

Alliance Theatre --- --- Institute

The Incredible Book Eating Boy

STUDY GUIDE

Grades K–5

Created as part of the Alliance Theatre's **Dramaturgy by Students program**

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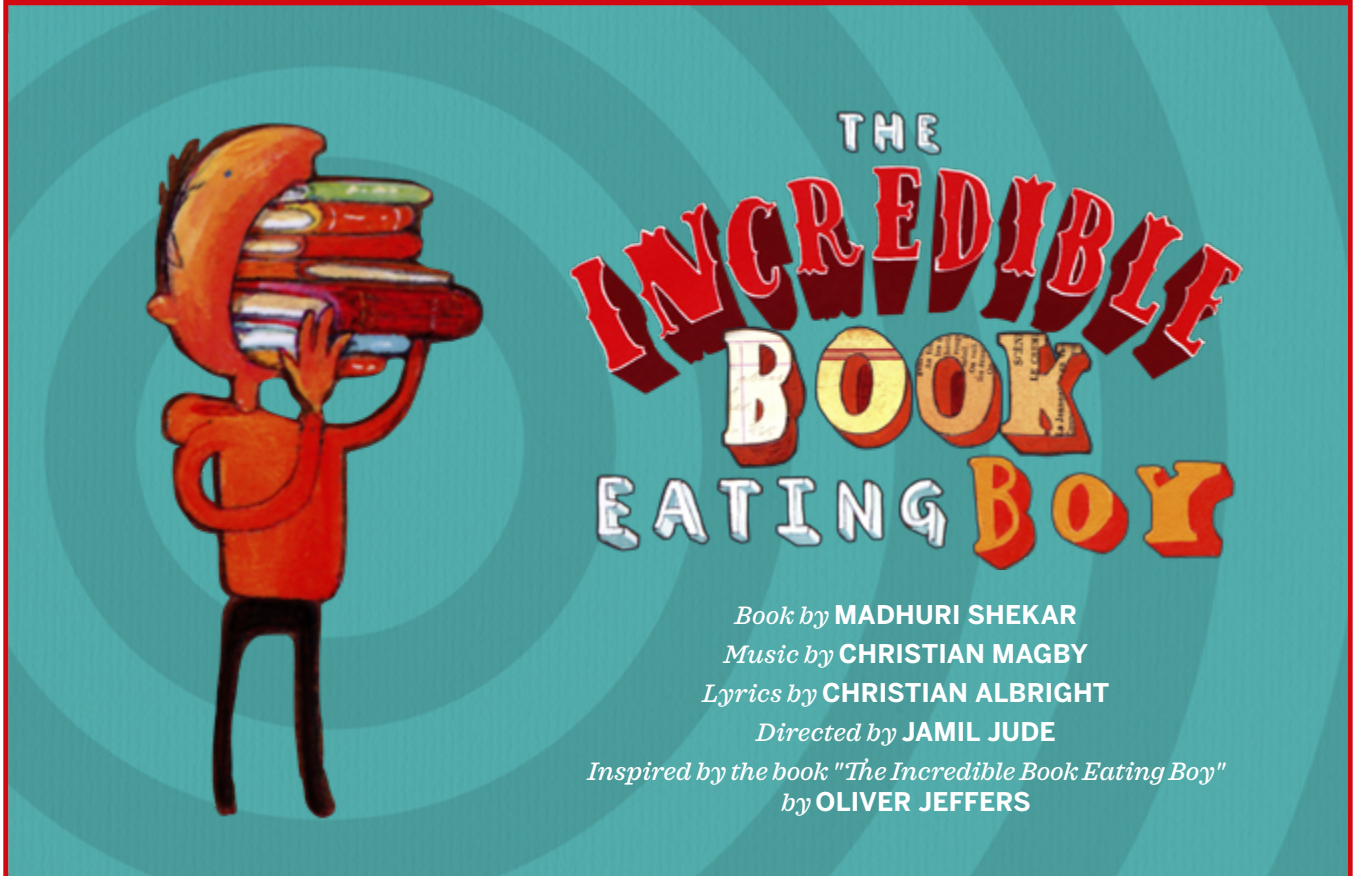


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GEORGIA STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Suggested grade levels: Elementary School Grades K–5

English Language Arts

ELAGSE1RL2 – Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.

ELAGSE1RL3 – Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

ELAGSE1RL7 – Use... details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.

ELAGSE2RL3 – Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

ELAGSE2RL6 – Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters.

