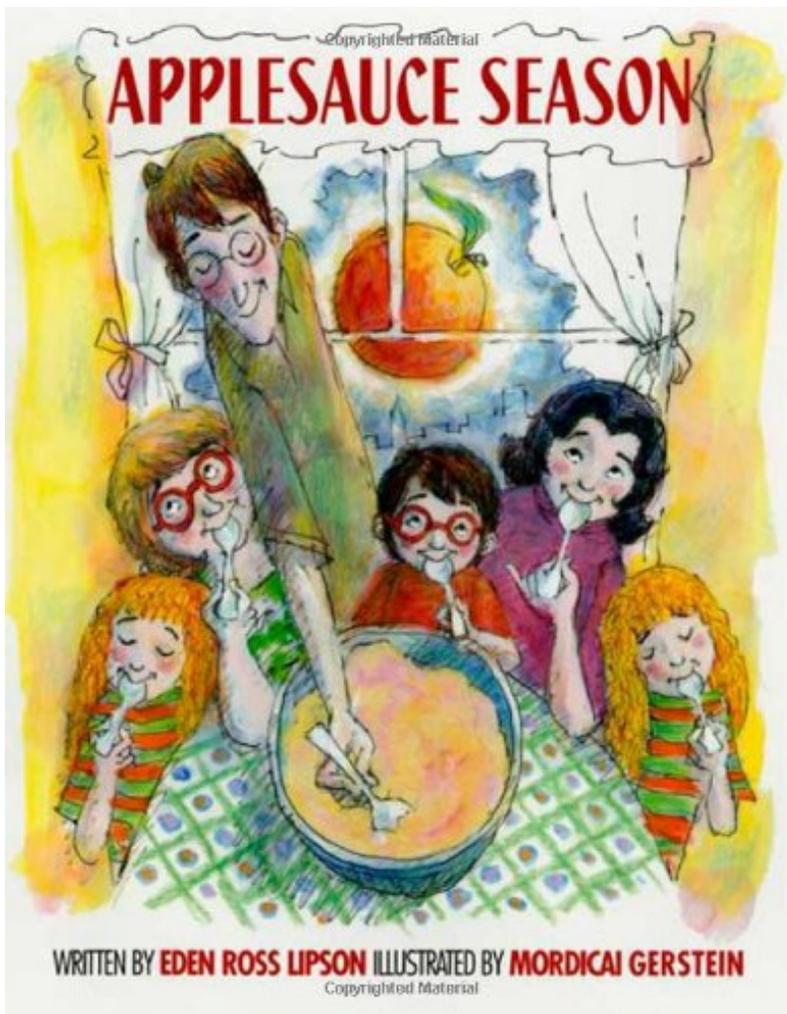


Literature Guide
for Eden Ross Lipson and Mordicai Gerstein's
Applesauce Season



By Robin M. Huntley

Summary

Applesauce Season is the quintessential fall book: a young narrator describes with wonder the coming of apple season and the family food traditions that follow suit, subtly teaching readers all the while about apple varieties and the natural flow of the fruit's season. Readers follow the narrator from farmers' market, to kitchen, to table again and again while learning not only the specifics of applesauce, but the many other ways in which apples can be preserved and enjoyed during the fall.

Set in an urban area, the story brings concepts, skills, and traditions generally associated with rural living into a modern city. Rather than being grown and harvested in the narrator's backyard or community, the apples that narrator so loves are sold at a neighborhood farmers' market, introducing the idea of food systems to readers.

Applesauce Season is perfect for young readers, and can serve as a catalyst for a wide variety of learning activities. Themes of food, farming, pomology, cultural identity, family history, and responsibility all arise within the book's pages.

Critical Thinking Questions

Intended for use during or after a reading of Applesauce Season, the questions listed below are designed to support readers in deepening their understanding of the story. Readers can be encouraged to notice detail, to make connections between this and other stories, and to compare and contrast the narrator's apple-related experiences with their own.

- Look at all of the apples on the end pages! What do you notice about the many different varieties?

- What do you notice about the way that the weather feels when apple season begins?
- Where do you get apples from? What varieties do you buy/grow/pick?
- Why do you think the color and texture of the narrator's applesauce changes throughout apple season?
- How is your life like the narrator's? How is it different?

Extension Activities

Designed with young readers in mind, each of the activities outlined below supports readers in using Applesauce Season as a catalyst for experiential, hands-on, and/or community-based learning. All activities can be adapted to fit a specific age group, geographic location, or cultural context.

Making Applesauce

This one is quite self-explanatory: get cooking! The learning here comes from reader participation in the process of food creation. Practice measuring skills, cutting skills (when appropriate), recipe reading and following, and so on. Follow the recipe outlined in the book, or create your own! Experiment with different combinations of apples to shift the flavor.

What Variety?

Use the many different varieties of apples to support the development and productive use of descriptive language! Either gather a collection of different types of apples or use visual representations of a handful of varieties. Randomly assign readers a variety of apple, and allow them to closely observe it – taking notes if necessary/appropriate. Then, with each reader's

variety of apple kept secret, ask each one to describe their apple variety. Those listening should use the description given to help them determine which variety was examined.

Noticing Detail

This activity is nearly the same as *What Variety?* Instead of describing a type of apple, readers will be given an apple from a large group. They should be allowed time to notice the detail on its skin. Then, they'll return their apple to the group, apples will be jumbled around, and readers will be asked to find their original apple again.

Mapping Apples

Where do your local apples come from? Create a map of the journey that an apple takes from its tree to your kitchen. Do research on where locally sourced apples originate from, putting the burden of the research on the shoulders of young readers. If the apple doesn't have a sticker (which if it's local, it probably won't!), visit the grocery store to see if the display has a tag. If not, ask the produce manager. Research the orchard or farm that it came from – what does it look like? What other products do they sell? How do the apples get from the orchard to the store? Then, decide whether or not the apples go anywhere from your home or not. If you can applesauce or share pies with friends, how could that be included in your map? If your cores are added to a compost pile somewhere, how does that factor in? Use a large piece of paper, a wall, or even a paved driveway to create a large map that tracks the apple from blossom to belly (and compost!).

The Phenology of Apples

As the narrator notes, apple varieties don't all come into season at the same time. Some ripen in late summer, their seasons finished by mid-September. Other come into season much later, ripening into the chilly days of mid- and late-fall. Watch a local orchard, local food market, or farmers' market over the course of apple season and take note of the changes that take place in the varieties of apples offered. Which ones came early? What do they taste like? Which ones came late, and what's their flavor like? Create a list or visual that shares what you've noticed. Share it with others!

Apples Around the World

Though we in North America tend to think that apples are “our thing,” they're actually grown all around the world and, scientifically speaking, they originated in Asia! Put apples into historical and cultural context by exploring the many different uses for apples through time, and be sure to dig into the folklore surrounding apples, too! Exploring the stories, foods, and other practices that have featured apples over time can help readers to generate an understanding of how and why it is that we grow and eat apples in the ways that we do today.

Resources for Further Learning

Books

[The Seasons of Arnold's Apple Tree](#) by Gail Gibbons

[The Apple Pie Tree](#) by Zoe Hall

[Apple Cider Making Days](#) by Ann Purmell

[The Apple Pie that Papa Baked](#) by Lauren Thompson

Online Resources

US Apple Association <http://usapple.org>

Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association Heritage Apple Varieties

<http://www.mofga.org/Home/MaineHeritageOrchard/AppleVarieties/tabid/2657/Default.aspx>



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