amp! COMICS for kids

TEACHER'S GUIDE
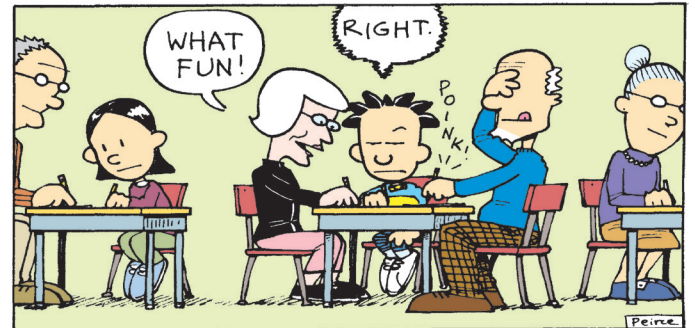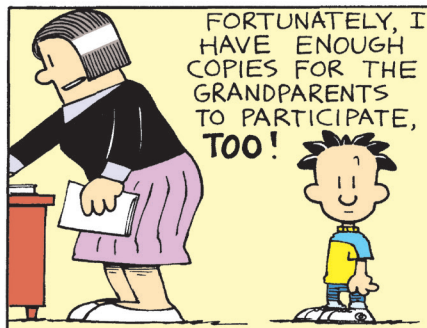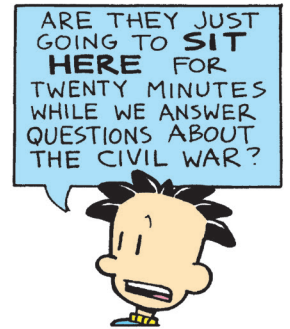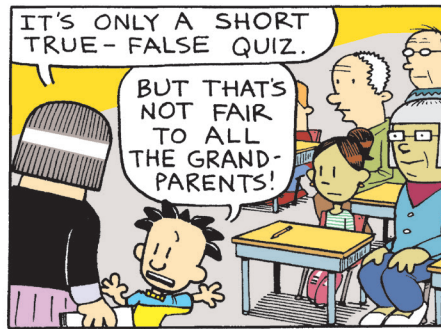
big NATE
WELCOME TO MY WORLD

FULL COLOR Plus PULL-OUT POSTER

by LINCOLN PEIRCE
New York Times Best-Selling Author

Panel 1: QUIZ TIME, PEOPLE. PUT AWAY YOUR NOTEBOOKS AND... — WHAT? HOLD IT!

Panel 2: IS THERE A PROBLEM, NATE? — YES, THERE'S A PROBLEM! YOU'RE GIVING US A QUIZ ON GRANDPARENTS DAY!

Panel 3: IT'S ONLY A SHORT TRUE-FALSE QUIZ. — BUT THAT'S NOT FAIR TO ALL THE GRANDPARENTS!

Panel 4: ARE THEY JUST GOING TO SIT HERE FOR TWENTY MINUTES WHILE WE ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CIVIL WAR?

Panel 5: HMM... YOU DO HAVE A POINT. — YES, I DO!

Panel 6: FORTUNATELY, I HAVE ENOUGH COPIES FOR THE GRANDPARENTS TO PARTICIPATE, TOO!
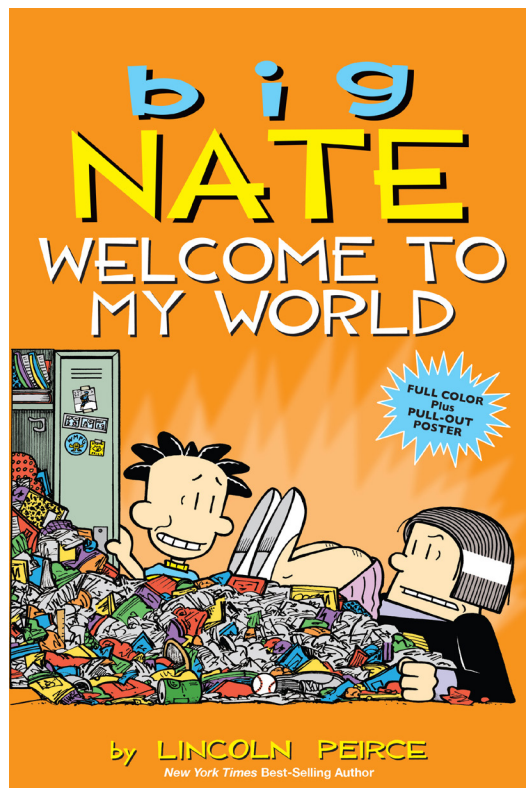
Panel 7: WHAT FUN! — RIGHT. — POINK!