ELAGSE3RL2 – Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text

ELAGSE3RL3 – Describe characters in a story (e.g. their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

ELAGSE3RL6 – Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.

ELAGSE5RL2 – Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

ELAGSE5RL3 – Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text.

Health

HE3.2 – Students will analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.

a. Discuss how family and cultural factors influence personal health and wellbeing.

HE3.4 – Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.

a. Discuss and demonstrate how speaking and listening skills can be used to build and maintain healthy relationships.

b. Recognize the causes of conflicts and apply effective nonviolent strategies to manage or resolve conflicts.

Theater

TARE.1 – Engage actively and appropriately as an audience member.

TARE.2 – Critique various aspects of theatre and other media using appropriate supporting evidence.

TACN.1 – Explore how theatre connects to life experience, careers, and other content.

TACN.2 – Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context.

AUTHOR STUDY: OLIVER JEFFERS

By Pamela R. Hill and Courtney Moors-Hornick



Oliver Jeffers is a visual artist and author working in painting, bookmaking, illustration, collage, performance, and sculpture. Curiosity and humor are underlying themes throughout Oliver's practice as an artist and storyteller. While investigating the ways the human mind understands its world, his work also functions as comic relief in the face of futility. Jeffers' engagements and practice are truly international in scope. His critically acclaimed picture books have been translated into over fifty languages and sold over 14 million copies worldwide. His original artwork has been exhibited at such institutions as the Brooklyn Museum in New York, the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin, the

National Portrait Gallery in London, and the Palais Auersperg in Vienna. Jeffers has been the recipient of numerous awards, including a New York Times Best Illustrated Children's Books Award, Bologna Rigazzi Award, An Irish Book Award, and a United Kingdom Literary Association Award. His nineteenth book as author and illustrator was released in October 2021, and he has illustrated several others. Oliver grew up in Belfast, Northern Ireland; he currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

PLAYWRIGHT STUDY: MADHURI SHEKAR



Madhuri Shekar was born in California and grew up in India. She is currently based in the New York region, having recently graduated from the Lila Acheson Wallace American Playwrights Program at Julliard. She writes on themes of love, relationships, and sexuality inspired by her cross-cultural background. Madhuri's plays include *Dhaba on Devon Avenue* (commissioned by Victory Gardens), *House of Joy* (California Shakespeare Theatre, San Diego Rep, developed at South Coast Rep, Julliard, Atlantic, NY Stage and Film), *Queen* (Victory Gardens—2017 Jeff Award for Best New Play; APAC—NY Innovative Theatre Award for Outstanding Full Length Script; Geva Theatre Center), *A Nice Indian Boy* (East West Players, Rasaka Theatre Company, EnActe Arts), *In Love and Warcraft* (Alliance/Kendeda National Graduate

Playwriting Competition winner), *Antigone, Presented by the Girls of St. Catherine's* (Alliance Theatre), and *Bucket of Blessings* (Alliance Theatre). Madhuri was one of the first recipients of Audible's new commissioning program for emerging playwrights. Her audio drama, *Evil Eye*, debuted at #5 on Audible's bestseller list, and won a 2020 Audie Award from the Audio Publishers Association for Best Original Work. The film adaptation is currently available to stream on Amazon Prime. In Hollywood, Madhuri was a staff writer on HBO's *The Nevers* and is currently at work on a film to be announced soon. Madhuri is a Resident Playwright at New Dramatists. She has an MFA in Dramatic Writing from USC, and a dual Master's degree in Global Media and Communications from the London School of Economics and USC.

CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

Music

Christian Magby is an actor and composer and is thrilled to be back at the Alliance Theatre, where he was last seen in *A Christmas Carol*, 2019. He can currently be seen in the CW hit series, *The Flash*, as Deon Owens, the Still Force, the latest cosmic force to be introduced to the Arrowverse. Magby can also be seen in the Oscar nominated, Amazon feature *One Night in Miami*, directed by Regina King, starring opposite Leslie Odom Jr., Aldis Hodge, and Lance Reddick. Magby has worked in the music departments for the NBC/Universal musical films *Dear Evan Hansen* and *Pitch Perfect 3*. He has worked as an actor and music director in many of the theaters in Atlanta, including Alliance Theatre, Aurora Theatre, Horizon Theatre Company, Theatrical Outfit, Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre Company, among others. His newest musical, *Mother of God*, will be premiering this December at Southwest Arts Center. Christian is a SCAD Grad and YEA Alum.

