

MAVEN THE MOUSE

SMALL MOUSE, BIG COURAGE



Homeschool Reading & Activity Guide

Designed for Grades 1-2

Emerging readers may complete activities with an adult.

A companion resource for families and educators

Read, discuss, create, and practice one brave step at a time.

Read. Talk. Create. Try one brave step.

A free companion resource for homeschool families

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A Note to Parents & Educators

Maven is a very small mouse living in a very big world. Across these stories she encounters situations many children recognize: feeling different, trying something new, being left out, learning a difficult skill, asking for help, speaking up when someone is unkind, and discovering that courage can grow one small step at a time.

This guide is designed to keep reading enjoyable. You do not need to complete every activity. Choose the pages that fit your child, read together when helpful, and allow drawing or spoken answers when writing would get in the way of the conversation.

A helpful idea for adults

The Maven stories repeatedly show that courage is not the absence of fear. Maven often feels nervous, disappointed, or unsure first. Her growth comes from moving forward, accepting support, and recognizing strengths that may look different from someone else's.

How to Use This Guide

- Read one Maven chapter at a comfortable pace.
- Ask the discussion questions orally before asking for written work.
- Choose one literacy activity and, when appropriate, the Maven Challenge.
- Let emerging readers dictate answers while an adult writes them down.
- Return to favorite chapters. Re-reading builds fluency and confidence.

A note about Chapter 15

Chapter 15, "Maven Under the Maker's Sky," uses explicitly faith-based language. Its companion activity is clearly marked optional so families can choose whether it fits their homeschool.

A Gentle Reading Plan

This is only a suggestion. Families can move faster, slower, or simply choose favorite stories.

Week	Read	Focus
1	Chapters 1-3	Knowing Maven; family and friendship; handling disappointment
2	Chapters 4-5	Self-advocacy; perseverance; learning in small steps
3	Chapters 6-7	Belonging; social courage; participation without having to win
4	Chapters 8-10	Trying new skills; safety; accepting help; independence
5	Chapters 11-15	Poetry, reflection, courage, belonging, individuality

The Maven Challenge

On many pages you will see a Maven Challenge. These are small real-life activities that help a child connect the story to everyday life. They are invitations, not tests.

CHAPTER 1

All About Maven the Mouse

Individual strengths • observation • quiet courage

Story Focus

Maven is the smallest mouse in her family and school. She cannot always do things as quickly or as strongly as the others, but she notices details they miss. When a baby bird needs help, Maven is close enough and observant enough to act.

Words to Know

- burrow — a small home or tunnel made in the ground
- delicate — fine, careful, or easily damaged
- courage — doing something important even when you feel afraid

Talk About the Story

- What are three things Maven notices that others might miss?
- Why do Maven's paws tremble when she sees the baby bird?
- How does being small help Maven in this chapter?
- What does Papa mean when he says Maven is strong in her own way?

Read, Write, or Draw

Draw yourself doing something you are good at. Add three words that describe your strength.

THE MAVEN CHALLENGE

Notice something today that other people may overlook. It might be a sound, a tiny object, someone who needs help, or a beautiful detail. Tell someone what you noticed.

CHAPTER 2

Maven's Friends and Family

Support • feelings • belonging

Story Focus

Maven learns that courage does not have to grow alone. Friends slow down so she can join them, her siblings invite her into their games, and Mama and Papa listen when she needs help understanding her feelings.

Words to Know

- support — help or encouragement
- steady — calm and balanced
- belong — to feel accepted as part of a group

Talk About the Story

- What do Maven's friends do when a game feels too fast?
- How do Mama and Papa help Maven?
- Why are their words compared to little lanterns?
- What do you think “Tiny does not mean less” means?

Read, Write, or Draw

Make a 'My Helping Team' picture. Draw or write the names of people you can go to when something feels difficult.

THE MAVEN CHALLENGE

Thank one person who helps you feel brave, calm, or included.

CHAPTER 3

Mouse Mountain Adventure Park

Disappointment • flexibility • belonging

Story Focus

Maven is excited for a class trip but learns that she is too small for some rides. With Darren beside her, she finds other ways to enjoy the day and discovers that belonging does not require doing everything everyone else does.

