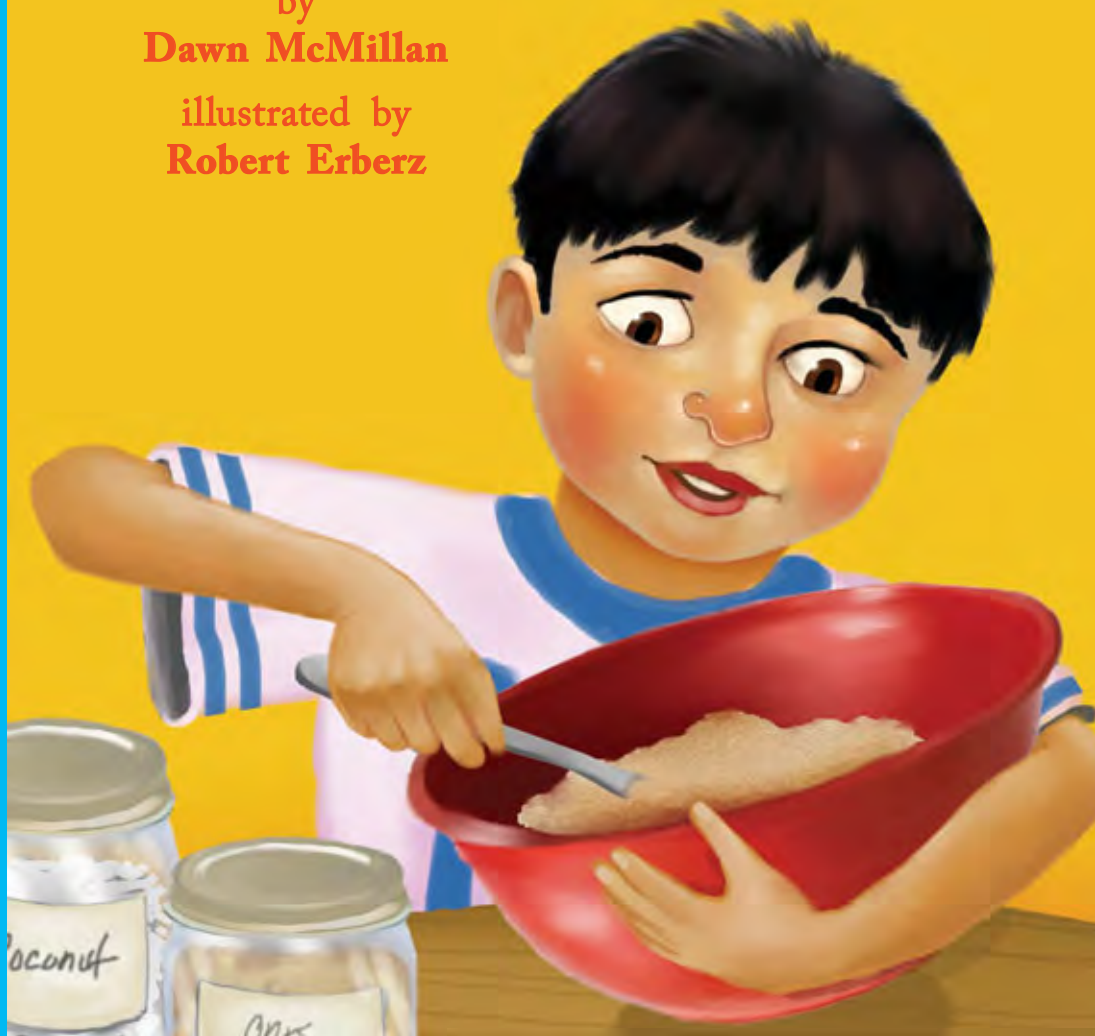


Realistic  
Fiction

# A Chef in the Family

by  
Dawn McMillan

illustrated by  
Robert Erberz



Mc  
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PAIRED  
READ

The Perfect Sandwich

## STRATEGIES & SKILLS

### Comprehension

**Strategy:** Ask and Answer Questions

**Skill:** Point of View

### Vocabulary

achievement, apologized, attention, audience, confidence, embarrassed, realized, talents

### Vocabulary Strategy

Prefixes

Word count: 1,328



**Education**

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**Essential Question**

How can you use what you know to help others?

