

## **The Mystery of the Missing Pepperoni**

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The morning sun streamed into Room 2B, but the students weren't looking at the multiplication charts or the colorful world map. All eyes were on Mr. Giles, who was standing beside a big, mysterious box with a wide grin on his face.

“Good morning, my brilliant second-graders!” he announced. “Does anyone know what special day it is today?”

A few hands shot up.

“Is it Talk Like a Pirate Day?” asked Leo, already squinting one eye.

“Is it National Wear Your Socks on Your Hands Day?” giggled Maya.

Mr. Giles chuckled. “Good guesses, but no. Today,” he said, tapping the calendar, “is National Pepperoni Pizza Day!”

A wave of excitement buzzed through the classroom. Mr. Giles opened the mysterious box to reveal everything they needed to become master pizza chefs: bags of flour, jars of tomato sauce, a giant block of mozzarella cheese, and of course, the star of the show—a big, sealed bag of perfectly round pepperoni slices.

“Today,” Mr. Giles declared, “we are not just students. We are ‘Pizzaologists’! Our mission is to create the most delicious pepperoni pizza Room 2B has ever seen. We’ll learn some math by measuring, some science by seeing how yeast makes our dough rise, and some art by creating our pizza masterpiece.”

The class was divided into teams. The “Dough-Namites” were in charge of mixing the flour, water, and yeast. The “Sauce Squad” was tasked with seasoning the tomato sauce with basil and oregano. The “Cheese Champions” were ready with their graters.

And finally, there was the “Pepperoni Patrol,” led by a very serious-looking girl named Chloe. Her one job was to guard the precious pepperoni and ensure each slice was treated with respect.

The classroom was a whirlwind of happy chaos. Flour dusted noses, the sweet smell of oregano filled the air, and the Dough-Namites kneaded the dough with all their might. Soon, a perfect, smooth pizza dough was spread out on a big pan. The Sauce Squad painted it with a vibrant red sauce, and the Cheese Champions sprinkled a blanket of white mozzarella over the top.

“It is time!” Mr. Giles announced dramatically. “Bring forth the pepperoni!”

Chloe walked proudly to the supply table. She reached for the big, sealed bag... but her hand found only empty air. She looked again. It was gone.

“Mr. Giles!” she gasped. “The pepperoni... it’s missing!”

The classroom fell silent. A pizza with no pepperoni on Pepperoni Pizza Day? It was a disaster!

“Don’t panic, Pizzaologists!” Mr. Giles said, putting on his imaginary detective hat.

“This is just a new part of our mission. We now have a mystery to solve: The Case of the Missing Pepperoni.”

The students became detectives. Leo looked for footprints near the table. Maya drew a sketch of the last time she saw the pepperoni. They looked under desks, behind the bookshelf, and even checked inside the class hamster’s cage (just in case Pip the hamster was a pepperoni-napper).

But there was nothing.

Just as everyone was starting to feel discouraged, a quiet boy named Sam, who was on the Dough-Namites team, slowly raised his hand. His cheeks were as red as tomato sauce.

“Mr. Giles,” he mumbled. “I think I know where it is.”

All eyes turned to Sam.

“When we were kneading the dough,” he explained, “I saw the pepperoni bag sitting right by the edge of the table. I was worried it might fall off, so I put it somewhere safe.”

“And where was that, Super Detective Sam?” Mr. Giles asked kindly.

Sam walked over to the flour bin, which the Dough-Namites had just finished using. He reached deep inside and pulled out the bag of pepperoni, now completely covered in a fine white dust. He had hidden it so well, he had forgotten all about it!

A wave of relief and laughter filled the room. The Pepperoni Patrol carefully wiped the flour off each precious slice. One by one, they decorated the pizza until it was covered in beautiful red circles. Some made a smiley face, others made a flower, and Leo tried to make the constellation Orion.

Mr. Giles slid the pizza into the oven in the teacher’s lounge. Twenty minutes later, a warm, delicious smell drifted back into Room 2B. The cheese was bubbly and golden, and the pepperoni was curled up into perfect, crispy little cups.

As they all sat down to enjoy a slice of their creation, Mr. Giles raised his paper cup of water.

“A toast to the Pizzaologists of Room 2B!” he said. “You mixed, you sauced, you grated, you solved a mystery, and you worked together. You’ve proven that the best ingredient in any pizza is teamwork.”

And everyone agreed, as they took a big bite, that it was the best pepperoni pizza they had ever tasted.

## Writing Prompts for "The Mystery of the Missing Pepperoni"

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**1. Narrative Prompt: A Different Ending** In the story, Sam had hidden the pepperoni by mistake. Let's imagine a different, sillier ending! What if Pip the class hamster was the real pepperoni-napper? Write a short story about Pip's secret adventure after he steals the bag of pepperoni. Where does he take it and what does he do with it?

**2. Procedural (How-To) Prompt: How to Be a Pizzaologist** The students in Room 2B followed steps to become "Pizzaologists." Think about the steps they took to make their pizza. Write down the instructions on "**How to Make the Perfect Pizza.**" Be sure to include:

- A list of ingredients you would need.
- The steps in the correct order (first, next, then, finally).
- At least one secret tip for making it extra delicious.

**3. Opinion/Persuasive Prompt: The Best Topping** Pepperoni was the star of the story, but there are hundreds of pizza toppings. What do you believe is the absolute BEST topping for a pizza? Write a paragraph to convince your teacher and classmates why your choice is the most delicious. Use descriptive words (like crunchy, sweet, savory, gooey) to make your argument stronger.

**4. Reflective Prompt: A Time You Made a Mistake** Sam made an honest mistake when he hid the pepperoni to keep it safe, and he felt a little embarrassed when he remembered. Write about a time you made a mistake. What happened? How did you feel? What did you learn from it?

**5. Creative Prompt: Invent a New Classroom Food Day** Mr. Giles's class celebrated National Pepperoni Pizza Day. If you were the teacher, what special food day would you invent for your class? It could be "Taco Tuesday," "Wacky Waffle Wednesday," or something totally new! Describe the day. What food would you make together and what special activities would you do to learn and have fun?

