

**Educator's Guide**  
**for**  
***The Cardboard Kingdom***  
**by Chad Sell**

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## About the Book

Welcome to a neighborhood of kids who transform ordinary boxes into colorful costumes, and their ordinary block into cardboard kingdom. This is the summer when sixteen kids encounter knights and rogues, robots and monsters—and their own inner demons—on one last quest before school starts again. In the Cardboard Kingdom, you can be anything you want to be—imagine that! Source: [www.PenguinRandomhouse.com](http://www.PenguinRandomhouse.com)

## About the Author

Chad Sell grew up in a small town in central Wisconsin. He lived in a neighborhood much like the Cardboard Kingdom, where he and his friends bounded through backyards in imaginative games and outfits. He also drew a lot and came up with all kinds of colorful characters. His favorites were often the villains, because despite being different and misunderstood, they were powerful and confident, and they got the best costumes. Chad lives in Chicago with his husband and two cats. (Source: Book jacket)

Chad Sell invited ten other writers to help bring the Cardboard Kingdom to life and fill it with the many heroes of the realm: Jay Fuller, David DeMeo, Katie Schenkel, Kris Moore, Manuel Betancourt, Molly Muldoon, Vid Alliger, Cloud Jacobs, Michael Cole, and Barbara Perez Marquez. More information about each collaborator is given in the chapter section corresponding to which he/she contributed.

Learn more about Chad Sell and *The Cardboard Kingdom* at [www.chadsellcomics.com](http://www.chadsellcomics.com).

## A Short Interview with Author Chad Sell

Why did you want to write this book with a group of other writers versus on your own?

*I wanted *The Cardboard Kingdom* to have lots of different characters and a wide variety of stories, so I thought it would be a good idea to have a bunch of different writers helping out! Everyone brought their own perspective and talents to the team. Plus, I had never written a whole book by myself, so I thought a team of ten talented writers would help me out a lot!*

What was great about collaborating on this book?

*A lot of my collaborators based their stories on their own childhoods, so it was amazing to hear about their experiences and help share their stories. Collaboration allows you to better understand other people's lives and perspectives, and it can also help you better understand your own. Sometimes it takes someone else to point out what is interesting about your own life!*

What were some of the challenges of collaborating with others? How did you get past these challenges?

*Working with a team can be tricky. Everyone has their own idea, and they might think that their idea is best. So I tried to be really sensitive to the feelings of my team, always pointing out their good ideas and trying to be gentle when I disagreed with them about anything. I also tried to be very honest with my collaborators, making sure that we had the same expectations of each other, and that we could trust each other!*

What are some of your top tips to working well with others?

- *Be considerate! Take time to listen to everyone's ideas, even if you think your idea is best. You might be surprised!*
- *Ask for help! If you are stuck on something, someone else might have a good solution for you! That's what's so great about working as a team -- whenever you need help with a problem, your friends are there for you!*
- *Stay focused on your goal! If you're working together with others on a project, make sure that you are focused on making it the best it can be, instead of showing off or proving that you are right.*

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## Getting Started

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### Teaching with Graphic Novels

#### **What is a Graphic Novel?**

Graphic novels are a literary form related to comics that tells stories through pictures and words. Unlike comics, graphic novels are not serialized the way comics are. And unlike picture books or illustrated chapter books, graphic novels have a more developed narrative and rely on the illustrations to propel the narrative.

#### **How Graphic Novels Can Help Students Learn**

Graphic novels attract reluctant readers through strong visual appeal and support struggling readers with illustrations that strongly connect to the narrative of the story. Just like a traditional novel, graphic novels contain literary elements: plot, characters, setting and narrative arc. They also can include other literary devices such as figurative language, symbolism, foreshadowing and flashbacks. With support from the visual components of a graphic novel, some students may find it easier to grasp these abstract concepts. Graphic novels also help students develop visual literacy skills.

*"there was like this sense of satisfaction for readers who maybe have a little bit of difficulty reading. Here are these pictures that help propel me through. It doesn't take very long to get through a page. Suddenly you read a 220-page book, and you've never read a 220-page book in your life. It's like this gateway to reading maybe things that are more difficult down the road..."* — Cece Bell, author of the graphic novel *El Deafo*

### **Graphic Novel Lexicon 101**

**Caption** - Text that contains narration to move the story along or provide additional information. This text is in contrast to dialogue, which generally occurs in speech balloons.

**Composition** - How the elements of an artwork or a graphic novel page are arranged.

**Foreground** - The part of a view that is nearest to the observer.

**Gutter** - The space between panels. This space may seem blank, but in fact, it is in this space where readers are forced to forge a link between one image and the next. As Scott McCloud, author of *Understanding Comics* (1993), explains, "Here, in the limbo of the gutter, human imagination takes two separate images and transforms them into a single idea" (p. 66).

**Motion line** - A line or multiple lines used to add a sense of motion to an object.

**Panel** - A panel is an individual frame, or single drawing, in the multiple-panel sequence of a comic strip or comic book. A panel consists of a single drawing depicting a frozen moment.

#### Types of Panels:

**Close-up** - A zoom-in on the action that's used to focus on a character's facial expression and emotions, or a specific object that's important to the story.

**Medium shot** - The action is viewed from nearby and the reader can see the entire body of the character(s) in the scene.

**Long shot/panoramic shot** - A wide-angle view that can be used to show setting.

**Perspective** - In terms of drawing a graphic novel, this refers to the technique an artist uses to create the illusion of space and depth in an image. Generally, this means that an object appears to get smaller as the distance between the object and the viewer gets bigger.

**Point of view** - The direction and angle from which the reader or artist is viewing the objects and people in a picture, for example, from above or below.

#### Types of Views:

**Bird's-eye view** - The scene is shown from overhead.

**Worm's-eye view** - The action is shown from below.

Sound effect - Sound effects or onomatopoeia are words that mimic sounds. They are non-vocal sound images. Examples include “click,” “krunch” and “pow.”

Speech balloons/dialogue balloons/word bubbles - Oval shapes containing text representing speech, a pointing element links the speech bubble to the character who is saying the words.

Splash Page - A splash or splash page is a large, often full-page illustration which opens and introduces a story. Often designed as a decorative unit, its purpose is to capture the reader's attention, and can be used to establish time, place and mood.

Spread - A spread is an image that spans more than one page. The two-page spread or double-page spread is the most common.

### **Strategies for Discussing the Visual Aspect of a Graphic Novel**

In addition to text, graphic novels have rich imagery to discuss. Here are some questions to use when guiding students in their exploration of the important visual elements of a graphic novel.

COLOR - Color can be used to shape the mood of a story, to differentiate between different settings and time periods or to reveal other elements of the narrative.

1. Which colors do you see used? Are they bright or more pastel?
2. Are the same colors used throughout the whole story or are there chapters where different colors are used?
3. What do you think would happen if different colors were used? What if the story was only in black and white?
4. How do the colors the author used make you feel? How would you describe the mood of the story? Happy? Playful? Sad?

PANELS AND GUTTERS - The size, shape, arrangement and relationship of the panels and gutters (the space between panels) are essential elements of the visual storytelling of graphic novels.

1. How do the panels fit together on the page? Do they overlap?
2. Are there images without borders?
3. Are the panels all the same size and shape or do they vary?
4. What does the arrangement of the panels tell you about the action in the story or a certain character? Why do you think the author chose to vary the shapes and sizes of the panels in this way?
5. Can you find examples of panels that show a close-up view? A medium-view? A long-view? How does the author use these different types of panels?
6. What does the space between two panels tell you about the action in the story? Is time passing? Is someone else speaking? Have we moved to a different place?
7. Is the space between panels, also called the “gutter,” the same between all panels or does it vary in width? Why might this be?

COMPOSITION - Composition refers to how an image is put together and the choices the author made regarding the size and placement of each element on the page.

1. What is at the center of the panel? The top? The bottom? What might this tell us?
2. Are some elements of the illustration larger while others are smaller? Why might this be?
3. How does the arrangement of the panels help you understand the story?

SPEECH BALLOONS/CAPTIONS - In graphic novels, speech balloons contain dialogue and captions are text blocks that contain narration.

1. Does the text appear in color or in black and white? If different colors are used, why might this be?
2. Can you find examples where the text differs in size, shape or thickness? What might these variations mean?
3. How does the author show different emotions through the text?
4. Compare a speech balloon and a caption. What do you notice?

SOUND EFFECTS AND MOTION LINES - Sound effects add another layer to a story. Motion lines add a sense of movement to objects in a panel.

1. What sounds do you see? Are they written in the same style as other text in the book?
2. How is the sound written? Does it remind you of how the sound actually sounds?
3. What examples of motion lines can you find in the book?

ARTISTIC STYLE - Each artist has his or her own style.

1. What words would you use to describe the artistic style of this book? Is it cartoony? Realistic? Bold? Does it remind you of other books or artwork you've seen?
2. How does the style of the images fit with the characters and story? Does it complement or contrast?

### **Tips for Reading a Graphic Novel Aloud**

1. In the case of *The Cardboard Kingdom*, the story sequence moves from left to right and top to bottom. When reading aloud, it may be helpful to give a visual cue, like pointing, to help your listener track what you're reading and to see the illustration that accompanies the text.
2. Play around with voices for each character if you're inspired!
3. Be sure to allow time for students to examine the illustrations on each page – they're ESSENTIAL to understanding the story!
4. When there aren't any words on the page, try adding your own. You can narrate the story by describing what you see, or you can ask questions that encourage students to explore what's happening:
  - a. What do you see in the picture?
  - b. What is happening?
  - c. Who is here?
  - d. What do you think he/she/it wants? Why?
  - e. What is the character thinking?

- f. What is the character feeling? Is the character happy? Sad? Angry? How do you know?
  - g. What do you think will happen next?
  - h. What would you do?
5. Ask questions every few pages to keep students engaged. Discussion questions are provided in this guide for each chapter.
  6. Have fun! Graphic novels are awesome, so share your enthusiasm as you read!

## Seven Reading Skills Every Kid Needs

The following seven reading skill targets are based on the Common Core College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading for grades K-12.

1. Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text and reference examples and details from the text to support one's answer.
2. Summarize a text and identify themes in a story.
3. Describe characters, settings and events in a story using specific details from the text.
4. Determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases in a text.
5. Describe how a story is composed of chapters and how each successive part builds on earlier sections.
6. Describe how a narrator's or a speaker's point of view changes the way events are described in a text.
7. Compare and contrast stories.

Note: These targets are based on the following Common Core English Language Arts College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading, as applied to grades 3-5: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.5, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.9.

## Supporting Social Emotional Learning

### What is Social Emotional Learning (SEL)?

The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), provides this definition: "Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions." (Source: [www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org))

In recent years, Social Emotional Learning has become an essential aspect of student learning in classrooms across America and beyond as educators see the powerful way supporting a student's social and emotional development reduces behavior issues, increases student achievement and equips students for adult life. SEL skills can easily be incorporated into academic lessons so students not only gain math and literacy skills, but also develop the five core SEL competencies.

### **The Five Core Social Emotional Learning Competencies**

CASEL has identified five core SEL competencies that comprise the field of Social Emotional Learning. They are:

- **SELF-AWARENESS** - The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a "growth mindset."
- **SELF-MANAGEMENT** - The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations, effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.
- **SOCIAL AWARENESS** - The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.
- **RELATIONSHIP SKILLS** - The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.
- **RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING** - The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others.

Source: [www.Casel.org](http://www.Casel.org)

### **Using Literature to Develop SEL Skills**

Reading and discussing books with students offers a myriad of ways to develop SEL skills. Here's a quick look at how literary discussions connect with the five Core SEL Competencies:

- By examining the emotions, strengths and weaknesses of characters, students develop the vocabulary and perspective necessary to understand their own emotions and strengths, thus enhancing their **Self-Awareness**.



- Many stories demonstrate the success of a hero or heroine who faces a great challenge but doesn't give up and is eventually rewarded. Students can explore these examples and how they develop **Self-Management** strategies like self-motivation and goal setting. How did those characters persevere?
- Examining a character's choices and trying to understand his or her perspective through thoughtful reading and discussion helps students develop empathy, perspective-taking, an appreciation for diversity and respect for others, which are all essential elements of **Social Awareness**.
- **Relationship Skills** center on the ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others and resolve conflicts. Discussing a book as a class or in small groups offers opportunities to practice these skills.
- Students' abilities to make **Responsible Decisions** are enhanced when they consider the choices of fictional characters, the consequences of those choices and then reflect on their own choices.

This guide will incorporate SEL skill-building discussion questions for each chapter and activities to make it easy to help boost students' Core SEL Competencies as you read *The Cardboard Kingdom*.

