because someone might be allergic to something. Ask the children if they know someone who has a food allergy. Discuss food allergies.

In Chapter 13, Ms. Morgan tells Katie she is only allergic to poison oak. Ask the class if they know someone who has an allergy to plants. Discuss plant allergies.

## **CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING**

Ask the children to list typical Thanksgiving foods that are served at their houses. Talk about why each food is an important food for that day, for that family. Does every family serve turkey? Turn these lists into spelling words.

Discussion: In Chapter 14, Katie tells Dad that Claire's family is somehow more real because they are planning a perfect Thanksgiving celebration. Dad says he and Katie and Tyler already ARE a real family. Discuss different kinds of families and whether or not some are more "real" than others.

Create a graph of the number of family members for each student in the class. How many families of three are there? How many families of four, five or six or more?

## **SETTING**

Knowledge: In Chapter 15, we learn that, two days before Thanksgiving, the Plummers' house is almost ready for company. How do we know this? Contrast these details with the way Katie's house looks by making a list in two columns.

## **CHARACTER**

We can learn about characters through their actions. Make two lists, one for Katie's dad and one for Claire's. How are they different? For example, throughout the book, Claire's dad constantly checks his watch. What does this tell us about him?

Knowledge: In Chapter 16, Katie plans to un-invite Ms. Morgan, but she doesn't do it. What does Ms. Morgan say that makes Katie change her mind?

Knowledge: We have heard about Mr. Flagstaff before, but in Chapter 16, we finally meet him in person. What does he do with Tyler? What does he say?

Discussion: Talk about his actions and speech, and how they characterize him. What new things do we know about him? What does he say and do that make Katie invite him to dinner?

## **CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING**

Discussion: Claire wanted to provide a traditional Thanksgiving dinner for her guests. Ask the students what Thanksgiving traditions they observe. (For example, certain foods, dinner at a certain time of day, or specific things each person does.) Is every family the same?

Idiomatic word usage: What does Ms. Morgan mean in Chapter 22 when she says she will feel “at home” at Katie’s house? Ask the children how they help someone feel “at home” at their houses.

Knowledge. Thanksgiving was originally a time to give thanks for the harvest. Many families today use Thanksgiving or some kind of harvest festival to think about what is good in their lives. The five people who came to Katie’s house were each thankful about at least one thing. In a group discussion, decide what Dad was thankful about. Do the same for Tyler, Ms. Morgan, Mr. Flagstaff, and Katie.

## **ACTIVITIES**

Ask the children to make a list of the things they are thankful for.

Ask the students to write about (or tell the class about) a Thanksgiving holiday that was memorable for some reason. They should use good details of setting and people and the sequence of events. Make it clear why the holiday was a memorable one.

Ask the students to create Thanksgiving collages using pictures cut from holiday magazines. Suggest that they be sure to include people’s faces, along with the food and decorations.

## **THEME**

Discuss the different meanings of the word “monster” in the title. Tyler thought the plywood turkey in the Plummer’s yard was a monster, but, for Katie, it was Thanksgiving itself that became a monster.

In the final chapter, Ms. Morgan says she's thankful to be with a real family. What do the students think she means? How does that make Katie feel? Can the students contrast this with the way Katie felt earlier in the book?

Are the students satisfied with the way the story turned out? Why?