

500

Words

By Jamie Norris



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COMPANY LIST

Green Thumb Theatre presents “**500 Words**” written by Jamie Norris.

Production Credits

“Sylvia”

Claire Hesselgrave

“Lance”

Ian Harmon

Directed By

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Susanne Gilles-Smith

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Scenery & Props Design

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Costume Design

Connie Hosie

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Composition

Corbie Fieldwalker

Props Built by

Heidi Wilkinson

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Green Thumb Theatre is a member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres and engages, under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement, professional Artists who are members of Canadian Actors' Equity Association.

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CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

The following activities are provided as suggestions and starting points for further exploration into the themes brought up in “500 Words”. Activity sections are divided by primary and intermediate purely based on suggested suitability but are not necessarily limited to each grade group.

All activities and reproducibles are created with the BC Ministry of Education Curriculum Guidelines in mind.

These suggestions address the standards of the Social Studies, Writing and Social Responsibility and Fine Arts and Language Arts Curricula.



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Note: Many of the exercises in this guide are not original creations of the author. The author of the guide is not attempting to claim the exercises as her own invention. They have been acquired and obtained from other learning materials. Where no credit is given, the original source is unknown.

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BC CURRICULUM, SYNOPSIS & CHARACTERS

500 Words and the BC Curriculum

This Study Guide will help you decide how to prepare your students to see the play. Included here are suggestions on how to work the performance into your curriculum and ideas on how to promote classroom discussion about friendship, understanding, collaboration, creativity and imagination!

Synopsis

Lance is the smartest kid in grade six who never misses an opportunity to show off his vocabulary. His teacher assigns him a reading buddy, Sylvia, who is a daydreamer but now that she's in grade three is finding it harder to hide that she never really learned how to read. All Lance wants to do when they are together is write for the story contest, not help Sylvia. But Lance can't think of a story until Sylvia imagines a whole world for him of magic, heroes and adventure. Learning together the unlikely pair create a magical story neither could have on their own.

In the end, Sylvia loses her fear of reading and Lance learns that the biggest word is not always the smartest word and that you really can't judge a person without knowing them.

Characters

Lance – a Grade 6 boy

Sylvia – a Grade 3 girl



Preparing Students for the Play

When young people attend a live theatrical performance for the first time they often do not realize how different it is from watching a movie or television show. Live presentations can be more challenging for performers, because anything could happen and affect their performance. Mistakes cannot be edited out! This makes for a more dynamic experience for both performers and the audience.

Pre-performance

Please remind students of the following:

It is rude and disruptive to talk, eat and drink during the play.

Photos or recordings are not allowed.

Excessive movement can be distracting to others watching the play,

Active Viewing

To make the most out of watching this live performance, **please encourage your students to** not only watch the play for the story, but to also pay attention to the set, costumes, music and lighting. These aspects are an important part of a live performance and will enhance later discussions about the play and the students experience watching it.

After the Play

Encourage students to talk about the play, what they liked, what was funny, were there parts they didn't like and who was their favorite character. There are always many things that can be discussed after any play-use this performance and guide to enhance your class time.



The following section includes activity ideas as well as pull out sheets for use with primary students.

Springboard for Discussion

- Who was your favourite character? Why?
- Which character did you not like? Why?
- Making Connections: Have you ever needed help with something at school? Did it make you feel happy or sad? Who helped you? How? How did you feel?
- Do you know how to help someone?

What's your favourite book?

Have your students draw a picture or make a collage of their favourite book or moment from the play.



Alphabet Collage Art

A great way to reinforce alphabet recognition, phonemic awareness and practice fine motor skills!

Materials:

Copies of a letter of the alphabet (block letter is best) on tag (e.g. the letter 'B') OR for Grade 1s, have students print their letter out so that it fills the page

Glue

Small items that start with the letter you are working on (e.g. apple stickers for the letter 'A', beans or buttons for "B", cotton balls for "C" ... glitter for "G" etc...)

Instructions (using the letter "B" as an example):

Students simply glue their beans into the block letter B copy.

Another variation would be to ask students ahead of time to bring in something that they can glue to paper that begins with letter you are working on. If you do the entire alphabet, the students could each have their very own, original alphabet book!

Here are some great Alphabet books!

Eric Carle's ABC's by Eric Carle

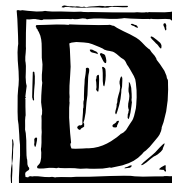
Alphabet Art by Judy Press

Dr. Seuss's ABC by Dr. Seuss

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom by Bill Martin Jr.

