

big
NATE
GREAT MINDS THINK ALIKE
by **LINCOLN PEIRCE**



Andrews McMeel
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KIDS

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Curriculum Connections and Activity/Discussion Guide



Andrews McMeel
Publishing

Big Nate: Great Minds Think Alike

Lincoln Peirce

AMP! Comics for Kids

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GRADE LEVEL: 3–7

Curriculum Connections

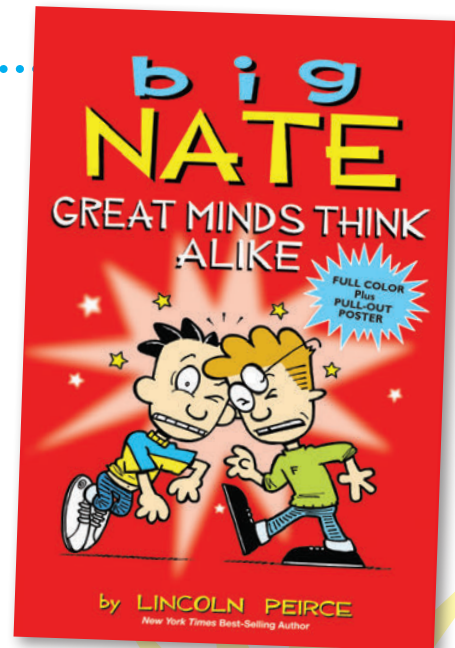
English Language Arts

Thematic Connections

School * Friendships * Relationships * Humor * Rivalry * Family

Overview

Two heads are better than one, except when they're crashing into each other! But that won't prevent Big Nate and his pals from hatching great ideas for fun. Nate Wright is a wisecracking eleven-year-old who knows he's destined for greatness—he's a sixth-grade chess prodigy, a self-described genius, and the all-time record holder for detentions in school history. He's often in hot water with his teachers and classmates, but Nate's winning personality and can-do attitude always make him a big hit with readers.



English Language Arts Lesson Plan: Collaborative Discussion, Group Activities, and Creative Writing

Objective

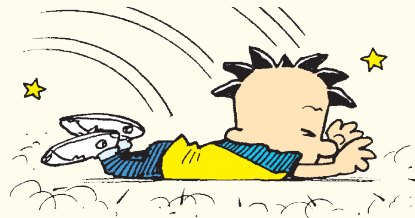
Students will read this comic book, participate in a class discussion, complete group presentation activities, and use the book as a springboard for individual creative writing exercises.

Prereading

The text of the book includes some words and expressions that may not be familiar to students. Ask students to note any unfamiliar words or expressions they come across while reading, and ask them to find definitions.

Postreading Discussion Questions

- * Ask students to share some of the expressions they recorded during their reading. Examples: “psych me out,” “pussyfooting around,” “kiss and tell,” and “hope springs eternal.” Are these new to most students? Were they able to guess the definition from the story context? Can students share some common expressions used in their classroom? At home?
- * Show the class the comic on page 175, where Nate is exuberant about Mrs. Godfrey’s sabbatical. In the “Yes” panel, why do students think the artist chose to use a word to portray Nate’s strong feelings? Can they suggest ways the artist might have shown the same thing using just pictures? Do they remember other places in the story where the artist uses a word or words to emphasize something, instead of relying on art alone?
- * On page 39, Francis asks, “Does irony count as a life skill?” Ask students if someone can define irony and if not, provide a definition and lead a discussion about it. Why does Francis say this about Nate? Is Nate aware that he’s being ironic? Can students name other examples from the story? Why is irony (along with mockery and sarcasm) such a staple in humorous writing? Have they read anything that could be considered ironic?
- * Much of the book takes place in a school setting. Ask students to compare and contrast this school environment with other school stories they’ve read (examples: *The Wimpy Kid* books or books by Andrew Clements). Is the setting here more realistic? More exaggerated? Look at the way the characters interact—boys vs. girls, kids vs. teachers, etc. Does a story with pictures, or a comic book, make for a funnier school story than one that just uses words?



Group Activities

Break the class into five or six groups and ask each group to do the following.

- * On page 166, Nate claims that Francis will act differently if his girlfriend comes with the boys to the mall. Have the group come up with five ways that boys act differently when girls are around, and five ways that girls act differently when boys are around. Have each group present their ideas to the class, with all members sharing in the oral presentation.
- * On page 55, Nate is upset because he is given a “lame” detention (being late for class); he would prefer a “quality” detention. Have each group brainstorm five to ten things that would result in a “quality” detention for Nate, and present them to the class.

Independent Creative Writing

- * On page 33, Nate decides he would like to become famous for breaking a world record. Have students write a short essay about which world record they would like to break, and how they would go about it. Bonus points for including some funny drawings!
- * Nate is always claiming to be an expert on something—in this book, he sets himself up as a Life Skills Coach, the Commissioner of Nicknames, and Dr. Love, an advice columnist. Have students choose another character from the story, give the character a similar “occupation,” and write a short essay giving the reasons for their choice.