Big Nate: Welcome to My World
Curriculum Connections and Activity/Discussion Guide
The activities in this guide align with the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards for grades 3–5.

By Tracy Edmunds, M.A. Ed.
Reading With Pictures

Big Nate: Welcome to My World
Lincoln Peirce

GRADE LEVEL: 3–5

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:
Language Arts—Word Choice

CONTENT STANDARDS:
Language Arts
Common Core State Standards: www.corestandards.org

OVERVIEW:
Students will identify and analyze word choice in *Big Nate: Welcome to My World*, then work in groups to create word-meaning gradients. Students will then create individual word-choice gradients detailing shades of meaning. Finally, students will write descriptive paragraphs about selected Big Nate cartoons using what they have learned about word choice.

Grade 3

READING

* Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.4]

LANGUAGE

* Use glossaries or beginning dictionaries, both print and digital, to determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.4.D]

* Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.5]

* Distinguish shades of meaning among related words that describe states of mind or degrees of certainty (e.g., *knew, believed, suspected, heard, wondered*). [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.5.C]
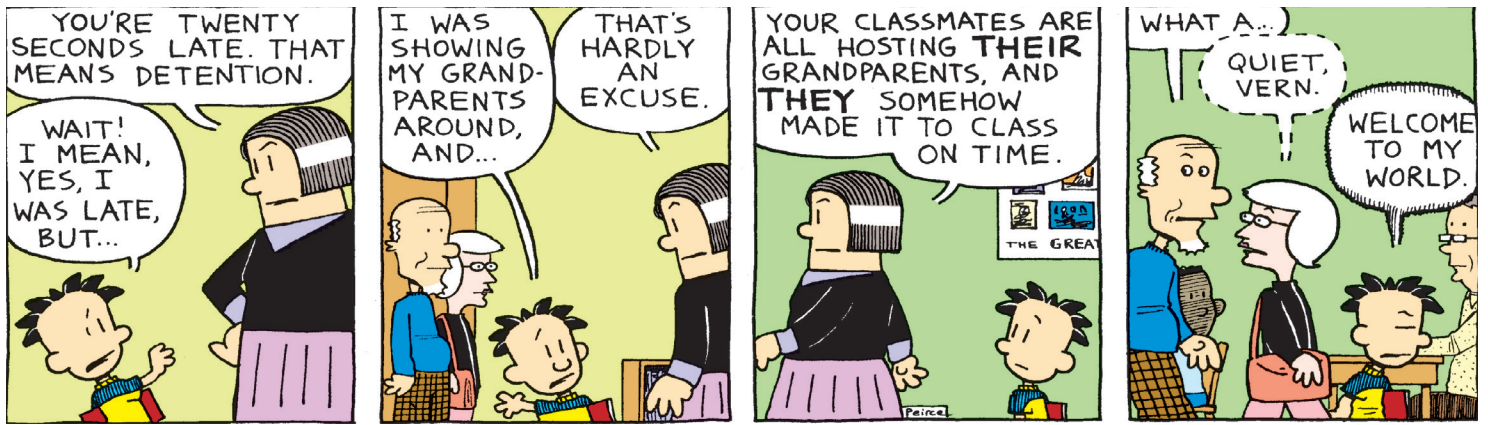
Grade 4

READING

* Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., *Herculean*). [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.4]

LANGUAGE

* Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation and determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.4.C]

* Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.5]

* Demonstrate understanding of words by relating them to their opposites (antonyms) and to words with similar but not identical meanings (synonyms). [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.5.C]

* Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal precise actions, emotions, or states of being (e.g., *quizzed, whined, stammered*) and that are basic to a particular topic (e.g., *wildlife, conservation,* and *endangered* when discussing animal preservation). [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.6]

Grade 5

READING

✱ Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.4]

LANGUAGE

✱ Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation and determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.5.4.C]

✱ Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.5.5]

✱ Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., synonyms, antonyms, homographs) to better understand each of the words. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.5.5.C]


Procedure

OBJECTIVES

✱ Students will identify and analyze word choice in *Big Nate: Welcome to My World.*
✱ Students will work in groups to create word-meaning gradients.
✱ Students will create individual word-choice gradients detailing shades of meaning.
✱ Students will write descriptive paragraphs about selected Big Nate cartoons using what they have learned about word choice.

