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# Activity Guide

800-788-1121

## Mop Top

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### ABOUT THE STORY

A young boy with an unruly head of hair struggles over a trip to the barber before his birthday party. After encountering several things along the way that he thinks could use a little snipping, he is reminded that his hair should be attended to. He eventually gets it cut after being mistaken for a mop.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Born in California, Don Freeman attended school in Missouri and then pursued a career as a musician and artist in New York. He later returned to California to start a family, as well as his career as a children's book author. Although he passed away in 1978, the fruits of Freeman's prolific career have remained popular among each new generation of young readers.

### INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask the children how they feel when they have to get their hair cut. Who does it for them? (a hairdresser, barber, parent) Would they rather let their hair just grow shaggy, or does it feel better to be well groomed? Explain that the boy in this story thinks he likes his shaggy mop top, until it gets mistaken for something else, and he quickly changes his mind.

### READING ACTIVITIES

#### *Comprehension/Thinking Skills*

- Who were some of the characters Moppy met on his way to the barber?
- What was the barber's name?
- What was the incentive for Moppy to get his hair cut?
- What did the woman shopping in the grocery store mistake Moppy's hair for?
- What is Moppy's real name?
- How old is Marty on his birthday?

### *Vocabulary*

Be sure students have an understanding of the following terms. Depending on age, simply discuss the terms, or have children look them up in a dictionary:

floppy, soaring, chinaberry tree, Tarzan, barbershop, vacant, grumbled, stumbled, waddle, staring, mowing, snipping, fluffiest, floppiest, jiffy, spick-and-span, tidy

### CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

#### *Language Arts: Make it Rhyme!*

Write the following words on a dry erase or chalkboard. Have students take turns drawing lines between the two rhyming words in each column.

|          |          |
|----------|----------|
| clipping | top      |
| roaring  | stopping |
| mowing   | stumbled |
| cropping | soaring  |
| grumbled | going    |
| mop      | snipping |

#### *Language Arts: Author Study*

Introduce several other books by Don Freeman. Have children read them and compare/contrast to *Mop Top*. Have each child select a favorite book to share with the class.

#### *Home and Career Skills: Field Trip!*

Contact a nearby barbershop and arrange to take the class on a tour of the shop. Have each child prepare a question to ask the barber/hairdresser. Write or illustrate reactions upon returning to the classroom.

#### *Science: Shaggy Dog*

Visit your local library and assemble a collection of nonfiction books about dogs and dog care. Have children research grooming techniques for various breeds. Discuss basic needs of animals (food, water, shelter, love, grooming, etc.) Allow children to share pictures and/or stories about their own dogs.

### INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

#### *Don Freeman*

Have students search for a web site using keywords "Don Freeman". Have students print out information and a picture on him. Write short biographical paragraphs about his accomplishments and assemble into a class book called "We Love Don Freeman".