

JUNIE B. JONES

Study Guide

DEAR TEACHER:

We have created the following study guide to help make your students' theater experience with Theatreworks USA's production of *Junie B. Jones* 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!

THE STORIES

Theatreworks USA's musical is based on several books about Junie B's first grade experiences, specifically, *Junie B, First Grader (at last!)*, *Junie B, Boss of Lunch*, and *Junie B, One-Man Band*. The connective tissue tying these stories together is a fourth book, *Top-Secret Personal Beeswax: A Journal by Junie B (and Me!)*, which features diary entries by Junie, which are designed to give children ideas for their own writings.

TOP-SECRET PERSONAL BEESWAX: A JOURNAL BY JUNIE B (AND ME!) Our musical opens with Junie celebrating her new top-secret personal beeswax journal, a gift from her mother, in which she can write and doodle anything, from her unique observations about the world, to drawings of wiener sausages.

JUNIE B, FIRST GRADER (AT LAST!) It's Junie B's first day of first grade, and a lot of things have changed for her: Junie's kindergarten best friend, Lucille, doesn't want to be her best pal anymore, and on the bus Junie makes friends with the new kid at school, Herb. Also, Junie has trouble reading the blackboard and needs glasses. She is afraid of being teased by the other children because of her new eyewear, until Herb borrows Junie's glasses and declares that her eyes "must be very special" if she can see through them.

JUNIE B, BOSS OF LUNCH While basking in the joy of having a brand new lunch box, Junie B notices that in first grade, most of the other children buy their lunches from Gladys Gutzman, who brought her kindergarten class cookies last year. When Junie B complains about no cookies in first grade, Mrs. Gutzman offers her an assistant position, folding napkins and welcoming the other schoolchildren to the lunchroom. But when Junie B smells lunch and loudly announces her distaste for the smell of tuna noodle casserole, the entire class foregoes their meal, and is angry at Junie B. Mrs. Gutzman arrives at Junie B's class that afternoon, and asks her help in distributing cookies, and her class forgives her.

JUNIE B, ONE MAN BAND Junie B prepares for the first grade kickball tournament by kicking her mother's watering can and badly stubs her toe. Since she and her injury-prone classmate Sheldon can't play, the teacher, Mr. Scary, suggests that they perform a halftime show. Junie's father suggests that she make the best of an unfortunate situation, and learn to juggle for the halftime show. As much as she practices, she can't get the hang of it. On the day of the tournament, the large crowd intimidates Sheldon, and he runs away, leaving Junie B by herself. The restless crowd throws biscuits at her, and Junie tries to juggle one more time, and is successful! Her proud family and friends rush onto the field to congratulate her.

Junie has filled all the pages in her journal with her adventures, and Herb lends her more paper. The show closes with the entire company urging the audience to keep journals and to write down the story of their lives.

PRE-PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION

1. If time permits, read *Junie B, First Grader (at last!)*, *Junie B, Boss of Lunch*, and/or *Junie B, One-Man Band* with your class. (Our show is based very closely on these books, and the students will enjoy hearing familiar dialogue and seeing the situations depicted in the books in our show.) Explain that they will see a musical (a live dramatic presentation that uses dialogue, songs, and dancing) to tell a story based on these books. What do students expect of the live performance after reading the books?
2. Junie B. Jones has a very unique way of speaking. She adds many parenthetical statements to the end of sentences, sometimes uses malapropisms (incorrect usage of a word), and occasionally uses poor grammar (much of this has improved in first grade, since the early kindergarten books). While students may find her use of language humorous, stress that it is not correct. While reading the books, you may ask them to identify Junie's grammatically incorrect phrases, and as a follow-up, you may use the attached worksheet: Junie-Speak 101 (appropriate for grades 2 and up).
3. Throughout the show, Junie B Jones keeps a "top-secret personal beeswax" journal, in which she writes about everything she says and does, and also her feelings, drawing, and anything else she can imagine. Do any of your students keep journals? What kinds of things do they write in them? Are their journals private?
4. In our play, there are fewer actors than characters. Ask your students to watch closely to see if they can tell which actors play more than one role (for example: Mr. Scary is also Mr. Woo, Junie's father, and Gladys Gutzman.)

