

EXPLORE MORE BOOK GUIDE

Activities, tools & resources for learning with this book!

Meet CHRIS

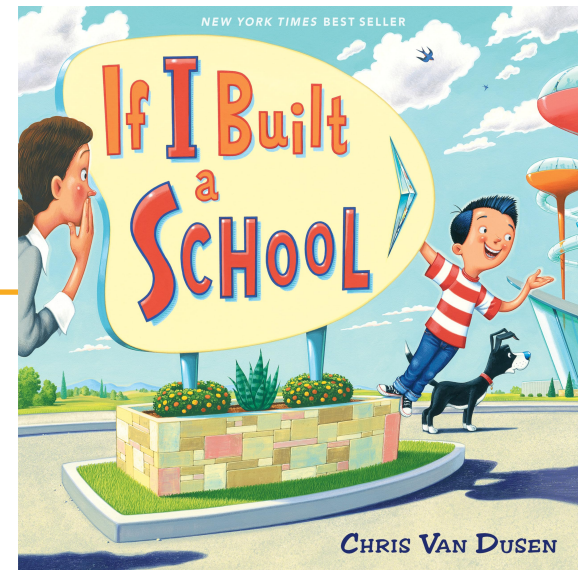
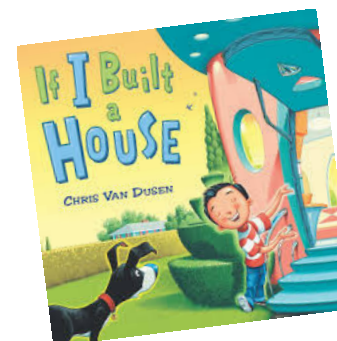
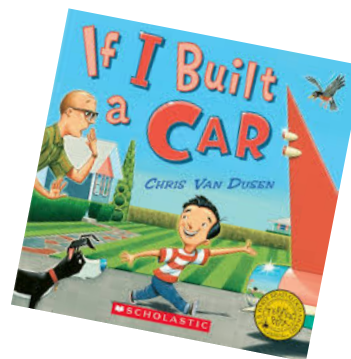


As a child, Chris didn't have video games or computers for entertainment so instead he would spend hours drawing pictures. His specialty was aliens, robots and monsters. For more than ten years he worked as a freelance illustrator specializing in art for kids. One day he started thinking about drawing a picture of a boat stuck high up in a tree. At the same time, a refrain kept running through his head- "Mr. Magee and his little dog, Dee/ Hopped in the car and drove down to the sea". The combination of these two things eventually became his first book, "*Down to the Sea with Mr. Magee*" which was published in 2000. Chris has been busy writing and illustrating children's books ever since.

For more information about Chris, visit his website at WWW.CHRISVANDUSEN.COM.

[Interview](#) with Chris

**Just a few favorites
from Chris:**



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LET'S BEGIN!

BEFORE READING THE BOOK

Use the Visual Thinking Strategy (VTS) questions below to orient readers, and to help guide a group discussion. Begin by taking a quiet moment to look closely at the book jacket, allowing time for observation and contemplation of the images.

- *What is going on in this picture?*
- *What do you see that makes you say that? (provide evidence)*
- *What more can we find?*

LET'S TALK!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Chris' favorite children's book authors are Dr. Seuss and Robert McCloskey.

- Why do you think he likes them so much?
- Do you think they influenced this book? In what ways?
- What are your favorite children's authors? Why?

Have you ever seen a building similar to the school in his book?

Chris uses architectural ideas from the 1950's-60's to create his pictures.

- Why do you think he does this?
- Does it make the book more interesting?
- What do you think of the colors?

FUN FACT

Chris Van Dusen is no stranger to IRW. He and Jeannie Brett are the wonderful creators of IRW's logo!

Watch this [VIDEO](#) for a quick VTS demo

HAVE QUESTIONS?

Please contact Alison Johnson at Island Readers & Writers, 207-460-6828 or ajohnson@islandreadersandwriters.org.

