

THE ICE CREAM KID

Brain
Freeze!



amp!
COMICS for kids

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Curriculum Connections and Activity/Discussion Guide

The activities in this guide align with Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts for grades 3–5.



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The Ice Cream Kid: Brain Freeze!

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GRADE LEVEL: 3–7

Curriculum Connections

English Language Arts

Thematic Connections

Humor * Fantasy * Family * School * Competition * Friends * Enemies

Overview

Irwin Snackcracker enjoys competitive booger picking, the smell of cafeteria pizza, and above all else, ice cream. But his average young life changes one fateful afternoon, when a bit of fudgesicle gives him super powers! And these super powers are no coincidence: they run in the family. Students will enjoy reading about Irwin's transformation and exploring the concept of humor through class discussion, team projects, and individual writing exercises.



English Language Arts Lesson Plan: Collaborative Discussion and Creative Writing

Objective

Students will read this book independently, keep a reading/vocabulary journal, participate in pre- and post-reading class discussions, collaborate on team projects, and complete individual writing exercises based on the book.

Pre-reading Discussion Questions

- * Show just the front and back covers of the book to the class. Do the covers give them a clue about what kind of book it is? Do they think it is scary, serious, or funny? Does it seem like something they will enjoy reading? What types of books do they enjoy most?
- * Then show students the interior of the book, flipping through and pausing at several of the full-color illustrations. Are students surprised to find that it is not a comic book? Are they disappointed? Can they tell from the illustrations that this is probably a humorous book? How?

- * Lead a discussion about exaggeration. Do students know what that means? Can anyone suggest examples? Do students find it funny when authors or artists exaggerate?
- * Have students keep a journal while reading this book and record three things:
 - Any examples of exaggeration they come across, either written or illustrated.
 - Any scenes that they think are especially funny.
 - Any unfamiliar words or phrases as they read the book. Ask them to try to uncover meaning through context and then to verify with a dictionary.



Post-reading Discussion Questions

- * Start by asking students if they thought the book was funny. Was it really funny, not funny at all, or just “kind of” funny? Why or why not? Ask students to share the scenes they thought were funny, referring to their reading journals if necessary, and make a class list of the funniest scenes.
- * As a class, examine this list. Is everyone in agreement about the humor in the scenes? Were they funny because of the pictures, or would they have been just as humorous without them? Do the ways the characters act, and interact, add to the humor?
- * There is a lot of “boys versus girls” action in the book. Do both boys and girls think this makes for funny scenes? Do girl and boy readers find the same scenes funny? Why or why not?
- * Ask students to name some of the characters in the book. Did they think the names were funny? Did they recognize WHY they were funny? Did their characteristics “live up to” their names?
- * Have students share examples of exaggeration (in either words or pictures) from their reading journals and talk about why this device is used to add humor to a narrative. When were the exaggerated scenes funny, and when did they fall flat? Why? Is it possible to exaggerate too much? Contrast the exaggerated humor in a story with a lie that is told in real life. Why is one funny and the other not?

Team Projects

- * Explore some of the traditional elements of the “hero” story. Divide the class into small groups and have each group dream up a new superhero, complete with superpower, sidekick, mentor, and nemesis. Have them write a short paragraph about each. Bonus points for humor!
- * Then, give each group a copy of the table of contents from *Brain Freeze!* Using the same chapter names, have them make an outline of an original story about their superhero, and then take turns reading their outlines to the rest of the class.

Writing Exercises

- * For most of the book, Irwin isn’t sure that he wants to give up being a kid, even to have superpowers. Ask students to write a short essay: If they could turn into a superhero by eating ice cream, would they do it? If they did have a superpower, what would they like it to be? Have them give the pros and cons of being a superhero.

- * Both Irwin and Wendy C. have close, if unconventional, relationships with their grandparents. Have students write about a connection they have with their grandparents or another older person. Do they get along? Are they able to have fun together? What have they learned from him or her?
- * Superheroes get all kinds of newspaper coverage. Have students write two news stories:
 - As a reporter for a city newspaper who has scored an interview with the Ice Cream Kid and Mighty Super Gus.
 - As a reporter for the school newspaper who has been assigned to interview Irwin and his Grandpa.
 Have students read their interviews aloud to the class.
- * Cafeteria “lunch ladies” are a popular subject for funny school stories. Ask students to write their own—she can be either the hero or the villain.

English Language Arts Standards (abbreviated version) this guide aligns with:

Grade 3

Reading: RL.3.1, RL.3.3, RT.3.4, RL.3.7

Writing: W.3.1, W.3.3

Speaking and Listening: SL.3.1, SL.3.2, SL.3.3, SL.3.4, SL.3.6

Language: L.3.1, L.3.2, L.3.3, L.3.4

Grade 4

Reading: RL.4.1, RL.4.3, RL.4.4

Writing: W.4.1, W.4.4

Speaking and Listening: SL.4.1, SL.4.2, SL.4.3, SL.4.4

Language: L.4.1, L.4.2, L.4.3, L.4.4

Grade 5

Reading: RL.5.1, RL.5.3, RL.5.4

Writing: W.5.1, W.5.4

Speaking and Listening: SL.5.1, SL.5.2, SL.5.3, SL.5.4

Language: L.5.1, L.5.2, L.5.3, L.5.4



Visit the Common Core State Standards website to read about the individual standards:

www.corestandards.org/the-standards.