### **Additional Resources**

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL): [www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org)

Printable SEL Competencies Chart: <https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Competencies.pdf>

Edutopia SEL Resources: <https://www.edutopia.org/video/5-keys-successful-social-and-emotional-learning>

## Suggested Timeline for a Six-Week Book Study

<i>Week</i>	<i>Chapters</i>	<i>Pages of Reading</i>
1	The Sorceress, The Huntress, The Big Banshee, pp. 1-48	48
2	The Alchemist and the Blacksmith, The Prince, The Animal Queen, pp. 50-92	42
3	The Blob, Professor Everything, "One Afternoon at the Dragon's Head Inn", pp. 94-126	32
4	The Gargoyle, The Mad Scientist, The Robot, pp. 126-175	49
5	The Army of Evil, The Bully, pp. 176-213	37
6	Megalopolis, Summer's End, pp. 214-274	60

## Suggested Timeline for an Eight-Week Book Study

<i>Week</i>	<i>Chapters</i>	<i>Pages of Reading</i>
1	The Sorceress, The Huntress, The Big Banshee, pp. 1-48	48
2	The Alchemist and the Blacksmith, The Prince, pp. 49-85	35
3	The Animal Queen, The Blob, Professor Everything, pp. 86-117	31
4	"One Afternoon at the Dragon's Head Inn", The Gargoyle, pp. 118-145	27
5	The Mad Scientist, The Robot, pp. 146-172	26
6	The Army of Evil, pp. 173-199	26
7	The Bully, Megalopolis, pp. 200-233	33
8	Summer's End, pp. 234-274	40

## Setting the Stage for a Reading Adventure

Creating a culture of literacy in your classroom goes beyond just reading, it's about inviting the whole group to dive into a journey filled with fun characters, interesting discussions and activities that bring the book to life. Here are some suggestions for incorporating your reading adventure into your classroom space and keeping track of the story as you read:

1. **Bulletin Board Collage** - Make a dedicated space to post student drawings and summaries created for each chapter of book. Add student projects from the activities section too!
2. **Our Reading Scrapbook** - For each chapter in the book and for each YOBOD event students attend, create a scrapbook page (or multiple pages) that combine words and images to record what happened. Scrapbook pages could be made individually by each

student in order to create a personal scrapbook to take home at the end of the summer, or the class can work together to create a single book, with students working in small groups to create each entry.

3. **Adventure Journals** - Provide students with notebooks, or create simple paper journals using notebook paper, construction paper and staples. Have students draw pictures and write a few sentences about the important events of each chapter as they read. Students can also use their journals when responding to writing prompts in this guide.
4. **Character Ring** - Using index cards, have students draw a character from the book on one side of the card and then write three details about that character on the back of the card. Keep the cards on a binder ring and add new cards as students meet new characters in the book.
5. **Wonder Board** - Books can be the starting spot for all kinds of inquiry. Create a space to capture your students' "wonders" as they read the book. Examples of wonders could be: "How do people make graphic novels?" or "Would it really work to make a city like Megalopolis out of cardboard?" Define and label a section of wall space, a cabinet door or part of the whiteboard. Next, provide students with sticky notes and pencils to add their wonders to the board. As time allows, read through the class' wonders as a group and select several wonders to investigate or invite students to do their own research and report back to the group.

## Five Ways to Use the Discussion Questions

Discussing a text with students allows them to check their understanding of what they read, make connections between the text and themselves, and practice important literacy skills. The discussion questions provided in this guide offer a selection of chapter-by-chapter questions to get you started, but you should feel free to add your own questions and invite students to offer their questions to the group too. If desired, questions can be given to students ahead of time, so they can look for answers in the text as they read.

As students discuss the book, encourage them to reference passages in the text to support their answer or opinion. Ask: *How do you know this?* Or *What evidence can you find in the text to support your idea?* Model this practice as you engage in the discussion, too.

**Educator Tip:** Encourage students to have their books with them during the discussion so they can refer to specific passages in support of their answers.

1. **Educator-Led Class Discussion-** The group works as a whole and the educator poses questions for students to answer.

2. **Small Groups** - Students work in small groups to discuss the questions while the educator circulates from group to group listening in on the discussion and asking follow-up questions.
3. **Task Groups** - Each group of students is given a question (or questions) to answer and then reports back to the entire class with their answer(s).
4. **Written Response** - The discussion questions can also be used as writing prompts and students can answer all or just selected questions as part of a journal assignment.
5. **Discussion Cards** - Invite students to chat about the book as they eat lunch or have independent work time by writing discussion questions on index cards which can be passed around the group for pairs of students to discuss.

## How to Use the Writing Prompts

Just like reading, writing is a skill that improves with practice. Two writing prompts are given for each chapter to allow students some choice regarding what they write. Encourage students to choose the prompt that interests them most. Educators may also ask students to write a summary of the chapter as part of the assignment. If constrained by time, space or materials, many of the writing prompts can also be completed as an oral storytelling activity in pairs. Celebrate your students' writing by allowing time for them to share what they wrote with a classmate, a small group, or the whole class.

## How to Use the Activities

Engaging activities in art, English Language Arts (ELA), Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) bring books to life and enhance learning. In the activity instructions section, you'll find dozens of activities that connect to themes in the book. Complete these activities with the suggested chapter or as fits best with your class' schedule and interests.

### Quick Chapter Activities

For each chapter, a "Quick Activity for this Chapter" activity is provided. These activities require only pencils and paper and can be completed in about 20 minutes. They are designed to offer educators a quick activity that requires no prep, minimal materials and the flexibility to plug them into a schedule when there are minutes to fill.

Educators are also encouraged to incorporate additional activities that connect with the themes found in *The Cardboard Kingdom*.

## Possible Programming Themes for *The Cardboard Kingdom*

- Cardboard
- Imagination

- Roleplaying
- Costumes
- Self-expression
- Individuality
- Bullying
- New house/moving
- Siblings
- Gender roles
- Castles
- Knights
- Potions
- Cooking
- Graphic novels
- Comics
- Generational differences
- Entrepreneurship
- Product development/market research
- Fairy tales
- Fractured fairy tales/remixed stories
- Princes/princesses
- Disney movies
- Animals
- Inclusion
- Collaboration
- Physics
- DIY
- Making friends/friendship
- Divorce
- Mythical creatures
- Robots
- Birthday traditions
- Good/evil
- Architecture
- City planning/urban planning
- Different types of families
- Hero's journey/quest
- Teamwork
- Dragons
- Stereotypes

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# READ & DISCUSS

## A Chapter-By-Chapter Discussion Guide

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### The Sorceress (pp. 1-16)

#### About This Chapter's Co-Author: Jay Fuller

Jay is a cartoonist living in Brooklyn, New York, with his husband-to-be, Kevin, and their little corgi pup. He writes and illustrates his comic, *The Boy in Pink Earmuffs*.

Source: *The Cardboard Kingdom*

#### Summary

In this wordless chapter, which was the spark that led to the creation of the whole book, readers meet the Sorceress, a boy who dresses up in a robe, high heels and cardboard headdress to become his alter ego. As he and his sister, who is dressed as goblin, play in the backyard, a neighbor peers over the fence and can be seen laughing at the scene. Distracted and embarrassed, the boy accidentally falls into a small swimming pool. His costume sopping wet, he leaves it in the pool and dashes off to his room. The neighbor girl feels bad. Meanwhile, as he hides in his room, the boy's sister brings her brother's headpiece to him. She eventually coaxes him to remake his costume and come back to play. As the Sorceress emerges from the garage, his sister has brought the neighbor over to act as the audience for a show in the garage where the Sorceress battles with a dragon (a cat with cardboard accessories). While initially enjoying the show, the neighbor is not pleased to be cast as the princess and eventually storms off. The boy and his sister use a doll to create a princess, but the boy is visibly disappointed by the idea. Suddenly, a new character joins the scene! The neighbor has returned wearing a cardboard knight costume and the three friends act out epic battle scenes together before sharing some lemonade in the final scene.

#### Discussion Questions

1. Looking at the chapter title page and first page, how would you describe the artistic style of each drawing? Why do you think the author used a different style for the chapter title page?
2. On pages 2 and 3, what is the relationship between the main images on each page?
3. Have you ever played dress-up with a parent's clothes and props you made yourself? What did you pretend?
4. How does the boy feel when he sees the neighbor girl giggling at him?

5. How does the neighbor girl feel when the boy runs inside after falling in the little swimming pool?
6. How would you describe the relationship between the boy and his sister? What examples can you find to support your idea?
7. Looking at page 10, how does the neighbor girl feel when the sister puts a princess hat on her? What does her face reveal about how she feels in each of the images on this page? Why do you think she leaves?
8. What happens when the neighbor girl comes back wearing her own costume? What do you think this says about letting people choose how they want to play?
9. How has the relationship between the neighbor girl and the boy changed from the beginning of the chapter to the end?
10. Do you wish there were words in the chapter? Why or why not?
11. Has there ever been a time when someone told you how to be? What happened and how did it make you feel?
12. Has there ever been a time when someone laughed at you? How did it make you feel? What did you do about it? Do you think it's ever okay to laugh at others?
13. What questions do you have about anything you read in this chapter?

### **Write and Respond**

1. What do you think the sister said to her brother to convince him to become the Sorceress again? Look at page 5 and write a short dialogue between the siblings.
2. When the neighbor girl returns in her knight costume she seems proud and powerful. Likewise, the young boy feels powerful in his sorceress costume. Write about the kind of costume that would make you feel powerful and why.

### **Quick Activity for This Chapter: Studying Emotions**

Without words, the characters' feelings are shown completely through drawings. Invite students to look closely at how our faces show our emotions. Working in pairs, have one student express a specific emotion (happy, sad, worried, angry, etc.) while the other student uses paper and pencil to quickly capture the essence of the emotion (this is speed sketching!). What is the angle of the eyebrows? What shape is the person's mouth? Are their eyes more open or closed? What small facial details help show that emotion? Have students switch roles and display different emotions at time allows. At the end, see if students can identify the emotion represented by each sketch.

## **The Huntress (pp. 18-30)**

### **About This Chapter's Co-Author: David DeMeo**

David is a bald jewelry designer with a large variety of hats. His favorite holiday is Halloween, and even though he is supposedly a grown-up now, he still makes his own costumes and dresses up every year. David lives in Caldwell, New Jersey. The Huntress was based on David's babysitting responsibilities as the oldest of three beast brothers.

Source: *The Cardboard Kingdom*

## Summary

The chapter opens with an image of a house with a “Sold” sign out front. After their mom leaves for a long evening shift, the teenage daughter (who we eventually learn is named Shikha) lays down the ground rules for the evening before ordering a pizza for her and her brother. As her brother (who we eventually learn is named Vijay) tries to sneak cookies out of the cupboard, she shoots a foam arrow toward him and he growls like a beast. Waiting for the pizza to arrive, Shikha starts to unpack boxes while her brother sneaks into their mother’s room and decorates his face and arms with animal stripes made of lipstick. The pizza arrives; Vijay steals some cookies; and dashes out the door to play with the neighbor kids. Shikha calls for her brother. She dons a headband, grabs her toy bow and arrow and heads to the backyard. She discovers her brother playing in the yard next door with kids in costume – a knight (who is tied to a tree), a sorceress and a goblin. She slips into the yard, frees the knight and joins the battle. She announces that she is Shikha, Hunter of Brothers, Guardian of Cookies, but eventually takes the title of The Huntress. The battle concludes and the friends share cookies before Vijay and Shikha go home for pizza. In the final scene, the siblings are asleep on the couch next to half-eaten pizza, cookies and soda cans as their mom comes home from work.

## Helpful Definitions

En garde - A French term meaning “on [your] guard” that is used in fencing to warn one’s opponent to take a defensive stance prior to a fight.

Minion - Someone who is not powerful or important and who obeys the orders of a powerful leader or boss.

## Discussion Questions

1. Who are the characters we meet in this chapter? What details can you find about them either from the speech balloons or illustrations?
2. Can you relate to the characters in this chapter? What about their life is similar to yours?
3. Why do you think Vijay’s mom calls him “my little beast” (p. 19)? Do your parents have a special name for you? How does that name make you feel?
4. Do you notice any differences in the speech balloons in this chapter? If so, where are they? Why do you think the author drew these bubbles differently? How does this choice enhance the story?
5. What do you think Vijay is doing with his mom’s lipstick (p. 23)?
6. How would you describe what it’s like for Shikha to babysit her little brother? What details from the book, either words or images, can you give to support your answer?
7. A “close-up” panel zooms in on a character’s face to help show emotion or zooms in on an object that’s important in the scope of the story. Can you find an example of a close-up panel in this chapter? What do you think the author wanted the reader to notice?
8. How does Shikha feel when she finally tracks down her brother? What does she decide to do? What would you have done?
9. Who is the “Hunter of Brothers, Guardian of Cookies” (p.27)?



10. Why do you think Shikha says, “Wait, are you a BOY?” Why do you think she is surprised that a boy is playing the role of the Sorceress? What do you think? Are some costumes only okay for boys or only okay for girls?
11. When the boy states that he is the Sorceress, how does Shikha respond?
12. The final page of this chapter is an image that covers the whole page. What details do you notice in the illustration? How does this image help wrap up the story of the Huntress?
13. What questions do you have about anything you read in this chapter?

### **Write and Respond**

1. Write about a time when your parents left you at home with a babysitter, older sibling or relative.
2. Vijay loves pineapple pizza and cookies. Write a menu with all (or as many as will fit!) of your favorite foods.

### **Quick Activity for This Chapter: Pizza Poll**

When their mom works a long evening shift, Shikha orders pizza for herself and her brother. What are your students’ pizza preferences? Create a bar graph showing student responses to a “pizza poll.” Possible poll questions could include favorite topping; thin or thick crust; eat out, delivery or frozen.