Lyrics

Christian Albright has been a lyricist for the Seattle Film Festival Selectee, The BoomBox Saints, and Librettist and a co-lyricist for the Atlanta Musical Theatre Festival Selectee, *Mother of God*. Christian continues to write songs and lyrics for numerous artists in Atlanta as well develop musicals and screenplays. *Mother of God*, co-created with Christian Magby, will be making its main stage premiere this December.

Director

Jamil Jude is a highly accomplished director, producer, playwright, and dramaturg focusing on bringing socially relevant art to the community. Jamil is the Artistic Director at Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre Company in Atlanta, Georgia, where he previously served as Associate Artistic Director. Additionally, he is the Co-Founder of The New Griots Festival, which is dedicated to celebrating, advocating, and advancing the careers of emerging Black artists in the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area in Minnesota. Prior to joining the staff at True Colors, Jamil served as the Artistic Programming Associate at Park Square Theatre in St. Paul, a Producer in Residence at Minneapolis' Mixed Blood Theatre, a New Play Producing Fellow at Arena Stage in Washington, DC and co-founded the Colored People's Theatre. Among his many awards, Jamil has been named the recipient of the Turn The Spotlight Fellowship (2018/19), Andrew W. Mellon/TCG Leadership U Fellowship (2015/17), Nautilus Music Theater Management Fellowship (2014/15), NNPN Producer Residency (2011/12; 2012/13), Jerome Foundation/The Playwrights' Center Many Voices Mentorship (2013/14) and the Allen Lee Hughes Fellowship at Arena Stage (2009/10; 2010/11). Jamil received his Bachelors of Arts from Colgate University.

INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTIAN MAGBY, COMPOSER



Alliance Theatre (AT): How did you identify with Henry as you worked on developing the production?

Magby: “I wasn’t as young as Henry, but there was a time during my childhood where I felt I wasn’t progressing through at the same pace as some of my peers. I was trying to find the best ways to learn and keep up. It’s kind of like when our parents tell us we need to eat our vegetables and clean our rooms. We do it because we are told to, but we don’t exactly understand the importance. That is where Henry is coming from. We don’t always understand the why and because we aren’t getting it and no one is breaking it down for us in an accessible way, we have to take drastic measures. For Henry, that meant book eating to keep up.”

AT: In February 2022, a workshop for *The Incredible Book Eating Boy* invited a class of first grade students to watch a reading of the play. What was that experience like?

Magby: “The first song started, and they were swaying and moving about. It was immediate! During the talkback after the workshop, they talked about all of their favorite parts. They reiterated everything, from beginning to end. We had no idea it would work so well.”

AT: Did you make any significant edits to the play after the February workshop?

Magby: “After the workshop and reviewing the script and score, we realized we had to include a song when the books come to life so we added that to the production you’ll see on the Alliance stage.”

SYNOPSIS

8-year-old Henry starts the third grade and discovers, to his horror, that picture books are only for kids younger than him. He hates reading books...they have way too many words! When his dog eats a book and suddenly begins to speak in English, Henry decides to digest some books of his own—yielding great results! Suddenly, he no longer feels left out from the world of knowledge that his friends and classmates are enjoying. However, once he has eaten every book in his vicinity, he begins to have horrible indigestion, and everything that comes out of his mouth is jumbled. He stops eating books under his doctor's orders and discovers how fun reading can be.



Brad Raymond, Alexander Chen, and Rhyn McLemore in the Alliance Theatre's world premiere musical production of *The Incredible Book Eating Boy*. Photo by Greg Mooney.

CHARACTERS

By Clovia Jackson and Courtney Moors-Hornick

Henry: An 8-year-old boy who is about to enter the third grade and discovers he has an appetite for eating books as a quick way to gain knowledge.

Rover: Henry's lovable talking dog. Rover inspires Henry to eat books after he gains the ability to talk just from digesting one.

Olivia: One of Henry's best friends at school. She is a little nervous about entering third grade but eager to learn.

Jeff: Henry's other school friend who is very confident and ready for third grade.

Ms. Penny: Henry's third grade teacher. She is determined to challenge her students and to transition them from reading picture books meant for "little kids" to reading textbooks and chapter books.

Henry's Mom: Loving and supportive of Henry.

Henry's Dad: Playful and sweet. Loves to cook!

News Reporters: A mob of journalists who are hungry to find out more about Henry's appetite for books.

Game Show Host: Host of the TV show Henry appears on, "Are You Smarter Than a Third Grader?"

Giant Books: Books that taunt Henry and want to get back at him for all of his book eating.

Doctor: Examines Henry and writes him a prescription: "No more eating books!"

