

FRINDLE

based on the book by Andrew Clements



SYNOPSIS

Everyone knows that Mrs. Granger, the language arts teacher, has X-ray vision in her classroom. She's also a fanatic about the dictionary, which is hopelessly boring to one of her students Nicholas Allen. But when Nick learns an interesting tidbit about words and where they come from, it inspires him to invent a new word. From now on, a pen is no longer a pen—it's a FRINDLE.

The story begins with Mrs. Granger, an elderly, distinguished teacher, grading papers when the mail arrives. She is informed by the superintendent that a permanent, million dollar trust fund for college scholarships has been set up in her honor. Mrs. Granger passes it off as a trick until she learns that the fund was established by a former student of hers, Nicholas Allen.

Then the theatrical production flashes back ten years when Nick is starting fifth grade at Lincoln Elementary School. He and several of his friends were dismayed to find that their language arts teacher was to be the dreaded Mrs. Granger, who was notorious for her long homework assignments. Nick responded rather coolly, however, because he was known throughout his class as the "idea man", who could invent ways to get everyone out of class work. Everyone was still reeling from his bug stunt last year which involved turning the thermostat up and dumping sand all over the classroom to create a beach party. The class was so busy cleaning up, there was never an opportunity to do any work, or even to receive a homework assignment. All the kids in Nick's language arts last year were more than confident that Nick would come up with something just as good this time.

"FRINDLE is ... about discovering the true nature of words, language, thought, community, learning. It's also about great teaching and great teachers, and about the life that surges through corridors and classrooms every school day."

-Andrew Clements

In the last moments of class, after Mrs. Granger had finished her lecture on the importance of words and their definitions, and just before she was about to sentence the entire class to what was sure to be the longest homework assignment ever, Nick's hand shot into the air. He'd come up with the perfect question to keep Mrs. Granger talking well past the ring of the bell: "Where do words come from?"

Mrs. Granger was not taking the bait, though, and she took this opportunity to allow Nick to teach the class, himself. Nick was to research his own question and write up a report, in addition to the homework that was assigned to the rest of the class.

This proved to be the beginning of Nick's experiment with words, as well as his power struggle with Mrs. Granger over what constituted a "real word" in the first place. It was then that Nick decided to create a new word to replace "pen": FRINDLE. The feud between Nick and Mrs. Granger then spread over the whole school, then the town, then throughout the entire country. The struggle went on and on, with neither conceding until finally Nick's new word was printed in the latest edition of the dictionary.

By the story's end, we find that Mrs. Granger not only taught Nick about the importance of words and their origins, but also about having the courage to stand up for himself when he faced opposition. In the final moments of the play, Nick thanks Mrs. Granger for the lessons, and, as a token of his gratitude, offers her a gift that she can call by any name she chooses. FRINDLE is an imaginative, quirky tale about creative thought and the power of words.

Curriculum Connections

Language Arts, Reading, Vocabulary, Spelling, Creative Writing, Literature

Levels

Recommended for ages 8 – 13 yrs, Grades 3 – 7.
Study guide and additional materials provided.

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RECOGNITION

Awards

- 1997 Christopher Award
Rhode Island Children's Book Award 1998
Judy Lopez Memorial Honor Book (L.A.)Award 97
Great Stone Face Book Award (NH)1997-1998
Rebecca Caudill Young Readers Award (IL)1999
Massachusetts Children's Book Award 1998-1999
William Allen White Children's Book Award (KS)1998-1999
Georgia Children's Book Award, 1998-1999
1998-99 Maud Hart Lovelace Award, MN Youth Rdg. Award
Sasquatch Children's Book Award (WA) 1999
1999 South Dakota Prairie Pasque Award
Charlie May Simon Children's Book Award, (AR)1998-99
Premio Cassa di Risparmio di Cento di Letteratura per Ragazzi,
1998, Cento, Italy
1998-99 Nevada Young Readers'Award
1998-99 North Carolina Children's Choice Award
Pacific NW Lib.Assn.- Young Reader's Choice 1999
(WA,OR,MT,AK,ID,AB,BC)
1999 Texas Children's Crown Award
Young Hoosier Book Award (IN) 1998-99
1998-99 Maryland Black-Eyed Susan Book Award, 4-6
Pennsylvania Young Reader's Choice Award 1999-2000
Utah Children's Choice Award, 2000



