

# big NATE

SAY GOOD-BYE  
TO DORK CITY



by LINCOLN PEIRCE

## TEACHER'S GUIDE

Curriculum Connections and Activity/Discussion Guide

*The activities in this guide align with Next Generation English Language Arts Standards for grades 3–5.*



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Reading With Pictures



Andrews McMeel  
PUBLISHING®

KIDS



## Big Nate: Say Good-Bye to Dork City

LINCOLN PEIRCE

AMP! Comics for Kids

Andrews McMeel Publishing

ISBN: 978-1-4494-6225-3

**GRADE LEVEL:** 3–5

### Curriculum Connections

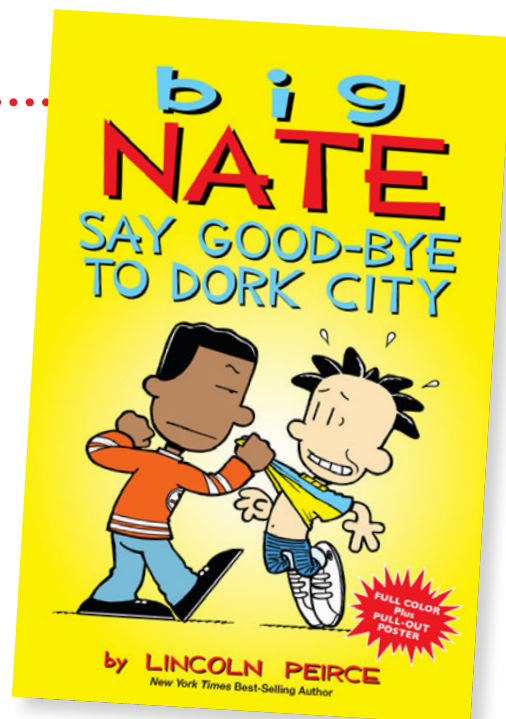
Language Arts—Character Motivation

### Content Standards

Language Arts

Common Core State Standards: [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)

### Overview



YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE,  
MY ONLY  
SUNSHINE... ☺



## Grade 3

### Reading

- Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3]
- Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.7]



## Writing

- ✱ With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4]

## Grade 4

### Reading

- ✱ Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions). [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3]

## Writing

- ✱ Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.4]

## Grade 5

### Reading

- ✱ Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact). [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3]
- ✱ Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a text (e.g., graphic novel, multimedia presentation of fiction, folktale, myth, poem). [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.7]

## Writing

- ✱ Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.4]



## Time Frame

3–5 class periods.

## Objectives

- \* Students will identify character actions and motivations in *Big Nate: Say Good-Bye to Dork City*.
- \* Students will create autobiographical four-panel comics based on real life situations in which they show both action and motivation.
- \* Students will observe and discuss ways to convey action and feeling in comics and use what they learn in creating their own comics.

## Materials

- \* Copies of *Big Nate: Say Good-Bye to Dork City*
- \* *Character Actions and Motivations* worksheet
- \* *Motivate to Action! Comic* worksheet
- \* Pencils
- \* Colored pencils, markers, or other art supplies

## Procedure

### Before Reading

1. Take students on a quick book walk through *Big Nate: Say Good-Bye to Dork City* without reading the dialogue. Ask students what they think the book is about. If students have read other Big Nate titles, ask them to share what they know about the characters and settings.
2. Ask students to point out who they think the main characters are in the comic, describe those characters, and make predictions about the characters based on visual cues.
3. Introduce the concept of character motivation. *Motivation* is the reason a character does something (what they want, need, think, or feel that makes them take action). For example, if a character steals food, the motivation could be hunger, greed, or jealousy. Ask students what some other motivations for stealing food might be.
4. Ask students to share some character actions that they remember from books they have read and discuss the motivations of the characters who performed those actions.

## Procedure Continued

### During Reading

5. Tell students that their purpose for reading this book is to observe the characters' actions and think about their motivations for those actions. What do the characters want, need, think, or feel that makes them take action?