I spy Little Letters by Jean Marzollo

How to Build an A by Sara Mridha



Alphabet Matching

Materials:

52 wooden clothespegs

3 or 4 small boxes (shoeboxes or plastic salad boxes)

Sharpie pen

52 circle stickers (any colour/s)

- 1) Label each clothes peg with a letter of the alphabet, one set with upper case and the other with lower.
- 2) Do the same with your stickers.
- 3) Place the stickers at regular intervals around the outer edge of your boxes... you can do this in alphabetical order or not. Your choice.
- 4) Place the clothespegs in a container.
- 5) The students task is to clip the clothespeg to the corresponding letter on the box.
- 6) For an added challenge: place an egg timer at this centre. Some students may like to time themselves!



Lance and Sylvia both have vivid imaginations and enjoy storytelling. Here is a centre that encourages your students to collaborate with each other and explore recording and creating their stories. Provide students with supplies to “publish” their own story. Turn it into a book by adding pictures and fastening sheets of paper together with paper-fasteners, a stapler or string tied through hole punches.

Students can keep their work in name labeled folders...as there will be a lot of paper flying around!

Some Suggested Supplies:

- Recycled Manilla folders
- Coloured Construction paper/Tag (for book covers...or whatever!)
- Stapler
- Paper Fastners
- Scissors: regular and scrapbooking (optional)
- hole punches
- ribbon
- Sheets of paper in all different sizes, textures, colours etc...
- Pencils, pens...different colours, sizes etc....
- Clipboards
- Letter stamps
- Old typewriter or computer keyboard (for imaginative play)
- Letter stamps
- Picture dictionaries, word cards, class list, newspapers, comics, magazines – anything that can be used as inspiration

....whatever you think will spark the writer in your students!



SILENT LETTERS

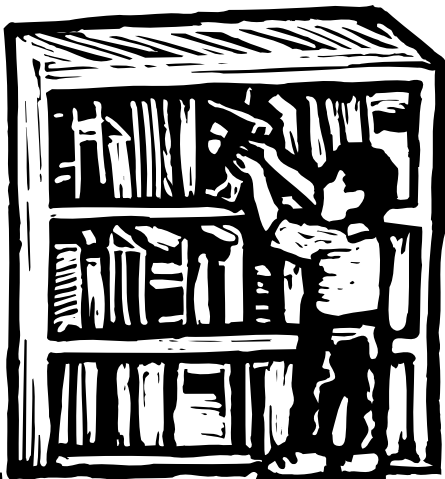
Shhh...Silent Letters!

Sylvia has trouble with the word "knight" because the letters 'k', 'g' and 'h' are silent. It can be confusing! Here is a great activity to play to help students learn about silent letters and have fun at the same time!

- 1) Divide class into 5 groups. Make copies of the reproducible on the next page – cut in half. (students could also use a small whiteboard/chalkboard)
- 2) On the classroom whiteboard/chalkboard write, for example, 'w'.
- 3) Students have 5 minutes to brainstorm as many words as they can where the letter 'w' is silent.
- 4) When the time is up, each group reads their answers to the class. The team with the most correct words gets a point.
- 5) Continue with another silent letter. After 5 rounds, the team with the most points wins!

Silent Letters: 'b', 'p', 't', 'g', etc...

See Reproducible on next page



SILENT LETTERS WORKSHEET

Shhh! Silent Letters!

In your group, brainstorm all the words you can that have the silent letter your teacher has given you!

Good luck! (use the other side of the paper if you need)

WORDS THAT HAVE A SILENT _____

1 _____ 6 _____ 11 _____

2 _____ 7 _____ 12 _____

3 _____ 8 _____ 13 _____

4 _____ 9 _____ 14 _____

5 _____ 10 _____ 15 _____

Shhh! Silent Letters!

In your group, brainstorm all the words you can that have the silent letter your teacher has given you!

Good luck! (use the other side of the paper if you need)

WORDS THAT HAVE A SILENT _____

1 _____ 6 _____ 11 _____

2 _____ 7 _____ 12 _____

3 _____ 8 _____ 13 _____

4 _____ 9 _____ 14 _____

5 _____ 10 _____ 15 _____

SYNONYMS

Name _____

Scrambled Synonyms

Synonyms are words with a similar meaning. For example, a 'steed' is another word for a 'horse'.

Can you match these synonyms? Draw a line to connect the matching pairs.

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. middle | kid |
| 2. community | mistake |
| 3. disappear | try |
| 4. aid | pupil |
| 5. child | permit |
| 6. error | vanish |
| 7. attempt | neighbourhood |
| 8. destroy | centre |
| 9. allow | help |
| 10. student | ruin |

Now, can you come up with some synonyms on your own? Try quizzing a buddy!