## **[SPLASH PAGE pp. 32-33]**

### **Discussion Questions**

1. How does the image on the left relate to the image on the right?
2. Which characters are shown in these images? What are they doing? How are they feeling?
3. What other details do you notice in the images?
4. What additional information do these images give the reader about these characters?

## **The Big Banshee (pp. 34-48)**

### **About This Chapter’s Co-Author: Katie Schenkel**

Katie lives in Chicago with her partner, Mike, and she wants to be Batgirl when she grows up. In the meantime, Katie is the writer of *Moonlighters*, an all-ages werewolf comic. The Big Banshee was inspired by Katie’s memories of being the girl who “talked too much.”

Source: *The Cardboard Kingdom*

### **Summary**

The chapter opens with a triumphant girl holding a drawing and exclaiming, “I did it!” while Vijay and Shikha look on. They comment that the character looks mean, but the girl (who we find out is named Sophie) explains that the character is just big. As they walk down the street, a

bully teases them. Sophie shouts at him to go bother someone else. Arriving at home, Sophie excitedly asks her mom for boxes. Her grandmother, Meemaw, arrives to look after Sophie while her mother is away for a few days on business. It's clear from the very first moment that Meemaw does not approve of Sophie's loud, exuberant personality. As Sophie describes the character she wants to build, she gestures wildly and accidentally knocks a carton of milk out of Meemaw's hands. Meemaw scolds her for being so loud and tells her that in her day, nice girls knew how to behave and be quiet, not act like a hellion or yell like a banshee. In her room, Sophie is overwhelmed by the criticism and gives up on her character idea. Time passes and we see Sophie withdraw from her group of friends, acquiesce to her grandmother's standard of proper girl behavior and experience great sadness as she draws and redraws her character concept alone in her bedroom. Sophie's mom returns home with a stack of boxes that she leaves for Sophie with a note saying how excited she is to see what Sophie makes.

The next day, as the bully teases Vijay, Sophie emerges as the Big Banshee! She uses her loudest voice to scare away the bully. Shikha and Vijay are happy to see their friend again. At home, Sophie excitedly tells her mom all about what has just happened, only to find Meemaw is still there and once again criticizes her for being too loud. After Meemaw leaves, Sophie and her mom discuss Meemaw's perspective on how girls should act, and Sophie's mom says Meemaw used to say the same thing to her when she was younger and it wasn't right then. Sophie's mom coaxes her into putting on her costume, which Sophie proudly announces is called Big Banshee.

### **Helpful Definitions**

**Banshee** - A female spirit in Irish mythology who announces the death of a family member, usually by wailing or shrieking. To "wail like a banshee" means to scream shrilly, especially when terrified.

**Hellion** - A rowdy, mischievous, or troublemaking person, especially a child.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. How does the author use color and gesture (a character's body movement) to show how the girl on the first page of the chapter is feeling?
2. Why do you think some of the words in the speech bubbles are darker than others? What does this tell us about how to read them?
3. How did Sophie stop the bully from teasing Vijay and Shikha? Has this approach ever worked for you? If not, what do you do when you see someone teasing another kid?
4. Who is Meemaw? What details can you share about her from the text and illustrations? How does Sophie initially feel about Meemaw's arrival?
5. In a comic or graphic novel, "motion lines" are used to add a sense of movement to an object and indicate its path of travel. Can you find an example of motion lines in this chapter? (On page 38, motion lines show the path of Sophie's arms, which knock the milk out of Meemaw's hands)
6. How does Sophie feel when Meemaw tells her that "nice little girls don't talk so loud" and "In my day, girls knew how to behave and be quiet. Not act like a hellion

- or yell like a banshee” (p. 39)? What do you think about Meemaw’s words? Do you think there are certain expectations of how girls and boys should behave? What are they? Are they the same for both boys and girls? If you think they are different for boys and girls, how are they different? What have you noticed in your family, at school or in movies and on TV?
7. What examples can you find in this chapter of the author using different lettering styles? How does the way a word is written add extra information and feeling? How do rough letters make you feel when you read them? What about letters written in red?
  8. How does Sophie’s behavior and mood change during her days with Meemaw?
  9. Examine the panels on page 41, do you notice a pattern to how the panels are arranged? How does the author show the passage of time? The spaces between panels are called “gutters” and they’re an important part of the overall layout too. What do you notice about the gutters on this page? Are they all the same? If not, what might explain the author’s decision to change things up?
  10. What does Sophie’s mom bring home for her? How do you think this makes Sophie feel? Has someone ever surprised you with a present?
  11. How does Sophie feel wearing her new costume? What clues can you find in the text or images to support your answer?
  12. Sophie and her mom discuss Meemaw’s thoughts on “proper” behavior for girls and her mom shares that Meemaw said the same things to her while she was growing up, but that doesn’t make them right. Sometimes people’s opinions change over time and sometimes they stay the same. Has there been a time when you had a different opinion from your parents or grandparents? Maybe about music or smartphones or bedtime? What did you do? Did you discuss the difference, try to change the person’s mind or just ignore it? What advice would you give Sophie?
  13. Why do you think Sophie decided to name her creation Big Banshee?
  14. What questions do you have about anything you read in this chapter?

### **Write and Respond**

1. On page 39, we see Sophie in her bed surrounded by the critical words her Meemaw, the bully and Shikha said to her that day. Notice how the lettering looks rough and sketchy. Draw a line down the middle of your page to create two sides. On one side, use your own unique lettering style to write things people have said to you that bothered you. On the other side, use a different lettering style to write words and phrases that people have said to you that made you feel awesome.
2. Meemaw tells Sophie that “nice little girls don’t talk so loud.” Write your response to Meemaw. If you were standing right next to Sophie at the moment, what would you say?

### **Quick Activity for This Chapter: Words Written Many Ways**

Throughout this chapter, the author uses stylized lettering to add emphasis and emotion to certain words like “roar” (p. 36), “splash” (p. 38) and “Leave him alone!” (p. 43). Invite students to choose a word or phrase and write it using different styles of lettering. How does the feeling

of the word change when the way it's written changes? Does the word "love" still feel warm when it's written in block letters with dark, rough lines? Can sinister words seem sweet when written in flowing cursive? Invite students to explore!

## [SPLASH PAGE pp. 50-51]

### Discussion Questions

1. Which characters do you see in this image? What are they doing? How are they feeling?
2. What other details do you notice in the image?
3. What additional information does this image give the reader about these characters?
4. Would you want to play this game?

## The Alchemist and the Blacksmith (pp. 52-66)

### About This Chapter's Co-Author: Kris Moore

Kris grew up in the suburbs of Detroit and lived there with his partner, Weston. As a kid, all he ever wanted to do was write comics, and as an adult, he did just that with his comic anthology, *Saturday Morning Snack Attack!*, and all-ages series, *Science Girl*. His characters, Becky and Alice, were inspired by the girls he grew up with, who were some of the most ruthless entrepreneurs ever to run a Kool-Aid stand. Sadly, Kris died unexpectedly in 2017 at the age of 33.

Source: *The Cardboard Kingdom, Obituary for Kristopher "Kris" Moore at KaatzFunerals.com*

### Summary

The chapter opens with a series of panels that capture Alice selling a "potion," which looks like lemonade, to Vijay as the "Beast Boost Juice" that will return his beastly power. Alice sells different potions to several more kids and by the end of the day, she's flopped on her bed reveling in the pile of money she has made. The next day however, no one comes by her stand. Puzzled by the lack of customers on the hot day, she eventually discovers the neighborhood kids are gathering at a new "blacksmith" shop opened by a girl named Becky who crafts cardboard weapons. Livid, Alice accuses Becky of stealing her customers and vows to get them back. Becky points out that she isn't selling lemonade and isn't trying to compete with Alice. The competition heats up as Alice and Becky continuously improve their offerings in an attempt to win more sales. The competition gets personal as Alice advertises potions to magically counteract Becky's weapons and Becky designs weapons to resist the magical effects of Alice's potions. The illustrations become increasingly packed, chaotic and kinetic in tone until Alice's Super Deluxe Mega Insane Potion causes Jack to throw up and one of Becky's spike-covered weapons leaves scratches all over his sister Sam.

The next day, Alice is back to selling normal potions at half-price in an attempt to lure back her customers. Sophie and Shikha wonder if Alice and Becky were working together the whole time as Becky's weapons hurt people and Alice's potions promised to heal them. Initially outraged by

this suggestion, Alice starts to see how maybe working together could be brilliant. She approaches Becky, who is busy closing up her shop, and proposes they join forces to create a cool neighborhood hangout, which becomes the Dragon’s Head Inn.

### **Helpful Definitions**

Alchemist- A person who practices alchemy, a medieval chemical science that aimed to turn metals into gold, discover a cure for all diseases, and find a way for people to live forever.

Profit- The gain after all the expenses are subtracted from the amount received.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. The “setting” is when and where a story takes place. What is the setting for this chapter?
2. Have you ever run your own business like a lemonade stand? What product or service did you offer? What was it like to run your business? Would you do it again?
3. What do you think makes Alice’s business successful at first? What changes on the second day?
4. Look closely at pages 56 and 57. How are the panels with Alice different from the panels with other characters? Now look at the pages before and after this section. What do you notice about the background colors in the panels showing Alice? How does the author use color to amplify Alice’s emotional state? How would you describe Alice’s feelings on pages 55-58?
5. What does Becky sell at her shop? What do you think inspired her to start her business? If you could choose to run Becky’s business or Alice’s, which would you choose? Why?
6. In comics and graphic novels, a “caption” is text that helps move the story along or provides additional information about a character or scene. Can you find examples of captions in this chapter? (“The next day...” on page 55 is an example of a caption)
7. What does Alice do to increase her sales? How does Becky respond? What is the overall feeling of this part of the chapter? What words would you use to describe the layout of the panels on page 60? Why do you think the author chose this layout?
8. As Alice mixes the Super Deluxe Mega Insane Potion on page 61, she uses “tears from the crimson bull,” what do you think that might be? What about “powdered ogre essence”? Or “gator sweat”?
9. How would you describe the way Alice runs her business as compared to the way Becky runs her business? In what ways are the two business owners similar and in what ways are they different?
10. What eventually ends the competition between Alice and Becky? What do you think each girl has learned about running a business and about herself?
11. Can you relate to Becky’s observation that competition just brought out the worst in her? How do competitive situations like matches or contests make you feel? Do you think competition has a role in school and sports and business? Why or why not? Do you think there are some parts of life where competition doesn’t belong? And if so, what might these situations be?

12. What do you think about Alice and Becky’s decision to work together? Do you think the Dragon’s Head Inn will be successful; why or why not?
13. What questions do you have about anything you read in this chapter?

### **Write and Respond**

1. Choose a product mentioned in the chapter and write an advertisement for it. Why would someone want to buy this item? How much does it cost? Where can they buy it? What special features or ingredients does it have?
2. Create a sales flyer for the Dragon’s Head Inn. What does the Inn offer in terms of food, drinks and things to do? When does it open and close each day? Is it open every day or only certain days of the week? What makes the Dragon’s Head Inn a great place to hang out?

### **Quick Activity for This Chapter: Consumer Happiness on a Budget**

As consumers (people who buy things) we have a lot of choices about how we spend our money. In this chapter, Alice and Becky knew there were only so many customers in the neighborhood and each of them only had a certain amount of money to spend, so they were competing for those customer dollars. Create a quick listing of items and prices on the board such as candy \$1, pizza \$7, game app \$5, music download \$2, etc. Choose items you feel will be familiar and popular with your students. Use whole number prices for younger students and prices with decimals for older students. Next, give each student a sheet of paper and a pencil. Tell students they have a budget of \$20 (or a budget of your choosing). What combination of items would they buy? Have students write down and calculate how they would spend their whole budget. At the end of the activity, allow students to compare lists. Did students choose a similar basket of goods or not? How did students decide what to “buy” with their money?

## **[SPLASH PAGE pp. 68-69]**

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Which characters do you see in this image? What are they doing? How are they feeling?
2. What other details do you notice in the image?
3. What additional information does this image give the reader about these characters?
4. What do you think happened next?

## **The Prince (pp. 70-83)**

### **About This Chapter’s Co-Author: Manuel Betancourt**

Manuel spends his days in New York City writing, baking and watching way too many movies. He has a PhD but doesn’t like to brag about it. The Prince was inspired by the many (many!) childhood crushes Manuel had on several animated fairy tale heroes. He’s happy to have finally written the story he wished he’d had while growing up.

Source: *The Cardboard Kingdom*

## Summary

The chapter opens with a group of friends watching “The Prince and the Pea” at a movie theater. The story features a princess who is rescued from a wild pea monster by a handsome prince and his sidekick. Miguel seems particularly fond of the prince in the movie. At home, Miguel hangs the movie poster on his wall and slips off into a dream where he’s the princess on the high tower of mattresses. His friend Nate appears and the two decide to play “Prince and the Pea” together with Sophie (Big Banshee) and Jack (Sorceress). At first Sophie begrudgingly plays the princess, Miguel plays the pea monster, Nate plays the prince and Jack plays an evil older woman from the movie. When Sophie decides the princess should rescue herself, Miguel becomes frustrated that his friends aren’t sticking to the script. Jack plays the princess next, but Miguel doesn’t like his portrayal either, so the friends have him play the princess. Things get awkward when Nate (the prince) asks Miguel (the princess) to jump into his arms and he doesn’t want to. (Throughout the first half of the chapter, we get the sense that Miguel has feelings for Nate, but is unsure about how to communicate those feelings or how they should figure into his interactions with Nate, leading to awkward interactions.) In the end, the tower of couch cushions comes tumbling down and the friends decide they’re sick of playing these characters. In the next scene, the friends become their own characters of Big Banshee, the Sorceress and the Prince, and imagine how these characters would act out the story. Miguel dashes in as the Royal Rogue, the prince’s dashing companion, and rescues the prince. Miguel’s mom comes home to find her couch torn apart and a pile of smiling and laughing friends. The friends relive the fun they had as they share some drinks at the Dragon’s Head Inn and then make plans to play again soon. In the final image, the movie posters have been plastered over with drawings of the adventures of the Prince and the Rogue.