POST-PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION

1. As soon as possible after the performance, engage your students in conversation about the production. How did the musical differ from the books? How were they similar? Discuss the fact that adult actors played children – why do they think the casting was done in this way? Why wasn't Junie's dog Tickle in the show? Why do they think some episodes from the book were omitted in the play? Who was their favorite character and why?
2. Junie B has to acclimate herself to many changes in first grade: a new teacher, a new bus friend, and new glasses. What kind of changes have the students experienced (for example, getting a new baby in the family, or moving to a different city or school)? Compare their adventures to Junie B's. Can change be good? Bad? Both at the same time?
3. When she gets her new glasses, Junie B worries that no one will like her because of the way she looks, and that no one will want to be her friend. She doesn't want to be different from her classmates (who in fact, are all unique in their own way!) Talk about Junie B's schoolmates and the things that make them special. For example: Sheldon is allergic to glue, dairy, and artificial meat; Camille and Chenille are twins; Herb is the "new kid" at school; José can speak Spanish. List some ways that being different can be good – and ways that having things in common can be good.
4. When Junie B helps Gladys Gutzman in the school cafeteria, she doesn't like the smell of lunch, and loudly announces it as "tuna noodle stinkle." What do your students do when they are asked to eat something that smells or looks unusual? Have they ever eaten something that looked or smelled questionable, but discovered they loved it? How about other nerve-racking new experiences – like the diving board at the pool or going in an airplane for the first time? How did your students feel before, during, and after these adventures?

5. Junie B is very disappointed that she can't play in the kickball tournament, due to her "smashed piggy toe." Her parents tell her the proverb: "when life gives you lemons, you make lemonade." What do they mean by this? Discuss times when your students ever had to make the best out of a bad situation. Can your students think of any other proverbs, and what they mean? (ie: "Where there's a will, there's a way," or "Man does not live by bread alone.")
6. Junie B and Sheldon perform at the halftime show during the first grade kickball tournament. To prepare, Junie B learns how to juggle, and practices constantly to get it right. (Another proverb: "Practice makes perfect!") Have your students ever had to practice for something (like for a soccer game, a choir concert, or even their spelling words)? Was that difficult for them? Did practicing help them achieve their goals? Why or why not?
7. Junie B Jones is a feisty first grader, and sometimes she makes mistakes or gets in trouble. But she always learns something. What lesson did she learn after she got her glasses? After helping Mrs. Gutzman? After the big halftime show? What does she learn from keeping a journal?

ACTIVITIES

(Note to teachers: some of these activities (and work sheets) are designed for older students, and some are intended for younger children – please use your judgment in deciding which are appropriate for your class.)

1. **CREATIVE DRAMATICS: JUNIE B, STAR OF THE WHOLE ENTIRE CLASSROOM!**
Your class probably noticed the similarity between the Junie B books and our stage production. Your class can make their own Junie B play! Select one of the books in the series, and assign different chapters to each student, or groups of students, to dramatize. (Your students may want to look at published plays, to get an idea about clear formatting.) When all the groups have finished with their section, they can read them aloud for the class. If time and resources permit, they can even create simple props and costume pieces and perform for other classes, or for their parents.
2. **MEMORY GAME: BABY'S GOT A BRAND NEW LUNCHBOX!** Direct the class to sit in a circle, and instruct the first student to fill in the blanks: "In my lunchbox, I've got _____." Going around the circle, the next student mentions the first item, plus a second. The next student mentions the first two items in order, plus a new lunch food, and so forth, so that by the end the circle might say "In my lunchbox, I've got an apple, a sandwich, milk, cookies, a fruit bar, chips, pizza..." et cetera. For an extra challenge, you might try eliminating students when they are incorrect – the last one in the circle who can remember all the food is the winner!
3. **JOURNAL ACTIVITIES: WRITING DOWN THE STORY OF MY LIFE** As Junie B sings in our show, "I am writing down the story of my life: what makes me scared or nervous, what makes me sad or blue." Your class can keep their own top-secret personal beeswax journals, and write (and draw) in them daily. You may wish to give them suggested topics to get them started. As Junie B and company sing:

<p>"If I want to draw a weiner sausage Or a picture of a beautiful day, Or list my favorite colors and foods, Everything I want is A-OK."</p>	<p>"Your favorite kind of popsicle, your allergy to glue, How much you love your family, or what friendship means to you, A picture of spaghetti or a lovely mountain view, No matter what you think or dream or feel or say or do!"</p>
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Older students can write about their lives, likes, and dislikes, and younger students who don't yet have writing skills may draw.
4. **OUTDOOR FUN: KICKBALL TOURNAMENT** During recess, split your class into teams, and have your own kickball game. The students can name their teams after characters in the books. For example, the Purple Glasses, or The Sugar Cookies, or The Tuna Noodle Stinkos. If the children want to, they can even put together their own halftime show, like Sheldon and Junie B, or be cheerleaders, like Lucille, Camille, and Chenille, or read the rules of the game, like May.

