

# big NATE

ALL WORK AND NO PLAY

by LINCOLN PEIRCE



## TEACHER'S GUIDE

Curriculum Connections and Activity/Discussion Guide



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## **Big Nate All Work and No Play** **Lincoln Peirce**

AMP! Comics for Kids  
Andrews McMeel Publishing  
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**GRADE LEVEL:** 3–7

### **Curriculum Connections**

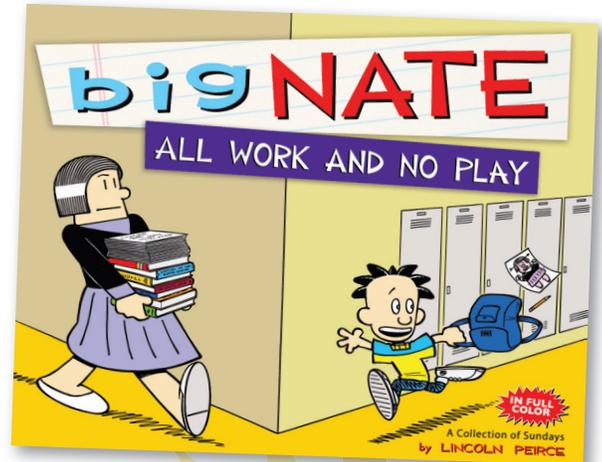
English Language Arts \* Art

### **Thematic Connections**

School \* Sports \* Family \* Friendship \* Creativity

### **Overview**

Aspiring cartoonist Nate Wright is the star of *Big Nate All Work and No Play*. Equipped with only a #2 pencil and the unshakable belief that he is #1, Nate interacts with friends, family, and teachers, inspiring humor, patience, and exasperation wherever he goes. Students can enjoy Nate’s mishaps while examining themes, setting, character, and the artistic elements of a successful story told in interconnected words and pictures.



## **English Language Arts Lesson Plans and Discussion Questions**

### **Objective**

Students will read this cartoon book, examining the story elements of character, setting, and theme, and compose their own stories.

### **Story Composition**

1. Have students read the book and keep lists of three elements:
  - \* Characters — Who are the major and minor characters?
  - \* Settings — Where are the primary places the stories take place?
  - \* Themes — Are there scenarios and ideas that recur during the reading?
2. Lead a class discussion:
  - \* About character: Nate is the main character, but who makes up the supporting cast? Do students like all of the characters? What are some traits of the major characters? (For example, Nate is messy and loves sports.)

- \* About setting: Why do students think the creator chose these settings (school, home, playing fields)? How would the stories have been different if they took place in another country? In another time period?
  - \* About theme: Talk about how the creator’s use of recurring themes adds to the humor of the stories (family, friends, school, and romance). Have students identify three ways that the artist makes comedy out of an everyday situation.
- 3.** Have students outline their own story elements—one to three settings and themes, and four to six characters—in preparation for creating their own funny cartoon story or stories.

## Other Curriculum Connections

### Art

In this book, Nate and his friends belong to a cartooning club. With students, revisit pages 22, 32, 47, 51, 82, 93, 113, and 127 to observe what Nate is learning about creating comics.

Ask students:

- \* Why does Nate draw cartoons?
- \* Do they think Nate’s drawing is a good way to express his thoughts/feelings about other people?
- \* Why are other characters, such as teachers, always getting mad at Nate about his comics?

Using Gordie’s advice about caricatures on page 51, have students draw a caricature of themselves or of someone in their family.

Using Nate’s suggestion on page 127 about keeping a cartoonist’s notebook, have students record everything they find funny for a fixed period of time.

Notice the standardized “header” for every page (Nate is running, the border looks like a composition book). Ask students to draw the header for their own cartoon stories, using the settings and themes they chose in the English Language Arts lesson (above).

Lincoln Peirce, the creator of *Big Nate*, started drawing cartoons when he was growing up and dreamed of becoming a cartoonist, which he did. Ask students what they think it would be like to be a professional cartoonist.