Artist: The creator of the graphic novel that captures Henry's attention at the book fair.

This play only has five actors! How did the five actors play these different roles? How did they use the Tools of the Actor (body, voice, imagination, concentration) to transform themselves into a new character? How did they change their costumes?

SETTING

Time: *Present day*

| LOCATION | DESCRIPTION |
|------------------|--|
| Henry's school | Ms. Penny's third grade classroom |
| Henry's home | Where he lives with his Mom, Dad, and dog Rover. (Specifically, the kitchen and Henry's bedroom). |
| Library | Where Henry is surrounded by books! |
| Game Show Studio | Where Henry is a contestant on a trivia show |
| Doctor's Office | Where a Doctor tells Henry "no more book eating!" |
| Book Fair | Where Henry rediscovers his love of books (for reading, not eating!) |

How did you know when the setting changed? What props or set pieces were added to the stage? How did the sound or lighting change?



Rhyn McLemore and cast in the Alliance Theatre's world premiere musical production of *The Incredible Book Eating Boy*. Photo by Greg Mooney.

THEMES

A **theme** is a moral or lesson of the story, or messages that are explored in the story. Discuss these themes together as a class!

Never give up on yourself.

In the beginning of the play, Henry feels apprehensive about starting the third grade and feels like he's not a strong reader like his peers. His reading insecurities lead him to his bad habit of eating books. However, Henry doesn't give up on himself, and with the help of his friends and mentors, he eventually finds joy in reading.

Don't be afraid to grow and learn new things.

Henry's book eating starts because he doesn't feel smart enough to read and digest information from the books the old-fashioned way! It's only when he challenges himself to view reading in a new light, by painting pictures in his mind as he reads, that he grows.

Learning takes time.

Anything worth doing is going to take time and practice. Henry must learn to be patient with himself on his reading journey.

You can be the author of your own story.

Henry learns that his approach to reading might look different than his friends, and that's okay! He finds joy in reading through the visuals in cookbooks, picture books, and graphic novels.

It's okay to make mistakes.

Henry makes the mistake of thinking that eating books is the only (and certainly fastest) way to gain knowledge. He learns from this mistake when he gets sick from eating all that paper! He knows he can't keep book eating, so he must change his ways. It's Henry's mistake that makes him grow and change. Mistakes can be a good thing, if we learn from them!

Lean on your friends.

Without the support of Henry's friends, family, teacher, and the graphic artist, Henry would have struggled to find the courage to believe in his reading abilities. When we're having a tough time, it's important to lean on the people around us for support.

HUMOR AND COMEDY

Humor and comedy play a huge role in *The Incredible Book Eating Boy*! Comedy is a storytelling genre that uses laughter and humor to entertain and amuse the audience.

Below are a few examples of different types of comedy and how they are used in the play.

Dry Wit and Deadpan Humor

When a joke is delivered “dryly,” with little emotion or facial expressions. This “deadpan” delivery highlights the ridiculousness of the joke!

(Henry helps his DAD prepare dinner, but food keeps dropping to the ground because he's staring at a textbook with frustration.)

ROVER

I could tell he was distracted.
(eating all the ground food)
Not that I'm complaining.

Irony

When the opposite outcome of what you expect to happen, happens

HENRY

Ohhhh no what's happening.

(Henry crouches over, clutching his tummy. Rover appears next to Henry.)

ROVER

It's ironic that you're having a tummy ache, considering all the fiber in your diet.

HENRY

You're not helping Rover!

Play on Words/Pun

A joke exploiting the different possible meanings of a word or the fact that there are words which sound alike but have different meanings. In the example below, the word “surely” also sounds like the name Shirley.

HENRY

I'm going to eat all of the books in the world!

HOST

Surely you can't be serious?

HENRY

I am serious. And don't call me Shirley.

MUSICAL MOMENTS

Songs help tell the story of *The Incredible Book Eating Boy*, by advancing the plot or by introducing us to characters and the problems they face. Many different elements of music can be identified in each song and contribute to the storytelling.

