



Main  
Street  
Theater



# JAMES & THE GIANT PEACH

STUDY GUIDE

all  
THEATER FOR ^ YOUTH

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# THEATER ETIQUETTE

Being in a live performance is very different from seeing a movie in a movie theater or at home. The setting is much quieter, and noises created by patrons can interrupt the show and distract the performers. You are watching real people on stage; they deserve your respect while they perform.

## **HERE ARE SOME BASIC GUIDELINES AND RULES FOR ATTENDING LIVE THEATER:**

- No talking. Even whispers can be loud in a quiet room.
- If you have a cell phone, it must be turned off AND put away during the show. The light can distract performers.
- Do not put your feet on chairs in front of you or sit on your feet in the seats.
- No food or drinks are allowed in the theater.
- Cover your mouth for yawns, coughs, or other noises.
- If you think something is funny, feel free to laugh. The actors are energized when they receive interaction from the audience.
- Don't stand up or switch seats during the performance.
- Use the restroom and get comfortable before the show starts.

**THE ACTORS LOVE TO RECEIVE FAN MAIL FROM THE STUDENTS!**

(send to)  
**Main Street Theater**  
**Attn: School Bookings**  
**3400 Main Street, Suite 283**  
**Houston, TX 77002**

# ROLES OF EMPLOYEES AT THE THEATER



**Director:** The show's director decides how they want the show to look and feel. They choose actors and make decisions on sets, costumes, sound, lighting, etc. Coaching the actors and deciding how and where they move (called blocking) is a big part of this job.



**Actors:** These people give a role as a character in the show. They must learn their lines and decide how they want to present their personality. Are they funny or sad? They work closely with each other and the director to match the show's tone.



**Choreographer:** A choreographer creates the show's dances or complicated movements. This person designs the moves with the director's approval and then teaches the actors how to perform.



**Lighting Director:** This person designs how the intensity and color of the lighting will appear on the stage. The colors can change how the set looks and create a feeling for the audience.



**Musical Director:** The musical director learns all the show's music. They then must teach and lead any musicians, singers, and others involved in producing the piece.



**Ushers:** Ushers are the people who welcome you to the theater and help you find your seat. They can also answer many questions for theatergoers.



**Costumer or Costume Designer:** This person or team decides and puts together costumes for all the actors. Sometimes they make the costumes, and sometimes they put existing pieces together.



**Prop Master:** The prop master ensures that anything used in the show is prepared and ready for actors to grab as they walk onto the stage. Props can be baskets, a flower, a glass, or a sword. They are also responsible for acquiring the set designers approval of the furniture needed and the set dressing.

# THE HISTORY OF JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH



Roald Dahl was born in 1916 in Wales, England and lived until 1990. He was well known for his children's books which stood out for their unique characters. He lived in Tanzania and served in the British Royal Air Force during World War II. He was a fighter pilot and was seriously injured in a crash landing.

In the early 1940's he lived in Washington D.C. and was a spy for the British Government.

Dahl's first book, *The Gremlins* was published in 1943 but was not successful. He wrote several adult books, some of which achieved best-seller status before trying his hand at children's books.

Some of his most famous children's titles include *James and the Giant Peach*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, *BFG*, *The Witches* and *Matilda*. Most of his children's books have been turned into films.

# ART PROJECT: MAKE YOUR OWN PEACH

Reading the description of the color of a peach, have students make their own! There are several options of how this project can be done. If possible have at least one real peach for the students to look at. Discuss how the color isn't solid across the fruit but varies throughout the body of the fruit.

*"The skin of the peach was very beautiful - a rich buttery yellow with patches of brilliant pink and red."*



**Option 1:** Have students draw a huge peach on a piece of paper. Using watercolor paints, have students paint one firm line of yellow, one of pink and one of red. Have the students lightly dampen their brush and swirl the colors together. Allow to dry and then display. Look at how no two are exactly alike, just like real peaches.



**Option 2:** Cut pieces of tissue paper in pink, red, orange, yellow, etc. Provide each student with a paper plate and school glue. Using the back of the plate, have students layer pieces of tissue paper onto the plate. Look at how the colors overlap and blend.



