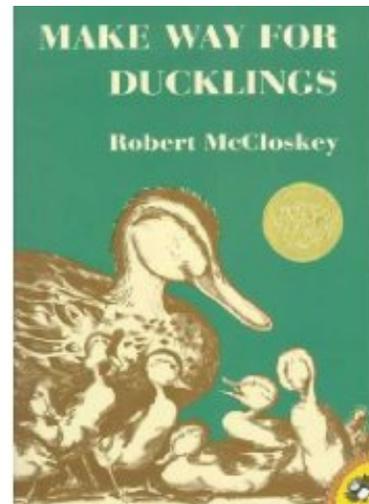


## **Make Way for Ducklings by Robert McCloskey** A Choose to Read Ohio Toolkit

### **About the Book**

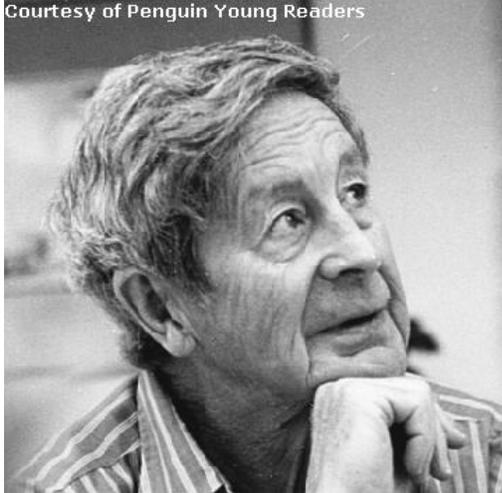
It's not easy for duck parents to find a safe place to raise their ducklings, but during a rest stop in Boston's Public Garden, Mr. and Mrs. Mallard think they just might have found the perfect spot. When Mrs. Mallard and her eight ducklings are stuck at a busy street in downtown Boston, their policeman friend Michael rushes in to stop traffic and make way for them. With its bird's-eye-view tour of Boston, this classic won the 1942 Caldecott Medal, which is awarded annually to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children published that year.



Cited resource:

**Make Way for Ducklings** Literature Guide from Teacher Vision  
<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/fiction/activity/1733.html>

Courtesy of Penguin Young Readers



## About the Author

Born in Hamilton, Ohio in 1914, Robert McCloskey was encouraged by his parents to explore his interests. "I took piano lessons from the time my fingers were long enough to play the scale," he was once quoted. McCloskey also played the harmonica, drums and oboe. He tinkered with the mechanics of old electric motors, clocks, and even built trains and cranes with remote control. "The inventor's life was the life for me, that is, until I started making drawings for the school paper," he said in an early interview. The Hamilton High School graduate won a scholarship to the Vesper

George Art School in Boston, which closed in 1984.

In Boston, McCloskey often fed the ducks while walking through the city's Public Gardens on the way to art school, but the young idealist's mind was full of Greek mythology, Oriental dragons and the classic building blocks of art education. McCloskey's urban encounters with mallard ducks, much like other early experiences, would come to life again when he became a children's book author.

His second and perhaps best-known book, **Make Way for Ducklings**, won the prestigious Caldecott Medal in 1942. In the story, a mother duck searches the streets of Boston for a safe place to raise her young. McCloskey began the book by recalling the hilarious scenes of ducks crossing grid-locked Boston streets. To illustrate the detailed movements of his characters with authenticity, McCloskey bought a half dozen southern mallards at a city market from a poultry dealer. He spent the next few weeks crawling around his studio, sketching the ducks and cleaning up their droppings. McCloskey put them in a bathtub to sketch their swimming movements. And when they waddled too fast for him to draw, McCloskey fed the ducks red wine to slow them down. Evident from the richly detailed charcoal illustrations, McCloskey returned to Boston to sketch the book's background alive with parks, bridges, fences, streets, people, and cars.

Other books written and illustrated by McCloskey include **Lentil**, **Homer Price**, **Blueberries for Sal**, **Centerburg Tales**, **One Morning in Maine**, **Time of Wonder**, and **Burt Dow: Deep Water Man**. McCloskey died in 2003.