## Helpful Definitions

Rogue - A dishonest or unprincipled man. This term can also describe someone who acts and thinks independently and sometimes unpredictably. In this chapter, the royal rogue is the prince’s sidekick.

## Discussion Questions

1. Does it look like everyone is enjoying the movie equally? What details can you find to support your answer?
2. On page 73, we see Miguel’s collection of movie posters. Can you figure out which Disney movie or fairy tale inspired each one? What are some of your favorite animated movies?
3. In the first panel on page 75 where the friends start to act out “The Prince and the Pea,” what is each character feeling about the plan?
4. How do the characters respond to Sophie when she decides to save herself instead of waiting for the prince? Has there been a time when you wanted to play a game a certain way, but your friends didn’t? What did you do?
5. How does Sophie feel when she is cast as the princess?
6. How does Jack feel when he is cast as the princess?

7. What emotions do you think Miguel is feeling as he plays the princess? What thoughts might be going through his mind from one panel to the next on pages 77 and 78?
8. When Miguel (as the princess) doesn't want to jump into Nate's (as the prince) arms, Nate asks why he's being weird. Setting boundaries with friends can be hard. What are some strategies you've used to tell someone you don't want to do something? Do you have a certain phrase you always use to say no? What do you do when someone says no to you? How could Miguel and Nate have handled this situation differently?
9. What do you notice about the style and feeling of the artwork on page 79 where the friends are acting out their own version of the movie plot? How does it compare to other pages in the chapter?
10. In comics and graphic novels, a "medium shot" is a type of panel where the action is viewed from nearby and the reader can see the entire body of the character(s) in the scene. Can you find examples of this type of panel in the chapter?
11. Compare how the group of friends feels on page 78 with how they're feeling on page 81. What helped turn things around? Do you and your friends ever act out stories from books or movies? Have you ever used couch cushions to build something? What did you make?
12. What does the last image of this chapter tell us about Miguel? How has his wall changed from earlier in the chapter? What do you think this means? What do you think he has learned about friendship, movies and himself?
13. What questions do you have about anything you read in this chapter?

### **Write and Respond**

1. Compliments feel good. Write a note to compliment someone in your class. Try to be specific about exactly what he or she did well.
2. Write about a time when someone needed help and you sprang into action.

### **Quick Activity for This Chapter: Sketch a Storyboard**

A storyboard is a series of drawings, usually in separate rectangular frames on a page, that show the main events of a story. When movies are made, storyboards help the director map out the scenes and specific shots that will make up the movie. Creators of graphic novels also use storyboards as they imagine the story they want to tell and play with ideas for the individual panels they will use to tell the story. Sketch a storyboard about your day. What are the important moments to capture?

### **[SPLASH PAGE pp. 84-85]**

#### **Discussion Questions**

1. Which characters do you see in this image? What are they doing? How are they feeling?
2. What other details do you notice in the image?



3. What additional information does this image give the reader about these characters?
4. Are there any signs you disagree with? Are there any signs you would add?

## The Animal Queen (pp. 86-92)

### About This Chapter's Co-Author: Molly Muldoon

Molly is a writer, editor, and newly minted librarian who's always on the move with her pawtner-in-crime, Jamie McKitten. At the moment, they live in Portland, Oregon. The Animal Queen was inspired by Molly's childhood menagerie of stuffed animals.

Source: *The Cardboard Kingdom*

### Summary

The chapter opens with a girl wearing a crown standing guard in front of a play structure filled with stuffed animals. She yells out "intruders!" and launches one of her stuffed toys over the fence by accident. A boy peeks over from the other side of the fence and offers to return the toy. As the boy hops into her yard, the girl shrieks that he can't enter her kingdom. She explains that she is the Animal Queen who commands all animals in her kingdom. The boy introduces himself as Seth and suggests that he be the Animal King, which the Animal Queen protests. Lifting a board in the fence, Seth lets his dog Speedy into the yard. Speedy performs a few pet tricks on command before grabbing the Animal Queen's stuffed animal snake and taking off across the yard. After a long chase, they finally catch the dog. The Animal Queen's mom calls her in for dinner and the Animal Queen tells Seth he should come back and be the Captain of the Guard. They both smile as they head to their respective homes.

### Helpful Definitions

Peasant - A poor farmer of low social status who owns or rents a small piece of land for cultivation. This term refers to agricultural laborers during pre-industrial times, especially the Middle Ages, who farmed the land and paid rent, taxes and fees to a landlord.

### Discussion Questions

1. What animals do you notice on the play structure? Do any of them remind you of your own toys?
2. What can you tell about the Animal Queen's personality just from the first two pages of the chapter? What details give you this impression?
3. How does Sir Rawley end up on the other side of the fence? How does the author show Sir Rawley's movement? (with a motion line)
4. How does the Animal Queen feel when Seth comes into her yard? How does the author show her feelings visually?
5. How does the Animal Queen respond when Seth says he'll be the Animal King?
6. Looking closely at the three middle panels on page 90, how would you describe the Animal Queen's thoughts and feelings in each panel? Do you think her opinion of Seth is changing? How so?

7. Looking at the central image on page 91, what's going on in this scene? Why are there so many images of the same character? What does this image tell you about the experience the characters had chasing the dog? What's your favorite moment in that scene?
8. Do you think Seth and the Animal Queen will see each other again? Why or why not?
9. Compare the beginning of the chapter with the end; how has the relationship between the characters changed? What do you think helped them become friends?
10. What are your favorite games to play in the backyard? What games can you play by yourself? What games do you like to play with friends, siblings or neighbors?
11. What questions do you have about anything you read in this chapter?

### **Write and Respond**

1. Write about your favorite stuffed animal. Include important details like its name, where and when you got it and why you love it!
2. Write about your favorite neighbors. Include important details like their name, how you met them and a memory you have of them.

### **Quick Activity for This Chapter: Animal Pictionary**

Working in small groups or as a whole class, players secretly write down the names of common animals on pieces of paper and then fold them up. The first chosen artist randomly picks an animal and then must get the others to guess the animal by drawing it on a piece of paper or whiteboard. No talking, gesturing or drawing of letters and symbols is allowed. Once the animal is guessed correctly, a new artist is picked.

## **[SPLASH PAGE pp. 94-95]**

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Which characters do you see in this image? What are they are doing? How are they feeling?
2. What other details do you notice in the image?
3. What additional information does this image give the reader about these characters?
4. What kind of ice cream would you order?
5. What do you think happened next?

## **The Blob (pp. 96-103)**

### **About This Chapter's Co-Author: Vid Alliger**

Vid is an aspiring writer and illustrator living in upstate New York. He's still figuring things out, and that's okay. The Blob was inspired by Vid's constant desire as a child to tag along with his older brothers, who were usually kind enough to let him play, too.

Source: *The Cardboard Kingdom*

## Summary

This wordless chapter opens with two boys playing in a bedroom. It appears from the photo on the wall in the room that the boys are siblings. One boy, Nate (the Prince), dons his costume and leaves as the other boy sits sadly looking at a pile of cardboard boxes. His initial enthusiasm for creating a costume seems to have been replaced by a sense of feeling left out. On the following page, Big Banshee, the Beast, the Prince and the Rogue are engaged in an epic battle that's interrupted by the arrival of a new character. Unsure about what the boy's costume represents, their confusion eventually gives way to laughter and jokes. The boy's eyes fill with tears and he starts to walk away when Nate grabs one of his tentacles. Nate offers his paper crown to create sharp teeth on the costume and adds fierce eyes with a couple of markers. The Blob is born! The Prince wraps one of the Blob's tentacles around his neck and the other kids battle to free him.

## Discussion Questions

1. Look carefully at the first four panels of this chapter on page 97. How does the view of the scene change from the top of the page to the bottom of the page? Which panel is an example of a "close-up"? A "medium shot"? A "long shot" or "panoramic view"? Why do you think the author made this choice?
2. What clues can you find on the first page (p. 97) about the relationship between the two boys? Do you think they're brothers? Friends? Cousins? Ha... you bring that up here.
3. How does the boy initially feel about making a costume? How does his mood change? What do you think causes this change?
4. How do the other kids respond when the boy shows up in his new costume? What do they think his costume might be? How does this make the boy feel?
5. Can you relate to the boy's experience? Has someone misunderstood what you were trying to say or misinterpreted something you made? What happened and what did you do? As a reader, how do your own personal experiences help you understand a story?
6. On page 101, how does the author show that the Prince has an idea? What is the Prince's idea? What might you have done in the situation?
7. How does the boy feel about his costume at the end of the chapter? Why do you think he wanted to make a costume?
8. What questions do you have about anything you read in this chapter?

## Write and Respond

1. Write a factsheet for the Blob. Include details like size, diet, natural habitat, lifespan and unique features.
2. Retell the chapter from the perspective of the Prince, Big Banshee, the Rogue or the Beast.

## Quick Activity for This Chapter: Creature Creation

Working in small groups, have each student draw the head (human, animal, alien or other) and neck of a character at the top of a sheet of paper and then fold the paper down so only the

bottom of the neck is showing. Have students hand their drawing to someone else who will then draw a torso and arms (or fins or robot hands, etc.) before folding the paper again to conceal the drawing. A third person adds legs and feet before finally unfolding the paper to reveal the creature creation.

## **[SPLASH PAGE pp. 104-105]**

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Which characters do you see in this image? What are they are doing? How are they feeling?
2. What other details do you notice in the image?
3. What additional information does this image give the reader about these characters?
4. What do you think happened next?

## **Professor Everything (pp. 106-116)**

### **About This Chapter's Co-Author: Cloud Jacobs**

Cloud is a fifth-grade teacher in Stuttgart, Arkansas. When he's not reading and writing comics, he's working his way through every Star Wars book he can get his hands on. Professor Everything was based on Cloud's awkward childhood, when he would usually be reading while other kids were playing football.

Source: *The Cardboard Kingdom*

### **Summary**

The chapter opens with a panoramic shot of rooftops and the words "but—but---" coming from a backyard. A boy (who we eventually discover is named Egon) wearing a book-inspired mask explains that physics won't allow people to superpunch a dragon at the speed of light. Sam, the Goblin, tells the boy he can't play with the group until he learns to use his imagination. As the boy walks through the front door of his house and heads to his room, he refuses dinner (it's his favorite: pineapple BBQ sandwiches!) and vents about how he can't make any friends in the neighborhood. In his bedroom, he sits on his bed, surrounded by books. A new book, titled "How to Make Friends," slides under the door. It includes three tips: "smile!"; "ask someone about their day"; and "lend a helping hand." The boy tries the first tip with Jack (the Sorceress) and the Knight, who end up wondering why he's smiling so much. He tries the second tip with Roy (the Bully) who threatens to beat him up. He tries the third tip with Connie (the Robot), who decides not to share any chocolate milk with him even after he has spent an hour cleaning her garage. Frustrated, he rips up the book and sits on the curb with his face in his hands. A boy approaches him and introduces himself as a humble Scribe. He shows Egon the book he has created called the Cardboard Kingdom, which records the adventures of the kids in the neighborhood, including Egon's epic quest for friendship. The two bond over their shared difficulty in making friends and Egon invites him over to read comics.

## Helpful Definitions

Speed of Light - The speed of light is 186,000 miles per second (299,792,458 meters per second), and, in theory, nothing can travel faster than light. In miles per hour, light speed is 671,000,000 mph.

Tome - A book, especially a large, heavy, scholarly one.

Scribe - Historically, a scribe was a person who copied documents by hand before printing was invented. Today, it can be used as an informal term for a writer or journalist.

## Discussion Questions

1. Sam (the Goblin) tells Egon (Professor Everything) that he can't play with the group until he learns to use his imagination (p. 107). What do you think of this statement? Do you think science and imagination can work together to make a fun game for everyone? Why or why not? How would you have responded to Egon's observation that a fist can't travel at the speed of light?
2. What do you think was the inspiration for Professor Everything's mask?
3. What is Egon's favorite food? This is the second character who loves food made with pineapple, do you remember who else likes pineapple? (Vijay, the Beast likes pineapple pizza) Do you like pineapples? How do you like to eat them?
4. On page 108, how does the author visually show Egon's frustration?
5. What do you notice about Egon's room?
6. What happens when Egon tries tip #1 for making friends (p. 110)? What do you think could have worked better?
7. What happens when Egon tries tip #2 for making friends (p. 111)? Do you think the result he got from this experiment says more about him or about the boy he spoke to? Has anyone ever teased you about your name? How did it make you feel? What advice would you give Egon about how he could have handled this situation differently?
8. What happens when Egon tries tip #3 for making friends (p. 112)? Do you think the result he got from this experiment says more about him or about Connie? Do you think he gave up on the book too quickly? Why or why not?
9. What advice would you give Egon about making friends? How did you meet your good friends? Did it take time to become friends? What does it mean to be a friend?
10. In graphic novels and comics, the "point of view" of an illustration is the direction and angle from which the reader or artist is viewing the objects and people in a picture, for example, from above or below. Can you find an example of a "bird's-eye view" in this chapter?
11. Who collects and chronicles all that happens in the Cardboard Kingdom? Has he heard of Egon? How does Egon react when he sees the Scribe's book?
12. What activity does Egon invite the Scribe to do with him? What do you notice about the final image in the chapter? What do these characters have in common? Do you think they might become friends? Why or why not?
13. What questions do you have about anything you read in this chapter?

