Welcome to the 2015-2016 Student Matinee Season!

Today’s scholars and researchers say creativity is the top skill our kids will need when they enter the work force of the future, so we salute YOU for valuing the educational and inspirational power of live performance. By using this study guide you are taking an even greater step toward implementing the arts as a vital and inspiring educational tool.

We hope you find this guide useful. If you have any suggestions for content or format of this guide, please contact sms@flynncenter.org.

Enjoy the show! -Education Staff

The arts are an essential element of education, just like reading, writing, and arithmetic... music, dance, painting, and theater are all keys that unlock profound human understanding and accomplishment.

-William Bennett

It is the supreme art of the teacher to AWAKE JOY in creative expression and knowledge.

- Albert Einstein

We appreciate and value your feedback.

- Click here to evaluate our study guides.
- Click here for Teacher Feedback Forms for the performance.
- Click here for Student Feedback Forms for the performance.
- Click here for Parent Forms to help parents engage with their children around the show.

This guide was written & compiled by the Education Department at the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts with inspiration from Griffin Theatre Study Guide and website, the Scholastic Teachers Guide for Frindle, and School Days, a Guide to Books by Andrew Clements. Permission is granted for teachers, parents, and students who are coming to Flynn shows to copy & distribute this guide for educational purposes only.
The Flynn Center recognizes that field trip resources for schools are extremely limited, thus matinee prices for schools are significantly lower than prices for public performances. As a non-profit organization, the Flynn is deeply grateful to the foundations, corporations, and individuals whose generous financial support keeps matinees affordable for schools.

A special thank you to the Wake Robin Friends of the Flynn for sponsoring this matinee performance.


Additional support from the Bruce J. Anderson Foundation, Green Mountain Fund, Walter Cerf Community Fund, the Vermont Arts Council, the Susan Quinn Memorial Fund, and the Ronald McDonald House Charities.
Before you see the show:
- Make a list of your character traits. Include your strengths and weaknesses. Do you think you share any characteristics with any of the characters in the play?
- Discuss perseverance. Describe a time when you had to stand up for what you thought was right. What happened?
- "School was the perfect place to launch a new word," Andrew Clements writes. Why? What makes schools such good breeding grounds for fads? Do companies or community organizations ever use your school for promoting products or services? How?

As you watch the show:
- Most of the actors in the play perform as several different characters. Do the actors use different body language or change their voices when they become a different character? Do they change costumes to change characters? Do they change their entire costume or use specific pieces (a hat, a jacket, etc.) to become a new character?
- Production Design refers to all of the elements in a play which provide the atmosphere or create the “world of the play.” This can be the kind of costumes that are used, the music or sound effects that are played, the set pieces and props that are used. The production team is made up of designers who work together to agree upon what each element should look like and how it should be created. After you see the show you can discuss some of the design choices that you observed in the play.
  - What did the costumes tell you about the different characters? Why do you think the costume designer chose those specific colors and fabrics?
  - What details did you notice about the set in the show? What changes might you have made were you the set designer?

After you see the show:
- The frindle is just one of Nick’s great ideas. Brainstorm about ways you could improve your own school. How can you turn your ideas into action?
THE STORY
Nicholas Allen has plenty of ideas. Who can forget the time he turned his third-grade classroom into a tropical island, or the times he fooled his teacher by chirping like a blackbird? But now Nick’s in fifth grade, and it looks as though he may have met his match in his new language arts teacher. Everyone knows that Mrs. Granger has X-ray vision, and that nobody gets away with anything in her classroom.

But when Mrs. Granger answers Nick’s question about where words come from, Nick devises his greatest plan yet…to invent a new word! From now on, a pen is now longer a pen – it’s a “Frindle!”

It doesn’t take long for frindle to take root, and soon the excitement spreads well beyond his school and town. His parents and Mrs. Granger would like Nick to put an end to all this nonsense. But frindle doesn’t belong to Nick anymore. All he can do now is sit back and watch what happens.

