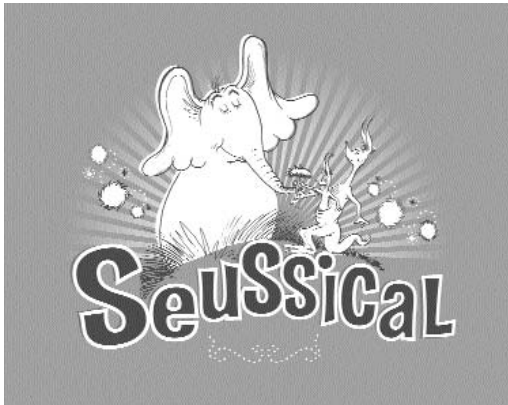


Synopsis of SEUSSICAL

Based on the works of Dr. Seuss
 Book by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty
 Co-conceived by Eric Idle
 Lyrics by Lynn Ahrens, Music by Stephen Flaherty



One day while walking by the River Walloo, Horton the Elephant hears a small noise. *This noise is a kind of a very faint yelp – as if some tiny person is calling for help.* The sound comes from a dust speck, which is a world to the Who's, tiny people whose planet is tumbling through space. Horton becomes their protector.

Unfortunately, he is the only one who can hear the Who's. He's labeled a fool: *The biggest blame fool in the Jungle of Nool. It's so cruel.* His solitary supporter is Gertrude McFuzz, a bird with a one feather tail, but she's too shy to tell him so, and Horton doesn't notice; his attention is on the Who's. One Who boy, JoJo, is a lot like Horton. He has such a strong imagination he can go to McElligot's Pool in the bath tub! JoJo and Horton are birds of a feather.

And speaking of birds, a fancy bird named Mayzie takes Gertrude under her wing and... tips her off to a Doctor. *Doctor Dake by the lake can give her a pill that she might like to take. These kind of pills get you a tail with frills.* Just how many frills does one bird need? Gertrude is going to find out. She might also find out that too much is...well, TOO MUCH.

A barrel of monkeys, the Wickersham brothers, snatch Horton's dust speck. They give it to an eagle named Vlad Vladikoff. *He goes flying over...a hundred-miles-wide patch of millions of clover.* That's where Vlad drops it. Oh, no! Horton begins searching and intends to continue until he finds his friends, but instead he meets Mayzie. After a conversation with the whacky bird Horton ends up climbing a tree to sit on Mayzie's egg, as she flies away for an afternoon break. Little does he know that the break last for 51 weeks! Horton keeps his promise, though and sits on the egg through thick and thin.

Horton sits through winter – through hunters – through an ocean journey. He's sold to the Circus McGurkus where the devoted Gertrude finds him. She brings Horton the clover that holds the Who's! His tiny friends are safe. Then Mayzie flies by and tells Horton he can keep her egg. Now he is a protector times two, but just then he's taken to court. *They say, "Lock him away!" His dust speck will be boiled in oil that same day.* Who will save Horton? Who is brave enough. Who is strong enough? A Who; a boy who finds the courage to speak up. Everyone finally hears the Who's, yes, even the two kangaroos.

*The world is saved, the egg is hatched.
 It's a happy ending! Now how about that-ch!*

- • • • •
- **NOTE:** SEUSSICAL is a musical that is almost entirely sung through. The story
- is told in lyrics more than dialogue. Prepare your class to hear the story sung
- by talking about the musicals they know. Note how much we learn about
- characters and plot in the songs of Disney's *Aladdin*, or *Hercules*, for example.
- Listen to a song from one of these movies, or something similar, and then
- together talk about all you learn from listening to the lyrics.
- • • • •



Dr. Seuss

It's difficult to imagine a library without...a world without...Dr. Seuss!

A recent Newsweek magazine began an article on a new book about the work of Theodore Geisel, a.k.a. Dr. Seuss, this way:

If you were to approach 100 people on the street and ask each one to recite from any narrative poem, the odds are that maybe one of them could get off a few lines of "Hiawatha" or "The Raven." But if you were to suggest that they could include the works of...Dr. Seuss, the chances are that most born after 1950 - or everyone with children - could get off not just a few lines but perhaps whole book-length poems. He is, without doubt, the best-known American narrative poet of the last half of the 20th century. And not just best-known: he's one of the best.