### **Write and Respond**

1. Write a letter to a friend about why you love having them as a friend. Do you share the same taste in books? Or like to play games or sports together? Or is it that your friend is always there to listen when you're having a rough day? If you feel like it, add an invitation to do something fun together!
2. If, like Egon, you've had a tough time making friends, write a list of 10 reasons why you would make a great friend. Are you a good listener? Do you like to play sports? Are you good at math and could help your friend when he or she got stuck on a homework problem? Are you kind? Funny? Generous? Perhaps people just haven't had the chance to truly see how amazing you are!

### **Quick Activity for This Chapter: Tele-Scribe**

Divide the class into groups of 8-10 students. Have the students in each group sit in a line with one student in front of the next and all facing forward. Next, give the person at the head of the line a piece of paper and a pencil. Give the student at the back of the line a word, either written on a piece of paper or whispered. Next, have the student with the word use their finger to draw the first letter of the word on the back of the person in front of them. This student must then draw the letter on the back of the person in front of them until eventually the letter is passed to the person at the front of the line who writes the letter on the piece of paper. After writing the letter, the student raises their hand to let the person at the back of the line know it's time to send the next letter. Letter by letter the word is built. No talking is allowed, but a student may raise their hand to show the person behind them that they need to have the letter written on his or her back a second time.

## **[SPLASH PAGE pp. 118-119]**

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Which characters do you see in this image? What are they are doing? How are they feeling?
2. What other details do you notice in the image?
3. What additional information does this image give the reader about these characters?
4. What do you think happened next?

## **“One Afternoon at the Dragon’s Head Inn” (pp. 120-125)**

### **Summary**

One afternoon at the Dragon’s Head Inn, Becky (the Blacksmith), Alice (the Alchemist), Shikha (the Huntress), Egon (Professor Everything), Jack (the Sorceress), the Scribe, Nate (the Prince), Sophie (Big Banshee) and the Blob are hanging out when the Animal Queen arrives with Seth’s dog in her arms. The Animal Queen proceeds to tell the group that she’s looking for her Captain of the Guard, who hasn’t reported for duty the past few days and that she’s worried about him.

The other kids begin to speculate as to what might have happened. When the Scribe hears that she is looking for Seth, he says that he heard that his father has moved out. Shikha adds that his parents have been fighting. The Animal Queen wonders how she can help with a problem like that. Suddenly Seth's dog, Speedy, takes off. Seth is calling him from his front door. The Animal Queen runs up to Seth and invites him to come play whenever he's ready.

### Discussion Questions

1. How would you describe the scene at the Dragon's Head Inn? What details do you notice in the image? What's the term used to describe the text at the top of the page? (caption)
2. Which character would you want to hang out with in this scene? Why?
3. Whose dog is the Animal Queen holding? How is the Animal Queen feeling?
4. On page 123, what do you notice about the size of the panels on this page as you read from top to bottom? What do you notice about the view and composition (close-up, medium shot, long shot) of the panels as you read from top to bottom? Why do you think the author made these choices? How does it enhance your understanding of the story and the way the Animal Queen is feeling?
5. What does the scribe think could be the explanation for Seth's absence? What does Shikha know about Seth's situation?
6. The Animal Queen wonders what she can do to help with this situation. Many kids may wonder about what to do if their parents are fighting or if their friend has parents who are fighting. The best thing to do is be there for your friend and to reach out to people you trust if you need to talk or you are worried about a friend's wellbeing. Who some trusted adults you can you talk to at your school? In your community? What are some ways you support your friends when they're going through a tough time?
7. Why do you think the Animal Queen says, "My whole kingdom awaits your return!" but then adds "But, you know... when you're ready." (p. 125)? Why might Seth need some time before he is ready to come over to play?
8. What questions do you have about anything you read in this section?

## The Gargoyle (pp. 126-142)

### About This Chapter's Co-Author: Michael Cole

Michael teaches English literature at Wichita State University, where he also works as an accessibility technologist and is pursuing a master's degree in creative writing. In his free time, he can be found with his three dogs, playing *Breath of the Wild*. The Gargoyle was loosely based on Michael's childhood experiences, but if he had been a superhero, he would rather have been Jean Grey, not a gargoyle!

Source: *The Cardboard Kingdom*

### Summary

The chapter opens with a muted color scheme and four panels showing Seth playing with action figures on the couch. He seems exhausted and worried. His parents are fighting and in the last

panel of the page, his mom can be seen pushing his dad out door as his dad protests that this is still his house. Seth struggles to sleep that night and in the morning his mom is concerned. Seth shares that he's bothered by how loud and scary his dad is when he comes over. When his mom suggests he play with his friends, Seth says he's too tired. Seth continues to sleep poorly at night and feel tired the next day. Inspired by his Night Falcon action figure, Seth creates a cardboard mask and wraps himself in the blanket from the couch. Climbing out through the window and onto the roof, he announces that the Gargoyle is now the protector of all that he can see. Empowered, Seth (as the Gargoyle) roams the roof, scares off a racoon, finds a lost frisbee and plays with his dog. And then starts getting cold. After staying up all night, his mom tucks him in on the couch with his Night Falcon figure. A loud crash awakens him. It's a lamp that has been knocked over as his parents fight. He rushes to grab his Gargoyle cape, but his dad is already gone. That night, Seth returns to the roof as the Gargoyle. When his dad arrives in a car, Seth (as the Gargoyle) yells down to his dad that he is the protector of the whole block from villains, monsters and all kinds of evil. He warns his dad not to enter the house. As a woman calls from the car, Seth's dad turns and leaves. On the final page, Seth's expression fades from triumph to sadness as he sits alone on the roof.

### **Helpful Definitions**

**Gargoyle** - In architecture, a gargoyle is a carved or formed fantastical creature with a spout designed to channel water from a roof away from the walls of a building in order to protect the masonry. As part of a building's gutter system for managing rain water, gargoyles are usually found near the roofline. Many well-known churches in Europe, such as Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, have multiple gargoyles.

In literature, a gargoyle is a fantasy horror monster inspired by the appearance of architectural gargoyles, with some tales stemming from the idea of the stone gargoyles coming to life.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What do you notice about the color palette on the first page of this chapter (p. 127)? Is it bright or muted? How does this color scheme differ from the pages we've seen so far in the book? What kind of mood do you think the author is trying to create?
2. What do you think Seth is thinking and feeling as he sits on the couch with his action figures? What details can you find to support your opinion?
3. Compare page 128 and page 129. What time of day is shown on each page? How would you describe the color scheme for each page? What do you think these contrasting pages tell us about Seth and how he is feeling? Do the muted colors make the scene feel more awake or sleepier? Why do you think the author might have made this choice?
4. Why do you think Seth is having trouble sleeping at night? Can you relate to being unable to sleep when you're worried about something? What do you do when this happens?
5. In comics and graphic novels, authors use "sound effects" to add an extra layer of detail to a scene. Often, the sounds words are spelled in a way that reads like the word sounds. This is called onomatopoeia. Can you find an example of sound effects in this



chapter? (p. 130) What do you notice about the way they are written? How does the lettering bring the sound to life even more?

6. Why does Seth create the Gargoyle costume? How does he feel when he wears it? In your own words, what is a gargoyle? Have you seen a gargoyle in other books, movies or TV shows?
7. What words would you use to describe the night that Seth spends out on the roof as the Gargoyle? How does that night compare to previous nights? What has changed?
8. This chapter can be hard to read for those who have gone through times when our parents fought or when they got divorced, or for those of us who just worry that might happen one day in our family. As Seth's mom points out, it can be a confusing time, and as we can see on Seth's face, it can be a really upsetting time. Who are some trusted adults you can talk to when you're feeling upset or confused? Who do you think Seth could talk to? What conversations might Seth want to have with his mom in order to feel better?
9. How does Seth's Night Falcon action figure get broken? How does the author emphasize that moment? Why do you think it's an important moment in the story?
10. How does Seth feel when he sees the Animal Queen reading together with both of her parents? What thoughts do you think are going through his mind? Whether you have one parent, two parents or live with other relatives or guardians, what activity do you love to do together?
11. As Seth's dad approaches the house late one night, the Gargoyle confronts him and warns him not to enter the house. Look closely at his dad's face in each panel on pages 140 and 141. How do his emotions change from the first panel to the final panel? Why do you think he decides to leave without going into the house?
12. On the final page of the chapter, how would you describe the range of emotions Seth feels from the first panel on the page to the last? Why might he have mixed feelings about the events that have just taken place? What type of view is shown in the first two panels? (close-up)
13. What questions do you have about anything you read in this chapter?

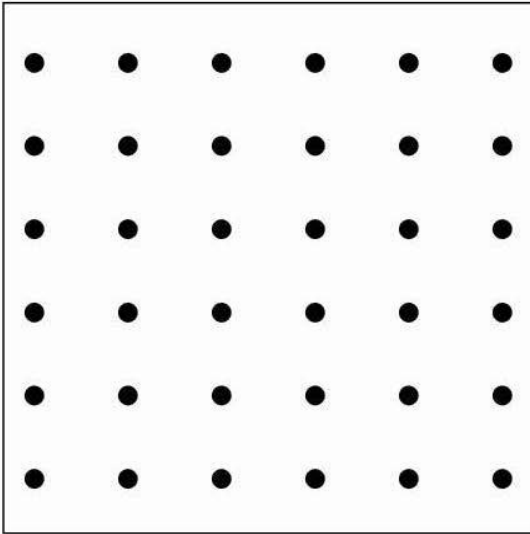
### **Write and Respond**

1. Write a response to this chapter. How did it make you feel? Do you have questions that you didn't feel comfortable talking about as a group? What do you think will happen next for Seth and his family?
2. Becoming the Gargoyle helped Seth feel more powerful and confident. Write about a time when you felt really powerful. Be sure to include as many details as possible to bring your story to life.

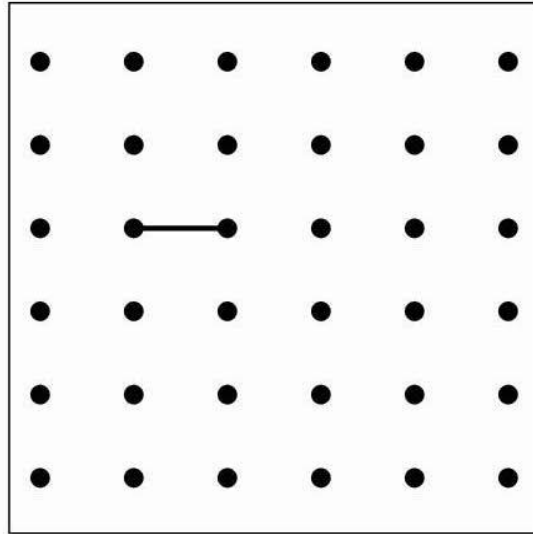
### **Quick Activity for This Chapter: Defender of the Block**

Working in groups of 2-4, have students create a gameboard by drawing a square grid of 6 dots by 6 dots (i.e. 6 rows, each of 6 dots), or use copies of the activity sheet provided in the Activity Pages section of this guide. Once the square of dots has been created, players take turns drawing line segments between dots. When a player completes a square with their line, they put their initial in the square as the "defender of the block" and take another turn. The game

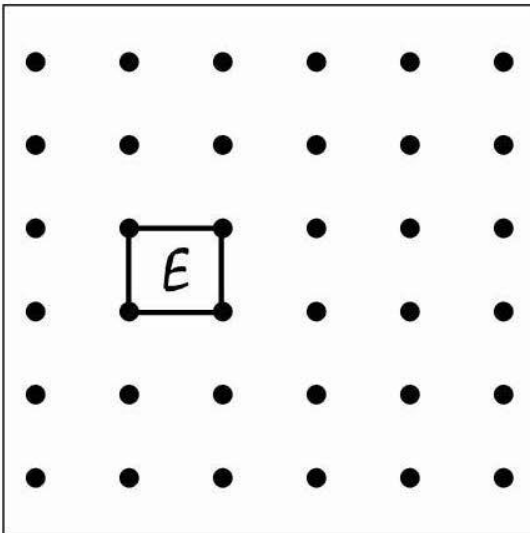
continues until all the lines between the dots have been drawn. The player with the most squares/blocks wins. Students can experiment with square grids of other sizes, 10 x 10, 12 x 12, etc., once they are familiar with the game.