THE CHARACTERS
Nick Allen: a fifth grader known as school’s “idea man” and the story’s main character
Mrs. Granger: a famously strict and savvy fifth grade teacher
Howie, Janet, & Chris: Nick’s classmates and friends
Mrs. Chatham: Principal of Nick’s school (Lincoln Elementary School)
Judy Morgan: a reporter from the Westfield Gazette
Bud Lawrence: a businessman who becomes a “Frindle” merchandiser
Mom & Dad: Nick’s parents
Darlene: Mrs. Granger’s grown-up daughter
Woman: saleswoman at a local shop, one of the first people to hear the word, “frindle”

THE AUTHOR: ANDREW CLEMENTS
As a child, Andrew Clements always loved to read and he believes that his early love of reading books played a big role in his choice to eventually become a writer. He taught in the public schools in Chicago for seven years before moving east to begin a career in publishing and writing.

Frindle was Clements’ first novel and was published in 1996. Since its original publication it has sold over two million copies in the US alone and had been published in many different languages. The idea for Frindle grew out of a talk he gave about writing to a group of second graders. He says this about the book: “Frindle is...about discovering the true nature of words, language, thought, community, and 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’ prolific career as an author has yielded novels, chapter books, picture books, picture books, specialty books, curriculum books, and early reader books for children. He has also published poetry and essays. Mr. Clements lives in Westborough, Massachusetts with his family.

“Sometimes kids ask how I’ve been able to write so many books. The answer is simple: one word at a time. Which is a good lesson, I think. You don’t have to do everything at once. You don’t have to know how every story is going to end. You just have to take that next step, look for that next idea, write that next word.” –Andrew Clements

One Word at a Time Story: Just like Andrew Clements says, a story is written one word at a time. Have your class form a circle. Tell them that you are going to tell a story together, by going around the circle and having each person add one word. The word they add must make sense with what’s come before it, so they should be really mindful to listen to each other. Try this multiple times with different students beginning the story.
Word Imagination: Create New Names for Everyday Objects

Pass out dictionaries to students and ask them to look up the word *pen*. Review the different parts of a dictionary entry: the word, pronunciation key, part of speech, word origin, and definitions. Explain that all words originated from other words, whether Old English, French, Latin, or Greek. Notice that *pen* has three separate definitions, each with its own origin.

- Announce that today the entire class will follow in Nick's footsteps and create new words and pretend they can be found in the dictionary. Refer back to Nick's famous quote: "Who says a pen has to be called a *pen*? Why not call it a *frindle*?"
- Brainstorm a list of objects found in the classroom. Examples: books, notebooks, desks, magic markers, paper, blackboard, chalk, erasers, etc.
- Ask students to choose three objects to rename. Create new words for these everyday classroom items. Be creative and use your imagination.
- Write dictionary entries for the new words. Follow the format discussed in step 1, including a pronunciation key, part of speech, word origin, and definition. Students can also add a small illustration of the word.
- In small groups, have students use their new words in sentences and try to guess their meaning. Then present the new words and dictionary entries. Discuss which word might be the "frindle" of the group (the one which would achieve widespread use and recognition). Why?

Get Your Frindle Here! Design Marketing Materials

Draw a picture that will serve as an advertisement for a *frindle*. What will it look like - an ordinary pen, or something more unique? Come up with a catchy phrase so people will start using it. What famous people or celebrities might you get to endorse it?

Use elements from the story in the advertisement: Show, perhaps, an angry Mrs. Granger disapproving of the use of *frindle* or all the kids staying after school writing with a *frindle*. The tag line could be: "If you have to write the same word over and over again as punishment, wouldn't you rather do it with a *frindle* than a pen"? Have the students think of the celebrities that would be least likely to endorse a *frindle* and incorporate them into the ads.

Explore Young Innovators

Nick makes his mark on the world even though he's just a fifth grader. Research and report to your class on other individuals who made significant contributions to literature, science, music, or other fields while still very young. If possible, bring in examples of their work.

Who Has Impacted Your Life?

Nick eventually comes to appreciate Mrs. Granger’s impact on his life. Choose three people who have had a positive impact on your life. Write about each one and tell what they have done to influence you. Or write a letter to each of those people, telling them what they’ve done to
The Art Form: Theater

What is theater? Webster’s dictionary says, “a dramatic performance.” Drama is any kind of performance that presents tells a story through character, action, and dialogue. Some say that theater portrays life—either as it is or as it might be. But one of the things that makes theater different from real life is that things can happen in theater that cannot happen in real life—in other words, things that appear to be magical. Mythical creatures of all kinds appear in the dramatic performances of cultures around the world.