# A Chef in the Family

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# Chapter 1

## Party Plans



My name is Benny and I love to cook. I want to be a chef. I am always looking for chances to use my skills. That's why I wanted to cook for Grandma on her birthday on Sunday.

“Please, Mom,” I said, “let me help with Grandma’s birthday lunch. You are so busy. If I did the menu it would save you lots of time.”

“There’s more to cooking lunch than planning a menu, Benny,” said Mom. “There’s the shopping and...”

“But I could write the shopping list,” I said. “Dad and I could go to the grocery store.”

“Sorry, Benny,” Mom said, “I think it’s best if I make lunch. Why don’t you make a present for Grandma instead?”

My heart sank. I am great at cooking, but not so good at making things. Like that time I made a jewelry box for Mom. It was a complete disaster! I was too embarrassed to give it as a gift. It ended up in the trash.



On Friday night, I started to make a card for Grandma. Grandma is just like me, she loves food, too. So I decided to draw a picture of a cake on the front of the card. But the drawing of the cake did not look delicious at all. Inside the card I wrote a message for Grandma. But I was working too quickly and I made a spelling mistake.

This was not turning out the way I had hoped.

Luckily, I had another idea. First I cut out a colorful picture from a magazine and glued it to the front of the card. Then I wrote out my own recipe for a cake. It was a little like one I'd made before, but I added a secret ingredient.

“Grandma will love it!” I thought, as I glued the paper to the inside of the card.



## Chapter 2

# The Right Ingredients

On Saturday morning, Mom was working on the computer. “I have to finish this report!” she said. “Dad will have to go and buy the things I need for Grandma’s lunch, and for her cake.”

“I could go with him, to help with the shopping,” I suggested.

“What about your present for Grandma?” Mom asked. “I think you should stay home and finish that.”

I laughed. “All done, Mom,” I said. “Grandma will see that I have special talents.”







Mom let me go with Dad to the store. Inside the store, I was amazed to see all the different foods. Dad bought cold cuts for sandwiches and some special bread. While I waited, I spotted a jar full of candied fruit. The fruit looked like jewels, red and green and yellow. I thought maybe Grandma would like it. I had some extra money in my pocket, and it turned out I had just enough.



Back home, I put the candied fruit away in the cupboard.

“Look at this, Benny,” Mom said, pointing to a recipe book with a picture of an amazing cake. “I’m going to make this for Grandma. It’s complicated and it’ll be a lot of work but it will be worth it,” she said with confidence. “I’ll get up early tomorrow morning so I will have plenty of time.”

## Chapter 3

# Mice in the Mix

On Sunday morning, I woke to hear a crash coming from the kitchen. I raced downstairs and into the kitchen.

“What’s happened?” I asked as I looked around at the mess in the kitchen. The cupboard door was open. The oven door was open. Packets of food were spilled over the floor.


“Angie!” shouted Dad as he arrived at the kitchen door. “What happened here?”

“Mice!” Mom shrieked.

“Where did they come from,” asked Dad.

“I don’t know,” said Mom. “They must have been in the cupboard. They’ve chewed a hole in the bag of sugar. They’ve chewed through an unopened bag of flour. They’ve been into everything I need for Grandma’s cake!”





I don't like to see Mom unhappy. "Don't worry, Mom," I said. "We'll help you clean up and then Dad and I can go and buy some more ingredients for your cake."

"It's no use, Benny," said Mom sadly. "The oven isn't working. I think the mice must have chewed through the power cord. Lunch is ruined! The mice even ate the special bread that you and Dad bought yesterday. I'm so embarrassed. I'll have nothing ready for Grandma."

"Nonsense," said Dad. "We'll find something for Grandma's lunch."

"Just wait a minute, Mom. I'll be back," I said as I raced upstairs.

## Chapter 4

# The Cupboard Cake

When I came back, I said, “I know what to do. I’ve got the perfect recipe. We have everything we need for my cake. The best thing is, it doesn’t need cooking. And we don’t need bread for lunch. I’ll make some lettuce wraps. I’ll be the chef, Mom. You can be my assistant.”

I got out a bowl and poured oats and coconut into it. Then I asked Mom to help get the rest of the ingredients.





“Chocolate chips, please,” I called. “And I need cranberries, honey and oil.” Mom kept handing me ingredients as I asked for them.

I realized I had one more ingredient to add. “Now for the candied fruit,” I said. The colors shone like jewels.