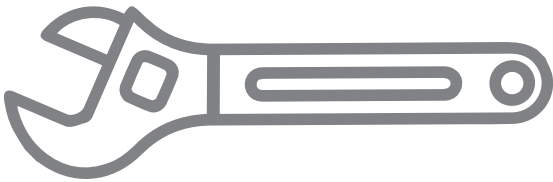
**Option 3:** On a huge piece of butcher paper, draw a giant peach with a permanent maker. Using non-toxic, stain-free paints in orange, red, and yellow, allow the students to take turns painting sections of the peach. After the entire class is done, the peach will be varied and beautiful, just as described in the book!



# MATH: MEASURING WITH CENTIMETERS

Centi – the beginning of the word centipede means hundred. The metric measuring system also uses centi- as in centimeters. A centimeter is one hundredth of a meter. In America our main measuring system is based upon inches and feet instead of meters.

Most rulers have millimeters and centimeters listed on the opposite side of the ruler to inches. Speak with your students about the differences of the measuring systems. Explain the origin of “centipede” and have students measure using both the US measurement system, and the metric system. Have them write down their lengths with answers from both systems.



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Icons via flaticon.com



# WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERS SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES?

Under each character list the traits that relate to them. You can use a trait for more than one character.

HONEST	ENERGETIC	BASHFUL	SERIOUS	CAREFREE	DREAMER	INSECURE
HELPFUL	CREATIVE	TIMID	LOVING	LOYAL	CURIOUS	GENTLE
BRAVE	FUNNY	SHY	LUCKY	OPTIMISTIC	DARING	DAINTY
SMART	CHEERFUL	LAZY	RESPECTFUL	AMBITIOUS	CRITICAL	FOOLISH
CARING	BOLD	RUDE	THANKFUL	CONFIDENT	HATEFUL	ANXIOUS



# GEOGRAPHY: TAKE A VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP TO THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING

Begin with some easy questions:

- Where is the Empire State Building located?
- It is considered a skyscraper. What does that mean?
- What year was the Empire State Building built?

Introduce the students to the following websites:

- Facts Just for Kids:  
<https://www.factsjustforkids.com/engineering-facts/empire-state-building-facts-for-kids/>
- Britannica Kids:  
<https://kids.britannica.com/students/article/Empire-State-Building/631467>
- Science Kids:  
<https://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/engineering/empirestatebuilding.html>
- The Empire State Building:  
<https://www.esbnyc.com/>

Build up to questions that require fact finding:

- How many floors is the Empire State Building?
- How many people did it take to build the Empire State Building?
- What floors have observation decks?

Videos of the history, design and current use of the Empire State Building abound.

The students don't have access to the internet? No problem! Print up the articles, hand out some highlighters and incorporate recognizing important text in content.