### After Reading

6. Show students the following pages and have them discuss their thoughts about these characters' motivations:
  - Page 54: Why did Mr. Rosa laugh so hard at Nate's statement?
  - Page 69: Why did Nate try to turn in his test without answering any of the questions?
  - Page 157: Why didn't Francis say anything to Mr. Galvin?
  - Page 180: Why did Nate choose to go with his friends instead of staying with Marcus?
7. Give students copies of the *Character Actions and Motivations* worksheet. Have them select four comics from the book in which a character performs some sort of action. In the chart on their worksheets, have students draw and write about the actions and motivations of the characters. Remind students that in comics, information comes from the words as well as the pictures (and the way they work together), so they should use information from both the drawings and the dialogue.
8. Tell students that they will now be starring in their own four-panel comics. They should think of situations that they have been in or that they might find themselves in and show how their motivations create actions. Give students copies of the *Motivate to Action! Comic* worksheet and have each student fill in the situation, action, and motivation that he or she will use.
9. Use the following pages in *Big Nate: Say Good-Bye to Dork City* to help students learn more about how actions and emotions can be depicted in comics. Encourage students to use what they learn in creating their own comics.
  - Panel-to-Panel Action (pages 10 and 34): Remind students that the action in the story moves from one panel to the next in a comic. Readers must often use their imaginations to fill in what happens between panels.
    - o Show students page 10. What happens between panels two and three? (*The eighth grader steals the ball from Teddy.*) How do you know? (*In the second panel, Teddy is kicking the ball, and in the third panel, the big kid has the ball. He must have taken it away in between the panels.*)

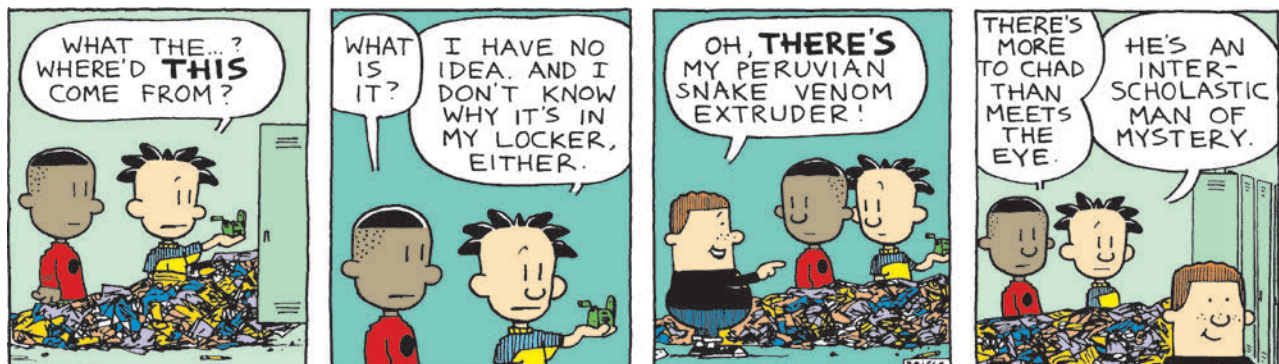


## Procedure Continued

- o Have students look at the last three panels on page 34. What happens between the purple “Click!” panel and the last panel? (*Nate’s dad triggers the trap and the net falls on him.*) How do you know? (*There’s a “Click!” above Nate’s dad’s head in the first panel, and then he’s trapped under a net in the last panel, so the net must have fallen on him in between panels.*)
  - o Point out to students that when they are creating their comics, they don’t need to show everything that happens. They can show what happens before and after in a way that leads the reader to figure out the action in between.
  - o Give students some time to find other examples of action between panels in the book and share them with the class.
- Within-Panel Action (pages 118, 167, and 168): Tell students that motion lines and repeated images are often used to show action within one panel of a comic.
- o Show students panels two and four on page 118. What do the colored lines mean? (*That Nate and Teddy are sliding. The lines also show which direction each of the characters is going.*)
  - o Show students page 167 and point out panel three and the last panel. Ask students what action is happening in these panels. (*Artur and Nate are bonking themselves in the head with empty plastic bottles.*) How did the cartoonist show that action? (*He drew multiple bottles overlapping to show the range of motion. The bottles are also blurry to show that they are moving quickly.*)
  - o Show students page 178. In panel two, how does the cartoonist show the action? (*A burst of short lines shows that Marcus shoved Artur. Also, the positions of the characters and the “SHOVE!” sound effect help tell you about the action.*) In panel three, how do you know that Marcus has turned around to face Nate? (*There is a curved line near the back of his head to show the motion.*)
  - o Point out to students that when they are creating their own comics they can show action within a panel by using motion lines and repeated or blurred images.
  - o Give students some time to find other examples of action within panels in the book and share them with the class.