### Author Resources:

#### Obituary and Tribute from *The Horn Book* magazine

<http://www.hbook.com/resources/obituaries/mccloskey.asp>

#### Ohioana Authors: Robert McCloskey

<http://www.ohioana-authors.org/mccloskey/index.php>

*Photograph Used with Permission from Penguin Young Readers. Text excerpted from "Ohioana Authors: Robert McCloskey".*



## Discussion Questions

### Before Reading

Have a discussion about crossing the street safely. What should you do before crossing the street? Discussion points might include looking both ways, holding an adult's hand, always crossing at an intersection, waiting for the "walk" light or the crossing guard to signal it is safe to cross, etc.

What do you find in a park? In a city? Ask whether a city would be expected to be a good place for ducks to live.

### After Reading

1. Why did the ducks want to cross the street? Have you ever needed to cross a busy street? What did you do?
2. What do you think the ducks will do in the park?
3. What do you like to do when you go to the park?
4. What means of transportation do the ducks use? What means of transportation do you see people using?
5. How do you know the story took place many years ago?
6. Name the physical features Mr. and Mrs. Mallard saw as they looked for a place to raise their ducklings.
7. Name the occupations you see pictured in the story.
8. Discuss the man-made and natural elements of the setting. Which characteristics of a park make it like a city? Which characteristics make it like a natural area?



## Extension Projects

### Arts & Crafts

*Egg-Carton Ducklings:* You will need a two-cup section from an egg carton (with the sections still attached), glue, construction paper, scissors, feathers, beads, and/or other decorations. Bend the egg carton cups towards each other, rim to rim (making an oval shape). Glue the cups together to form the duck's body. Cut out a bill and feet from the construction paper. Glue the feet and bill to the duckling's body. Add feathers, beads for eyes, or other decorations to complete your duckling.

### Language Arts

*The Ducklings' Names:* The ducklings are named in alphabetical order -- Jack, Kack, Lack, Mack, Nack, Ouack, Pack, and Quack. Write each duckling's name on a file card, then scramble the order of the file cards, and help kids practice putting them back in alphabetical order. Think of new names for the ducklings that mirror the same alphabetical sequence.

### Library skills

Use the library catalog to identify books and other resources about mallard ducks and ducklings. Locate pictures of and facts about mallard ducks.

### Geography

*Draw a Map:* Draw pictures of objects and characters from the story, then place them on a map of Boston. You may want to make a large-scale, simplified map of just the streets that are mentioned in the story. Kids can practice retelling the story and retracing the ducks' routes.

### Social Studies

*Communities:* This story takes place in a city, and you can find urban characteristics throughout the book. Make a chart highlighting the characteristics of and differences between a city, a suburban area, and a rural area. Compare and contrast the buildings, open spaces, transportation, population sizes, etc.

Cited resource:

**Make Way for Ducklings** Literature Guide from Teacher Vision  
<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/fiction/activity/1733.html>



## Additional Resources

### **Make Way for Ducklings lesson plan**

<http://www.d11.org/doi/socialstudies/SSGrade1/Make%20Way%20for%20Ducklings.pdf>

Provided by Colorado Springs School District 11

Grade Level: Primary (grade 1)

### **Make Way for Ducklings by Nancy Schon, Sculptor**

<http://www.schon.com/public/ducklings-boston.php>

This sculptor has created bronze statues of the ducklings and Mrs. Mallard for the Boston Garden.

Grade Levels: Pre-K, Primary, Intermediate

### **Make Way for Ducklings resources from Scholastic**

<http://bookwizard.scholastic.com/tbw/viewWorkDetail.do?workId=2709&>

The Scholastic Teachers site offers an art lesson, writing prompt, and other extension activities for the classroom.

Grade Levels: Pre-K, Primary

### **Mallard Duck from National Geographic**

<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/birds/mallard-duck.html>

The National Geographic Animals site includes facts about the mallard, a map of its range, and an audio clip of its call.

Grade Levels: Primary, Intermediate

Book details:

**Make Way for Ducklings** by Robert McCloskey. The Viking Press, 1941, Ages 3-8. ISBN-13: 978-0670-45149-4.

## About Choose to Read Ohio

Choose to Read Ohio (CTRO) spotlights Ohio authors and promotes reading across Ohio. The State Library of Ohio, in partnership with Ohioana Library Association, developed this initiative to encourage Ohioans of all ages to share literature by authors native to, residing in, or associated with Ohio. CTRO is adaptable for use in classrooms, libraries, bookstores, by book discussion groups, families, and other community groups.

Explore Choose to Read Ohio resources & toolkits: <http://oh.webjunction.org/ohctrointro>.