

# Cranberry Christmas

Book by Wende and Harry Devlin

Lessons prepared by Carrie Piper

## Social Studies:

### Map Work

This story takes place in the fictitious town of Cranberry Port in costal New England. Find New England on a US map. New England is made up of Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. You can make a story disk with the picture of an ice skate to place on your map.

### Deeds and property ownership

Mr. Whiskers and Cyrus Grapes feud over the pond between their properties. Explain to your child how a deed is a legal document that outlines the boundaries of your property. Walk the boundary of your property. Have your child draw a map of your property.

### Helping in the community

Maggie and her Grandmother help Mr. Whiskers clean up and organize his home. Talk to your children about helping others in your neighborhood. Discuss with your children ~ Why is it important to help others? What could you do to help someone in your community? Find someone you can help and make it a family project.

### House Keeping

Mr. Whiskers does not keep up on his housework. Discuss with your children all the chores that go into keeping a house clean and organized. What would happen if we picked up toys only once a week? How would it be to wear the same clothes every day? Lead the discussion to developing a chore chart with tasks assigned to each person.

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## Language:

### Story Structure

This story is expertly crafted. Discuss the elements of a good story in *Cranberry Christmas*.

Setting the Stage: It is a few days before Christmas and Mr. Whiskers is sad about the children not being able to skate on the pond.

Conflict: Cyrus Grapes claims the pond is on his property and Mr. Whiskers cannot prove him otherwise.

Rising Action: Tension rises with the visit of Mr. Whiskers' sister. Maggie and Grandma try to help and Mr. Whiskers makes a discovery.

Climax: Mr. Whiskers confronts Cyrus Grape with his deed.

Falling Action: The truth comes out.

Resolution: Mr. Whiskers' sister decides he can take care of himself and the children enjoy skating on the pond.

### Story Sequencing

Talk to your child about the story sequence. Which happens first? Maggie and Grandma help clean Mr. Whisker's house or His sister visits? Make up your own questions that help your child understand the sequence of events in the story.

### Vocabulary:

Here are some interesting words used in the story. Make vocabulary cards with pictures to illustrate the definitions.

Scat : to go away quickly

Persnickety : fussy about small details and having the characteristics of a snob

Scoundrel : a disreputable person

Triumph : the joy or exultation of victory or success

Sapphire : a gem of a transparent rich blue

Gloom : lowness of spirits

### Exclamatory words and Exclamation Points

Mr. Whiskers is fond of saying “Suffering Codfish!” when he is surprised. Other words that express this feeling are “Wow!” or “Holy Cow!” See what funny words you can put together to make exclamatory phrase! This is also a good time to introduce the use of the exclamation point. For your older student, note that exclamatory words have a special name-- Interjections-- and are one of the eight parts of speech (noun, verb, adjective, adverb, conjunction, preposition, interjection, pronouns).

Go-along book: *Fantastic! Wow! and Unreal!* by Ruth Heller

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## **Art:**

### Homemade Tree Decorations

Maggie and Grandma decorate Mr. Whiskers’ Christmas tree with his seashell collection with pretty results. What can you use to make some decorations? Here are some ideas to get you started.

#### Glitter Ornaments

Trace a simple star or whatever design on paper (tape the paper to the table). Lay wax paper over the top so you can see the design (also tape it to the table). Have the kids put glue over the outline of the design and then sprinkle on the glitter. Dry overnight and then peel from wax paper. Add a ribbon to hang on tree.

#### Pipe Cleaner Ornaments

This is quite easy, you need pipe cleaners and tri-colored beads. Take the pipe cleaner and thread on the beads so they nest together. Can make a wreath, candy cane, star, etc. For older kids you can have them weave ribbon with holes in it through the pipe cleaner and between each bead.

#### Apple Sauce Ornaments

Mix 1 cup cinnamon and 1 cup applesauce with 1 Tablespoon of white glue. You want a consistency that can be rolled with a rolling pin but not quite as sticky or it will stick to your counter! Sprinkle counter with cinnamon and roll out dough and cut with cookie cutters. Cut a hole in shape with the straw so you will be able to hang them. Let dry about 24 hours. They shrink as they dry. Cut lengths of gold thread, make loops and hang. They will keep their scent for a few years. Refresh scent with cinnamon fragrance oil.

### Pine cone Ornaments

Gather pine cones (they don't have to be large). Spray paint some gold, some silver, and some with clear sealer and while still wet sprinkle glitter on liberally, then spray again with clear sealer. This should be done in a well ventilated space. You could also have the kids paint the pine cones by hand with gold or silver paint, or dabbing glue on the cones and sprinkling with glitter. When the cones are dry, tie a beautiful ribbon around the top (ones that still have a bit of stem attached at the top work best), and you have a very nice ornament.

Get ideas from your children. They may have wonderfully creative ideas.

### Silhouette

When Maggie and Grandma leave Mr. Whisker's home on Christmas Eve the scene is in silhouette. Silhouette is an old art form. Some people can cut out a silhouette freehand. You can do your own silhouettes. Use a bare light bulb or some other source of directed light to cast your profile shadow on the wall. Hang up a piece of paper and trace the profile shadow. You and your child can use this method to draw each other silhouettes. Try to trace the silhouette of other interesting objects, too.