TIME FRAME

✱ 3-5 class periods

MATERIALS

✱ Copies of *Big Nate: Welcome to My World*
✱ *Interesting Words and Phrases* worksheet
✱ *Shades of Meaning* worksheet
✱ Sticky notes
✱ Pencils or pens
✱ Poster board
✱ Colored pencils, markers, or other art supplies
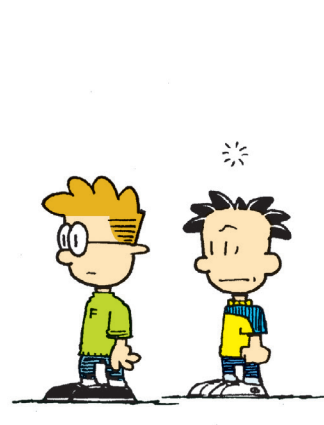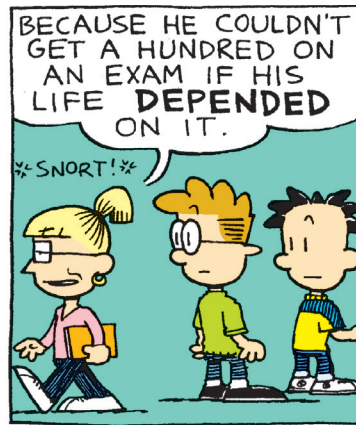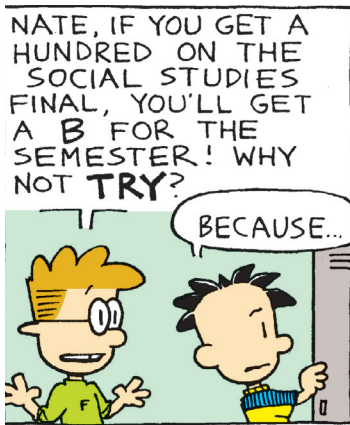
BEFORE READING

1. Take students on a quick book walk through *Big Nate: Welcome to My World* 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. Review or explain the concept of idioms. (This concept is covered in depth in the lesson for *Big Nate: The Crowd Goes Wild!*) Explain to students that an idiom is a word or phrase that isn't literal, so it doesn't mean exactly what the words say. For example, "It's raining cats and dogs." When someone says this, do they mean that cats and dogs are actually falling from the sky? What does the speaker really mean? (*It is raining very heavily.*) Ask students to share any idioms that they know.

3. Give each student a copy of the *Interesting Words and Phrases* worksheet. Review the three categories of words and phrases: idioms, adjectives, and verbs. Tell students that as they read, they are to record any interesting words that they find in the book for each category. If desired, give students the following examples to help them understand the assignment.

  ✱ Page 159: "I'm going to lay my cards on the table." (Idiom meaning to tell everything.)
  ✱ Page 80: *pathetic* (adjective meaning sad and pitiable)
  ✱ Page 132: *accelerate, decelerate* (verbs meaning to speed up and to slow down)


DURING READING

4. Tell students that their purpose for reading this book will be to search for interesting idioms, adjectives, and verbs and to record them on their papers. They should also write the meaning of each word or phrase. Encourage students to use context to determine meanings. Remind students that in comics, information comes from the words as well as the pictures (and the way they work together), so they should pay attention to both the drawings and the dialogue. If they have trouble determining meaning from context, they should use reference sources (dictionaries, thesauruses, etc.) to find correct definitions.

AFTER READING

5. Have students gather in small groups and share the interesting word choices that they found in the book. Let them know that it is okay to share words with one another and to add words to their lists that other students found in the book.