Elements of Music:

- Dynamics – loud vs. soft
- Pitch – high vs. low
- Timbre – the quality or color of the sound
- Form – the order and arrangement of the parts of the music
- Rhythm – how long or short a sound is

By looking at the names of the song titles below, can you make a prediction about what each song might be about? Consider the elements of music. Can you guess what dynamics, pitch, etc. will be used in each?

| SONG TITLE | PREDICTION | HOW MIGHT THE ELEMENTS OF MUSIC BE USED IN THIS SONG? |
|--------------------------------|------------|---|
| WELCOME TO THE THIRD GRADE | | |
| SMART GUY | | |
| I ATE A BOOK | | |
| THE INCREDIBLE BOOK EATING BOY | | |

VOCABULARY

Source: Oxford Online Dictionary

| WORD (Part of Speech) | DEFINITION | IN CONTEXT |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Absurd (adj.) | Unreasonable, ridiculous | "Oh, this is so absurd." |
| Almanac (n.) | A reference book containing a calendar for the upcoming year, times of events (sunrises and sunsets), and interesting statistics and facts about a variety of topics | "Say goodbye to picture books" "We're gonna read an almanac" |
| Atone (v.) | To make amends; to make up for something bad | "We're gonna eat you Straight down to the bone Rip off your flesh So that you can atone." |
| Bland (adj.) | Dull and uninteresting | "The words seem bland." |
| Chemistry (n.) | The scientific study of the properties and behavior of matter | "Chemistry books have a lot of mass." |
| Confess (v.) | Admit to a mistake | "Can I confess something?" |
| Diary (n.) | A book in which one keeps a daily record of events and experiences | "You ate my history book, and my diary and my sticker book." |
| Digest (v.) | Break something down so that it can easily be absorbed | "Hardcovers take a lot longer to digest." |

| WORD (Part of Speech) | DEFINITION | IN CONTEXT |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Distracted (adj.) | Unable to concentrate | "I could tell he was distracted" |
| Eureka (exclamation) | A cry of joy when one discovers something | "Eureka!" |
| Extra-Curricular (adj. or n.) | An extra activity at school pursued in addition to your normal classwork | "I can see your eyes are yearning for some extracurricular learning." |
| Fortified (adj.) | Having had vitamins or other supplements added to increase the nutritional value | "You can also get Vitamin D from fish and eggs and fortified milk." |
| Gastronomical (adj.) | Relating to the practice of cooking or eating good food. | "It means your predilection for sophisticated gastronomical experiences!" |
| Graphic novels (n.) | Books that use art to tell a story | "And graphic novels! They're colorful and filled with action." |
| Gravity (n.) | The force that attracts a body toward the center of the earth, or toward any other physical body having mass | "I know that Newton wrote a theory about gravity." |
| Hassle (v.) | To pester, bother | "Aw, don't hassle the guy. It's dinnertime!" |
| Impeccable (adj.) | Flawless, faultless, perfect | "His knowledge is impeccable." |
| Ironic (adj.) | When something happens in the opposite way to what is expected | "It's ironic that you're having a tummy ache, considering all the fiber in your diet." |

| WORD (Part of Speech) | DEFINITION | IN CONTEXT |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| Logically (adv.) | In a way that is expected or sensible | "Let's think about it logically." |
| Mass (n.) | In physics, the quantity of matter that something contains | "Chemistry books have a lot of mass." |
| Organ (n.) | A part of an organism that is typically self-contained and has a specific vital function, such as the heart or liver in humans | "Did you know the only organ that can float is your lungs?" |
| Overwhelmed (v.) | Overcome with emotion | "It makes me feel overwhelmed." |
| Peers (n.) | Someone the same age as you | "Say hello to all my peers." |
| Perspective (n.) | A particular attitude toward something; a point of view | "It's just a matter of perspective." |
| Pi (n.) | In math, the numerical value of the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter (approximately 3.14159) | "Math books always taste like... Pi!" |
| Prodigy (n.) | A young person who has exceptional qualities or abilities | "A prodigy for his age" |
| Queasy (adj.) | Feeling sick, nervous, or worried about something | "Why're you looking so queasy?" |
| Social Studies (n.) | A subject in school that explores various aspects or branches of the study of human society | (<i>Mom looks at the textbook.</i>) "Social Studies, huh?" |

| WORD (Part of Speech) | DEFINITION | IN CONTEXT |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Spectacle (n.) | A visually striking display | "But it's such a spectacle." |
| Theory (n.) | A system of ideas intended to explain something | "I know that Newton wrote a theory about gravity" |
| Unconventional (adj.) | Unusual or irregular | "Highly unconventional" |
| Violin (n.) | A stringed musical instrument of treble pitch, played with a horsehair bow | "Or maybe learn the violin." |
| Vitamin (n.) | A nutrient that the body needs in small amounts to function and stay healthy | "All right class, who can tell me which vitamin your body creates from the sun?" |
| Yearning (v.) | To intensely long for or want something | "I can see your eyes are yearning." |

Juan Carlos Unzueta and Alexander Chen in the Alliance Theatre's world premiere musical production of *The Incredible Book Eating Boy*. Photo by Greg Mooney.



