The Mitten
Author: Jim Aylesworth
Illustrator: Barbara McClintock

- **Summary:** This retelling stays true to the original Ukrainian folktale. A small boy loses his red mitten in the snow and returns to his grandmother very upset. Meanwhile, many forest animals find warmth inside the mitten until it is stretched one animal too far.

- **Awards received:**
  - Parent's Choice Award (Silver)
  - Hornbook Fanfare Book for 2009

- **Reviews:** From *Kirkus Reviews* A little boy goes out to play in the snow with the mittens his grandmother knitted him, but comes back with only one. They'll look for it later, she says, and comforts him with hot cocoa. Meanwhile a squirrel discovers the mitten and curls up in it for a warm nap. Then a rabbit, a fox and a bear each come along, and after much pleading they are let in. Finally, a tiny mouse manages to talk his way in, with a mitten-destroying result. Aylesworth brings a folksy voice to the story, and McClintock's detailed black-lined illustrations set on snowy white backgrounds add to the vintage sensibility. She invests her animals with enormous personality and the scene with an absurd humor with the use of sequential vignettes, making it both visually and tonally quite different from Jan Brett's 1992 version. What really shines is the temptation offered to little imaginations: What happens to all those lost mittens when you're not there? Certainly fun to think about while drinking hot cocoa on a snowy day-recipe included. Fresh. (Picture book. 3-6)

- **Author Information, Jim Aylesworth:**
  [http://www.aylesworth.net/Confidence_family_DWT_CSS/ff_jim.htm](http://www.aylesworth.net/Confidence_family_DWT_CSS/ff_jim.htm)

- **Illustrator Information, Barbar McClintock:**

- **Discussion Questions:**
  - Why did the boy’s grandmother knit him a hat, scarf, and a pair of mittens?
  - Why do all of the animals want to crawl inside of the mitten?
  - During the winter, where do you usually find animals?
  - Why do the animals all decide to let each animal inside of the mitten?
  - How many animals actually fit inside the mitten?
  - How do the boy and his grandmother find the mitten at the end of the story?
  - How did the mitten change throughout the story?
  - Do you think that a story like this could actually happen?

- **Curricular Activities**
o Reading/oral language –
  ▪ Have the students practice story sequencing by describing the order that
    the animals entered the mitten and then the order that each animal left.
  ▪ Read other authors’ versions of this folktale and then compare and
    contrast them:
    • Jan Brett
    • Alvin Tresselt
    • Rita Walsh

o Writing – Write a story from the mitten’s point of view if it could come to life,
  and include how it felt and what it would have to say to both its readers and the
  little boy who lost it.

o Math/Technology –
  ▪ Graph how many mittens tall both the teacher and every student in the
    class is and have students compare how many gloves taller they are then
    other students.

o Science –
  ▪ Identify the prints left in the snow by all the animals that were inside the
    mitten and discuss how each animal has a different set of prints.
  ▪ Students can also begin a unit on the hibernation process of bears in the
    winter and how plants change in their appearance and processes because
    of this season.

o Social Studies – Locate different geographic areas on a map that follow similar
  patterns in the seasons that are described at the beginning of the book. Then find
  areas that do not follow these same patterns such as areas down south where it is
  rare to find snow in the winter.

o Art – Print out two copies for each student of the mitten design by clicking on the
  attached link. Have students color and decorate the mittens with crayons, markers,
  stickers, buttons, cotton balls, jewels, etc. Punch holes around the mitten and lace
  together with a piece of yarn. [http://www.bry-backmanor.org/actpag21b.html](http://www.bry-backmanor.org/actpag21b.html)

o Drama – Cut out a large mitten made of paper and hold it in front of the
  classroom. Instruct students to crawl into the mitten one at a time, everyone acting
  like the animal that they have chosen to represent. When the last student finally
  squirms inside, the teacher rips the paper mitten to represent the mitten bursting
  while the students scamper away.

o Music –
  ▪ The whole class can sing songs together that are all about mittens. One of
    the following includes:
      “Each Mitten has a Mate”
      (to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell")
      Each mitten has a mate, has a mate.
      Each mitten has a mate, has a mate.
      Can (child's name) find the pair?
      (He/She) is looking here and there.
      Can (child's name) find the mate.
      Find the mate?
- Other songs about mittens can be found at:
  [http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/songpoems33.html](http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/songpoems33.html)

- Technology - Instruct each student to type a letter to their grandmother and include in the letter their favorite gift that she gave or made for him/her.

- Cooking/food –
  - Bake cookies in the shape of a mitten. Bring in plastic knives and frosting to decorate the cookies. Toppings to bring in can include: assorted colors of frosting, gumdrops, chocolate chips, marshmallows, and sprinkles.
  - For a warm treat, bring in spoons, disposable Styrofoam cups, and packets of hot chocolate that students can mix and drink in class just like the little boy in the book.

**Related Books:**

- Non-Fiction:
  - *Snowflake Bentley* by Jacqueline Briggs Martin and Illustrated by Mary Azarian
  - *Life in the Woodlands* by Two-Can Editors
  - *Eyewitness: Mammal* by Steve Parker

- Fiction:
  - *The Mitten Tree* by Candace Christiansen and Illustrated by Elaine Greenstein
  - *When Winter Comes* by Pearl Neuman and Illustrated by Richard Roe
  - *The Napping House* by Audrey Wood and Illustrated by Don Wood

**Other titles by Aylesworth:**

- *Our Abe Lincoln*
- *Little Bitty Mousie*
- *Jim Aylesworth and YOU.*
- *Goldilocks and the Three Bears.*
- *The Naughty Little Monkeys.*
- *The Burger and the Hot Dog.*
- *The Tale of Tricky Fox.*
- *The Full Belly Bowl.*
- *Aunt Pitty Patty's Piggy.*
- *Through The Night.*
- *Jim Aylesworth’s Book of Bedtime Stories.*
- *The Gingerbread Man.*
- *Teddy Bear Tears.*
- *My Sister's Rusty Bike.*
- *Wake Up, Little Children*
- *My Son John.*
- *The Good-Night Kiss*
- *The Cat & The Fiddle & More*
- *Old Black Fly.*
- *The Folks in the Valley.*
- Country Crossing.
- The Completed Hickory Dickory Dock.
- Mr. McGill Goes to Town
- Mother Halverson's New Cat
- Hanna's Hog
- One Crow
- Two Terrible Frights
- Shenandoah Noah
- The Bad Dream
- Siren In The Night
- Mary's Mirror
- Tonight's The Night
- Hush Up!

- Other titles by McClintock:
  - Adèle & Simon
  - Adèle & Simon in America
  - Animal Fables from Aesop
  - Cinderella
  - Dahlia
  - The Fantastic Drawings of Danielle
  - The Gingerbread Man
  - Goldilocks and the Three Bears
  - House of Dolls
  - Mary and the Mouse, the Mouse and Mary
  - Our Abe Lincoln
  - The Tale of Tricky Fox
  - When Mindy Saved Hanukkah
  - Aunt Pitty Patty's Piggy
  - A Little Princess
  - Molly and the Magic Wishbone
  - Prog Frince: A Ribbeting Mixed-up Tale
  - Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm

- Websites for further study or enrichment:
  - [http://www.ayles.com/Mitten_Weather.pdf](http://www.ayles.com/Mitten_Weather.pdf) - Resources for The Mitten - songs, activities, etc.
  - [http://www.amonco.org/animalsinthewinter.html](http://www.amonco.org/animalsinthewinter.html) - Animals in the Winter (Montessori Unit of Study)