6. Have students share the idioms they found in the book and discuss both the literal and intended meanings of each.

7. Direct students to reread pages 28–33, in which Nate deals with his lunch. On the board or on chart paper, make a list of words that might describe a lunch. Ask students to list both positive words, such as *delicious* or *yummy*, and negative words, such as *disgusting* and *yucky*. Don't forget to add the words that Nate uses: *brutal, nasty*, and *horrible*. Write (or have student volunteers write) each word on a separate sticky note.

8. On the board or chart paper, draw a long, horizontal line, like a timeline. At the left end of the line, write the word *delicious*, and at the right end, write *disgusting*. Ask students how these words relate to each other. (They are antonyms.)
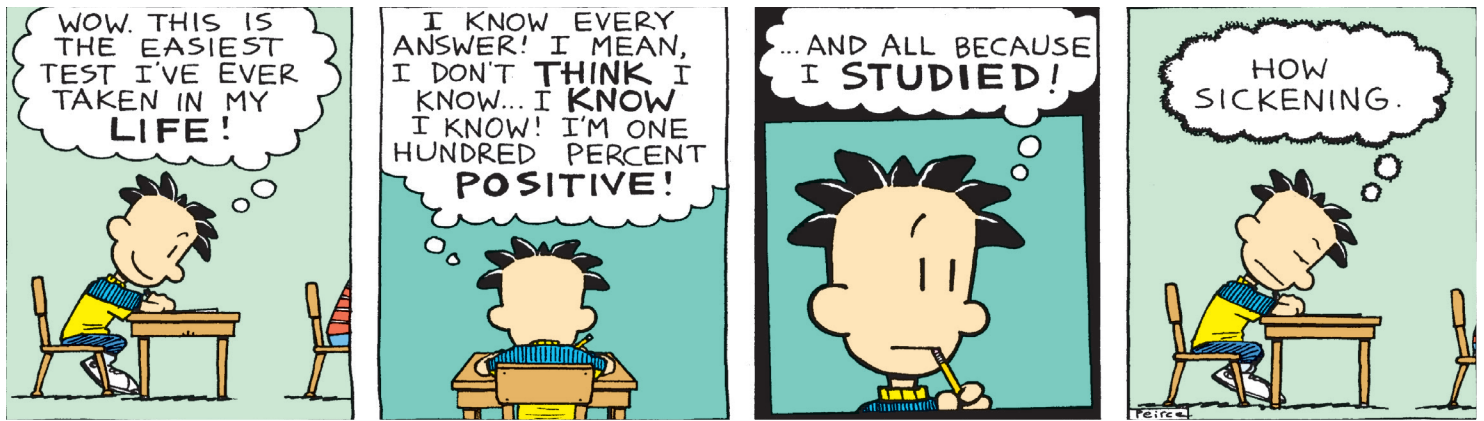
9. Ask students if they know what a *color gradient* is. Explain that a color gradient is the smooth, gradual transition from one color to another or from one shade of a color to another. Ask them to imagine the color orange to their left, and the color yellow to their right, and a smooth blend across the middle from one to the other. Tell students that they are going to create a meaning gradient between *delicious* and *disgusting* by using the words they wrote on the sticky notes to create a smooth transition in shades of meaning from one word to the other. Here are some examples you can share with students:
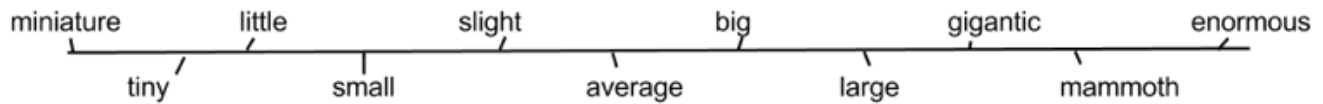
10. Have students place the sticky notes along the line on the board or paper, trying to place them so that the meaning shifts gradually from *delicious* to *disgusting*, creating a gradient of meaning. There is no "right" answer; encourage discussion about the placement of each word and let students know that they can add more words if they like. Here is an example of a completed gradient:
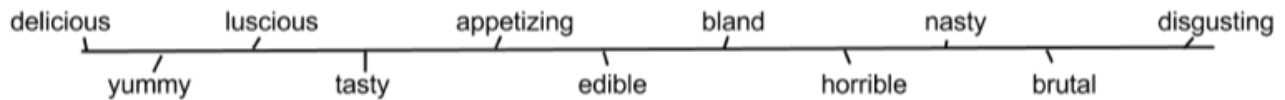

11. Place students in small groups, and provide each group with sticky notes. Ask groups to choose a descriptive word from their adjective or verb lists, select an antonym, and create a list of words that might go between the two words. Have the groups write each word from their lists on sticky notes. Then, have each group use their sticky notes on a desk, wall, or other surface to create a meaning gradient between their two words.