Award Nominations

- Maine Student Book Award 97-98
Dorothy Canfield Fisher Book Award (VT) 97-98
Kentucky Bluegrass Award, 1997-1998
Nebraska Golden Sower Award 98-99
NENE Award (HI)1998
Texas Bluebonnet Award 1998-99
1998 Battle of the Books Reading List (NM)
Arizona Young Readers'Award 1998-99
Sequoyah Children's Book Award, (WA)1998-1999
Virginia Young Readers Award, 1998-1999
West Virginia Children's Book Award, 1998-1999
Sunshine State Young Readers Award, (FL)1998-1999
Wyoming Indian Paintbrush Book Award, 1998-1999
Iowa Children's Choice Award, 1999-2000
California Young Reader Medal, 1999-2000
Garden State Children's Book Award, (NJ)1999
Land of Enchantment Book Award, (NM)1999-2000
Nutmeg Children's Book Award, (CT) 1999-2000

Notations, Listings, Commendations

- NY Pub.Lib.- 100 titles for reading & sharing, 1996
Horn Book Magazine Fanfare Book, 1997
Parents' Choice Honor Book, 1997
Chicago Public Library's Best of the Best, 1998
Best Kids Books--Family Fun Magazine, 1998
Indiana Read-Alouds Too Good to Miss 1997-1998
Capitol Choices list, best books for ages 7-10, 1999

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Griffin Theatre has performed FRINDLE at:

Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall – Sarasota, Florida
The Raymond F. Kravis Center for the Performing Arts – West Palm Beach, Florida
Proctor & Gamble Hall at the Aronoff Center – Cincinnati, Ohio
Coral Springs Center for the Arts – Coral Springs, Florida
The Grand Theatre – Wausau, Wisconsin
Metropolis Center for the Performing Arts – Arlington Heights, Illinois
Alaska Center for the Performing Arts – Anchorage, Alaska
Clowes Memorial Hall of Butler University – Indianapolis, Indiana
The Bushnell Center for the Arts – Hartford, Connecticut
University of Massachusetts at Lowell – Lowell, Massachusetts
Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts – Cerritos, California
The Peace Center – Greenville, South Carolina
Loeb Playhouse, Purdue University – West Lafayette, Indiana
University of Wisconsin, Whitewater – Whitewater, Wisconsin
Wilson Center for the Arts – Brookfield, Wisconsin
Franciscan Center of Lourdes College – Sylvania, Ohio
Eau Claire Regional Arts Center – Eau Claire, Wisconsin
The Carson Center – Paducah, Kentucky
Tennessee Performing Arts Center – Nashville, Tennessee
Vilar Performing Arts Center – Beaver Creek, Colorado
McIntyre Hall – Mount Vernon, Washington
Theatre at Meydenbauer – Bellevue, Washington
Everett Civic Auditorium – Everett, Washington
Higley Center for the Performing Arts – Gilbert, Arizona
Flynn Center – Burlington, Vermont
Lebanon Opera House – Lebanon, New Hampshire
Chris Brown Presents – Lowell, Massachusetts
LaGuardia Civic Center – Long Island City, New York
New Jersey Performing Arts Center – Newark, New Jersey
Charlotte Performing Arts Center – Charlotte, Michigan
Polk Center – Lakeland, Florida



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A Note from the Artistic Director

I was given FRINDLE to read back in 1998 by a very wise teacher. The book, at the time was by a little known author named Andrew Clements. Now years later, it is one of the most widely read children's novels in the country. Joining a list that includes, "The Harry Potter Series, To Kill a Mockingbird and Bridge to Terabithia."

