



The Chicken Squad: The First Misadventure

Written by: Doreen Cronin

Illustrated by: Kevin Cornell

Meet the Chicken Squad: Dirt, Sugar, Poppy, and Sweetie. These are not your typical barnyard chicks. They're busy solving mysteries and fighting crime. So when Squirrel comes barreling into the chicken coop, they know that it will be up to the Chicken Squad to crack a case that just might be out of this world.

Award: ALA Notable Children's Book Award 2015

Lexile: 470 **AR Level:** 3.3

Author Website: <http://www.doreencronin.com/>

Illustrator Website: <http://www.bearskinrug.co.uk/>

Book Trailer/Author interview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l4Te3-Mirr8>

Other Websites/links: <http://pages.simonandschuster.com/chicken-squad>

Food: Peeps, hard boiled eggs, deviled eggs, chicken cupcakes -

<https://www.pinterest.com/search/pins/?q=chicken%20cupcakes&rs=typed&0=chicken%7Ctyped&1=cupcakes%7Ctyped>



Eraser:

<http://www.pencilthings.com/product-p/bcm-38242.htm>



<https://www.usimprints.com/product/chicken-pencil-top-eraser-8349876/>

Nonfiction Titles:

Ciovacco, Justine. *Squirrels*.

Ganeri, Anita. *Mystery Stories*.

Heller, Ruth. *Chickens Aren't the Only Ones*.

Miller, Sara Swan. *Chickens*.

Patten, Barbara. *Dogs with a Job*.

Introduction:

Students will know Doreen Cronin's other books, *Click Clack Moo*, *Diary of a Worm*, *Trouble with Chickens*, etc. Have those books on hand. Before reading, discuss themes in Cronin's writing, show interview with her, discuss differences between a picture book and a chapter book, utilize her website <http://www.doreencronin.com/>

Story time Activities:

Character traits – Throughout the book, the readers learn more about each chick's personality. Each one is unique. Encourage students to note the strengths and weaknesses of each one. Have students complete the Which Chick Are You? Quiz after reading. It's just for fun but highlights how we are all unique. <http://pages.simonandschuster.com/chicken-squad>

Extend this activity by having students list their own character traits and how they are unique.

Pair with Non-Fiction – Select a non-fiction book about chickens, squirrels, rescue dogs or bird life cycle and compare and contrast.

Great life cycle worksheet - <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/11892386492448189/>

Video of chick hatching - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SyO3YwrsJPg>

Synonyms/Antonyms - Ms. Cronin uses a lot of adjectives in the story. On pages 10-17 there are many words describing the "big and scary" thing the squirrel has seen. On page 53, there are many words describing the chicks. On page 55, there are words describing squirrels. Many of these words are synonyms. Ask students to come up with additional words that mean, big, special, etc. Then challenge them to come up with antonyms for those words. This can be done with partners or in small groups.

Pair with a craft - Lots of craft ideas at <https://www.pinterest.com/deanna1825/chicken-lesson-plan-ideas/>



<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/341851427937849124/>



<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/341851427937849124/>



<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/43487952626292935/>

Discussion Questions:

1. Why does Tail, the squirrel, faint when he sees JJ? A: Because JJ chases him around the yard. (p. 21)
2. The chicks think the big, scary thing is a UFO. What is it really? A: BBQ (p. 78-80)
3. Who is Barbara and why does she spray Tail with the hose? A: She is the human who lives on the farm. Tail freezes in the yard and is in the wrong place at the wrong time when the BBQ is knocked over.(p. 80-81)
4. Do the chicks ever realize that the UFO is a BBQ? A: No. Sugar announces that the aliens came down for the hot dogs and now are so scared they'll never come back. (p. 84-85)
5. Tail doesn't know his shapes very well. Which shapes do the chicks help him learn? A: rhombus (32), triangle (35) circle (37)

Open-ended questions:

1. Who is telling the story? Why would Ms. Cronin use JJ Tully to tell the story? Would the chicks be reliable narrators? Is JJ reliable?
2. Sugar determines (p. 47) that the big, scary thing is a UFO. What is a UFO? What do you know about UFO's? Are they real? Why do you think that?
3. JJ seems gruff, impatient, and critical of the chicks. How do you think he really feels about them?