WORD SEARCH

Try to find as many of the hidden words as you can! Remember that the words can be hidden across, down, or diagonal!

P	L	A	Y	K	Y	E	S	S
G	R	I	H	R	A	W	Y	K
A	P	L	O	E	F	B	L	A
D	J	T	S	Q	D	E	V	L
A	S	N	R	E	A	D	I	W
S	E	Q	N	M	S	E	A	O
B	M	A	G	E	F	L	B	R
L	L	A	N	C	E	U	S	D
G	R	S	J	I	P	L	N	S

Play

Lance

Sylvia

Read

Fun

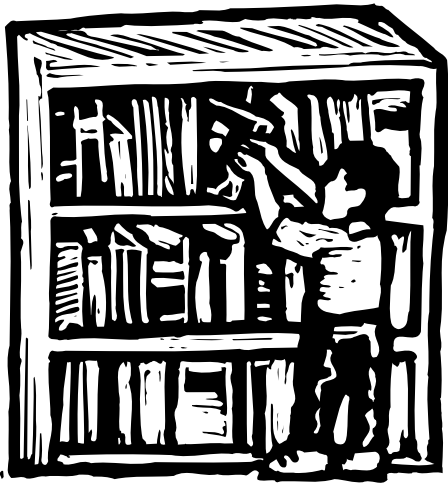
Story

Words

Never Have I Ever...

A great way for children to bond with one another and have lots of laughs. Just as Lance and Sylvia found, by sharing your differences, you learn more about your similarities! It's a good strategy for kids to say things that they think most HAVE done, but that they themselves have not.

- 1) The students sit in a circle.
- 2) Students place their hands with all ten fingers spread out on the floor in front of them.
- 3) Going around the circle, in turn, each student will say something that they have never done before. For example, they might say, "Never have I ever eaten strawberry ice cream."
- 4) If the other players have done that event, they must fold down one finger.
- 5) The last two students left are the 'survivors'.



The following section includes activity ideas as well as pull out sheets for use with intermediate students.

Social Studies Application: critical thinking skills – including questioning, predicting, imagining, comparing, classifying– to selected problems or issues - create a presentation on a selected topic

Language Arts Self and Society (Personal Awareness, Comprehend and Respond and Working Together)

Fine Arts Exploration & Imagination, Context

Springboard for Discussion

- Discuss the production. How did the set/ costumes / sound / acting / writing / directing get the story across? What worked? What didn't? Why?
- Can make any connections with the way Sylvia was feeling about her reading? Is there something you wish you were better at?
- Everybody is good at something! Can you think of what you are especially good at?
- What about one of your friends?
- Lance is really good at reading, but there are some things he could work on. What were those? Are there things about yourself that you would like to improve?



Collaborative Writing

Students create a story outline together and then use their outline to write their story independently. Encouraging teamwork, creativity and an appreciation of creative individuality.

See “Writing Partners” reproducible on the next page



WRITING PARTNERS EXERCISE

Writing Partners

Let's plan a story together! In pairs, use the sentence frames to help you make a story outline! When you've finished, take your outline and use it to write a detailed story on your own. When you and your partner are done, compare your stories!

In this story the problem began when _____

_____.

So, _____

_____.

Next, _____

_____.

Then, _____

_____.

The problem is finally solved when _____

_____.

At the end of the story _____

_____.

Improvised Storytelling

This is a great theatre game to get students thinking on their feet, listening to each other and being creative! The students are co-storytellers and the teacher is the story conductor. Another easier option is to choose a well-known fairytale and have the students retell it with the teacher conducting.

How to play:

- 1) Pick three volunteer storytellers.
- 2) The teacher/conductor gives the storytellers a first line of a story. (see sample list of first lines or make up your own!)
- 3) The game begins when the teacher/conductor points to a storyteller who must repeat the first line and continue telling the story.
- 4) At any time the teacher/conductor may point to another storyteller who must continue telling/creating the story.
- 5) The teacher encourages the students to listen to each other and provides prompts to remind storytellers that they need a problem, solution etc... until the story comes to brought to an end.

Sample First Lines

- "Once Upon a Time, there was small bird who lived in a garbage dump."
- "High on a hill there is a creaky old house and in this house ..."
- "Underneath a black rock, at the edge of the forest there lives a ..."
- "On planet Ooblot, where the sun never shines, a curious thing just occurred ..."
- "RUN! yelled my fish, Before IT gets you!"
- "I was just walking to school when I noticed ..."
- "No one noticed the shadow disappear into the storage cupboard – except me."
- "'Goodmorning!' said my pet fish, Henry."



HOMONYMS

The Homonym Challenge!