I immediately fell in love with FRINDLE. Not only was it a great story, but it treated children with respect. It looked at life through the wide eyes of child with an optimism that most of us forget as we grow up. It is said that Andrew Clements books "give young readers insights and strategies for rising to the challenges of their classrooms." That is certainly true.

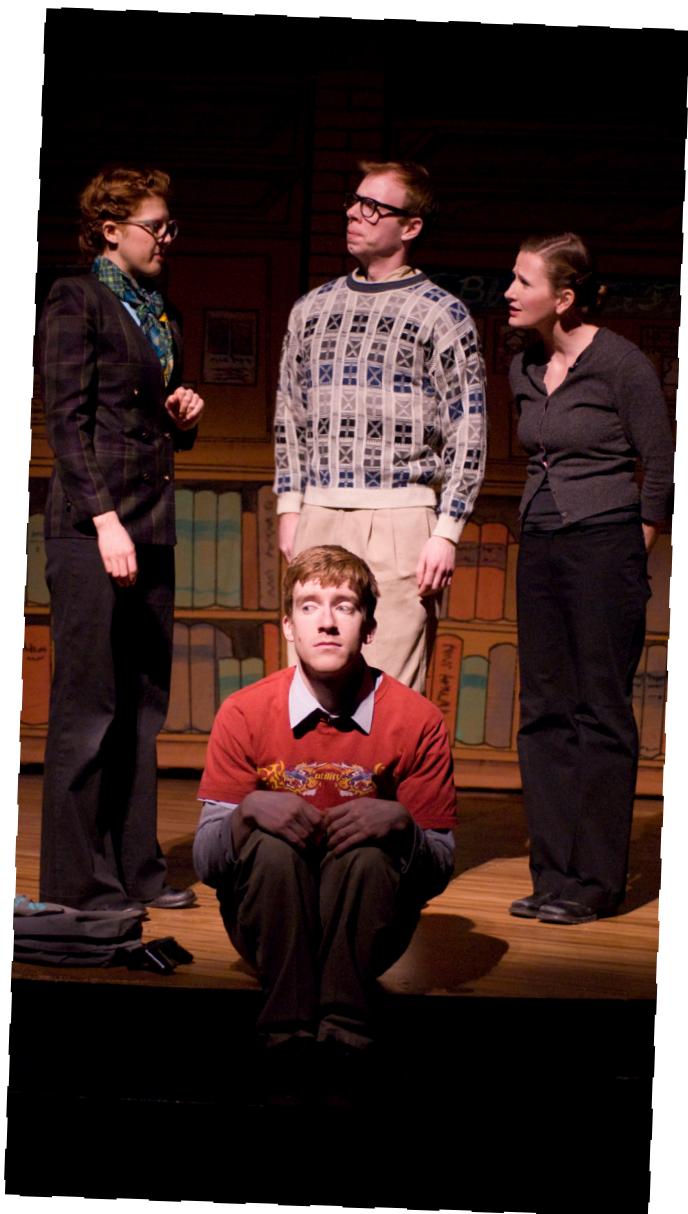
It also gives us a story with a character who discovers their hidden potential and the person they might later become. More importantly, they stumble, they make mistakes and they fail in their efforts to achieve, learn and grow-up. In the end they succeed because they have an adult who helps them along the way and in the case of FRINDLE a great teacher.

A GREAT TEACHER. All of us had that one teacher that made a difference in our life. The teacher we remember who inspired us to be a better student and person. For me FRINDLE is about those important relationships in our formative years that helped make us the person we are today.

FRINDLE was really a perfect fit for the Griffin Theatre Company. An intelligent piece of theatre that not only teaches the audience (both young and old) valuable life lessons, but does it with empathy, humor and compassion.

I know you will enjoy FRINDLE as much as I do. And to that wise teacher back in 1998—who's name, with the passage of time I have forgotten—I want to say thank you.

Bill Massolia
Artistic Director
Griffin Theatre Co.