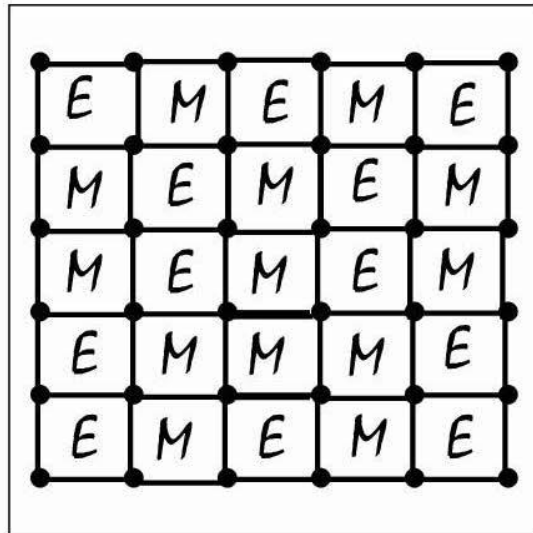
A 6 x 6 game board



To Play: Players take turns drawing lines that connect 2 dots.



When a player draws a line that completes a square, they write their initial inside it to "claim it."



Play continues until no more lines can be drawn. The player with the most squares wins.

## [SPLASH PAGE pp. 144-145]

### Discussion Questions

1. Which characters do you see in this image? What are they doing? How are they feeling?
2. What other details do you notice in the image?
3. What additional information does this image give the reader about these characters?
4. What do you think happened next?

## The Mad Scientist (pp. 146-158)

### About This Chapter's Co-Author: Barbara Perez Marquez

Barbara is a Dominican American writer. She lives in Baltimore and has been writing since she was in seventh grade. Just like Amanda, Barbara was born and raised in the Dominican Republic, loves mustaches, and believes we can all experiment a little more in life!

Source: *The Cardboard Kingdom*

### Summary

The chapter opens with images of bubbling test tubes, stained gloves and a brain floating in a jar. A gleeful mad scientist can be seen rushing into the laboratory. Wearing a lab coat, gloves, goggles and cardboard moustache, a girl (who we soon discover is named Amanda) creates cardboard accessories to address her client's needs. A boy doesn't like his hair, so she gives him a whole new head; a girl doesn't like her big feet, so she makes crazy big backward feet for her. At the dinner table, Amanda tells her dad about the "experiments" she did today and the amazing cyborgs and mutants that resulted. When her dad tells her that people are different for a reason and that changing them isn't helping them, Amanda vows to use her experiments to make her friends more different and awesome. The next day, Amanda adds paper and cardboard to a boy's cast while telling him about Dominican shape-shifters called galipotes. When Amanda's dad gets home from work, he looks surprised and then angry. Marching her inside, he demands to know why she is wearing a moustache outside on the lawn where everyone can see. Amanda explains that it's part of her lab gear, but her dad tells her to take it off and go to her room. When Amanda refuses to come out of her room for dinner, her mom confronts her dad and shares that the part Amanda had loved most about her costume was the way it made her look like her dad. Stunned and saddened, he finds Amanda in her room and they talk. He tells her that sometimes when things are strange and different, they seem scary and that sometimes it's hard to accept what you don't understand. He offers Amanda's cardboard moustache to her and she puts it on. They both smile.

### Helpful Definitions

Cyborg - A fictional person whose human abilities have been enhanced by mechanical parts built into the body.

Dominican Republic - The Dominican Republic is the second-largest Caribbean nation by area (after Cuba) at 18,705 square miles, and third by population with approximately 10 million people. The capital is Santo Domingo and the official language is Spanish. The Dominican Republic shares the island of Hispaniola with the country of Haiti.

La Ciguapa - A mythological creature of Dominican and Puerto Rican folklore. They are commonly described as having a human female form with brown or dark blue skin, backward facing feet, and long hair that covers their otherwise naked bodies. They supposedly inhabit the high mountains of the Dominican Republic and are out mostly at night. Some people believe they bring death, and it is said looking them in the eye can leave people permanently bewitched.

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ciguapa>

Galipote - A person who can transform him/herself into animals at will. The stories go that the galipotes are impervious to weapons like knives, machetes and bullets. For some, they're mischievous creatures that love to pull pranks on normal humans like re-directing sleepwalkers and misdirecting travelers in the forest, or scaring people who are walking in dark places. But in other myths, the galipotes are violent, deceitful and evil.

Source: <http://www.unavainabienspanish.com/dominican-monsters-folklore/>

La bruja - The Dominican bruja is said to have her origin in the European witch tradition, but what makes the Dominican bruja special is the persistence of the belief in her existence. Witch sightings are common, and, like her European counterpart, Dominican witches have a penchant for broom flying and eating children. It's believed that Dominican witches gain their wealth of knowledge from indigenous and African magic. Source:

<http://www.unavainabienspanish.com/dominican-monsters-folklore/>

### Discussion Questions

1. What inspires the Mad Scientist's experiments? What are some examples of how she uses cardboard accessories to change people? How do her clients feel about the results? How does she feel about the results?
2. In comics and graphic novels, text can be inside a speech balloon as dialogue, or inside a text box as a caption. Text can also be part of a sound effect and written outside a text box. Can you find examples of each type of text in this chapter?
3. How does Amanda's dad feel about her experiments? What details can you find in the text to support your answer?
4. Do you agree with Amanda's dad's statement, "All people are different for a reason...Changing them isn't helping them"? (p. 149)? Why or why not?
5. On page 150, Amanda's dad tells her to never be afraid of being different. This might be something that is easier said than done. What thoughts do you have about this topic? What is it like to be different? Do you think our community is doing a good job of including those who are different? What examples can you share to support your opinion? What do you think we could do better as a community?

6. The term “culture” refers to the traditions, beliefs, customs, values, attitudes, religion, language and knowledge of a particular group of people. What clues about Amanda’s cultural background can you find in the text? Why might it be important to understand a person’s culture? What might people not know about your cultural background?
7. What is a “galipote” (p. 152)? (further information about this term and all the mythical creatures mentioned in the chapter is included in the helpful definitions section)
8. How does Amanda’s dad respond to seeing her out in the yard dressed as the Mad Scientist? Were you surprised by his response? How does Amanda react? Do you think it’s possible that better understanding his cultural background could help us better understand his reaction?
9. What inspired Amanda to wear a moustache as part of her costume?
10. On page 157, Amanda’s dad explains that the mythical creatures he has taught her about are strange and different, which can make them seem scary at first. Thinking about your own experience, has something seemed scary to you at first, but became less scary once you learned more about it?
11. Amanda’s dad explains that “Sometimes it is hard to accept what you don’t understand” (p. 157). How does this observation help explain his reaction to Amanda’s experiments and costume? Have you ever had times when you felt like your parents just didn’t understand you? How did you work through this challenge?
12. How has Amanda’s relationship with her father has changed over the course of this chapter?
13. What questions do you have about anything you read in this chapter?

### **Write and Respond**

1. Amanda’s dad tells her “never be afraid to be different” (p. 150). Write a list of 5 unique facts about yourself.
2. Amanda’s dad tells her, “All people are different for a reason... Changing them isn’t helping them” (p.149). Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

### **Quick Activity for This Chapter: Presto Chango**

Students practice careful observation as they try to figure what has changed about a classmate’s appearance. To begin, a volunteer stands in front of the group so everyone can observe the details of his or her clothing and accessories. A second volunteer plays the role of the “Mad Scientist” who will help the volunteer alter his or her appearance by suggesting ideas. Have the volunteer turn around once or twice and then leave the room, accompanied by the Mad Scientist. While out of the room, the Mad Scientist will help make 3 changes to the volunteer’s appearance. Possible changes could include turning a hat backward, rolling up a sleeve or pant leg, tucking in an untucked shirt or removing one’s socks. Remind students that the volunteer must agree to any changes and that the Mad Scientist is only there to help suggest ideas for changes and help if needed. Any changes must still be appropriate for a classroom setting. When the volunteer returns, the class tries to identify the 3 changes made by the Mad Scientist. Allow other students to play the roles of volunteer and Mad Scientist.

## [SPLASH PAGE pp. 160-161]

### Discussion Questions

1. Which characters do you see in this image? What are they doing? How are they feeling?
2. What other details do you notice in the image?
3. What additional information does this image give the reader about these characters?
4. What do you think happened next?

## The Robot (pp. 162-172)

### About This Chapter's Co-Author: Vid Alliger

Vid is an aspiring writer and illustrator living in upstate New York. He's still figuring things out, and that's okay. Vid also co-wrote the chapter titled "The Blob."

Source: *The Cardboard Kingdom*

### Summary

The chapter opens with a girl in a cardboard robot costume using a magnifying glass to focus the sun's rays and melt several plastic dolls. Her speech balloons feature text in a different font, giving the indication of a robot voice. Her dad looks on and asks what her friends are up to today. Connie (the Robot) replies that friendship is a human weakness and robots don't need friends. Over lunch, Connie's dad tries to engage her in a conversation about planning a party for her upcoming birthday, but at every opportunity, Connie tries to shut down the conversation. Connie's dad continues his efforts and urges her to think about a robot-themed party, which seems to finally catch Connie's interest. Later, Connie (as the Robot) can be seen delivering invitations to "the robot revolution" at her house next Saturday. Many of the kids are unclear about what the invitation means.

On the Saturday of the party, the backyard is decorated, and Connie and her dad wait for the guests. By the start time of the party, no one has arrived. Over the fence, Connie can see Nate (the Prince), the Animal Queen and Miguel (the Rogue) playing together even though she had invited them. Feeling disappointed, she sits on the porch step with her dad. Suddenly, her mom opens the backdoor and Vijay (the Beast), Sam (the Goblin) and the Blob rush into the backyard. The party starts, and the parents look on as the kids run wild.

### Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Connie the Robot's speech balloons look different than those of her dad? What do you think Connie's robot voice might sound like?
2. Connie the Robot says, "Friendship is a weakness found only in humans" (p. 163). What do you think of this statement? Do you feel friendship is something that makes you stronger or weaker? How so? Why do you think Connie says something like this? What might it reveal about her own feelings regarding friendship?

3. How does Connie feel about having a birthday party? Does she change her mind as her dad discusses his ideas with her? What does the final panel on page 165 reveal about Connie?
4. When Connie's mom returns home from the store and asks Connie to help with the groceries, Connie says, "I am not your robot slave" (p. 165). What do you think of her response to her mom's request for help? What would you have done? What are some of the ways you help out at home?
5. How do the kids in the neighborhood react to Connie's invitation to the "Robot Revolution" next Saturday? Looking closely at pages 166-167, can you spot all the characters we've met so far in the book? Does Connie invite all the kids of the Cardboard Kingdom?
6. What games and refreshments has Connie prepared for her guests? What kind of music do you think one might play at a robot-themed party?
7. Why do you think Nate (the Prince), the Animal Queen and Miguel (the Rogue) didn't come to the party? What clues can you find on pages 166-167?
8. Compare the image of Connie on page 171, with the following images: Amanda on page 151, the group of friends on page 79, Sophie on page 48 and Seth on page 133. What visual elements, poses and expressions does the author use to show that a character feels happy, triumphant and powerful? Can you find other examples in the book? What pose would you make to show you feel triumphant?
9. What do you notice about the party scene on the last page of the chapter?
10. What are the birthday traditions in your family? Do you celebrate with a party? What is one of your favorite birthday memories?
11. What questions do you have about anything you read in this chapter?

### **Write and Respond**

1. A robot-themed birthday party is just perfect for Connie. Choose another character in the book and write about the perfect birthday party you would plan for him or her. What would the decorations be like? What games would you play at the party? What food would be served?
2. Imagine you had a robot that lived with your family. What tasks would you want your robot to do to help out? Would you want it to play games? What would it look like? Would it have a robot voice or a more human voice?

### **Quick Activity for This Chapter: Robot Code**

Invite the class to imagine their new robots use a special code language to communicate. Have them invent a robot code by writing out the letters of the alphabet and then drawing a unique symbol below each letter. Have students use their new code to write a message on the bottom half of the page and then trade papers with a classmate. Can they decode the message?

## [SPLASH PAGE pp. 174-175]

### Discussion Questions

1. Which characters do you see in this image? What are they doing? How are they feeling?
2. What other details do you notice in the image?
3. What additional information does this image give the reader about these characters?
4. What do you think happened next?

## The Army of Evil (pp. 176-191)

### About This Chapter's Co-Author: None

This chapter was written by Chad Sell without a co-author. Chad's author profile can be found on page 2 of this guide.

### Summary

The chapter opens with an image of the Sorceress at the top of a flight of stairs calling down to her goblin assistant to hurry up and stop spilling her potion. On the next page, the reality of the scene is fully visible: Sam (the Goblin) is spilling green paint on the stairs as Jack (the Sorceress) waits for her at the top, and Jack's mom yells at him for getting possibly toxic paint all over his sister and using her as a slave and test subject. Exasperated, Jack's mom tells him he's not allowed to have any more potions, henchmen or the Sorceress in the house. At dinner, a friend of Jack's mom asks about his interest in magic and he explains that he is a sorceress in exile. His mom is not amused. The next day, Jack dresses as the Sorceress again and tells his mom that he'll find a new place to play and a new minion. Everyone he asks says no. Adding insult to injury, Jack discovers his sister is now hanging out with other kids. Dejected, Jack decides to play a prank on Sam and her friends. The prank goes awry; things get broken; and everyone is angry at Jack in the end. Departing the scene, Jack curses them all and says they'll regret the day they crossed the Sorceress. The Knight approaches Jack as he swings alone on a swing set. She gives him a hug and listens as he explains how he doesn't feel like people understand him and how he enjoys playing the evil villain. That night, Jack's mom finds him on the couch in his plain clothes watching TV. She sits down next to him to start a conversation. She tells him that she's "okay with it." (Here we get the sense that she suspects Jack may be somewhere on the LGBTQ spectrum and she's unsure of what to say, but wants to reassure him that she accepts him). She continues to attempt a conversation, but is careful to avoid labeling Jack or putting ideas into his head beyond what he thinks of his reality. She tells him that she is okay with him dressing up, but wonders if it's just dress-up or something more. When she asks, "Who is the Sorceress?" Jack replies that she's what he wants to be: "magical and powerful and amazing." His mom hugs him and tells him he certainly is those things.