It is believed that people have been acting out stories forever. In all cultures around the world people performed for each other by acting out stories they knew by heart because they’d heard them or seen them acted out by others, or because the event happened to them. It wasn’t until about 2,500 years ago (500 B.C.E.) that some Greek playwrights wrote down the conversations they wanted others to say. These are believed to be the first written plays and mark the beginning of the western theater as we think of it today.

READ & EXPLORE: Click here for a more in-depth description of theater history and language and terminology.

WORDS COME ALIVE: Arts Integration Activities

Providing the opportunity to actively explore the world of the show helps students become more engaged and connected audience members, thinking about artists’ choices and approaching the performance with enhanced curiosity. For more information about our arts integration activities, click here, call 652-4548, or email schoolprograms@flynncenter.org.

CHARACTER MOVES: Playing More than One

This production of Frindle has six actors. Once actor plays Nick exclusively and another plays Mrs. Granger throughout the show. But the four remaining performers play several roles.

While quick costume changes and the use of wigs help them in their transformation, these actors rely heavily on their ability to make distinct, yet realistic choices with body and voice to differentiate one character from another. By giving your students the change to make some similar choices, they will be able to watch the performance with a more critical eye.

Invite each student to find a space in the room where they can move freely. Establish and practice the use of a “freeze” signal, such as a single drum beat or the flick of the light switch, so that every time they notice the signal they freeze their body like a statue.

Next, move on to “When I say go, show silently, with your body and gestures, that you are the very energetic young Nick. Go. Freeze!” Continue with the following character suggestions:

- Nick’s concerned father
- A flashy television newscaster reporting on the air
- A tired shopkeeper who first heard the word “Frindle” 
- Nick’s wise teacher, Mrs. Granger
- Nick’s caring mother
- A slick business man named Bud

Remind the students that they must work to make their interpretations distinct from one another by changing their faces, movements, and postures. Divide the class of students in half and invite on half to sit and watch the other group perform the exercise again.

Ask the audience, “What physical choices did you see that were particularly effective? Why?” Repeat the exercise one more time so that everyone gets the opportunity to be both audience and performer. Remind the students when they come to the show to watch for all the choices the actors make to transform from one character to another.
IMPROVISED DIALOGUE:
Making Decisions about Music
In this production, music plays between scenes when set pieces come on and off stage and actors change costume. The specific musical pieces were carefully chosen. They help maintain a certain level of energy and spirit throughout the show. Prepare for this exercise by having several, widely varying music clips available to play. Turn off the lights in the classroom and tell them that when the lights come back on you will all be improvising a conversation as though you were the creative team for the touring show of *Frindle*. They should try their best to stay in character throughout the scene. They should incorporate their knowledge of the book to help them discuss and decide which music to use for scene changes in the show. AS each solo line is offered, invite the entire class to echo the interpretation and guess what emotion is being used.

Nick: (worried) *Do you think I’m teacher’s pet?*
Nick: (excited) *I’ve got another idea. Here’s your...ffffrrr...frindle!*
Mrs. Granger: (angry) *I will not have my class disrupted again!*
Nick: (depressed) *Am I in trouble again?*
Mrs. Granger: (joyful) *This is a frindle.*

Ask the students: “What vocal choices did you hear that were particularly effective at portraying an emotion? Why?”

EXPLORING ADAPTATION
When a book is adapted for the stage there are often changes made to the original story. Here are some questions to help guide your class through a discussion about the differences between the book and the play.

- One difference between the book and the show involves introducing Mrs. Granger in the opening scene with a moment that originally happened at the end of the book. In this way, most of the story becomes a flashback. Why do you think the playwright made this change? How did it impact the story?

- In the book, a narrator reveals a lot of important information, like the time Nick turned Miss Deaver’s room into a tropical island or Nick’s thoughts when he becomes afraid of the power of his own ideas. The play has no narrator, so the playwright had to write a script that would reveal these details in another way. How did the playwright do this? Do you think the playwright was successful in finding ways to include these details? Were there any parts of the book that you thought should have been included and were not? Which parts? What does their exclusion do to the story?

- The playwright adds the character of Mrs. Granger’s daughter, Darlene, to the play. What purpose does this character serve? What did you think of this choice?

- In the play there were four students present to represent an entire class. Do you think the four actors maintained sufficient energy to make it feel like a whole class and make the scenes work? What are some other ways this could have been accomplished? What would you have done if you were the director?