## Procedure Continued

- Feeling Symbols (pages 62, 98, and 153): Tell students that comics often use symbols to show characters' feelings.
  - o Show students page 62 and point out the black cloud over Nate's head in the second-to-last panel. What does this symbol mean? (*Nate is angry or upset.*) Have students look for a similar symbol on the next page.
  - o Turn to page 98 and ask students to point out lines or symbols that show how Nate is feeling. (*The sweat drops flying off his head in the third panel show that he is nervous. The lines coming from his head in the last panel show that he is really upset.*)
  - o Turn to page 153 and ask students to find the feeling symbols. What do they mean? (*The hearts around Spitsy mean that he loves the snowcat. The question mark and exclamation point mean that he is confused and surprised.*)
  - o Give students some time to find other examples of feeling symbols in the book and share them with the class.
- 10. Give students time to sketch out first drafts of their comics in pencil. Remind them that a comic is a series of pictures that tell a story in sequence, not just four unrelated pictures. They should use a combination of pictures and words to tell the whole story. Their comics must show the situations and the actions they took, and should allow the reader to figure out what the motivations were for the actions.
- 11. Once students have created their drafts, have each of them prepare a piece of paper with his or her name and a two-column chart with the headings *Action* and *Motivation*. Then have students place their completed comics on their tables or desks, along with the prepared chart. Have students circulate around the room and read one another's comics. For each comic, students should write on the chart what the action is and what they think the motivation was for the action. This will provide students with authentic feedback on how well their comic conveys their intended messages.
- 12. Have students revise their comic drafts based on the feedback they received, and then provide colored pencils, markers, or other art supplies for students to create final versions.



## Assessment

Have each student write a paragraph about the situation depicted in his or her *Motivate to Action!* comic. Each student should describe the situation, the action he or she took, and the motivation that spurred him or her to action. Assess students' writing using the formative or summative assessments that you usually use for writing, and also analyze students' comics and paragraphs to assess their understanding of character action and motivation.

## Differentiation and Extended Learning Activities

### Digital Comics

- ✱ Let students use a free online digital comic creator, such as MakeBeliefsComix or the ReadWriteThink Comic Creator, to create their *Motivate to Action!* comics.

### Character Role Play

- ✱ Give students an opportunity to act out the scenarios they created in their comics. Remind students that they need to show both the actions they took and their motivations for those actions. Give students time to create props or costumes, if desired, and to plan and rehearse their performances. Let students present their skits and have the class discuss the motivations behind each action.

### Write from a Character's Point of View

- ✱ Have each student choose a character from *Big Nate: Say Good-Bye to Dork City* and write a journal entry from the point of view of that character. Their entries should describe situations from the book and the characters' thoughts and motivations before, during, and after the situations.





# Character **ACTIONS** and **MOTIVATIONS**

Names:

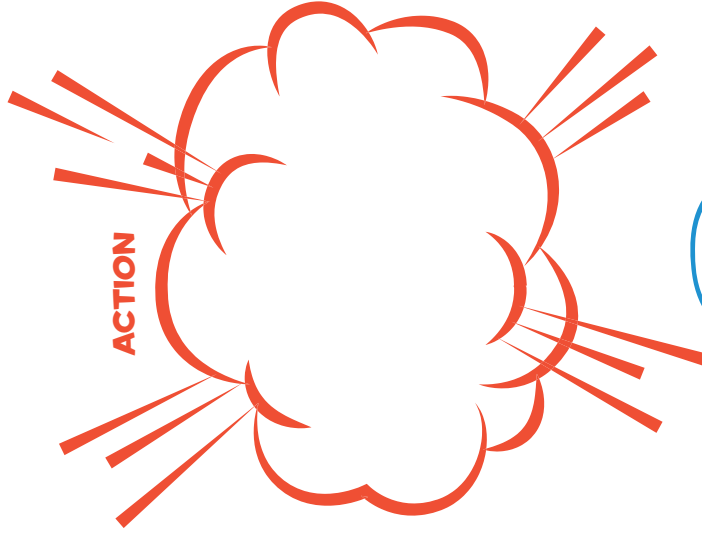
Date:

Directions: Choose three comics from the book in which a character performs an action. For each comic, write the page number and the name of the character. In each "Action" section, write and draw what the character does in the comic (action). Then, in the "Motivation" section, write and draw what you think the character wanted, needed, thought, or felt that caused him or her to make those choices (motivation).

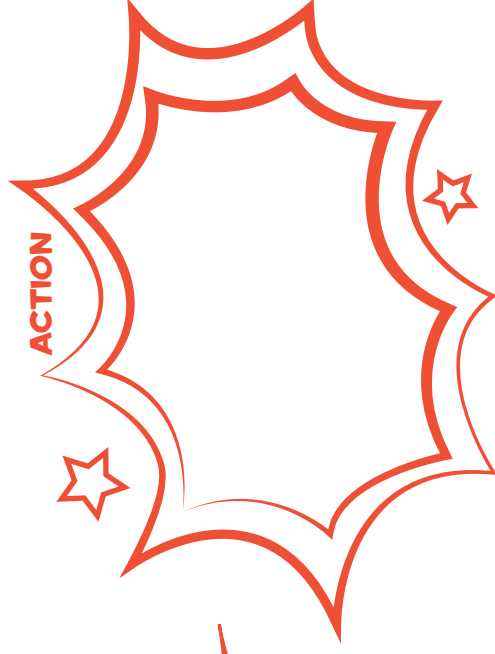
1. Page number: Character:

2. Page number: Character:

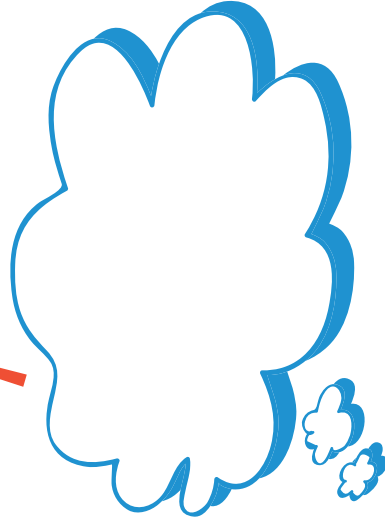
2. Page number: Character:



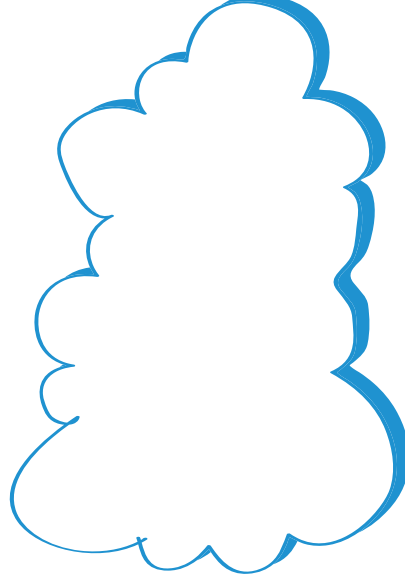
**ACTION**



**ACTION**



**MOTIVATION**



**MOTIVATION**



**MOTIVATION**



# MOTIVATE to ACTION! Comic

Name:

Date:

Directions: Think of a situation in your life in which you might have to make a choice about how to behave. What action would you take? What would your motivation be for taking that action?

My Situation: \_\_\_\_\_

My Action: \_\_\_\_\_

My Motivation: \_\_\_\_\_

Using the comic frame below, sketch out your idea for a comic about the situation starring YOU. Be creative in your use of panel-to-panel action, within-panel action, and feeling symbols—and make sure that your comic is clear and easy to read.

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