Homonyms are words that can be spelled the same or sound the same but have a different meaning from each other. For example, Lance uses the word 'dumb' meaning "mute".

Below are some homonyms – can you figure out at least two different meanings for the word and write a sentence using each?

For example:

BARK

- 1) That dog has a very loud bark!
- 2) The cedar tree's bark was extremely rough.

Bank

- 1) _____
_____.
- 2) _____
_____.

Duck

- 1) _____
_____.
- 2) _____
_____.

Present

- 1) _____
_____.
- 2) _____
_____.

WORD SEARCH

Try to find as many of the hidden words as you can! Remember that the words can be hidden across, down, diagonal and even backwards!!!

J	T	F	U	N	D	M	H	Y	A	L	P	M	C	A
A	H	H	A	F	A	G	O	E	A	S	C	H	P	N
L	E	S	R	T	E	D	R	A	G	O	N	S	A	S
M	A	O	I	L	R	G	S	I	S	T	D	B	C	Y
G	T	N	E	M	A	B	E	P	O	R	I	L	D	L
B	R	I	K	C	A	Q	N	Y	O	O	G	Z	S	V
M	E	A	U	N	R	G	S	W	P	X	N	T	L	I
U	B	L	C	A	K	N	I	G	H	T	E	B	C	A
H	Q	O	A	W	G	E	H	N	K	B	O	A	I	C
T	S	O	P	N	W	B	N	E	A	F	Z	L	G	A
N	O	H	A	P	C	Q	Z	H	X	T	C	N	A	T
E	V	C	Z	S	A	E	P	T	J	O	I	A	M	T
E	O	S	R	X	B	L	N	L	A	I	Y	O	G	K
R	L	M	R	E	A	W	S	T	O	R	Y	B	N	J
G	A	R	M	O	U	R	H	W	O	A	N	M	O	J
A	V	P	I	H	S	D	N	E	I	R	F	E	N	A