*Icons via flaticon.com*





# SCIENCE: SINKING & FLOATING

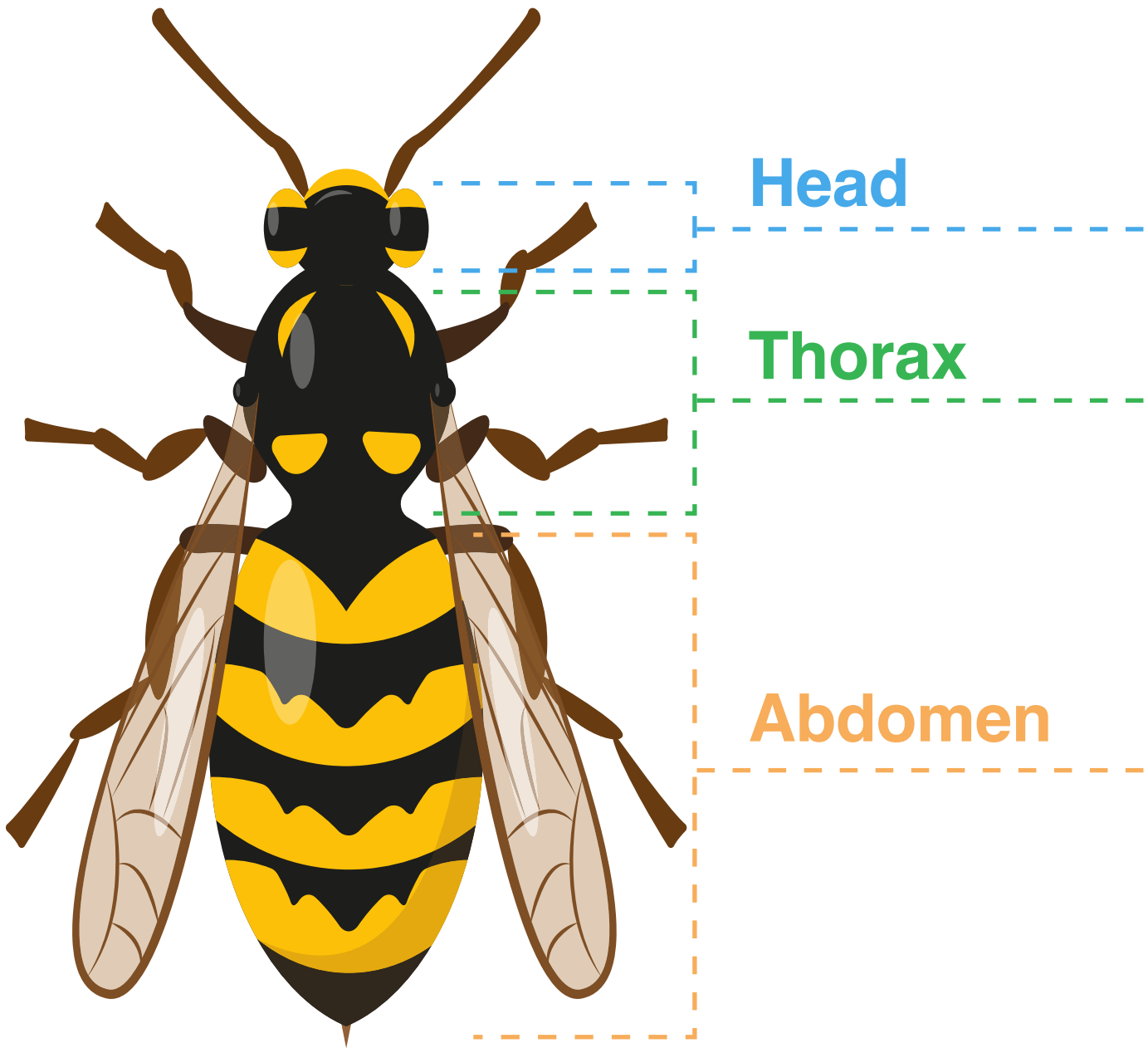
## SINK OR FLOAT PREDICTIONS

Make a prediction in the table below if you think the item will sink or swim.

OBJECT	FLOAT	SINK
pencil		
paper clip		
notecard		
marshmallow		
toy car		
coin		
stick		
crayon		

# SCIENCE: PARTS OF AN INSECT

Talk about the basic parts of insects, explaining that all insects have the three same parts: Head, Thorax and Abdomen. Have students label the parts on images of insects from the book or create construction paper cut-outs to be labeled.



# FUN FACTS ABOUT JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH

The book was almost called “*James and the Giant Cherry.*” Roald Dahl was inspired to write the book based on a cherry tree growing in an orchard outside of his countryside home. He imagined what would happen if one of the cherries grew continuously. He considered many different fruits before settling on the peach.

*James and the Giant Peach* was Roald Dahl’s first children’s book. Writing a children’s book was huge shift for Dahl. He wrote numerous short stories and a couple of novels for adults before trying his hand at writing a children’s book. He went on to write some of the most beloved children’s books of all time.

**Quentin Blake was not the original illustrator of the book.** Most fans of Dahl immediately recognize the illustrations of Quentin Blake and assume that he illustrated all of Dahl’s books. Actually, he didn’t redesign the story until 1995.