CULTURAL, GEOGRAPHICAL, AND HISTORICAL REFERENCES

In the song, “The Incredible Book Eating Boy,” Henry shares his newfound knowledge with Ms. Penny and his classmates. Here are some of the topics he devoured!

If you were Henry, what would you sing about? What knowledge do you want to share?



The Louisiana Purchase

The Louisiana Purchase occurred in 1803 and was the purchase of land by the United States government from the French for \$15 million. It included 828,000 square miles and, in the future, would make up fifteen states.

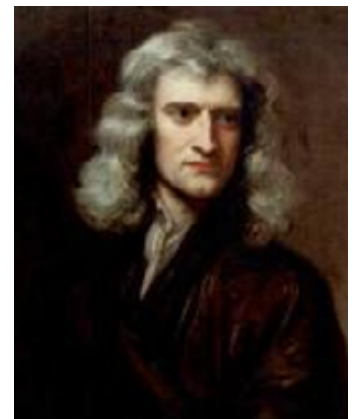
The Louisiana Purchase almost doubled the size of the United States and included in the east, the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains of the west, as well as New Orleans in the south.

“Yes, I know things. I know the Louisiana Purchase was in 1803!”

Newton

Isaac Newton is considered one of the most important scientists in history. Even Albert Einstein said that Isaac Newton was the smartest person that ever lived. During his lifetime, Newton developed the theory of gravity, the laws of motion (which became the basis for physics), a new type of mathematics called calculus, and made breakthroughs in the area of optics such as the reflecting telescope.

“I know that Newton wrote a theory about gravity. Yes, I know things!”



Genghis Khan

Founder of the Mongol Empire, Khan was a fierce and brutal fighter and general and was admired by many for his courage.

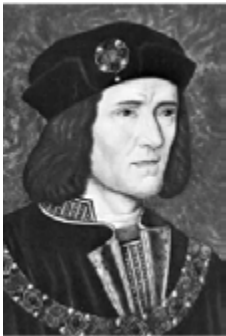
“I know that Genghis Khan led an army by his command!”

Christopher Columbus

Christopher Columbus is the explorer who is credited for discovering America. Of course, there were already people living in America at the time who we call Indigenous Americans. There even was a European, Leif Ericsson, who had been to the Americas before. However, it was Columbus' voyage that started the exploration and colonization of the Americas.



"I know that Christopher Columbus never founded this land."

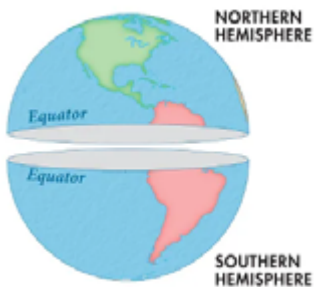


Richard the Third

Richard III was King of England between 1483 and 1485. He was the last king from the House of York and the last of the Plantagenet dynasty. His death marked the end of the civil wars known as the Wars of the Roses (1455–85).

Watergate

The Watergate scandal was one of the worst political scandals in the history of the United States. The scandal began when five men were arrested for breaking into the Democratic Party offices on June 17, 1972 and ended with the resignation of President Richard Nixon on August 9, 1974.



The Equator

An imaginary line around the Earth that goes exactly midway between the North Pole and the South Pole and divides it into two equal halves, the Northern Hemisphere and the Southern Hemisphere.

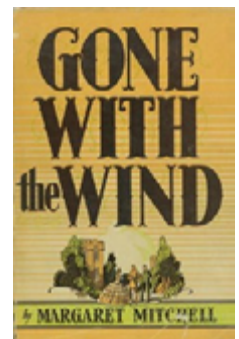
1788

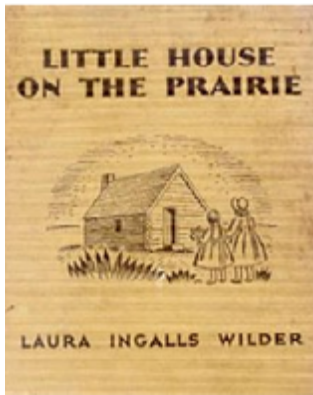
The year the Constitution of the United States was ratified (or approved).

Gone With The Wind

A novel by Margaret Mitchell that was first published in 1936, that tells the story of love during and after the events of the Civil War.