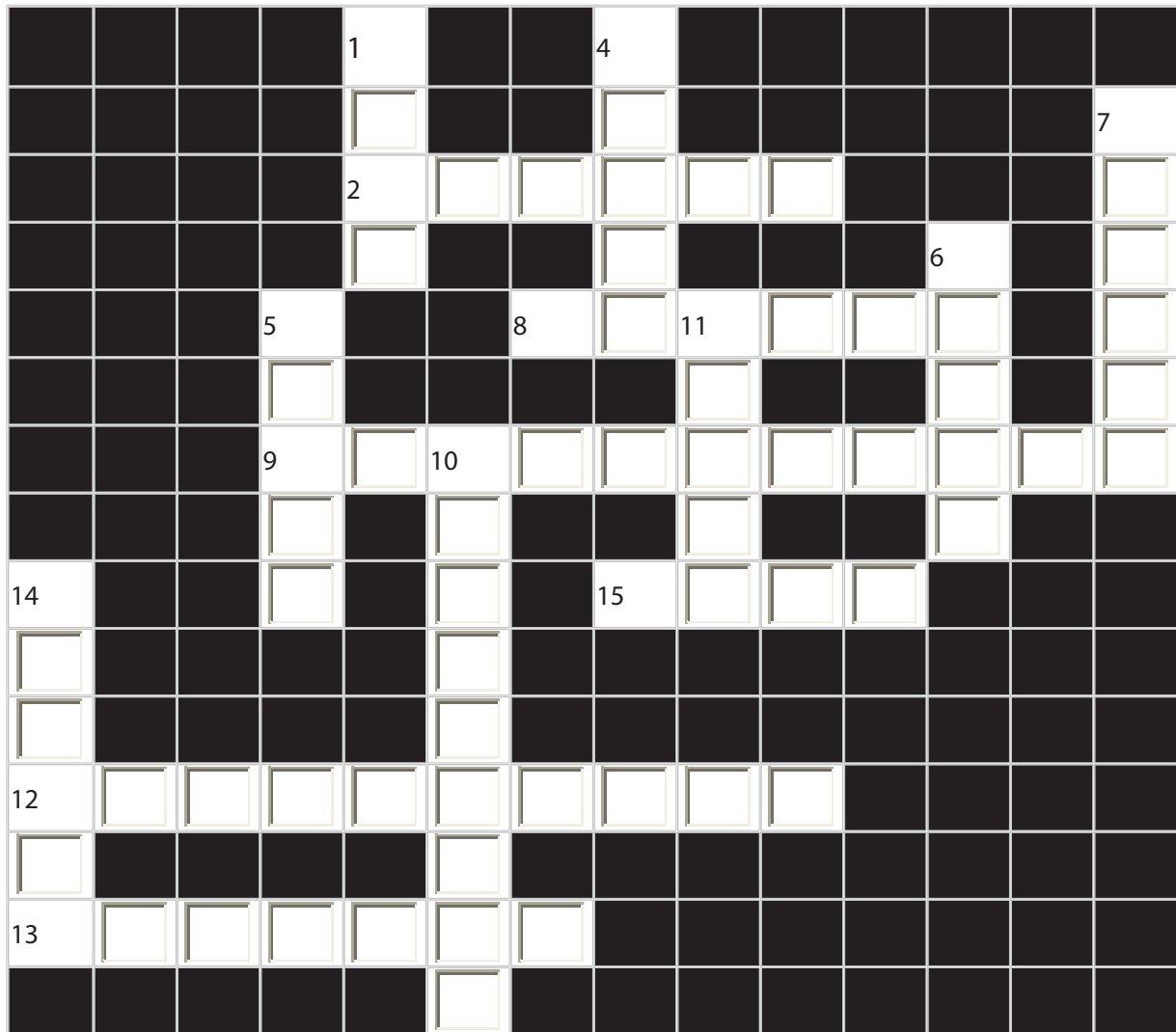
play
Lance
armour
story
knight

read
Sylvia
friendship
theatre
school

fun
alphabet
words
dragon

imagination
magic
Green Thumb
horse

"500 Words" Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

2. _____ are the people that pretend to be different characters in a play.
8. This character is in grade 3 and is very creative.
9. Sylvia helps teach Lance how to use his _____ to come up with story ideas
12. _____ is the name of the group that put on the play
13. Going to see a play is also called going to the _____
15. Sylvia needs help learning to _____

(Answer key on next page)

DOWN

1. If actors performed Lance's story it would be a _____
4. Lance gets Sylvia to help him come up with a _____ for a contest
5. Lance wants to _____ a story but he doesn't know where to start
6. The horse in Sylvia and Lance's story is called _____
7. Knights go on adventures and sometimes have to fight a fire-breathing _____
10. In the story, Mr. Knight and Magic go on a wild _____
11. This character is in grade six and uses big words
14. Lance's story is about a brave _____

Gargoyle Art

In "500 Words", Sylvia uses her imagination to turn found objects into art. Bring a box of recycled goods and anything you can find lying around (egg cartons, old pop bottles, pieces of fabric, string, old kitchen utensils, old cds/cassettes, cereal boxes, etc) into your class and instruct the students to create their own "gargoyle" using whatever materials they can find! Have your own mini Gargoyle Gallery in your classroom where the students can display their creations!

[This project could be extended into "Story Art" as the students could then write a story, or create a picture book, about the "gargoyle" that they have created!]

Crossword Puzzle Answer Key

Across

- 2. actors
- 8. Sylvia
- 9. imagination
- 12. Green Thumb
- 13. theatre
- 15. read

Down

- 1. play
- 4. story
- 5. write
- 6. magic
- 7. dragon
- 10. adventure
- 11. Lance
- 14. knight



RESOURCES

500 Words Resources!

Here are some helpful websites about literacy and reading!

<http://www.literacybc.ca>

Fact sheets about literacy and available resources in the community.

<http://www.readnowbc.ca>

Literacy forum, information about literacy events, videos and tools for teachers and parents.

<http://www.suu.edu/faculty/lundd/readingsite/readingresources/>

An incredibly comprehensive list of online reading/literacy resources for teachers!

<http://www.abcteach.com>

An American site with teaching resources for elementary school teachers. Lots of printable material available for free!

<http://www.kiddyhouse.com/teachers>

Worksheets, printables and other resources for teachers! Also has a section for kids.

<http://www.gamequarium.org/dir/Readquarium/>

Online reading, comprehension, vocabulary, phonics and book related games. Extensive list with links to other sites.

<http://www.rif.org/kids/readingplanet/bookzone.htm>

"Reading is Fundamental" website for kids with games, activities, book lists, videos, songs and other resources.

<http://www.readingrockets.org>

Resources for teachers and parents including lesson plans, toolkits, podcasts and lists of books and materials for further research. Full episodes available online of "Launching Young Readers" a PBS series for parents and educators

<http://www.scholastic.com/kids/stacks/>

Games, videos, message boards-all designed for kids to keep them interested in reading.



Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to use and review the **500 Words** Study Guide as a resource to further enrich your students' experience watching the play.

We want to hear from you!

Reviews, comments, and questions from students and teachers can be posted to our website.

Please visit us at **www.greenthumb.bc/feedback.asp** to submit reviews and comments.

We also love to receive letters and drawings from students who have seen our performances!

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