Newsweek, Feb. 26, 2007, page 58



Image of stamp from: <http://www.texasphilatelic.org/resources/stamps2004/geisel>

The Cat in the Hat was published in 1957 and within four years it had sold 2 million copies. This book length poem used a vocabulary of exactly 236 words (only one of which had two syllables) and revolutionized the teaching of reading to American children. By now Theodore Geisel is one of the most translated authors on the planet. His work has been read on every continent - including Antarctica (Seuss made the trek in the backpack of at least one radio operator we know of).

It is not only the uncanny glee with which he uses language, but his mischievous characters that make his work unforgettable. In addition his work has a depth belied by its surface playfulness. The youngest child can recognize that *The Cat in the Hat* is about more than a play date with a maniacal feline. It is a fable about responsibility in a fantasy world - that never spells out its moral.

Depending on the age of your students:

- Read Dr. Seuss.
- Do book reports on Dr. Seuss.
- Research and report on the author himself; he has a fascinating biography.
- Discover a theme which Dr. Seuss treated and do further research into the issue it presents.
- Play the game below:

Dr. Seuss imagined wild and wonderful worlds filled with weird looking creatures -- that somehow feel and act almost exactly like us. The things he was thinking were often about things important for us to think too. Match these book to the "things" they are about.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Horton Hears a Who</i> 2. <i>Horton Hatches the Egg</i> 3. <i>The Sneetches</i> 4. <i>The Butter Battle Book</i> 5. <i>Hunches In Bunches</i> 6. <i>How the Grinch Stole Christmas</i> 7. <i>Thidwick the Big Hearted Moose</i> 8. <i>What Was I Scared Of?</i> 9. <i>The Lorax</i> 10. <i>Gertrude McFuzz</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Generosity and taking advantage of kindness b. The danger of thinking looks are what matter c. The fear of anything that is different d. Prejudice divides and alienates people e. It is important to keep promises f. The danger of military armament/war g. Independence from peer pressure h. Things are not as important as people i. We must be careful and care for the earth j. The strong must stand up for weaker ones |
|---|---|



Do a Little Dance



Students act out this story of cats and birds while helping solve math equations. Make them characters from the show if you wish!

- Divide the group into 4 rows. Assign each row to be ducks, turkeys, chickens, or cats. Agree on a walk, a carriage, and a little dance step appropriate for each animal group. The area where the rows of birds are sitting is the “NEST”. Designate two other areas in the room as the “JUNGLE OF NOOL” (front and center) and the “CAT MAT” near where the cats are sitting.

- Students move in character in the order they are seated in line to the JUNGLE or are taken to the CAT MAT according to the cues in the story.
- The music for the tale can be either prerecorded or the teacher can use percussion to give a rhythm. The numbers and the equations in the story will change to fit the number of students in each group, making sure that each student gets to make an appearance in the JUNGLE at least once before the grand party. (The numbers used in the example are for 6 of each animal.)
- Begin the narration...

“Once on a world on the top of a clover was a little town called Nool. In Nool there were 6 ducks (ducks stand to do very brief “duck dance”, then sit), 6 turkeys (turkey dance), and 6 chickens (chicken dance).

How many birds lived in Nool? $\{6+6+6=18\}$

Nearby, there was also a Cat’s Mat where there lived 6 cats (cat dance).

The birds of Nool often liked to get together for a bird dance. For some reason the birds never invited the cats, which didn’t please the cats at all. So the birds would meet in small committees in the nearby jungle to plan the dance and try to keep it secret from the cats.

The first committee to meet in the jungle was the decorating committee, which had 2 ducks and 1 chicken (first 2 ducks and first chicken in line move into the “barn”). They decided to decorate the jungle with popcorn streamers and straw confetti (students can pretend to decorate). How many birds are decorating? $\{2+1=3\}$

When they finished decorating, they danced together to celebrate. Little did they know that while they were dancing, a cat snuck into the jungle (enter first cat) and took away one of the ducks (cat takes duck to the “Cat Mat”). How many birds in the barn? $\{3-1=2\}$

The other birds got scared and ran back to their nest (birds go to the end of their bird rows). How many birds in the jungle? $\{2-2=0\}$

Three turkeys came to the jungle next along with 3 ducks to display their new dance costumes. They danced around each other admiring each other’s colorful costumes. How many birds are showing off costumes? $\{3+3=6\}$

Two cats snuck in and tried to join in the costume parade. How many animals in the jungle? $\{6+2=8\}$

When the birds told them to leave, the two cats took 2 ducks and 1 turkey with them. How many animals in the jungle now? $\{8-3=5\}$

The other birds got scared and ran back to their nest.