"Richard the Third! Watergate! The Equator! 1788! Hemorrhoids! Gone with the Wind! Capuchin Monkeys! Who is Booboo the fool?"





Little House on the Prairie

A series of American children's novels written by Laura Ingalls Wilder, based on her childhood and adolescence in the American Midwest between 1870 and 1894.

The Doctor finds a half-digested copy of "Little House on the Prairie" in Henry's stomach and says, "I couldn't get through it either."

Quebec City

Quebec City, founded in 1608, is the capital of the Canadian province, Quebec. It is inhabited by mostly French speakers.

"One of the oldest cities in Canada is Quebec!"



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

By: Stacy Joseph (Atlanta Public Schools) and Rebecca Pogue

Pre-Show Discussion Questions

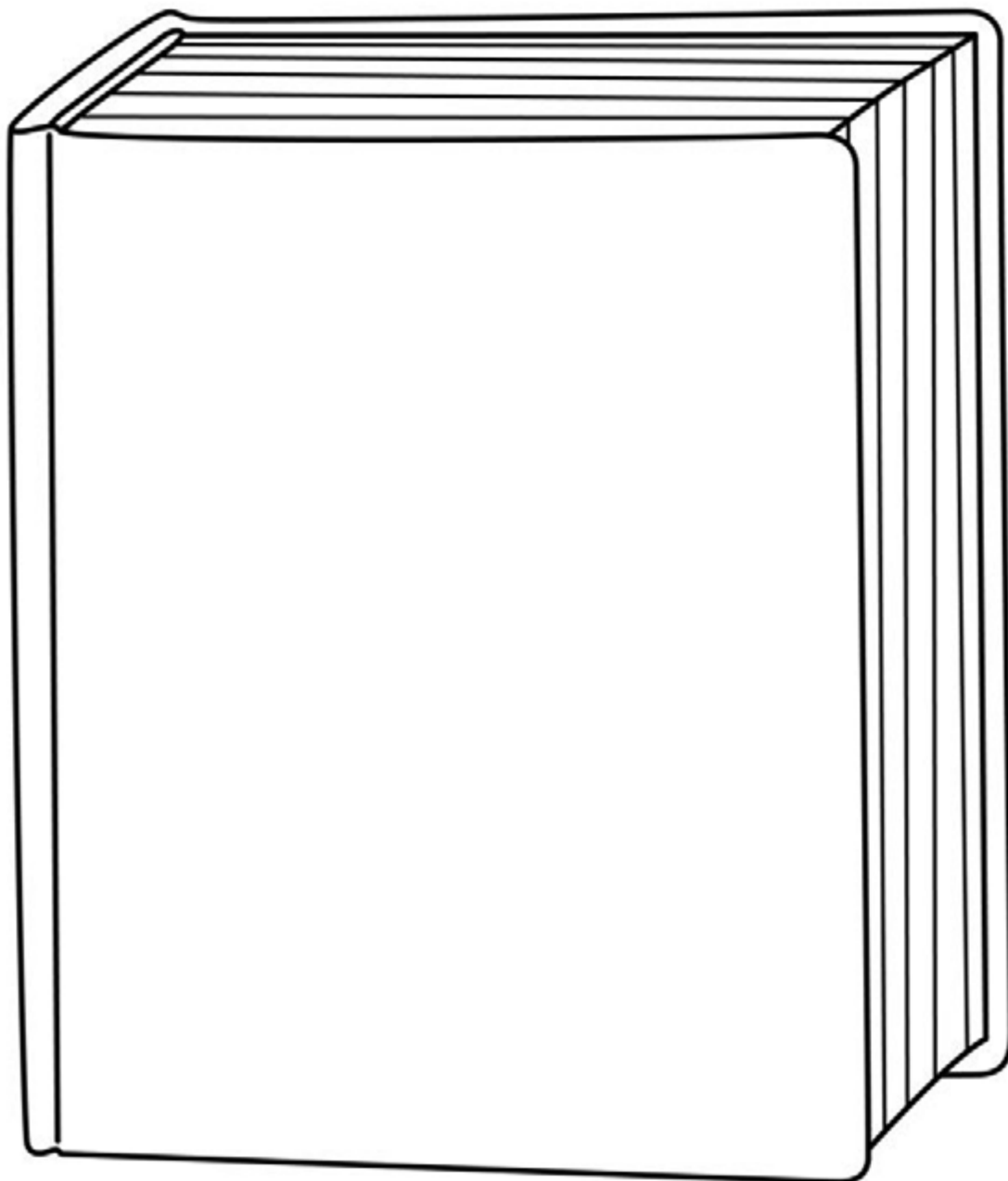
1. Based on the title, *The Incredible Book Eating Boy*, what do you think this play will be about?
2. What kinds of books do you like to read? Why?
3. How do you feel when you start a new grade at school?
4. Make a prediction: Why do you think that Henry, the main character, starts eating books?
5. In what ways can books help us? Describe a time a book has helped you. (Did you learn something new, imagine a distant land, or see your own stories on the page?)
6. If you could only eat one book for the rest of your life, and you would gain all the knowledge contained in that book, what book would you pick, and why?
7. How do you lean on your friends? How do they support you and help you accomplish your goals?
8. What is the role of an audience member during a play? How do they show their appreciation for the actors?
9. Review the elements of theater (set, costumes, props, lighting, sound). How do these elements help to share the story on the stage?