12. Have each group of students share their completed meaning gradient with the class. Again, encourage discussion about the selection and placement of the words. Tell students that they can make changes to their gradients based on the discussion if they like.

13. Distribute copies of the *Shades of Meaning* worksheet to students. Have them refer to their original word-choice lists and select an interesting adjective or verb and its antonym, then create a gradient by filling in words between them. Collect students' papers for later assessment.

14. Direct students to choose one Big Nate cartoon from the book and write a short narrative description of what happens in the comic. Tell students that they are to use what they learned about word choice to make their descriptions interesting.

15. Have each student trade papers with a partner. Each student should read his or her partner's descriptions and circle interesting word choices.

16. Allow students to read their narrative paragraphs aloud for the class. Collect their papers afterward for assessment.

WOW. THIS IS THE EASIEST TEST I'VE EVER TAKEN IN MY **LIFE**!

I KNOW EVERY ANSWER! I MEAN, I DON'T **THINK** I KNOW... I **KNOW** I KNOW! I'M ONE HUNDRED PERCENT **POSITIVE**!

...AND ALL BECAUSE I **STUDIED**!

HOW SICKENING.

ASSESSMENT

✱ Assess students' individual *Shades of Meaning* worksheets for understanding of the concept:

   ❯ Did the student choose interesting words/phrases?

   ❯ Does the order in which the student placed the words make sense?

   ❯ You may wish to have students explain their choices orally.

✱ Assess students' descriptive narrative paragraphs for interesting word choice.

※ GULP. ※
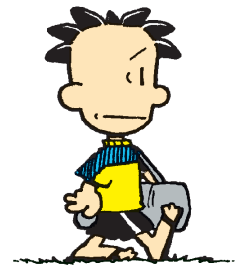
DIFFERENTIATION AND EXTENDED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

DRAWING DESCRIPTIONS

Show students some of Lincoln Peirce's videos (*www.ampkids.com/videos*) on how to draw Nate and the other characters from Big Nate. Then, have students select some interesting word choices and create visual representations by drawing the characters.

SMUG
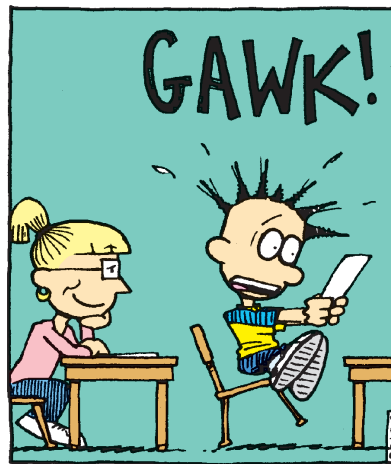
AGHAST

ECSTATIC

SHADES OF MEANING POSTERS

Have students split into groups and provide each group with a poster board and art supplies. Have each group create a poster showing a shades-of-meaning gradient. Students should decorate their posters in a way that uses visuals to emphasize the meanings of the words. For example, if they are creating a gradient between *miniature* and *enormous*, they could make the words start small and get bigger across the gradient, or include pictures of animals from ants to elephants. If they are creating a gradient between *jubilant* and *despondent,* they could draw Big Nate's face showing each emotion across the gradient.

NAME(S) _____   DATE _____

INTERESTING WORDS AND PHRASES

Directions: As you read *Big Nate: Welcome to My World*, write down any interesting word choices that you find. Look for idioms, adjectives, and verbs that are unusual or that you find intriguing. Write the meaning of each word or phrase.

Idiom	Meaning

Adjective	Meaning

Verb	Meaning

SHADES OF MEANING

Directions: Choose a pair of interesting words that are antonyms. They can be verbs, such as *adore* and *despise*, or adjectives, such as *vigilant* and *careless*. Write one word at each end of the line. In between, write words that gradually shift in meaning, creating a gradient of shades of meaning from one word to the other.