Now 4 chickens, 2 turkeys, and 3 ducks came to the jungle to bring the snacks for the party and danced as they sampled the treats. How many birds are dancing and eating snacks? $\{4+2+3=9\}$

Right away, 3 cats came and tried to eat the snacks. How many animals in the jungle? $\{9+3=12\}$

The birds made them stop!

(continued on page 5)



Do a Little Dance...continued



Now the birds asked where the other bird friends were. The cats pointed toward the cat mat and said they only took the birds so that they could teach them to dance. With that the birds agreed to teach the cats to dance and invite them to the jungle for a dance if they brought back all their friends. The 3 cats left the jungle. How many animals in the barn? { $12-3=9$ }

Right away they came back with all the captured birds and all the cats. How many animals are in the jungle for a dance? { $6 \times 4=24$ }

All the animals joined in for a celebration (all dance)."

A CELEBRATION DANCE

Jungle Square Dance

Students follow the instructions as the teacher is the caller for the Jungle Square Dance. Students can be encouraged to keep finding a partner bird or cat that is of a different type. The teacher can demonstrate how to follow the called instructions before the dance begins. A tape or a CD of an instrumental song can be used (the most obvious choice is one with a country/western flavor) or the teacher or designated percussionists can keep a steady 4/4 beat.

Start the dance in two circles, one facing in and one facing out so that each dancer is facing a partner. They follow the instructions of the call after it is said.

Bow to your friend, wave "how ya do"
Hook wings and paws, turn two by two
Wiggle your shoulders and clap your hands
Now find a different neighbor in this land

[The above stanza can be repeated as many times as you would like before moving to the next.]
 Now all you birds move around in their ring. Have one ring move clockwise and the other opposite.

Stomp your paws and flap your wings
Move straight ahead and shake your tail
Boogie back the other way, stop and wail

[Repeat above stanza as many times as you would like before performing the concluding stanza.]

Jump up, jump down, lay slowly on the floor
Take a cat nap do a little bird snore
Now let that snore get quiet please
When the music stops you all – must – FREEZE!



Make Your Own Story

SEUSSICAL is composed of many stories combined into one brand new story. Here are two activities that allow you to make your own story. For younger students a puppet show, or for older students written in another of several formats.



To make puppets you will need:

Copies of character drawings, preferably on cardstock
 Crayons, markers, or paint to decorate your puppets
 Scissors to cut out your character puppets
 Glue sticks to assemble the puppets
 Popsicle sticks
 Tape to attach characters to the Popsicle sticks
 Your imagination

First of all, let students create their own puppets by coloring, cutting out, and assembling characters (2 sheets of character elements follow). They can mix and match ears, legs, wings, and bodies to make Horton the Elephant, Mayzie or Gertrude McFuzz, a Who, or any combination of these characters. (Students may want to devise a way to add feathers to a tail or make an egg hatch as they go along, or to draw extra characters they imagine themselves.)

Mount the characters on Popsicle sticks so that they can be used as puppets. It is simple to use a desk or table as a stage for the puppet play. Simply mask the front, if using a table, so that the puppet actors can become invisible behind and below the playing surface.

Working in small groups, have students combine their puppets to tell a story that illustrates one of the following themes. Make certain the players understand that there is no "right" or "wrong" story – they are not being asked to re-enact a story they know or have read necessarily. They are free to use these characters to tell any story they can imagine.

- "A person's a person no matter how small!" Everybody matters and everybody has a right to be part of things and be safe and taken care of. What can happen when you stand up for somebody who isn't being heard or taken care of?
- Anything is possible if you believe in yourself! If you dare to dream something and you work toward what you imagine, you can do surprising things. Tell a story of someone who does something great because they don't get discouraged.
- A friend is someone who believes in you! No matter what "everybody" says, your friend is the person who knows you and believes in you. Let your story show what it means to be a friend.
- "I meant what I said, and I said what I meant!" It is important to keep promises no matter how difficult it can be. Tell a story where someone is responsible even though it would be easier to walk away from a promise.

