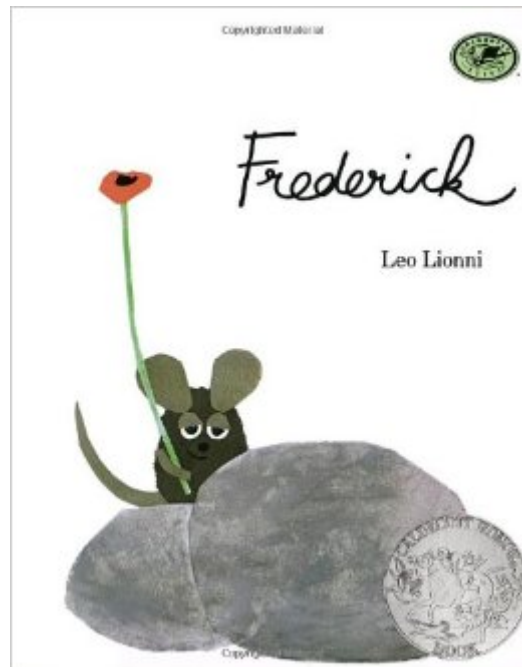


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# Frederick



## Synopsis

While the other field mice work to gather grain and nuts for winter, Frederick sits on a sunny rock by himself. "I'll gather sun rays for the cold dark winter days," he tells them. Another day he gathers colors, and then words. And when the food runs out, it is Frederick, the dreamer and poet, whose endless store of supplies warms the hearts of his fellow mice, and feeds their spirits during the darkest winter days. Frederick's story will warm readers as well in this Caldecott Honor winning fable.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 500L (What's this?)

Paperback: 32 pages

Publisher: Dragonfly Books; English Language edition (April 12, 1973)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0394826140

ISBN-13: 978-0394826141

Product Dimensions: 6.9 x 0.1 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (170 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #9,520 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #42 in [Books > Children's Books > Animals > Mice, Hamsters, Guinea Pigs & Squirrels](#) #236 in [Books > Children's Books > Classics](#)

Age Range: 3 - 7 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 2

## Customer Reviews

I and my sister grew up with Frederick as one of the most sacred books in our childhood canon. Recently, while shuffling through boxes of ancient heirlooms, I came across the simple, unassuming cover of Frederick (in 1977 the cover showed only the back of Frederick in the lower right corner, gazing into the distance, and no title), and immediately a serene peace overcame me. I couldn't believe I had forgotten about this book. I sat down and read it again, and from a distance of twenty years it still resonated with me. This book brought calm and joy into my heart as a child, and did so again as I read it today. I can't think of any better recommendation for a book than that. In terms of content, the story of Frederick is simple. In a community narrowly focused on efficiency, one mouse stands apart and concerns himself with art. Frederick notes the wonder of the world he lives in, and takes the time to assimilate it. While his cohorts may grumble at this behavior, when the dreariness

of winter overtakes them they are grateful for Frederick's words. Frederick's poetry is seen as an essential supply for survival. The illustrations are simple and yet extremely expressive -- witness my instant emotional reaction to a cover that was ninety-percent blank space -- and the wording is likewise concise. But the emotional impact of this book is what sets it apart. Out of sixty or seventy books I thumbed through today, I pulled out six that I felt defined my childhood. This book was at the top of the stack.

In a children's bookstore, I once heard a father tell his son to put back a picture book because it was "garbage." Maybe he saw the shocked look on my face, because he started lecturing me about how children today need to learn a lot of things and they don't have time to waste on fairy tales and other stories. Unfortunately, his point of view is becoming more common. It looks like this generation of children is going to grow up in a world that cares more about their ability to memorize facts and formulas and regurgitate them for standardized tests than it cares about their ideas and imaginations. Leo Lionni's books - especially Frederick - are great antidotes to that narrow mindset. Frederick is an artistic and imaginative little mouse. While his family gathers food for the winter, Frederick sits around observing. The other mice criticize him for being lazy, but Frederick insists that what he's doing is important - he's collecting words and colors. When winter finally comes, of course, the food Frederick's family gathered sustains them. But eventually the food runs out and it is Frederick's vivid memories of the colors of spring, as well as his poems and stories, that take the other mice's minds off their troubles and get them through the winter. I don't think there's a better book about the importance of nurturing the imagination than Frederick. When Lionni first wrote it, in 1966, it became an instant classic. Today it's not just a great children's book, it's a crucial one.

In a gentle and lyrical turn, Lionni's Frederick is the story of a family of mice preparing for winter. One mouse - Frederick - does not gather corn, nuts, and wheat along with the others and instead sits apart explaining that he is gathering sunrays, colors, and words. Although reproachful of his apparent idleness, in the depth of winter, the other mice come to appreciate Frederick's ability to entertain them by sparking their imaginations. Lionni employs color, texture, and shape in his collages comprised of torn and cut paper in solid colors and patterns pieced together into landscapes. Each collage stretches across both pages and bleeds to the edges of the page; by means of the layers of paper, the illustrations have an enormous sense of depth and presence. Visually, the illustrations dominate the pages, with the text appearing in the upper left corner. At

times, the illustrations elaborate on Lionni's spare text, while at other times the illustrations offer an abstracted version of the concrete details mentioned in the text. In the final pages of the story, the integration of the text and images is complete, as the text itself becomes an element of the collage. Lionni's language is simple, appropriate for beginning readers, but poetic as well, as befits a book about a mouse-poet. Ultimately, Frederick encourages us to respect others' differences and reminds us of the power and value of imagination.

This book has followed me around for 37 years. I still have the original copy from childhood, torn and tattered but also I keep newer ones in my healing library for my patients. This book explains meditation, the power of the heart and openness better than any other I have yet to encounter. It is important to cultivate heart in our children and imagination. In our busy-minded and action-oriented world, kids need permission to slow down and use their imagination in a good way. This book teaches this and it teaches it well. I will always love Frederick! He is one of my childhood "teachers" who gave me permission to dream and think warm thoughts. He shows the power of heart and mind together - and that above all things it is okay to be yourself, and to be "different."

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