Words to Know

- measure — to find the size or amount of something
- determined — deciding to keep trying
- belong — to feel that you are part of something

Talk About the Story

- Why does Maven worry before the trip?
- How does Darren help without making Maven feel helpless?
- What does Maven do even though the Cat's Castle ride scares her?
- What does Maven learn about belonging?

Read, Write, or Draw

Fold a paper into two columns: 'I hoped...' and 'I can still...'. Think of a time a plan changed and list another way the day could still be good.

THE MAVEN CHALLENGE

The next time a plan changes, name one thing you are disappointed about and one new possibility you can try.

CHAPTER 4

Maven Finds Her Courage

Bullying • self-advocacy • trusted adults

Story Focus

Aubree repeatedly teases Maven about her size and tail. Maven first stays silent, then tells Papa what has been happening. With support from Papa and Maureen, she practices courage and tells Aubree to leave her alone.

Words to Know

- tease — to make fun of someone in a hurtful way
- confidence — belief in yourself or your abilities
- creative — able to make or think of new ideas

Talk About the Story

- Why doesn't ignoring Aubree solve the problem?
- Who are Maven's trusted helpers?
- How can you tell Maven is still afraid when she speaks up?
- What changes after Maven stands up for herself?

Read, Write, or Draw

Practice three safe sentences: 'Please stop.' 'I don't like that.' 'I need help.' Talk about which trusted adult you would tell if unkind behavior continued.

THE MAVEN CHALLENGE

With an adult, role-play asking for help. Remember: asking for help can be a brave action.

CHAPTER 5

Maven Learns to Ride a Bike

Practice • adaptation • perseverance

Story Focus

Maven wants to ride with her friends, but a bicycle feels too large and difficult for her. This chapter invites children to think about learning a skill through practice, patience, and adjustments rather than deciding that difficulty means failure.

Words to Know

- balance — to stay steady without falling
- frustrated — upset because something is difficult
- practice — repeated effort to improve a skill

Talk About the Story

- What parts of the bicycle are difficult for Maven?
- How does Maven feel when other mice can do something she cannot yet do?
- Why is 'not yet' different from 'I can't'?
- What kinds of changes or help can make a hard skill easier to learn?

Read, Write, or Draw

Choose one skill you are learning. Draw three stepping-stones and write one small practice step on each.

THE MAVEN CHALLENGE

Spend ten focused minutes practicing a skill that is difficult for you. Celebrate the practice, not just the result.

CHAPTER 6

Maven the Mouse and the School Dance

Social courage • belonging • self-expression

Story Focus

Maven is excited about her first school dance but worries about fitting in and being safe among larger classmates. Finding clothing that feels right and staying connected to a trusted friend help her move from worry to joyful participation.

Words to Know

- discouraged — feeling less hopeful
- included — welcomed as part of a group
- confidence — feeling able to trust yourself

Talk About the Story

- Why does shopping for the dance become discouraging?
- What helps Maven finally feel good in her dress?
- How does staying connected to a friend help her enjoy the dance?
- Can someone be nervous and brave at the same time? Explain.

Read, Write, or Draw

Design an outfit for an event where you would want to feel comfortable and confident. Label what makes it feel 'like you.'

THE MAVEN CHALLENGE

Try one small social step: greet someone, join a family activity, ask to play, or share an idea.

CHAPTER 7

Maven and Squeak & Sprint Day

Participation • strengths • sportsmanship

Story Focus

Maven worries that her size will keep her from succeeding at the school games. Papa reminds her that she does not have to win every event. Looking for an activity that suits her strengths changes the day from a test into an opportunity to participate.

Words to Know

- relay — a race or game completed in turns
- participate — to take part
- sportsmanship — fair, respectful behavior during games

Talk About the Story

- What makes Maven anxious about Squeak & Sprint Day?
- What advice does Papa give her?
- Why is finding an activity she enjoys important?
- What can make a game successful even if you do not win?

Read, Write, or Draw

Invent a new Squeak & Sprint event that gives different kinds of children a chance to succeed. Draw it and explain the rules.