ECHO: Speaking Lines
The actors must portray many different emotions in the show. They rely on voice (as well as face and body) to communicate these emotions through their lines of dialogue. By giving students the chance to make vocal choices, they are better able to appreciate the choices these actors make in the performance. Invite students to listen closely as you speak one of the lines of dialogue below. (Because these lines are provided out of context, we’ve inserted a suggestion for an emotional interpretation alongside.) Invite them to echo your voice as closely as possible, in unison. Next invite individual students to volunteer their own emotional interpretations of a line. AS each solo line is offered, invite the entire class to echo the interpretation and guess what emotion is being used.

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The Flynn Center

The Flynn has been at the center of Vermont's cultural landscape for over 80 years—from its earliest days as a vaudeville house through five decades as a movie theater to its present life as the region's leading performance center and arts education organization. Today, the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts is recognized internationally for its significant artistic, educational, and community outreach activities; superb technical capacity; beautiful historic setting; and world-class presentations. At the Flynn, we celebrate a rich legacy of connecting our community with the arts. The Flynn is recognized for its stellar artistic programming in theater, dance, and music; and for educational programs that reach far into the community to advance teaching and learning. For more about the Flynn, click here.

Etiquette for Live Performances

The Essentials

- Listen, experience, imagine, discover, learn!
- Give your energy and attention to the performers.
- At the end of the show, clap for the performers’ time and energy.
- Eating, drinking, and chewing gum are not okay.
- Talk only before and after the performance.
- Turn off wireless devices. No photos, videos, texting, or listening to music.

Why is Etiquette Important?

A good live performance is a powerful communication between audience and performer. The more the audience gives to the performer, the more the performer can give back to the audience. The performer hears the audience laughing, senses its sympathy, and delights in the enthusiasm of its applause. Furthermore, each audience member affects those sitting near him or her, in addition to the performers onstage. Technological devices (cameras, phones, etc.) have become so prevalent in our daily lives, but using these devices is distracting to the performers onstage and other audience members trying to watch the show. Even the light from checking the time, or the buzz of a phone on vibrate can pull the people around you out of the experience. Cell phone frequencies can even interfere with the microphones in the production, and taking photos can be unsafe for performers. Additionally, an artist has the right to decide what photos and videos go out into the world. Phones keep you from being present and fully engaged with the show. Thank you for turning devices completely off!

DISCUSS BEING A MINDFUL AUDIENCE MEMBER:

How is going to see a live theatre performance different from seeing a movie, going to a concert, or watching TV? In small groups, come up with a list of positive audience behaviors, and behaviors that would be disruptive to performers and other audience members. Come together and create a master list.
We can’t wait to see you at the theater!

Teachers, a few reminders:

- Fill out the [Seating and Travel Survey](#), so we can best accommodate your group’s needs in regards to dismissal, bussing, students with different needs, etc.
- Share your experience with us! Use the [feedback links](#), or share your students’ artwork, writing, responses. We love to hear how experiences at the Flynn impact our audiences.
- Explore other [student](#) matinees at the Flynn this season. We’ve still got seats in some shows and we’d love to help you or other teachers at your school enliven learning with an engaging arts experience!

We have some new initiatives to deepen student connection and experience!

**Pre or Post-Show Video Chats:**

Help students build enthusiasm or process their experience with a free, 5-10 minute video chat before or after the show! We can set up Skype/Facetime/Google Hangouts with your class to answer questions about the content, art form, and experience. Contact Kat, [kredniss@flynncenter.org](mailto:kredniss@flynncenter.org) to set up your chat!

**Autism and Sensory-Friendly Accommodations:**

The Flynn Center has been working diligently to break down barriers for audience members with disabilities, with a particular focus on those with sensory-sensitivities. Social stories, break spaces, sensory friendly materials, and more are available for all student matinees. Feel free to let us know ahead of time if any of these would be useful, or ask an usher at the show!

Make your field trip the most meaningful learning experience it can be with a preparatory Companion Workshop in your classroom!

An engaging Flynn Teaching Artist can come to your school to deepen students’ understanding of both content and form with an interactive workshop, enriching kids’ matinee experiences. Funding support is often available. To learn more, check out this [link](#). To book a workshop, click [here](#). Questions? Contact Sasha: [schoolprograms@flynncenter.org](mailto:schoolprograms@flynncenter.org) or (802)652-4508