JUNIE-SPEAK 101!

Junie B. Jones has a very unique (unusual) way of speaking. Sometimes, her grammar is not exactly perfect. And sometimes Junie B. mispronounces words. Below are several phrases from the books featured in TheatreworksUSA's musical. Rewrite the sentences to make them grammatically correct. (We've underlined the incorrect phrases, to give you a head start!) You can also read the Junie B. Jones books and pick out incorrect phrases of your own!

1) Me and Herb walked to Room One.

2) I quick opened my journal.

3) It was the funnest dream I ever had.

4) I do not know him that good.

5) 'Cause this wasn't as hard as I thought.

6) Mother made me pasketti and meatballs.

7) He played the cymbals very good.

8) Here is the bestest part of all!

9) This year shalt be no different!

10) My forehead had drops of sweaty.

JUNIE B'S WACKY STORY!

Here's a story about Junie, and it's up to you to fill in the blanks! Under each blank is the name of a "part of speech." Pair up with a classmate and ask each other for each item in this list of types of words. Then fill these words into the blanks of the story, and read your crazy stories out loud!

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1) Person's name: _____ | 10) Adjective 2: _____ |
| 2) Place 1: _____ | 11) Adjective 3: _____ |
| 3) Place 2: _____ | 12) Adjective 4 (with -est): _____ |
| 4) Exclamation: _____ | 13) Verb 1: _____ |
| 5) Noun 1 (plural): _____ | 14) Verb 1 (past): _____ |
| 6) Noun 2: _____ | 15) Verb 2: _____ |
| 7) Noun 3: _____ | 16) Adverb: _____ |
| 8) Noun 4: _____ | 17) Weather condition: _____ |
| 9) Adjective 1: _____ | 18) Body part: _____ |

One day, Junie B. Jones and _____ decided to go to the _____. When

Person's name Place 1

they got there, Junie B. said "_____! Would you look at all these _____!"

Exclamation Noun 1 (plural)

_____ said "Let's _____ over them!" Junie B. said "Hurray, hurray!"

Proper name Verb 1

That's a _____ idea!" _____ and Junie B.

Adjective 1 Person's name Adverb

_____ and _____, until they were very _____.

Verb 1 (past tense) Verb 1 (past tense) Adjective 2

Just then, a _____ appeared in the sky! "Uh-oh," _____

Adjective 3 Noun 2 Person's name

said. "It looks like it's going to _____!" Junie B. and _____ rode their

Weather condition Person's name

bicycles to the _____ and waited for the _____ to _____.

Place 2 Weather condition Verb 2

While they were there, Junie B. bought _____ a _____. "Thank you,

Person's name Noun 3

Junie B.," _____ said. "I've always wanted a _____!" Just then, Junie

Person's name Noun 3

woke up in her _____ and rubbed her _____. She said, "That was the

Noun 4 Body part

_____ dream ever, I tell you!"

Adjective 4 with -est

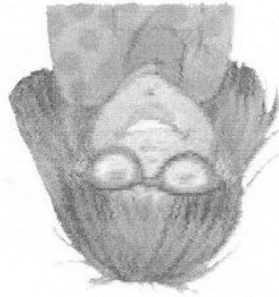
Irish I was an
Oscar Mayer Wiener!

Irish who?

Irish.

Who's there?

Knock, knock.



Ha! Made you
sneeze again!

Ash who?

Ash

Who's there?

Knock, knock.



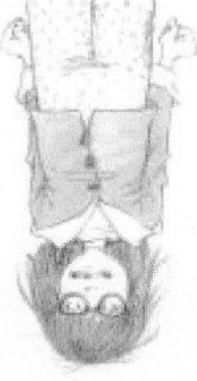
Ha ha! Made you sneeze!
(Get it? Hatchoo!)

Hatch who?

Hatch.

Who's there?

Knock, knock.



Hey! Who are you
calling a cuckoo?

Kook who?

Kook.

Who's there?

Knock, knock.



This joke is bestest of them all.
'Cause you're the one who makes it up!
(Just write it in the space below)

Looney B. Jones



Reproducible handout

Look Just Like Junie B.!

Cut out and color in the paper mask below.
Punch out a hole on either side of the mask and use a string to attach
the mask to your head.



Reproducible handout