THE MAVEN CHALLENGE

Play a short family game and practice congratulating another player, whether you win or lose.

CHAPTER 8

Maven the Mouse Takes the Plunge

Fear • recovery • water-safety awareness

Story Focus

Swimming lessons make Maven anxious, especially because she feels different from her classmates. With instruction and support, she learns that being frightened does not prevent her from learning, recovering when something goes wrong, and trying again.

Words to Know

- float — to rest or move on the surface of water
- recover — to become steady again after difficulty
- safety — actions that help prevent harm

Talk About the Story

- What worries Maven before swimming begins?
- Why does her green swimsuit make her feel more noticeable?
- What helps Maven when she becomes frightened in the water?
- What does Maven learn about recovering after something goes wrong?

Read, Write, or Draw

Make a 'Calm-Down Card': STOP — BREATHE — LISTEN — TRY THE NEXT SAFE STEP. Decorate it and keep it somewhere useful.

THE MAVEN CHALLENGE

With an adult, name three water-safety rules your family follows. This activity is discussion only; swimming practice should always be supervised by a responsible adult.

CHAPTER 9

Maven Tries Karate

Trying something new • discipline • growth

Story Focus

Maven wants an activity of her own after seeing the things her friends can do. Karate becomes an opportunity to explore how a new skill can feel unfamiliar at first and how progress comes through instruction and practice.

Words to Know

- dojo — a place where martial arts are practiced
- discipline — practicing good habits and self-control
- progress — movement toward improvement

Talk About the Story

- What makes Maven interested in karate?
- How might a beginner feel when watching someone who is already highly skilled?
- Why is practice important in martial arts and other skills?
- What would you tell Maven before her first lesson?

Read, Write, or Draw

Make a 'Beginner Badge' that says: 'I am allowed to be new at something.' Add a picture of a skill you would like to try.

THE MAVEN CHALLENGE

Ask an adult to teach you the first step of a skill they know. Focus on listening carefully and practicing safely.

CHAPTER 10

Maven the Mouse and the Lunch Tray

Independence • accepting help • friendship

Story Focus

Maven wants to carry her cafeteria tray independently, but the loaded tray becomes too heavy. Lindsey notices her struggle and helps. The story makes an important distinction: being capable and independent does not mean refusing appropriate help.

Words to Know

- independent — able to do things for yourself
- panic — a sudden strong feeling of fear
- trust — confidence that someone is dependable or safe

Talk About the Story

- Why doesn't Maven want to ask for help?
- What signs show that the tray is becoming too much for her?
- How does Lindsey help respectfully?
- Why can accepting help be a form of good judgment rather than weakness?

Read, Write, or Draw

Divide a page into 'I can do myself,' 'I am learning,' and 'I can ask for help.' Put one example in each box.

THE MAVEN CHALLENGE

Ask for help with one appropriate task this week, and help someone else with something they need.

CHAPTER 11

Maven's Starry Night of Courage

Poetry • imagery • letting worries settle

Story Focus

The book shifts into a gentler, lyrical form. This is a good place to slow down, listen for rhyme, notice images from the night sky, and talk about how words can create a peaceful feeling.

Words to Know

- rhyme — words with the same or similar ending sound
- imagery — words that help us picture, hear, or feel something
- worry — a thought or feeling about something that may go wrong

Talk About the Story

- Which words or pictures make this poem feel peaceful?
- What happens to Maven's worries in the poem?
- Can you find two words that rhyme?
- How is reading a poem different from reading one of Maven's longer adventures?

Read, Write, or Draw

Write or dictate two rhyming lines about bedtime, stars, courage, or a peaceful place.

THE MAVEN CHALLENGE

Before bed, name one worry and imagine setting it aside until tomorrow. Then name one good thing from your day.

CHAPTER 12

Papa Mouse's Goodnight Wish for Maven

Encouragement • family • affirmation

Story Focus

Papa's goodnight wish emphasizes that being tiny does not limit what Maven can contribute. The chapter provides a natural opening for discussing the encouraging words children hear from people who love them.