The next day, Jack gathers together a group of kids including Sam (the Goblin), Connie (the Robot), Vijay (the Beast) and the Blob, to form the Army of Evil. Working together they formulate evil plans, eat cookies and pull pranks on the other kids.



## Helpful Definitions

Henchman - A trusted follower or supporter and especially someone who performs unpleasant or illegal tasks.

Incantation - A series of words said as a magic spell or charm.

Minion - Someone who is not powerful or important and who obeys the orders of a powerful leader or boss.

## Discussion Questions

1. Compare and contrast the first page of the chapter with the second page. What does the scene look like in Jack's imagination as compared to reality? How does Jack's mom see this scene? What is her reaction?
2. How does Jack's sister feel about her role as Jack's minion? What does her mom think? Would you want to be Jack's minion? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think Jack decided to play a prank on Sam and her friends?
4. Looking closely at pages 184 and 185, how many traits/actions of a good friend can you spot? What are things good friends do for each other?
5. Why does Jack feel frustrated? Can you relate to feeling frustrated when you feel like people don't understand you or your ideas?
6. As Jack watches TV on the couch on page 186, his mom sits down next to him and says she wants to talk. What does she want Jack to know?
7. Why does Jack like to dress up as the Sorceress? Can you find a specific quote from the text to support your answer? (p. 187) What are some things that make you feel powerful and amazing?
8. What is the Army of Evil? Who leads it? Who are the members? What does the army do?
9. The battle between good and evil comes up a lot in literature, TV, games and movies. Do you think people, events and actions always fall into one category or the other, or do you think it's more complicated than that? Is the Army of Evil completely evil? Partly evil? Not evil at all?
10. Jack and his friends like to make evil plans and play pranks on the other kids. How do you feel about this? Is what they're doing okay? Why or why not?
11. How do Jack and his fellow members of the Army of Evil feel on the last page of the chapter? At the same time, how do you think Alice felt when they poured vinegar into her lemonade? How do you think the Animal Queen felt when they stole her stuffed toy and damaged it?
12. Which character was the main focus of this chapter? How might this chapter be different if it was told from the perspective of someone else? What if it was told from the perspective of Jack's mom? Or someone who is not a member of the Army of Evil?
13. What questions do you have about anything you read in this chapter?

### **Write and Respond**

1. Create an advertisement for the Army of Evil. What does the Army do? Why would people want to join? What type of people should join? Does one need any special skills? What is the meeting schedule and location for the Army of Evil?
2. Create an advertisement for your own group. What is the group's name and mission? What activities will members do when they meet? Why should someone join your group? Example: The Crafty Coloradans is a club for anyone who loves to make things! Do you knit, crochet or sew? Come join us every Friday afternoon at 3 p.m. for crafting and cookies!

### **Quick Activity for This Chapter: Copy Cat**

Many great artists get their start by copying the works of others as a way to learn new skills and practice certain techniques. Invite students to choose a panel or a whole page from this chapter to recreate using a pencil and a piece of paper. Encourage them to study the shapes, lines, shading, expressions and gestures in their selected panel/page.

## **[SPLASH PAGE pp. 192-193]**

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Which characters do you see in this image? What are they are doing? How are they feeling?
2. What other details do you notice in the image?
3. What additional information does this image give the reader about these characters?
4. What do you think happened next?

## **“On Garbage Day” (pp. 194-199)**

### **Summary**

On garbage day, Sophie (Big Banshee), Nate (the Prince), Miguel (the Rogue) and Amanda (the Mad Scientist) collect cardboard for their friend Peter who is constructing something massive underneath a large tarp. Each child tries to guess what Peter might be building as he hasn't given them a clue or let them see what's inside the cloaked mound. After disappearing under the tarp, Peter returns with a sign that reads “Megalopolis Coming Soon (No Peeking).”

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Why did the kids collect cardboard on garbage day?
2. On page 197, Sophie, Miguel, Nate and Amanda all take a guess at what Peter's creating. Which of their ideas would you most want to see? Why?
3. What do you think “Megalopolis” might be?
4. It seems like Peter is building something really big! Have you ever built something so large you could walk inside of it? What was it? What was it like to build it?

### **Helpful Definitions**

Polis means “city” in Greek.

Mega means “big” in Greek.

Megalo means “great” in Greek, in the sense of “very large.”

### **Quick Activity for This Section: The Great Greek Guessing Game**

Challenge students to think of city names and words that include, or stem from, the Greek word “polis,” which means “city.” If students are struggling to think of words, select a word from the list below and give clues until they can guess it. Clues could include the meaning of the word, a rhyming word and/or popular culture references.

Cities: Annapolis, Maryland; Indianapolis, Indiana; Minneapolis, Minnesota

Words: policy, polity, police and politics, metropolis, metropolitan, cosmopolitan, acropolis, necropolis

## **The Bully (pp. 200-213)**

### **About This Chapter’s Co-Author: David DeMeo**

David is a bald jewelry designer with a large variety of hats. His favorite holiday is Halloween, and even though he is supposedly a grown-up now, he still makes his own costumes and dresses up every year. David lives in Caldwell, New Jersey. David also co-wrote the “The Huntress” chapter.

Source: *The Cardboard Kingdom*

### **Summary**

This chapter opens with an old woman watching Sophie (Big Banshee), Vijay (the Beast), Shikha (the Huntress), Jack (the Sorceress) and Sam (the Goblin) play in the street. She smiles with glee and enthusiastically describes the scene for her grandson in an effort to get him to go and join the other kids. He tells her that he’s too old for dress-up. To which she replies that he’s certainly not too old to go make some friends! Leaving the house, Roy bullies Vijay about his costume and teases Sam when she stands up for her friend. Feeling smug about his putdowns, Roy greets a couple of neighborhood teens, who invite him to attend a costume party the next day. Roy is thrilled at the invitation from the “cool kids.”

The next day, Roy excitedly finishes his praying mantis costume and heads to the party. When he arrives, the teens begin laughing at him and posing for selfies with him as a way to further ridicule him. As Roy runs home, the teens continue laughing. He speeds past The Scribe and Egon (Professor Everything) who shouts out hello to him. Storming through the front door, Roy slams it behind him. He tells his grandma what happened and blames her for suggesting he go try to make friends. He vents about hating the neighborhood, the kids in the neighborhood and his house. He wishes he could live with his mom again, but Roy’s grandma explains that his mom needs time to look after herself right now and that for the moment, the two of them will have to take care of each other. Later, Roy spots the teens and hides behind a bush. When the kids of the neighborhood see Roy, they hide. Roy discovers “Megalopolis” and sneaks under the

tarp that covers it. When his grandma comes to check on him that night, Roy says his work is top secret, but that everyone will see it soon. He smiles devilishly and appears to be designing a dragon monster.

### **Helpful Definitions**

Fiddlesticks - An exclamation used to express annoyance or disagreement.

Constructive criticism - The process of offering helpful and specific suggestions about the work of others, usually involving both positive and negative comments, in a friendly manner rather than an oppositional one.

Praying mantis - Mantises are an order of insects that contains more than 2,400 species. The common name “praying mantis” stems from the way the standing pose of a mantis resembles a person praying. Mantises can be found all over the world in temperate and tropical habitats. They are carnivores and some species can grow up to 6 inches long.

### **Resources for Teaching About Bullying**

Information on what to do if you are being bullied and things to say to a bully:

<https://www.stompoutbullying.org/get-help/about-bullying-and-cyberbullying/are-you-being-bullied>

Ideas for what kids can do to identify, stop and prevent bullying, includes some short videos:

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/kids/what-you-can-do/index.html>

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Like with any book, your imagination adds to the story as you read, whether it’s imagining images if the book contains only text, or filling in the storyline if there are only images. What kind of game do you think the kids are playing on page 201? What helps you guess? Did you draw from your own experience? What clues do you see in the image?
2. What would Roy’s grandma like him to do? Why does he refuse? Do you agree with his argument? Why or why not? (p. 202)
3. What do you think “fiddlesticks” means? What strategies do you use when you encounter a word you don’t know?
4. In comics and graphic novels, the space between panels is called the gutter. At first it might seem like this is blank space, but things actually happen in this space and our minds fill in this gap between panels with a link that binds the two images together. Look at the first two panels on page 203. What happens in terms of Roy’s physical location between the two panels? What thoughts do you think he had between the first panel and the second panel that motivated his decision to go outside?
5. Are Roy’s words on page 203 really “constructive criticism”? Why or why not? What is constructive criticism?
6. How would you describe the “cool kids” Roy meets? Did you sense anything odd about their costume party invitation?

7. Foreshadowing is “a literary device in which a writer gives an advance hint of what is to come later in the story. Foreshadowing often appears at the beginning of a story, or a chapter, and it helps the reader develop expectations about the upcoming events.” (Wikipedia) The author uses foreshadowing in this chapter by leaving clues to Roy’s future costumes. Did you spot the clue that foreshadowed his first costume choice on page 202? (praying mantis poster on the wall of his room) What kind of costume did Roy create?
8. How did the teens treat Roy when he arrived at the party? Were they laughing *with* him or *at* him? How can you tell?
9. Who does Roy blame for what happened at the party? What do we learn about Roy’s home life in this chapter? Is he going through a tough time? How might that impact the way he behaves?
10. On pages 210 and 211, what do you notice is similar about Roy’s behavior and the behavior of the neighborhood kids? Do you think that even bullies can have their own bullies? What do you think causes people to become bullies? What can you do if you encounter a bully at school or in your neighborhood? (see resources on bullying above for ideas to share with students)
11. What do you think Roy might be planning to do with whatever is under the Megalopolis tent? What clues (foreshadowing) can you find in the chapter?
12. What questions do you have about anything you read in this chapter?

### **Write and Respond**

1. Write about a time when you were teased or bullied. What happened? How did you respond? How did you feel? If you could go back to that time, would you do anything differently? If so, what? What would you do if a similar situation happened today?
2. Write about a time when one or both of your parents/guardians were away. How did you feel? What did you miss most about that person? How did you make it through that time? Did you learn anything about yourself as a result of that experience?

### **Quick Activity for This Chapter: Friend Finder**

Sometimes we don’t realize how many things we have in common with others, which can make us feel different when we’re really not. Have students divide a piece of paper into 8 sections and then write their response to the following prompts in the corresponding section (or use copies of the activity sheet provided in the Activity Pages section of this guide):

1. Favorite dessert
2. Favorite class in school
3. Number of siblings
4. Favorite color
5. Favorite sport to play
6. Type of pet (or none)
7. Shoe size
8. Do you like reading *The Cardboard Kingdom*?

Next, invite students to move around the room to find someone that has the same answer as them for as many sections as possible. When they find a match, have that person sign that

section of the sheet. Unless your group size is small, have students try to find a different person for each section.

## **Megalopolis (pp. 214-231)**

### **About This Chapter's Co-Author: Jay Fuller**

Jay is a cartoonist living in Brooklyn, New York, with his husband-to-be, Kevin, and their little corgi pup. He writes and illustrates his comic, *The Boy in Pink Earmuffs*. Megalopolis was inspired by Japanese monster movies and the little cardboard dioramas Jay used to make as a kid. Jay also co-wrote the chapter titled "The Sorceress."

Source: *The Cardboard Kingdom*

### **Summary**

The chapter opens with Peter standing ready to pull off the large tarp that covers Megalopolis as the kids of the neighborhood watch. When the cover is off, a futuristic city of cardboard is revealed. The kids imagine they are riding on the elevated train through the city, racing rocket cars through buildings and scaling skyscrapers until suddenly, a giant dragon monster appears. It's Roy. He gleefully rips apart buildings and lays waste to the city. The kids are saddened and concerned for Peter, who after a few minutes, picks up a piece of the wreckage and seems to have an idea. As Roy triumphantly marches down the street, the "cool kids" tease him, rip his costume and push him into a bush. That night, both Peter and Roy are hard at work designing new fierce costumes.

