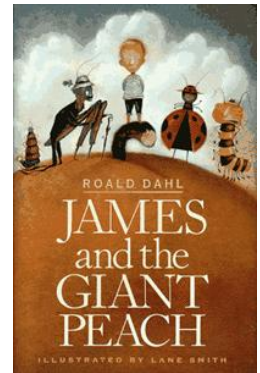


James and the Giant Peach:
A Literature Focus Unit for Fourth Grade

created by
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FEATURED SELECTION:

- Dahl, Roald. *James and the Giant Peach*. New York: Puffin Books, 1961.
 - This is a fourth to fifth grade reading level. (Lexile: 870 L)
- James goes to live with his two mean aunts when his parents die in a freak accident. He is miserable until an old man gives him some magic crocodile tongues. However, James drops them and they produce a giant peach, in which lives a giant centipede, earthworm, ladybug, grasshopper, spider, and glow-worm. James joins these lively creatures and they embark on many adventures as the peach travels around the world. The peach lands in an ocean where sharks attack them until James catches seagulls with string to carry the peach into the air. The peach finally ends up speared by the Empire State building, and the creatures become famous and get jobs in New York City. James lives in the peach pit and makes many friends, so he is finally happy.

RELATED MATERIALS:

- Reinhart, Matthew. *Young Naturalist's Handbook: Insect-lo-pedia*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2003.
 - This book describes the parts, life, and characteristics of various insects. James' friends, such as the grasshopper and ladybug, along with other insects are described in this book.
 - The reading level is age four through eight.
- Capeci, Anne. *The Magic School Bus Chapter Book #11: Insect Invaders*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 2001.
 - Wanda brings her new pet ladybugs to school to find out how to care for them; instead, the whole class goes on an adventure on their magic school bus. Like James, the class discovers the world of the insects.
 - This is a third grade reading level. (Lexile: 610 L)
- James, Mary. *Shoebag*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1990.
 - Shoebag is a happy cockroach who suddenly finds himself transformed into a human; Shoebag is turned back into a cockroach after influencing several humans' lives. Shoebag, an insect, gains a new perspective on life similar to James, who gains the perspective of an insect.
 - This is a fourth grade reading level. (Lexile: 780 L)
- Cronin, Doreen. *Diary of a Worm*. New York: HarperCollins, 2003.
 - In this book, a young worm describes his family, school, and friends, along with providing various facts about earthworms. This book provides another view into Earthworm's life from *James and the Giant Peach*.
 - This is a second grade reading level. (Lexile AD 360 L)

- Kirk, David. *Miss Spider's Tea Party*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1994.
 - The other insects are afraid to attend Miss Spider's tea party; she helps a moth who gets soaked by the rain, so soon the other insects join her party. Similar to *James and the Giant Peach*, this book provides a look into insects' lives and also addresses the fear of spiders.
 - This is a fourth grade reading level. (Lexile 810 L)

GOALS

- The students will examine the insect characters in the book in order to determine what is true and what is fiction about them in the book.
- The students will examine how the author, Roald Dahl, integrates idioms into the book to enhance the story.
- The students will investigate various insects from the book in order to find out more about them and their homes.
- The students will predict what would have happened if James was the one to swallow the crocodile's tongues.
- The students will learn to use the reading comprehension skills of predicting and visualizing.

STRATEGIES/SKILLS

- The students will learn the comprehension strategies of predicting and visualizing.
- The students will learn to identify and use idioms.
- The students will learn to use descriptive words when writing.

STANDARDS

- Science 4.4.2: Investigate, observe, and describe that insects and various other organisms depend on dead plant and animal material for food.
- Science 4.4.3: Observe and describe that organisms interact with one another in various ways, such as providing food, pollination, and seed dispersal.
- English 4.2.3: Make and confirm predictions about text by using prior knowledge and ideas presented in the text itself, including illustrations, titles, topic sentences, important words, foreshadowing clues (clues that indicate what might happen next), and direct quotations.
- English 4.2.5: Compare and contrast information on the same topic after reading several passages or articles.
- English 4.3.1: Describe the differences of various imaginative forms of literature, including fantasies, fables, myths, legends, and fairy tales.
- English 4.5.2: Write responses to literature that:
 - demonstrate an understanding of a literary work.
 - support judgments through references to both the text and prior knowledge.
- English 4.5.5: Use varied word choices to make writing interesting.