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### **Math:**

#### Christmas Countdown

In the beginning of the story it states that it is three days until Christmas. How many days is it until Christmas at your house? Make a paper chain with one link for each day until Christmas. Each evening you and your children can remove a link and recount how many days until Christmas. You can also number each chain or put a scripture on each.

#### Counting and Sorting Collections

Mr. Whiskers has a huge sea shell collection in his bathtub that they use to decorate his Christmas tree. Do you have a collection such as rocks, bottle caps, leaves or sticks? If not, you can go outside and collect one. Many craft stores sell polished stones and seashells that are not too expensive. A bag of 15 bean soup works well too.

Once you have your collection it can be sorted and counted in all kinds of ways. You can make loops out of yarn to organize your sorting. Inside one loop you can place all pink shells in another all that are not pink. With older children you can overlap two yarn loops for a Venn diagram. One loop is for pink shells, the other for shells with ridges, so the overlap area is for shells that are pink and have ridges. Let children come up with their own classification and really exercise their brains.

### Sand Figure 8's

Mr. Whiskers teaches the children how to do figure eights on their skates. In a shallow baking pan put a thin layer of sand, salt, flour, or even shaving cream! Show your child how to trace a figure eight with your finger in the sand, salt or flour. Practice making other numbers too.

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## **Science**

### Cleanliness & Germs

Mr. Whiskers sweeps only in the spring. Talk to your children about how germs grow in a dirty place. Use this experiment to show how germs and bacteria grow.

You Need:

A piece of sandwich bread

A zipper seal sandwich baggy

A few unwashed little hands

A sunny location

Have your children cough on their unwashed hands. Pass the piece of bread around and ask them to gently pat their hands on the bread. Place the bread in the baggy and seal it. Place it in a sunny spot. Wash all hands. Observe over the next few days and watch the bacteria and germs grow!

### Ice – Why Does Ice Float on Water?

Ice is a solid so why does it float? Gather a few items around your house including a few ice cubes. Fill a container (preferably a clear container) with at least 6 inches

of water. Help children make a prediction about which items will float and which will sink. After this, ask why some floated and others didn't. Were their predictions correct?

Why ice floats:

Water, unlike most other liquids, becomes less dense as it freezes. Ice is 9% less dense than water which means that when a container of water freezes it will take up 9% more space as ice. This is why water expands as it freezes. Have you ever busted a water bottle by freezing it when it was full? This might be a good experiment too. The molecules of water float around close to each other and ice molecules form a hexagon pattern (Snowflakes all have a hexagon pattern).

If you want you can also address ideas about molecules, cohesion and buoyancy.

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### **Just for Fun:**

Plan an ice skating trip. Try some figure eights!

Make Maggie's Favorite Cranberry Cookies. The recipe is on the back of the book.

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# INTERJECTIONS

What is an interjection?



Examples  
from the Story

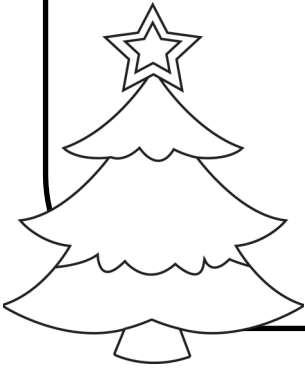
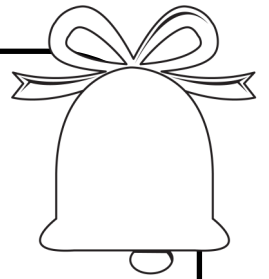


# MAPPING

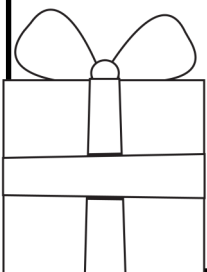
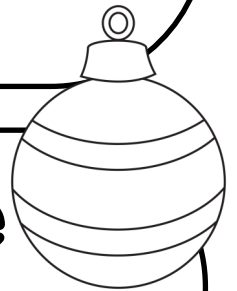
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# Cranberry Christmas

