

Nate the Great

STUDY GUIDE

Dear Teacher,

We have created the following study guide to help make your students' theater experience with Nate the Great as meaningful as possible. For many, it will be their first time viewing a live theatrical production. We have learned that when teachers discuss the play with their students before and after the production, the experience is more significant and long-lasting. Our study guide provides pre and post production discussion topics, as well as related activity sheets. These are just suggestions; please feel free to create your own activities and areas for discussion. We hope you and your class enjoy the show!

BACKGROUND

Our play is based on the first volume in the Nate the Great series of stories by award-winning author Marjorie Weinman Sharmat.

THE STORY

- Nate, the great boy detective solves mysteries with the help of some famous fictional detectives from the past: Sherlock Holmes, Charlie Chan and Nero Wolfe.
- Just as Nate starts looking for a case to solve, his friend Annie tells him she needs help finding a missing painting. Nate takes the case and they begin looking for clues.
- Nate wants to solve the case on his own so he sends the famous detectives away but soon finds himself at a dead end. He and Annie team up to find the painting and Nate learns that solving mysteries can be more fun with company around.

BEFORE SEEING THE PLAY

1. You may want to read some of the Nate the Great stories and review the plots and characters with your students.
2. Discuss mystery stories with your students. What makes a story a mystery? Brainstorm some examples of stories or movies you may know that are mysteries. Can anyone name any famous fictional detectives?
3. One theme in the play is teamwork. Discuss what it means to work or play on a team. What is important when you play on a team? What qualities do you look for in a teammate?

AFTER SEEING THE PLAY

1. Ask your students how the play was different from the Nate the Great books you read. How was it the same?
2. How does Nate change during the play? Why does he want to solve the mystery by himself? What happens to change his mind about accepting help from others?
3. How do the fictional detectives help Nate? Why do you think only Nate can see them? Has anyone ever had an imaginary friend?
4. Discuss how the actors played their roles. How did you know some characters were supposed to be children and some were adults? (detectives) How do you think the actors who played Fang and the Hexes prepared for their roles? How would you portray a dog or cat on stage?

ACTIVITIES

Creative Dramatics

Have your students re-enact scenes from the play. First, have the students discuss specific scenes – who were the characters, where did it take place, what happened? Examples of scenes might be:

- Nate and Annie looking for Rosamund's cats
- Nate and the detectives searching for clues

Debate

In the play Rosamund is obsessed by cats. She claims, "Dogs are so much blander." Annie has a dog named Fang who keeps her company. Divide the class in two and give each side an animal to defend: dogs vs. cats. Have the students research facts on both animals and stage a debate about which makes the better pet. Students can make posters to support their arguments.

Creative Writing

1. *Vocabulary*- Use the attached sheet and a dictionary to find the meanings of words used in the play. Match the words to the definitions by drawing a line connecting them.
2. *Poetry* – Annie sings a song about the color yellow. She uses metaphors and similes such as "Yellow's daffodils and sunshine" and "Yellow shimmers like a gold mine." Have students choose a color and write a poem using metaphors and similes as poetic devices.
3. *Story Recall*- Use the attached sheet to answer quiz questions based on the play.

Artistic Expression

The missing picture in the play was covered up with a different color paint creating a completely different picture in a secondary color. Have students experiment with the primary colors: red, yellow and blue and make pictures combining the colors to form secondary colors just like Harry did.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Marjorie Weinman Sharmat has written over 130 books for children of all ages. There are more than 20 books in the Nate the Great series including:

NATE THE GREAT
NATE THE GREAT GOES UNDERCOVER
NATE THE GREAT AND THE LOST LIST
NATE THE GREAT AND THE PHONY CLUE
NATE THE GREAT AND THE STICKY CASE
NATE THE GREAT AND THE MISSING KEY
NATE THE GREAT AND THE SNOWY TRAIL
NATE THE GREAT AND THE FISHY PRIZE
NATE THE GREAT STALKS STUPIDWEED
NATE THE GREAT AND THE BORING BEACH BAG
NATE THE GREAT GOES DOWN IN THE DUMPS
NATE THE GREAT AND THE HALLOWEEN HUNT
NATE THE GREAT AND THE MUSICAL NOTE
NATE THE GREAT AND THE STOLEN BASE
NATE THE GREAT AND THE PILLOW CASE
NATE THE GREAT AND THE MUSHY VALENTINE
NATE THE GREAT AND THE TARDY TORTOISE
NATE THE GREAT AND THE CRUNCHY CHRISTMAS
NATE THE GREAT SAVES THE KING OF SWEDEN
NATE THE GREAT AND ME: The Case of the Fleeing Fang
NATE THE GREAT AND THE MONSTER MESS
NATE THE GREAT, SAN FRANCISCO DETECTIVE
NATE THE GREAT AND THE BIG SNIFF
NATE THE GREAT ON THE OWL EXPRESS
NATE THE GREAT TALKS TURKEY



Internet:

Learn about author Marjorie Weinman Sharmat:

<http://www.kidsreads.com/series/series-nate-titles.asp>

Random House: Nate the Great (with printable activities):

<http://www.randomhouse.com/kids/natethegreat/>



Name: _____

NATE THE GREAT MULTIPLE CHOICE QUIZ

1. What food does Nate the Great love to eat?
 - Pizza
 - Cookies
 - Pancakes
 - Waffles
2. What name do all of Rosamund's cats share?
 - Fluffy
 - Hex
 - Rex
 - Snowball
3. The character Harry is:
 - Annie's Brother
 - Nate's Brother
 - Rosamund's cousin
 - One of the detectives
4. The detectives that help Nate are Sherlock Holmes, Nero Wolfe and:
 - Jackie Chan
 - Charlie Chan
 - Nancy Drew
 - Encyclopedia Brown
5. What color is the picture that Annie paints?
 - Red
 - Blue
 - Green
 - Yellow

Name: _____

HELP NATE FIND THE PANCAKES!

Nate's favorite food is pancakes. Help him find his way through the maze to a delicious meal just right for a great detective!