Have the various groups of students perform their puppet plays for each other. When all the performances have been done take time to recognize what you enjoyed and what the stories celebrate:
 Friendship, reliability, courage, confidence...and imagination.

(continued on pages 7-9)



PUPPETS
Horton,
Gertrude,
Etc.



Make Your Own Story...continues

SEUSSICAL introduces characters from several different stories to one another. The Cat in the Hat can visit the jungle. Gertrude McFuzz can moon over Horton. What fun! Have you ever imagined what would happen if some of your favorite characters could meet?



Fill in the blanks, and follow directions:

Write the names of three of your favorite characters from three different books, movies, or stories here.

Now think of a place from a story that you would love to go:

Name another place you wouldn't want to go for any reason: _____

Finally, think of one "thing" – an object you've seen, heard or read about. Whatever pops into your mind first will work (or you can take a little time to choose): _____

- Now. If imagine a story that combines all the elements of stories you listed above - pieces from stories you have heard or seen - into a story all your own.
- Write a short story – or create a comic book, storyboard, play or mini-opera.

Here are some prompts that may be useful as you write. You may want to use the space below for notes before you begin to write a first draft:

Have two of your characters can meet first in the place you like.

(What do they say to each other? Why are they there?)

Write it so that they have the "thing" you thought of, or maybe they need to find it.

Create a plot in which they need to go to the other place to get it or for some other reason.

What might that be?

Somewhere along the line make sure they meet the third character.

You decide when, how and why.

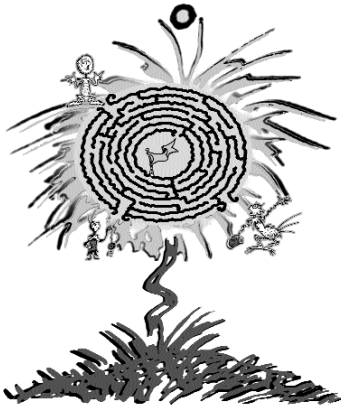
The amazing thing is that even if you and a friend chose identical answers to the questions above (which is unlikely), each of you would write your own story, and both of them would be great!



Poetry & Play

POETRY: Dr. Seuss utilized phonograms, or rhyming words, in his writing.

To help students identify rhyming words, have them play Rhyme Line. Divide the class into two teams, with two students acting as judges. Each team is then evenly divided into two lines facing the judges, line A and line B. Each judge presides over one team. The game is a race to see which team can get through their lines first. At the start, the person who is at the head of line A says any word, and the person in line B must say a word that rhymes with it. When the judge has given the okay, the two players run to the back of their lines and the lines move forward. Player B must say a word that actually rhymes with what Player A said. It must also be an actual word—no made-up words allowed! If the judge says a word doesn't count for whatever reason, the players must start over with a new set of words. Whichever team gets through their entire A and B line first, wins. After you have played the game, have students sit down and write down a list of all the rhyming words they can remember from the game. They can then include new words. Read a few passages from a Dr. Seuss book which illustrate the use of rhyme. Then have students try their hand at writing a poem using rhyming words from their lists.



Which WHO makes it to the banner and saves the world?

PLAY: The Teasing Chair and Body Fusion Games

In the play, Horton is laughed at by some of the other jungle dwellers, including the Wickersham Brothers and Sour Kangaroo, when he tells them about Whoville. These two exercises, when done together, help students analyze how it feels to tease, why people tease, and in contrast how it feels to support others. First, have a class discussion about teasing, or bullying. Identify some of the things people say when they tease someone. Why do people tease? How does it feel to tease someone? Divide the class into two groups. Set a chair in the center of the room. Have one group circle around the chair while the other one watches.

Have the group who is standing start to tease the chair. Invite them to use words that they identified earlier. After a few minutes, end the exercise and have another discussion. How did it feel to tease someone? Did you feel powerful? Did you think it was funny? Did you feel pressured into doing it when everyone else was doing it? Ask the group that was watching how it felt to watch it happen. What did the teasers look like? If you want, give the groups a chance to switch roles.