Words to Know

- encourage — to give someone hope or confidence
- caring — showing kindness and concern
- wish — something hoped for

Talk About the Story

- What does Papa want Maven to remember?
- Which of Maven's qualities matter more than her size?
- How can encouraging words change the way someone feels?
- What encouraging words would you give a friend?

Read, Write, or Draw

Create a small 'Courage Note' for someone in your family. Include one thing you appreciate about that person.

THE MAVEN CHALLENGE

Ask a family member to tell you about a time when someone else's encouragement helped them keep going.

CHAPTER 13

The Mouse Who Shone Her Own Way

Belonging • individuality • poetry

Story Focus

This lyrical chapter reassures Maven that she belongs without needing to become exactly like everyone else. It is a useful bridge between reading comprehension and personal reflection.

Words to Know

- individual — one unique person
- belong — to be accepted as part of a group
- unique — unlike anyone or anything else in exactly the same way

Talk About the Story

- What does Maven sometimes wonder about herself?
- What does the poem tell her about belonging?
- Does belonging require everyone to be the same?
- What is one way you 'shine your own way'?

Read, Write, or Draw

Draw a star and fill it with five things that make you 'you' — interests, talents, favorite things, character traits, or hopes.

THE MAVEN CHALLENGE

Tell someone one thing you appreciate about the way they are different from you.

CHAPTER 14

The Tiny Mouse and the Twinkling Trail

Sensory language • uncertainty • noticing the world

Story Focus

Maven describes a world that feels enormous from her point of view. The chapter is especially useful for sensory language: what Maven sees, hears, and feels as she moves through unfamiliar places.

Words to Know

- twinkling — shining with small changing flashes of light
- nervous — worried or uneasy
- sensory words — words connected to seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, or smelling

Talk About the Story

- What does the grass look like from Maven's point of view?
- What does Maven hear?
- Which details make the world seem very large?
- How can noticing your surroundings help when a place feels unfamiliar?

Read, Write, or Draw

Go on a five-minute noticing walk. Record one thing you see, one thing you hear, one thing you feel, and one thing that surprises you.

THE MAVEN CHALLENGE

Choose an unfamiliar but safe place to explore with an adult: a new library aisle, walking path, garden, or room. Practice noticing instead of rushing.

CHAPTER 15

Maven Under the Maker's Sky

OPTIONAL FAITH-BASED REFLECTION • *identity* • *worth*

Story Focus

This chapter uses explicitly faith-based language to tell Maven that she was made with care and has inherent value. Families who use faith-based materials can explore identity, gratitude, and the idea of being intentionally created.

Words to Know

- image — a likeness or representation
- special — valued or distinct
- gratitude — thankfulness

Talk About the Story

- What does the poem say about how Maven was made?
- How does the night-sky imagery support the peaceful message?
- What qualities or gifts are you thankful for?
- How can believing that every person has value affect the way we treat others?

Read, Write, or Draw

Optional: Draw a night sky and write or dictate three things about yourself for which you are thankful.

THE MAVEN CHALLENGE

Optional: As a family, name one way you can show care for someone because every person has value.

ALL ABOUT ME

Maven learns that being different does not make her less. Now make a page about you.

Something I am good at:

Something that is hard for me:

Someone who helps me:

Something that makes me different:

Something brave I have done:

Something I would like to learn:

Finish the sentence

I may be _____, but I am also _____.

SMALL MOUSE, BIG COURAGE

READING AWARD

This award is proudly presented to

for reading with Maven and discovering that courage does not mean never feeling afraid;
it means taking the next brave step.

You did something worth celebrating!

You read, thought, talked, created, and practiced courage. Keep noticing your strengths, asking for help when you need it, and trying one small step at a time.

Date: _____ Parent/Educator: _____

Small mouse. Big courage. Your next brave step starts here.



♥ SMALL MOUSE, BIG COURAGE ♥

CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

This certifies that

has completed the
Maven the Mouse: Small Mouse, Big Courage
Homeschool Reading & Activity Guide
*and has discovered that courage doesn't mean never being afraid—
it means taking the next brave step.*

Date

Parent/Teacher Signature