Post-Show Discussion Questions

1. In what ways could you relate to Henry?
 2. What was the problem that Henry encountered when eating books, and how did he solve the problem?
 3. What is the central message of the play? What did the playwright want audiences to learn?
 4. What was your favorite moment in the play? Why?
 5. In the play, Henry doesn't give up on himself, and he discovers that learning can take time. Describe a time in your life when you didn't give up on yourself and accomplished a goal. How did you feel when you overcame obstacles?
 6. Henry learns that it's okay to make mistakes, but only if we learn from them. Describe a time when you made a mistake but learned from the experience.
 7. The play used humor to entertain the audience. What was your favorite joke, and why?
 8. How did the five actors play these different roles? How did they use the Tools of the Actor (body, voice, imagination, concentration) to transform themselves into a new character?
 9. How did you know when the setting of the play changed? What props or set pieces were added to the stage? How did the sound or lighting change?
 10. How did music help tell Henry's story? What song was your favorite?
 11. Make a prediction: What happens next to Henry in the fourth grade?
 12. If you read *The Incredible Book Eating Boy* by Oliver Jeffers, in what ways were the play and book similar? How were they different?
-

POST-SHOW EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Using the template below, design your own “Monster Book” costume.



Using the template below, create a mini graphic novel of the most important moments from *The Incredible Book Eating Boy*.

| | |
|----------|----------|
| A | |
| B | C |
| D | |
| E | F |

STATUES

Create a “frozen picture,” or a statue with your body. Statues can represent a person, a feeling, or even an idea!

A strong statue has:

1. Facial expressions
2. Interesting body shapes
3. Levels (high, middle, low)

Statue Prompts:

- Henry on the first day of third grade
- Rover swallowing Henry's textbook whole!
- Henry tentatively eating his first book
- Henry's teacher or classmates reacting to Henry eating a book
- Henry feeling sick after eating too many books
- Henry feeling much better entering the fourth grade



Alexander Chen in the Alliance Theatre's world premiere musical production of *The Incredible Book Eating Boy*. Photo by Greg Mooney.

TABLEAU

A **tableau** is a frozen snapshot of a group of participants/actors that represents and explores a particular moment in a story.

A strong statue has:

1. Facial expressions
2. Interesting body shapes
3. Levels (high, middle, low)
4. Character relationships

Instructions:

- Select a moment from *The Incredible Book Eating Boy*, and describe the scene so everyone knows what kind of tableau they'll be creating.
- Have the participants/actors join the scene one at a time, building the image one statue at a time.
- Incorporate the use of levels. High, low, and medium body positions make the tableau more interesting for the audience.
- Strong tableaux utilize expressive facial expressions! What is your character thinking or feeling in that moment?
- Option to layer in Thought Tracking: The teacher can activate certain statues in the tableau by calling their name or tapping them on the shoulder. Once activated, the statue, as the character, has to say how they're feeling or what they're thinking, using 1st person perspective: "I'm feeling ____" or "I'm thinking about ____."



India Tyree, Brad Raymond, Alexander Chen, and Rhyn McLemore in the Alliance Theatre's world premiere musical production of *The Incredible Book Eating Boy*. Photo by Greg Mooney.

Tableau Prompts for *The Incredible Book Eating Boy*:

- Henry, Rover, Mom, and Dad around the dinner table
- Henry in the library surrounded by scary, menacing books that have come to life
- Henry, Jeff, and Olivia at the book fair
- Create two tableaux: Compare and contrast Henry's first day of third grade in Ms. Penny's classroom with his first day of fourth grade

SOURCES

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