In contrast, ask students what is the opposite of teasing or bullying? Generate a list of behaviors. For our purposes, we could say that the opposite of teasing is to hold someone up, or support them. Ask students to begin walking through the space in neutral.

Then you call out a body part, such as elbow. Students must connect with another student at the elbow. Once each student has found an elbow partner, have them look that partner in the eye and say, "I will hold you up." Then have them walk again. Call out another body part, like knee. Each student must find a different partner to touch knees. Again, have them say, "I will hold you up." Continue calling out different body parts. Then, you call out parts that you've already done, so that the kids have to find their elbow partners again. You could also call out more than one part, so that kids must connect with, say, their elbow partner as well as their pinkie partner. Each time they must say, "I will hold you up."

Have another discussion:

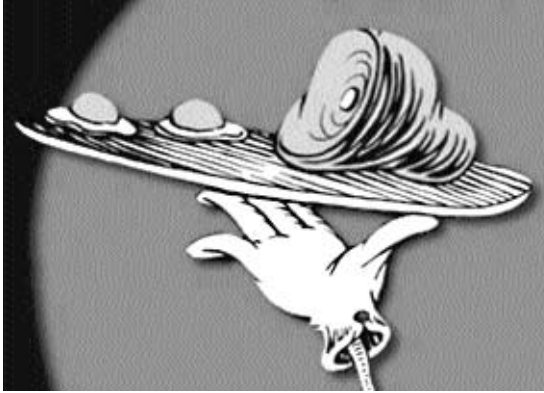
How did it feel to be able to support someone?

How did it feel to know that someone else supported you?

How can we make sure that people feel supported in your classroom?



Green Eggs Word Jam



Dr. Seuss loves words! He loves to take them, bend, rearrange, turn them up-side down and backwards to make new words and creations. One of the happiest and most recognized examples of his word-joy is *Green Eggs and Ham*, an unappetizing image but the source of a lot of fun.

Below is a list of other foods with funny names. Have students (individuals or groups) decide which of the following are NOT real names for food. For those they believe are real food items, imagine the ingredients that are in each dish.

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Shoo Fly Pie | Bubble and Squeak |
| Biff Bam Pow Cake | Ten Orange Squirrels |
| Hoppin John | Hush Puppies |
| Red Velvet Cake | Toes in Socks |
| Fried Green Tomatoes | Brooklyn Eggs and Hot Foot Stew |
| Toad in the Hole | Inky Pinky |
| Pickled Pig's Feet | Mincemeat Pie |
| Hasenfegger | Smashed Nose Soup |
| Stompleberry Pie | 7-Up Cake |
| Monkey Bread | |

Next have students make up the name of a dish of their own or use one of the ones they think are made-up from the above list. Create a recipe for their dish. The dish can be comprised of real ingredients or of something of their own creation. Have them create a recipe card and illustrate it.

Include:

- Ingredients and quantities of ingredients needed
- Preparation and cooking process
- How many people does it serve?
- Describe the people who would eat this dish, where they live, and on what occasions the dish is served?

For more advanced students have them take them dish and expand it for multiple guests, i.e. if they said the dish originally serves 4, have them make the recipe calculations in order to make the dish for 8 and then for 80.

Compile all of these new recipe cards into a Mixed Up Recipe book.

Answers:
Mmm,
mmm,
yummy

Smashed Nose Soup - not real
Stompleberries Pie - not real
7-Up Cake - a cake made with 7-Up
Monkey Bread - a sweet bread

Shoo Fly Pie - Molasses based pie
Bubble and Squeak - cabbage and potatoes
Biff Bam Pow Cake - not real
Ten Orange Squirrels - not real
Hoppin John - black eye peas, ham, and rice
Hush Puppies - fried corn bread
Red Velvet Cake - a cake with red food coloring
Toes in Socks - not real
Fried Green Tomatoes - fried non-ripe tomatoes
Brooklyn Eggs and Hot Foot Stew - not real
Toad in the Hole - sausages & Yorkshire pudding
Inky Pinky - Scottish roast beef and carrots
Pickled pig's feet - pigs feet in pickling brine
Mincemeat Pie - apples, currants, (rarely meat)
Hasenfegger - German rabbit stew



Related Resources

The plot and characters in SEUSSICAL are inspired by a number of books by Dr. Seuss. We highly suggest reading any of these books in class as a follow-up or lead-in to the play. Some of the books referenced in the play are: *Horton Hears a Who*, *Horton Hatches the Egg*, *Gertrude McFuzz*, *Yertle the Turtle*, and *The Cat in the Hat*.