**Dahl loved having Creepy Creatures as Characters.** Dahl greatly admired the work of Beatrix Potter (*Peter Rabbit*) and A.A. Milne (*Winnie the Pooh*). Therefore, he didn’t want to write real animals in his children’s books. He reportedly told his daughter, “There seemed to be jolly little that had not been written about, except, maybe little things like earthworms and centipedes and spiders.”

**LEGO created it’s own James and the Giant Peach sculpture.** In 2017 LEGO celebrated by creating a huge James sculpture at Cardiff Castle. It took 160 hours to build.



Dahl, R. (2022, July 26). 7 juicy facts you didn’t know about James and the giant peach. Penguin Books UK. Retrieved February 8, 2023, from <https://www.penguin.co.uk/articles/childrens-article/7-juicy-facts-you-didnt-know-about-james-and-the-giant-peach>

# IF YOU LIKED *JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH*, YOU MIGHT LIKE...



## **Crenshaw**

by Katherine Applegate

The heart-warming new story about family and friendships from Newbery Medal-winner Katherine Applegate. Life is tough for ten-year-old Jackson. The landlord is often at the door, there's not much food in the fridge and he's worried that any day now the family will have to move out of their home.

## **The Magician's Elephant**

by Kate DiCamillo

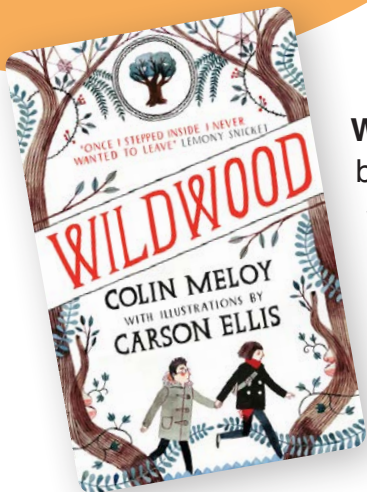
When ten-year-old orphan Peter Augustus Duchene encounters a fortune teller in the marketplace one day and she tells him that his sister, who is presumed dead, is in fact alive, he embarks on a remarkable series of adventures as he desperately tries to find her.



## **Wildwood**

by Colin Meloy

When her baby brother is kidnapped by crows, seventh-grader Prue McKeel ventures into the forbidden Impassable Wilderness--a dangerous and magical forest in the middle of Portland, Oregon--and soon finds herself involved in a war among the various inhabitants.





### **The Wild Book**

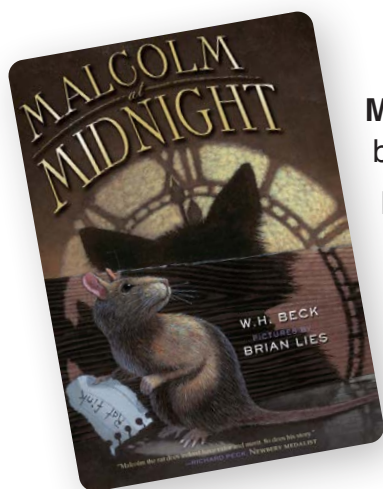
by Juan Villoro

A wondrous adventure story of a boy who goes to live with his kooky, book-obsessed uncle in a library where books have supernatural powers. Thirteen-year-old Juan's summer is off to a terrible start. First, his parents separate. Then, almost as bad, Juan is sent away to his strange Uncle Tito's house for the entire break! Who wants to live with an oddball recluse who has zigzag eyebrows, drinks fifteen cups of smoky tea a day, and lives inside a huge, mysterious library?

### **Emmy and the Incredible Shrinking Rat**

by Lynne Jonell

When Emmy discovers that she and her formerly loving parents are being drugged by their evil nanny with rodent potions that can change people in frightening ways, she and some new friends must try everything possible to return things to normal.



### **Malcolm at Midnight**

by W.H. Beck

Malcolm, a smaller than average rat, loves life at McKenna School and the secret society of classroom pets that keep children out of trouble, but when Aggy the iguana disappears Malcolm must use all of his ratty persistence to prove his innocence and save her.