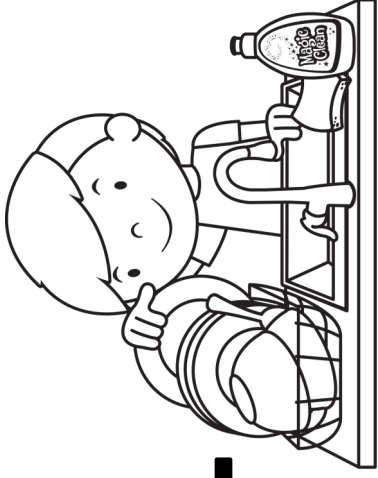


# Christmas at My House





# CHORE CHART



SUN

MON

TUES

WED

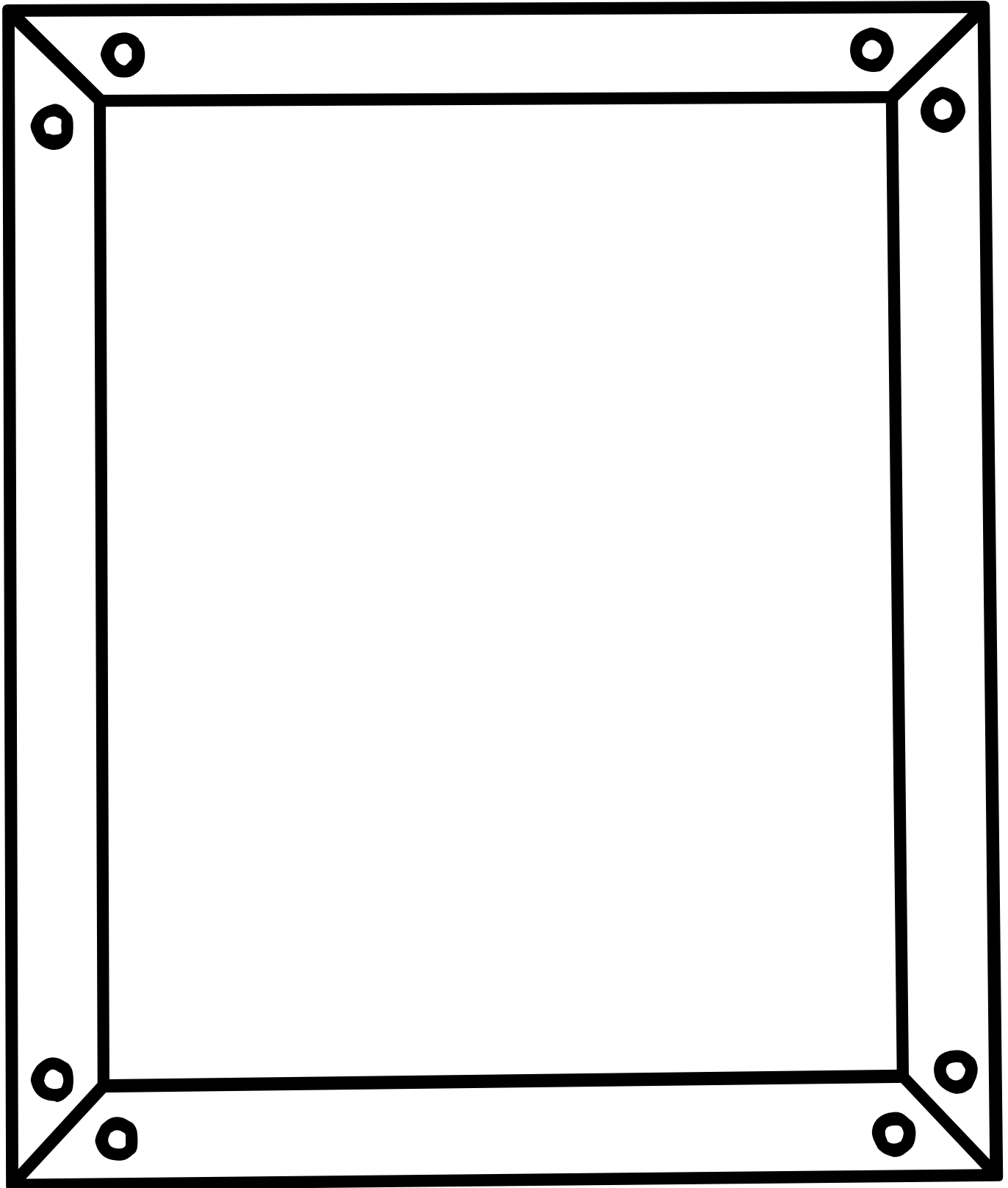
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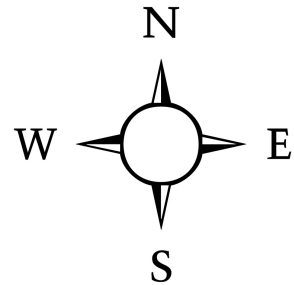
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# MY SILHOUETTE



Use a map to help you find the following states  
and color them on the map below:

Massachusetts  
Vermont  
Maine  
Connecticut  
New Hampshire  
Rhode Island



# WHERE ARE THE NEW ENGLAND STATES?



# INTERJECTIONS

What is an interjection?



Examples  
from the Story



# MAPPING

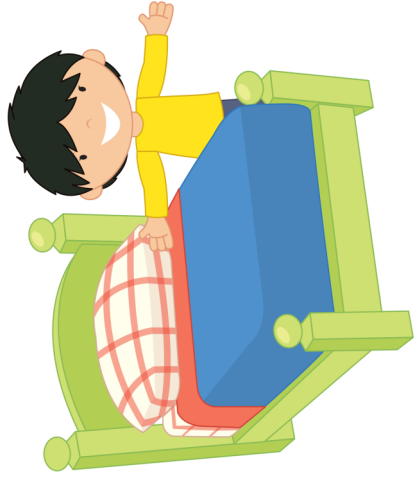
# MY PROPERTY

# Cranberry Christmas



# Christmas at My House





# CHORE CHART



SUN

MON

TUES

WED

THUR

FRI

SAT



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