These other books are thematically connected to the play in various ways:

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Roald Dahl. *Each of five children lucky enough to discover an entry ticket into Mr. Willy Wonka's mysterious chocolate factory takes advantage of the situation in his own way.* (ages 8 to 12)

The Field Guide, Tony DeTerlizzi. *When the Grace children go to stay at their Great Aunt Lucinda's worn Victorian house, they discover a field guide to fairies and other creatures and begin to have some unusual experiences.* (ages 8 to 12)

Lucy Rose, Here's the Thing About Me, Katy Kelly. *Eight-year-old Lucy Rose keeps a diary of her first year in Washington, D.C., her home since her parents separation, where she spends time with her grandparents, makes new friends, and longs to convince her teacher to let her take care of the class pet during a holiday.* (ages 6 to 10)

Mary Poppins, P. L. Travers. *The wind brings four English children a new nanny who slides up the banister and introduces them to some delightful people and experiences.* (ages 8 to 12)

Project Mulberry, Linda Sue Park. *While working on a project for an after-school club, Julia, a Korean American girl, and her friend Patrick learn not just about silkworms, but also about tolerance, prejudice, friendship, patience, and more. Between the chapters are short dialogues between the author and main character about the writing of the book.* (ages 8 to 12)



Who is honest and steadfast and strong and trustworthy
 And brave and his big gray ears too?
 Why, it's Horton the Elephant, certainly!
 And – except for the ear part – it's YOU!
 Can an elephant be your hero?
 Can a world float on the wind?
 Can a bird love with all her heart?
 Can a bird be an elephant's kin?
 One question we'll answer: Before the play's through,
 You will hope that Horton is a lot like you!

Here are some questions for discussion and exploration:

- 1) Gertrude thinks that having more feathers will get her noticed. Have you ever wished for something that isn't as good as you thought it would be once you get it? Does having certain things truly make you more important?
- 2) How can we help ourselves and others to feel important on the inside without having to change on the outside?
- 3) What makes someone a good friend? Horton says that "an elephant's faithful one hundred percent". What does it mean to be faithful? Is a good friend a faithful friend? Is it hard to be faithful sometimes? How can we remember to be faithful to our friends?
- 4) In the end JoJo, "the smallest of all", saves the day by speaking up for all of Whoville. When you are small, is it hard to get people to listen to you? Why do you think people have a hard time listening to someone who's small? What can we do to make sure everyone's voice gets heard?

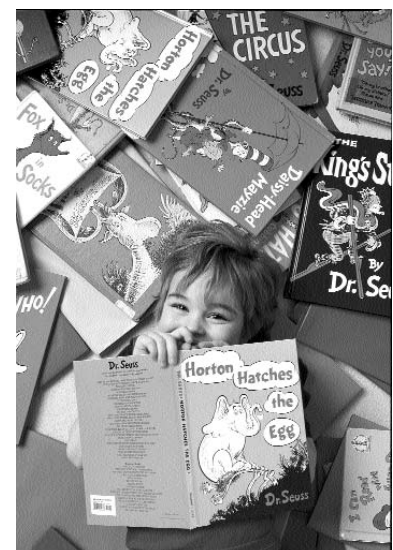


YOUR FEEDBACK

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Feedback your response is invaluable. Please take a moment to respond. Thank you.

1. Did using this Study Guide add to your theater experience?
 Yes Some No
2. How much of the Study Guide did you read?
 Didn't have time About a quarter All
3. What do you think of what you read? Mark as many as apply.
 Useful Enjoyable
 Nothing new Not for my students
4. Did you get the Study Guide in time to prepare to see the play?
 Yes No Comment



5. What sections of the Study Guide did you find most important?

6. How did the experience of preparing for and then seeing the play impact you students?

7. Did you spend more time working with the material BEFORE or AFTER the play?
 Before After About the Same
8. Which of the following best describes you?
I teach: middle school high school
 home school
 other _____

Comments: _____

(continue on separate page if desired)

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