*"I loved the rhythm of Dr. Seuss' words
and I was fascinated by the meticulous
detail of Robert McCloskey's illustrations.
I had no idea back then I'd end up writing
and illustrating children's books when I
grew up"*

-Chris Van Dusen

STANDARDS Covered throughout this Explore More Book Guide:

SL.1. Prepare for and participate in conversations across a range of topics, types, and forums, building on others' ideas and expressing their own.

SL.2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

SL.3 Present information and supporting evidence appropriate to task, purpose, and audience so listeners can follow the line of reasoning and incorporate multimedia when appropriate.

R.4. Read various texts closely to determine what each text explicitly says and to make logical inferences; cite specific textual evidence to support conclusions drawn from the texts.

R.5 Provide an accurate summary of various texts; determine the central idea(s) or theme(s) and analyze its development throughout each text.

R.6. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

R.8 Analyze the structure of various texts, including how the features and components relate to each other and the whole.

R.9. Assess how perspective or purpose shapes the content and style of various texts.

How have schools changed over time?

- Do you know the history of your school?
- When was it built and for how many students?
- Check with your town's historical society or library to find information about the schools in your town through the years. See if you can visit a site of an old school.

TRADITIONS:

How many schools were in your town?

How many children attended?

Were any in just one room?

Why did some old schools have 2 doors at the entrance? Can you find out any information about teachers?

Did the school have a bell in a tower?

Is the building still standing and being used for anything now?

What were desks like?

What did they write on? (students and teachers)

What about lunches? Who made them? What were they? What books were they reading?

What did report cards look like?

Check out this [LIST](#) of 11 ways schools were different in the 1800's

Imagine that you have travelled back in time. Research the various ways children were transported to school between 1820 and 1950.

- How might they get to school in 3020? Draw a design template for your futuristic vehicle.



Imagining your Dream School



Creating A Vision. Think about...

Food, Transportation, Teachers, Writing methods, Playground, Sports, Art, Music, Class Pets, Report Cards, Classroom Supplies, Desk, Library or Learning Commons

Looking through the pages of the book make a list of all of the futuristic ideas that Chris Van Dusen put into the school. How many of them do you think will truly be reality in the future?

Write down your guesses and make a time capsule to bury and dig up 10, 20, or 30, years from now. (Art, History, Social Studies)

Think about: Blueprints, Building Materials, The Environment, Sustainability, Virtual experiences...

Begin by using green paper and white chalk draw a blueprint of your ideal school. (see the end-papers of the book)

Use this as the template for creating your dream school. (Art, Science, Math)

Look at an episode of "*The Jetsons*" What do you notice? Are the houses, buildings and vehicles similar to Chris's books?

Watch "*Magic School Bus Get Lost in Space*." Imagine your own fantasy field trip. Where would you go? What would you see?

Write a story about your adventure.

Writing Extensions:

- Research images of architecture from The Space Age.
- Thinking about the 3 books in the *If I Built* series, (House, Car, and School), what subject would you add to this list? Begin to sketch out your story. "If I Built a...." What time period will influence your story?
 - Write a letter to Chris and Jack telling them about your impressions of their dream school.
 - Try to create your own Seussian rhyme!
 - Create a pop-up book



- In the book, Jack wants to Design a school where nature and outside are key features. Design a “green” school that brings the outside in.

- Set up a maker space with all the things needed to create a futuristic school or one room of the school. Plastic tubes, Legos, cardboard tubes, boxes, silk flowers, toothpicks, popsicle sticks...
- **Architecture**-Build a model of your school out of recycled items. Explore some [PHOTOS](#).
- List foods you would like to see Robochef make. Can you come up with new exciting meals? Make your new meals out of play-doh or clay.
- The school that Jack designs in the book has elements of these themes; architecture, holograms, genetics and hovercraft. Take a look at this [WEBSITE](#) to get ideas for your own experiments and school designs.

LET’S DIVE DEEPER! Explore More

- Research holograms and see if you can make one.
- Research hovercraft, who invented it? Why was it invented? When? Follow these [STEPS](#) to try and make your own.

LET'S READ MORE! Text to Text Connections

