

# Teacher Quick Reference Guide

06/07 Children's Theatre Company Season

## The Play

### *The BFG (Big Friendly Giant)*

Based on the book by Roald Dahl • Adapted for the stage by David Wood  
Enjoyed by all ages



## Synopsis

One night, while a brilliant moonbeam shines onto her pillow, Sophie decides to creep over to the window of the orphanage to see “what the world looks like now that the witching hour is at hand.” What she spies outside is beyond her wildest dreams. Coming up the street is...a giant, who promptly snatches her up and takes her with him! Based on the book by celebrated author Roald Dahl (*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *James and the Giant Peach*), this delightful play follows Sophie to Giant Country, a land unknown to humans, where the Big Friendly Giant introduces her to snozzcumbers, Fleshlumpeaters, and frobscottles. But when the rest of the giants decide to go on a rampage for “human beans,” it’s up to Sophie and the BFG to somehow get the news to the Queen and save England.

## The Big Ideas

- Surprising friendships which last in the face of adversity
- Dreams
- Playing with language

## Examples of Activities and Standards Connections

### **Activity: Read the book *The BFG* by Roald Dahl**

*Standard (Grade 3) Reading and Literature: Literature:* The student will actively engage in the reading process and read, understand, respond to, analyze, interpret, evaluate and appreciate a wide variety of fiction, poetic and nonfiction texts.

***The following activities are perfect companions for the book, but are also great if you choose to see the play only:***

### **Activity: Create a character map to analyze relationships in *The BFG*.**

*Standard (Grade 3) Reading and Literature: Literature (same as above):* Identify, describe and respond to literary elements of characterization, plot, setting and theme.

As a class or individual or in small groups, identify the main character of the play. Write the name in the center of a large piece of paper. Now discuss and identify characteristics of that character and write them underneath the name. Draw a box around the name and the descriptors. Identify other supporting characters in the play. Write their names spaced out around the page and draw boxes around them. How does the main character feel about each supporting character? Write each response on an arrow from the main character box toward each appropriate box. How does each supporting character feel about the

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main character? Write responses on arrows running from the supporting character boxes toward the main character box. At the bottom of the page, you may want to write about how you as the audience member felt about each character when he/she first appears and then how you felt about them at the end of the play. Did your feelings toward a particular character change? How and why?



**Activity: Utilize poetry to introduce character analysis for The BFG.**

*Standard (Grade 3) Writing: Types of Writing:* The student will compose various pieces of writing. The student will write in a variety of modes to express meaning, including poetic.

Basic poetic forms such as acrostics, list poems, and haiku are perfect exercises to not only engage your students in wordplay and demystify poetry, but also to get them to analyze characters in fun ways. For example, an acrostics lesson

might go something like this: Identify and list all the characters you can remember from the play. Underneath each character's name, brainstorm a list of words that come to your mind when you think of this character. The words can be anything—nouns, adjectives, verbs, etc. They can even be phrases. For the character Sophie, a phrase could be “saw a giant.” Based on your list of characters, create acrostic poems about each character. The words used could be from your brainstorm list or not. Example:

Saw a giant  
Orphan  
Precocious  
Hides inside a snozzcumber  
Is almost eaten  
England is saved!

The basic structure of a list poem is just that—a list. Have students choose a character, such as the Big Friendly Giant. Ask them to brainstorm everything that comes to mind when they think of the BFG, including what he likes to eat, what he has in his house, things he says, and words that describe him. Write these words or phrases as a list. Then go back and add even more descriptive words to each word or phrase. The result is a list poem. For more advanced students, the haiku form offers the challenge of capturing the essence of a character within the limits of the classic 5-7-5 syllable structure:

**The BFG**  
Catches dreams in jars  
Hides Sophie from all his friends  
Helps her save England

**Activity: Create a dream recipe. Compile it in a class “Dream Cookbook”.**

*Standard (Grade 3) Writing: Types of Writing:* The student will write in a variety of modes to express meaning, including descriptive. Spelling, Grammar and Usage: The student will apply standard English conventions when writing.

As a class, study how recipes are written, paying attention to the phrasing of complete sentences as commands. You may also take this opportunity to explore different measurements. In the play *The BFG*, the Big Friendly Giant catches dreams, puts them in jars, and delivers them to children. What if you could create your own dream? What would be the ingredients? How would you make it? Would you start with a gallon of good weather, add a cup of bike riding, and finish with a sprinkling of Kool-Aid?

**Pre- and Post-Show Discussion**

Use these questions as jumping off points for deeper exploration after the show.

- 1) What is a friend? What does it mean to be a friend? How does it feel to have a friend? Have you ever been in a situation where you had to help or defend a friend?
- 2) Sophie and the BFG are an unlikely pair of friends. Why do you think they become friends? What are some of the special qualities they have in common?
- 3) As you are watching the play, keep a mental note of all the unusual words that are used. Make a list from memory as a class after the show of all the unusual words. Try to determine their meaning using contextual clues from the play.