

# Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge

Book by Mem Fox

Unit study by Christa Stepien

## Social Studies

### Nursing Homes and Retirement Homes

Wilfrid lives next to a retirement home or a nursing home. Has your child ever visited one of those places? Perhaps he has a grandparent or great-grandparent who lives in one. Why do people live there? (Obviously there are a variety of reasons, but common ones would be that they can no longer live alone and need help with things like getting around, cooking food, taking care of their medical needs. Some people move into a retirement community so that there are others around and they are not lonely.)

### Soldiers and War

Miss Nancy Alison Delacourt had a brother who went off to war and didn't return. Does your student know any soldiers or anyone who has been off to war? This might be easier for your child in the terms of a grandparent or other elderly relative, if it would be too frightening for them. You may have friends or family in the armed forces, and might want to mention them, and talk briefly about how they are fighting to protect our country. Discuss in whatever depth you think is appropriate.

### Patience

Sometimes it is hard to be patient with the elderly, but Wilfred has no trouble with it! Discuss possible reasons why it might be hard (they might not remember things, they might have short tempers, or get easily frustrated because there are some things that they can't do anymore, and wish they could...) and how your student would feel if he were in that scenario. Putting yourself in someone else's shoes sometimes makes it easier. If possible, visit a nursing home, an elderly friend, or a neighbor.

## Language Arts

### Recording Memories

There are five types of memories that Wilfrid learns about. Something warm, something from long ago, something that makes you cry, something that makes you laugh, and something as precious as gold. Make a list of them for your student. See if he can come up with memories of his own that can fit into each category. Have him ask relatives or friends about their memories, and see if they can come up with one in each category. It might be interesting to read the book with a grandparent or other elderly friend or

relative and then ask them about their memories.

Wilfrid describes the people at the nursing home in a simple sentence each. Have your child do the same for a few people that he knows. He may have a grandparent who loves to read with him or an aunt who likes to dance. Give him some ideas, and let him run with them. Your student may wish to draw a picture of the person and caption it with their sentence.

If desired, use the printable page. Student can draw a picture at the top. Use the first line for recording the person's name. Use the other two lines to record the one sentence description. Print as many pages as you need for this activity.

### Names

Wilfrid likes Miss Nancy best because she has four names. How many names does your student have? Does he know anyone with four names? Discuss titles (Mr., Mrs., Miss, Doctor, etc.) and maybe suffixes (Jr., Sr., III).

### Letter Writing

Have your student write a letter to someone telling them about some of their memories with them.

### **Art**

Consider having your student make cards or drawings to send to a local nursing home. You could also send them to <http://www.colorasmile.org/>.

Take a shoebox, and make a diorama of the memories that Wilfrid found. You could have a student make a diorama of their own memories.

Make a sock puppet or a puppet on strings.

### **Math**

#### Counting

1. Stack sugar cubes (or blocks) like Wilfrid does in the pictures. Count how many your student can stack. How many did Wilfrid stack?

If desired, use the printable page to record how many your student stacks. Try three

times and record each try. Let your student draw pictures to correspond with his stacking.

2. Count how many things Wilfred collects.

### Subtraction

Miss Nancy is 96. How old is your child? How much older than your child is Miss Nancy?

### Estimation

Tell your child that estimation is like a guess that you make based on clues that you have. Have your child estimate how old Wildrid is, from clues that he sees in the illustrations and that he hears in the story.

You could also estimate your stacks of blocks or sugar cubes before you count them.

## **Science**

### Growing Old

Discuss with your child what happens to you as you grow older. Talk about the changes from baby to child to adult to elderly.

Miss Nancy probably has Alzheimer's or dementia. You may want to describe briefly to your student what this means. Alzheimer's affects the brain and destroys brain cells. People with Alzheimer's forget things, and have trouble thinking, talking and taking care of themselves. Sometimes they get scared, because it is confusing to them that this is happening to them, and they might become angry with whoever is taking care of them. You may wish to discuss how this is difficult not only for the person with the disease, but also for the people taking care of them.

### Eggs

Miss Nancy remembers finding speckled blue eggs. These are most likely robin's eggs. If possible, find a picture and show it to your child. You may wish to learn more about different kinds of eggs. Let's read and find out science has a book called A Nest Full of Eggs that is a good starting point.

Let your student draw different types of eggs on the prepared page. You might have to find some online pictures to help him draw the eggs.

### Shells

Wilfrid finds shells, and Miss Nancy remembers going to the beach. Has your child ever been to the beach? Has he ever collected sea shells, or seen them? If you have access to sea shells, let your child see and touch them! Sea shells are the hard outer layer created by an animal that lives in the sea. The shell protects the animal. The shells are empty because the animal has died, and has either rotted away or has been eaten. Hermit crabs find empty shells and use them for their own protection.

If your student is interested in shells, read [What Lives in a Shell?](#) by Kathleen Weidner Zoehfeld.

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# memories

Something warm.

Something from long ago.

Something that makes you cry.

Something that makes you laugh.

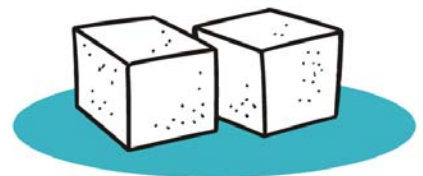
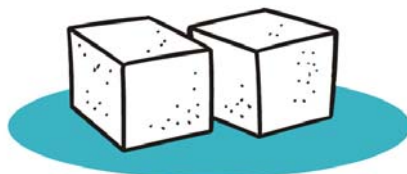
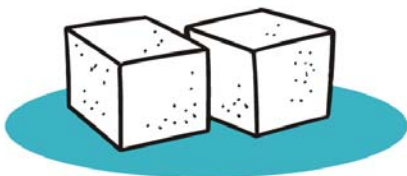
Something as precious as gold.

# How Many Can You Stack?

Try #1

Try #2

Try #3





# Different Kinds of Eggs!

Chicken's Egg

Robin's Egg

Ostrich's Egg

Cardinal's Egg

Hummingbird's Egg

Imaginary Egg