I pressed the mixture into a dish. I spread cream cheese on top and decorated it with candied fruit. I was full of confidence. The cake looked good.

“Now, it just needs to go into the fridge to firm up,” I said.

“That’s a great achievement,” Mom said.

When Grandma arrived, the kitchen was clean and the table was set with the best tablecloth. On the table was a plate of cold cuts and cheeses, a dish of pickles, a bowl of lettuce leaves, and a plate of grated carrot.

Grandma loved the cold cuts and cheeses, and grated carrot was her favorite thing for sandwiches, but she noticed something was missing. “I don’t see any bread,” said Grandma.

“Sorry, Grandma, no bread today,” I apologized. “We had a problem with mice. Today I’m the chef and I have prepared something new. These are my special lettuce wraps.”

Grandma said, “Lettuce wraps! What an interesting idea.”

Finally, I brought out my cake to the waiting audience. “Attention everyone! Grandma’s birthday cake!” I said as I set the cake down on the table. “Chef Benny’s special cake.”





“Delicious!” said Grandma as she took a bite. I’m impressed. I’d love the recipe.”

“Here it is,” I said proudly, and I gave Grandma her card.

# Respond to Reading

## Summarize

Summarize the story *A Chef in the Family*. Use your graphic organizer to help you.

Details
↓
Point of View

## Text Evidence

1. How can you tell this story is realistic fiction? Identify one feature that tells you this. **GENRE**
2. What does Benny want the reader to know about himself. Look at page 3 for clues. **POINT OF VIEW**
3. What does the word *nonsense* on page 11 mean? How does the prefix *non-* help you figure out the meaning? **PREFIXES**
4. Write about how the author shows Benny's point of view at the end of the story. **WRITE ABOUT READING**

## Compare Texts

Read about how Benny uses his skills to help others.

# The Perfect Sandwich

It was Food Week at the mall. Benny saw that there was a sandwich contest for young chefs.

“I can do that,” Benny said excitedly. “I’ll take a survey of everyone’s favorite filling and I’ll use the top five for my sandwich.”

But together, the top five fillings tasted terrible! So Benny made another sandwich with different fillings. It was better, but the bread was soggy.

“I’ll just take my favorite sandwich,” he decided.



Benny entered his cheese, lettuce, and mayo sandwiches in the contest. He knew they tasted delicious, but they didn't win. Benny felt disappointed. He collected his sandwiches and walked home with his mom.

On the way home, Benny saw a sign for a food bank. His mother explained it was a place where people in need could get food. "Mom, maybe I could give them my sandwiches," he said.

Benny took the sandwiches to the man in charge of collecting the food donations, who introduced himself as Leroy.



“Sorry,” Leroy apologized. “We only collect canned and prepackaged foods. But we need people to help with a Thanksgiving meal next week. Would you and your mother like to help?”

“Yes please,” said Benny. “I’m a chef. I made these sandwiches.”

“I’d love to taste one,” said Leroy.

“That was the perfect sandwich,” said Leroy when he had finished eating. “If you bring those skills with you to the Thanksgiving meal, there will be a lot of happy people.”



## Make Connections

How will Benny’s cooking skills help others?

### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Is knowing how to prepare tasty food a good skill to have? Use what you learned from *A Chef in the Family* and *The Perfect Sandwich* to support your response. **TEXT TO TEXT**

# Focus on Genre

**Realistic Fiction** *A Chef in the Family* and

*The Perfect Sandwich* are realistic fiction stories.

Realistic fiction stories are set in the present. The characters are realistic. That means that they are like real people.

**Read and Find** Find two examples in the story to show that *Chef in the Family* is realistic fiction.

What events in the story could real life? What makes Benny seem like a real person?

## Your Turn

Write a realistic fiction story about using a talent or skill to solve a problem. Start by thinking of a realistic problem that your character might have. Then, think of a skill that could solve the problem. Write the story in the first person. That means, write the story as if you are the main character.

# Thinkmark

## Characters

How would you describe Benny?  
Is that the same way that Benny describes himself?

## Sequence of Events

What happened in *A Chef in the Family*?  
What happened **first**, **then**, **next**, and **finally**?

## Plot

What was the problem in *A Chef in the Family*?  
How did Benny solve it?

## Conclusions

What conclusions can you draw about why cooking is important to Benny?

# Skills and Talents

GR O • Benchmark 34 • Lexile [t/k]

Grade 3 • Unit 4 Week 2

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