UNIT PLAN

- Pre-reading
 - The teacher will have a speaker bring in insects to share with the class. If this is not possible, the teacher will bring in pictures of spiders, earthworms, grasshoppers, and centipedes to share with the class.
 - Grouping: whole-class
 - The students will draw a picture of what they think an insect's home looks like.
 - Grouping: individual
- Reading
 - The teacher will read the first chapter aloud to the class.
 - Grouping: whole-class
 - The students will use buddy reading to read most of the rest of the book. Occasionally, the teacher will read the book or the students will read individually.
 - Grouping: partner, whole-class, individual
 - Accommodations: The teacher will partner struggling readers with good readers so they can help them. The teacher will also meet with struggling readers after each chapter to make sure that they understood the chapter.
- Responding
 - The students will write in their reading logs twice a week to respond to what they have read. One journal entry will include, "What would have happened if James had swallowed the crocodile tongues instead of dropping them?" Other entries will include comparing the insects, why the author gave James' aunts the names of Sponge and Spider, respectively, and why the author included the cloud men.
 - Grouping: individual
 - The students will participate in grand conversations once a week. The conversations will focus on connections the students have made between *James and the Giant Peach* and the related material they have read, how they are using the comprehension strategies taught, and interesting passages students have read.
 - Grouping: whole-class
- Exploring
 - Word wall words will include: ambled, awkward, colossal, desolate, disentangle, enormous, enthralled, extraordinary, famished, flabbergasted, gigantic, horrid, hovering, hysterics, jostling, nuisance, pandemonium, peculiar, plummeted, quiver, rambunctious, ridiculous, scornful, stealthy, and trembling
 - Grouping: whole-class
 - The teacher will share information about the author, Roald Dahl. The teacher will read a short biography about him and give the students a list of other books he has written.
 - Grouping: whole-class
 - The teacher will describe idioms. The teacher will share examples of idioms the author used in the book, and the students will reread these sections. Examples of idioms from the book include "all in the same boat," "pulling my leg," "flood of tears," "work like mad," and "white as a sheet." The students will then work with a partner to write two of their own idioms each about the story. The students will also create illustrations for their idioms.
 - Grouping: whole-class, partner

- The teacher will give mini-lessons on the predicting and visualizing comprehension strategies and using descriptive words when writing.
 - Grouping: whole-class
- The students will make a list of the insect characteristics that are true in the book and the ones that are false.
 - Grouping: small group
- The teacher will give book talks about the related materials and explain how they connect to *James and the Giant Peach*. The students will then be encouraged to read these books on their own during silent reading time.
 - Grouping: whole-class, individual
- Applying
 - The students will each create a project about the book. The students can work alone, with a partner, or with a small group of three or four students. They will choose their project from a list provided by the teacher.
 - Students may explore buoyancy by doing a science experiment to discover if a peach would really float as it did in the book. The experiment can be found at <http://www.idahoptv.org/ntti/nttilelessons/10/99pine.htm>.
 - The students may make a papier-mache peach. They will then make seagulls from construction paper and attach them to the peach with string.
 - The students may make peach food. They may find their own recipe using peaches or find one at <http://www.davispeachfarm.com/recipes.html>.
 - The students may make a poem or song about the story.
 - The students may create a skit from one section of the book to perform for the class.
 - Grouping: may be individual, partner, or small group.

TIME SCHEDULE

<u>Day 1:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduce the book ▪ Have guest speaker come in ▪ Students draw insect homes ▪ Read chapter 1 and 2 out loud (30 minutes) 	<u>Day 2:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students read chapters 3-5 in buddy reading ▪ Students write in reading logs ▪ Teacher introduces the fantasy genre (35 minutes) 	<u>Day 3:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students read chapters 6-7 in buddy reading ▪ Teacher will share information about the author (20 minutes) 	<u>Day 4:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students read chapters 8-10 in buddy reading ▪ Students write in reading logs ▪ Teacher introduces related materials (25 minutes) 	<u>Day 5:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students read chapters 11-12 individually ▪ Compare and contrast various characters ▪ Participate in grand conversation (30 minutes)
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<p><u>Day 6:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students read chapters 13-14 in buddy reading ▪ Minilesson on using descriptive words ▪ Students write in reading logs (25 minutes) 	<p><u>Day 7:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The teacher reads chapters 15-16 ▪ Teacher discusses the predicting strategy (20 minutes) 	<p><u>Day 8:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students read chapters 17-18 in buddy reading ▪ Participate in grand conversation (25 minutes) 	<p><u>Day 9:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students read chapters 19-21 individually ▪ Students write in reading logs (15 minutes) 	<p><u>Day 10:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students read chapters 22-23 in buddy reading ▪ Teacher discusses the visualizing strategy (20 minutes)
<p><u>Day 11:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students read chapters 24-25 in buddy reading ▪ Students will compare and contrast the insect characters ▪ Students will list the true and fiction aspects of the insect characters (35 minutes) 	<p><u>Day 12:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students read chapters 26-27 individually ▪ Students write in reading logs (15 minutes) 	<p><u>Day 13:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The teacher reads chapters 28-30 ▪ Teacher introduces idioms (25 minutes) 	<p><u>Day 14:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students read chapters 31-36 in buddy reading ▪ Participate in grand conversation (35 minutes) 	<p><u>Day 15:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students read chapters 37-39 in buddy reading ▪ Students write in reading logs (20 minutes)
<p><u>Day 16:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students work on projects (30 minutes) 	<p><u>Day 17:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students work on finishing projects ▪ What is not finished becomes homework (20 minutes) 	<p><u>Day 18:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students share their projects with the rest of the class (20 minutes) 		

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

- _____ Picture of what an insect's home looks like
- _____ Journal entries
- _____ Two written idioms about the story with illustrations
- _____ Final project about the story

Monitoring student learning:

- The teacher will use a rubric to grade the students' pictures, journal entries, idioms, and final projects. The students will keep these in a folder to make a portfolio to turn in at the end of the focus unit. The students will have a checklist to keep track of assignments.
- The teacher will observe and keep a checklist of who talks and what is said during the grand conversations.
- The teacher will observe students and make anecdotal notes during buddy reading.

Ideas for focus unit from:

<http://www.davispeachfarm.com/recipes.html>

<http://www.idahoptv.org/ntti/nttileasons/10/99pine.htm>

<http://education.gsu.edu/gatod/FeatureTeacher/FeatureLessonPlan.htm>