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CLASSROOM WORKSHOPS AND RESIDENCIES

The focus of the Griffin Theatre Company's workshops and residencies are to introduce students to the creative process, the basics of theatre arts and can be designed specifically to augment and enhance a teacher's classroom curriculum.

Workshops are designed to promote creative thinking, stimulate imagination, develop critical thinking skills, promote language development, heighten listening skills, foster group cooperation and peer respect, increase awareness and empathy of others, reinforce positive self-concept, and give students a fresh and innovative way to learn.

Workshops begin with a collection of theatre games and exercises that encourage and enhance creative thinking, problem solving, spatial awareness, and trust. Such techniques help to create a group that is supportive, energetic, and focused.

The Griffin Theatre workshops and residencies are first and foremost designed to educate but, they are fun too. Workshops and residencies can be conducted in conjunction with Griffin Theatre performances or can be scheduled independently. One workshop can last anywhere from forty-five minutes to two hours. Residencies with teaching artists can last from two days to two weeks.



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ABOUT

GRiffin theatre company



MISSION

The mission of the Griffin Theatre Company is to create extraordinary and meaningful theatrical experiences for both children and adults by building bridges of understanding between generations that instill in its audience an appreciation of the performing arts. The Griffin achieves this mission and vision through artistic collaboration, produces literary adaptations, original work and classic plays that challenge and inspire, with wit, style and compassion for the audience. The company is supported by an ensemble of Artist in Residence with a range of disciplines include acting, designing, directing and production.

HISTORY

The Griffin Theatre Company originated in Chicago's Logan Square neighborhood in a factory loft the company renovated. In July 1992, the Griffin relocated to Andersonville and renovated the historic Calo Theater. Five years ago the Griffin vacated its space in Andersonville after thirteen years and is completing its negotiations on its agreement with the city of Chicago to purchase an abandon police station in the Edgewater neighborhood of Chicago. The Griffin plans to renovate and transform the building into a state of the art theatre facility that will become its permanent home.

Over the last twenty-two years the Griffin has provided a wide range of work including world and mid-west premieres of acclaimed scripts, critically lauded productions of Shakespeare and original adaptations of novels. Each year the main-stage offers 3 full-length productions and 1 children's production. Many of the Griffin's 100 plus productions have appeared on Chicago area critics "Best of the Year" lists. These productions included, *Time and the Conway, Angus, Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging, Ash Can Alley, Shakespeare's Dog, Much Ado About Nothing, The Art*

of Success, Women and Wallace, The Downside, Be More Chill, Loving Little Egypt, Independence, Letters Home and most recently, *Journey's End*. The Griffin is the recipient of 35 Joseph Jefferson Award nominations for theatre excellence in Chicago. The company produced the west coast premiere of *Riding the Dolphin* in Los Angeles in 1996 and its world premiere production of *Henry and the Second Gunman* was optioned by Miramax Films. The Griffin also tours its hit adult production of *Letters Home*. This past fall the Griffin performed the production at Connecticut's prestigious and fabled Westport Country Playhouse.

Children's programming at the Griffin brings young people original productions of award-winning children's literature. Productions over the last twenty years have included the world premieres of *The Whipping Boy, Sleeping Ugly, Frindle, Catherine Called Birdy, Romeo and Juliet are Alive and Well and Living in Maple Bend, There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom* and *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*. The Griffin's national touring company brings its two most popular productions—*The Stinky Cheese Man & Other Fairly Stupid Tales* and *Frindle* to young people throughout the United States each year. Tours have included such prestigious venues as Cleveland Playhouse Square, Kravis Center for the Performing Arts in West Palm Beach Florida, Tennessee Performing Arts Center in Nashville and the Vilar Performing Arts Center in Beaver Creek, Colorado. Last year the Griffin Theatre had the pleasure to perform its touring productions for over 100,000 young people and adults.



(773)769-2228

3711 North Ravenswood Ave. Suite 145 • Chicago, IL 60613

griffintheatre.com