The next day, Peter and Roy battle as a robot-inspired superhero and an even-fiercer dragon monster. They are smiling and enjoying the fight, when suddenly Roy is hit by a water balloon. The cool kids are laughing and launching balloons at Peter, Roy and the cardboard city. Roy suggests they team up. Blending their costumes and working together, they scare off the "cool kids" with a mega costume and then the other members of the Cardboard Kingdom throw water balloons at the "cool kids" as they flee on bikes. Together, Roy and Peter repair Megalopolis with help from the members of the Cardboard Kingdom. In the final image, the robot superhero and the dragon monster wave goodbye to each other.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What details do you notice about Megalopolis when Peter finally reveals it on pages 216 and 217? Is it what you had expected? Thinking back to earlier parts in the book, were there any clues (foreshadowing) to what Peter was building? If so, what were they?
2. How do the neighborhood kids respond to Megalopolis? On pages 218 and 219, the characters are all enjoying the city in different ways. If the author created a "real world" view of this scene, what do you think it would look like? Would the kids actually be sitting in a cardboard train? Or would they be sitting on the grass with their eyes closed imagining it?
3. Who is wearing a dragon monster costume? What does he do to the city? Why do you think he wanted to destroy it?

4. Initially, Peter feels very sad about the destruction, but then he gets an idea. What do you think he will do? Have you ever had a moment of sadness or disappointment become the spark for something great to happen? How did something that seemed bad end up leading to something good in the end?
5. Do you think Roy learned anything from his encounter with the teen “cool kids”? Why or why not?
6. How would you describe the color scheme and the style of the illustrations on pages 226 and 227?
7. What would you say if asked to give a play-by-play description of the battle depicted on pages 226 and 227? Could you tell who was winning before the teen “cool kids” showed up?
8. What brings Peter and Roy together in the end? What do you think this chapter reveals about one possible way to change a bully into a friend? Do you think it’s realistic to believe that all bullies will one day become a friend? Why or why not?
9. Can you spot these graphic novel elements in this chapter: motion lines; sound effects; a panel with a bird’s-eye view; a panel with a close-up view; and a splash page?
10. What questions do you have about anything you read in this chapter?

### **Write and Respond**

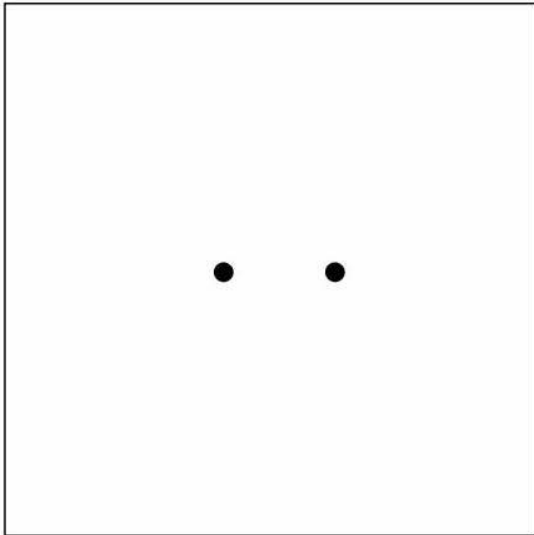
1. Write an acrostic poem about MEGALOPOLIS. An acrostic poem is the kind where you write each letter of a word on a separate line and then think of a word or phrase that begins with each letter. For example: CITY → **C**ars drive everywhere; **I**nteresting places to visit; **T**rees line the streets; **Y**oung people walk to school.
2. Write about the city where you live. What do you love about it? What do you wish were different?

### **Quick Activity for This Chapter: The Battle of Megalopolis**

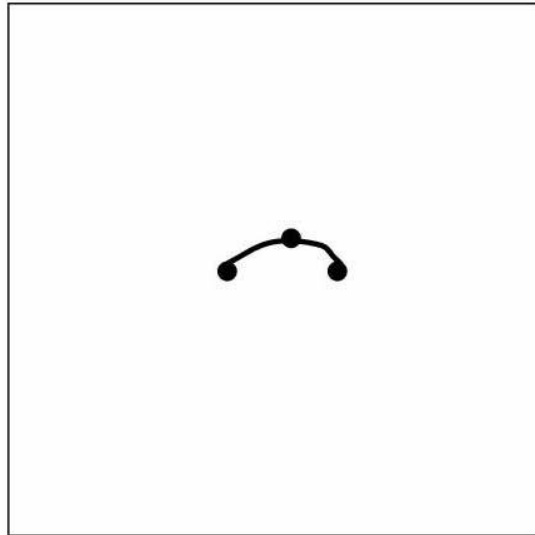
Peter and Roy battle each other in Megalopolis by throwing superhero style punches while wearing their cardboard battle costumes. What if they had battled on paper instead? The game of Sprouts is a battle of lines and spots for two players armed only with paper, pencils and clever thinking. To begin, players draw 2 or more spots on a piece of paper (encourage students to experiment with the number of spots once they master the basics of the game). One player connects two spots with a line, or one spot to itself (creating a loop), and then draws a spot on the line he/she has just drawn. Then it is the other player’s turn to add a line and spot. The rules: 1. Any new line cannot cross another line or pass through a spot; 2. No more than three lines can emerge from any spot. Players take turns adding lines and spots until no more moves are possible. The last player to make a successful move is the winner. The game of Sprouts was invented in 1967 by two mathematicians John H. Conway and Michael S. Paterson, when they were both at the University of Cambridge in the UK. Learn more about the game here:

<https://nrich.maths.org/2413>

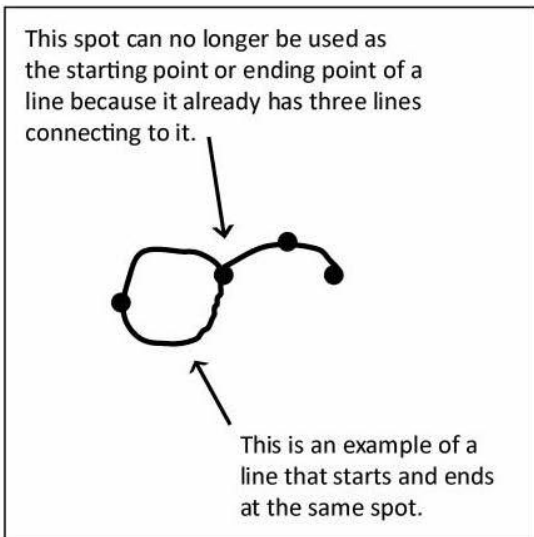
(See game diagram on next page.)



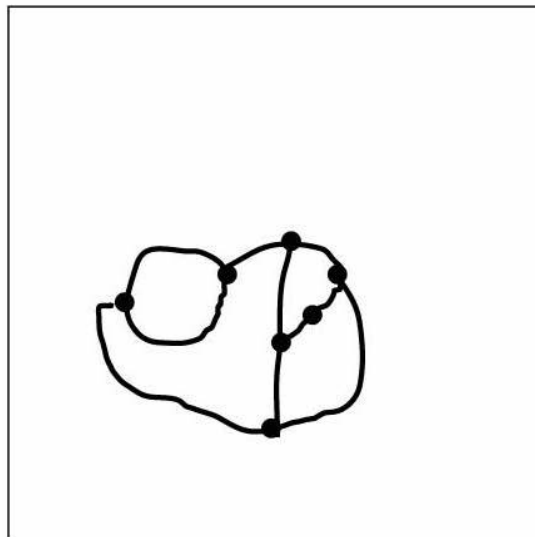
A 2-spot Sprout game board



To Play: Players take turns drawing lines that connect 2 spots. In the middle of the new line, the player adds a new spot.



Rules for adding lines: 1. No spot can have more than 3 lines connected to it. 2. Lines can start and end at the same spot. 3. Lines may not cross other lines.



The game ends when there are no more possible moves. The last person to make a move is the winner.



## [SPLASH PAGE pp. 232-233]

### Discussion Questions

1. Which characters do you see in this image? What are they doing? How are they feeling?
2. What other details do you notice in the image?
3. What additional information does this image give the reader about these characters?
4. How is this an example of foreshadowing?
5. What do you think happened next?

## Summer's End (pp. 234-274)

### Summary

The chapter opens with the neighborhood kids gathering at the Dragon's Head Inn. At the back table, Becky seems down. She shares with Alice that while working at the Inn has been fun, she feels like she has missed out on having an adventure of her own. Jack overhears her tell Alice how she wishes she could go on a quest with the other kids just once before the end of the summer. Jack confers with Connie (the Robot), Vijay (the Beast), Sam (the Goblin) and the Blob. It's clear they are hatching a plan. The next morning, Alice discovers that the dragon head decoration from the Inn is missing. Egon (Professor Everything), Amanda (the Mad Scientist) and the Scribe begin to investigate when Becky finds a map. Jack (the Sorceress) announces that the Army of Evil has taken the dragon head and everyone must split up and follow the map to face three challenges. Becky is thrilled. In the backyard of the Animal Queen, the swing set has been converted into a giant beast from which Sam squirts water at the kids below. The Gargoyle, Animal Queen and the Huntress battle the Beast and eventually reclaim the Animal Queen's kingdom. For the next challenge, the kids handily dismantle the Mega Blob's defenses. In the final challenge, the kids face a giant robot that squirts water from a hose in each hand. Their initial attempts fail and they are blasted with water. In a clever move, Becky kinks the hoses to stop the flow of water and then releases the kink when Ultra-Bot has the hoses pointing at her face. The robot is knocked over by the blast of water.

The battle ends, but where is the dragon head? As Alice fumes over the missing icon, a multi-head cardboard dragon rises from behind the nearby fence. The dragon is piloted by a team of kids and the missing dragon head has become part of the beast. Blending elements from all of their costumes, the other kids build a battle bot to face the dragon. Water shoots forth from all five smaller dragon heads leaving the battle bot broken and soggy. For a moment, it seems that evil has won, but then, Alice joins the fight using a table from the Inn as a shield to block the water. Becky grabs swords and everyone lines up behind the table. Once they are close enough to the dragon, the kids leap out from behind the shield to dismantle the dragon. In the process, the dragon head from the Inn is destroyed. The friends relive the magic of the quest and then gather for drinks and cookies at the Dragon's Head Inn, where there are now 6 dragon heads on the wall instead of just one.

The next week, the neighborhood kids gather to board the school bus. Once on board, the Scribe shows his “Cardboard Kingdom” book to his seatmate. In a two-page image, all of the fantasy characters of the Cardboard Kingdom can be seen racing alongside and riding on top of the school bus. In the final image of the book, the kids head into the school building, their shadows in the shape of their summertime alter egos.

### **Helpful Definitions**

Malfunctioned - (of a piece of machinery or equipment) failed to work properly.

Circuit - In electronics, a circuit is a path between two or more points along which an electrical current can flow.

Catapult - A machine that can throw objects at a high speed. In the past, armies used catapults to hurl heavy stones at enemy fortifications.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Why is Becky feeling disappointed about how she spent her summer? Does Alice seem to understand Becky’s feelings?
2. There are no words on page 238. How would you describe what happens in that scene? What do you think Roy said to the other kids when he arrived at the garage? Do you wish there were speech balloons or captions on this page? Why or why not?
3. Look closely at page 239; how does the author draw the reader’s attention to the missing dragon head? Can you find other examples of this technique? (p. 250)
4. It seems that Jack has found his moment in this chapter. What does he organize for the neighborhood kids to enjoy? How does Alice feel about this plan? How does Becky feel?
5. What are some examples of ways the kids work together as they face the three challenges? Does it look like everyone is enjoying the quest?
6. For some readers, part of the fun of a book is imagining yourself in the action. How would you have completed each of the challenges?
7. What prompts Sophie to say, “Maybe evil has won!” (p. 260)? Have you ever experienced a time when you thought about giving up? How did you push through? In the story, what helps the kids push through?
8. Were you surprised when Alice came back with the table and joined the battle? Why or why not? What previous parts of the story support your opinion?
9. Who was underneath the final dragon head? Were you surprised to see that it was Peter and Roy? Thinking back over the entire story, what examples can you find of how relationships between characters have changed over the course of the book?
10. What details do you notice about the scene at the Dragon’s Head Inn on pages 268 and 269? What makes this the perfect place to celebrate a successful quest?
11. In the final pages of the book, the fantasy versions of the Cardboard Kingdom characters can be seen alongside and on top of the school bus. What do you think the author is trying to show with this image? What’s the message? Similarly, we see the Cardboard Kingdom heroes in the shadows of the kids as they walk into school (p. 274). How do your summertime experiences stay with you even when school starts?

### End-of-Book Wrap-Up Discussion Questions

1. Thinking about the whole book, what brought all the kids together over the course of the summer? Was it the cardboard or something else? How do you think people become friends even if they look different and have different backstories? Are there ways we're all the same?
2. Throughout the book, how has the author visually distinguished between the layers of reality and fantasy? What do you think of the author's choice to create visuals for the characters and stories the neighborhood kids imagine? What might the story have been like if only the cardboard versions of the costumes were shown?
3. It is said that in comics and graphic novels, the illustrations play a central role in telling the story and are not merely decorative. Do you agree with this statement? What examples can you find in the text to support your opinion?
4. If this was your first graphic novel, what did you think about this format? Are you likely to read another graphic novel? Why or why not? If you were given the choice at school to only read graphic novel versions of the assigned texts, would you choose that? Did anything surprise you about reading this type of book?
5. What was one of your favorite parts of the story? What was one of your favorite illustrations?
6. Were there any parts of the book that you didn't enjoy? Which ones and why?
7. What questions would you like to ask the class about this book?
8. What questions do you have about anything you read in this book?

### Write and Respond

1. Write a review of *The Cardboard Kingdom*. Be sure to include a short summary of what happens in the story without giving away too many surprises, plus the reasons why you did or didn't like the book.
2. Did you know that you can write to the authors of books? Write a letter to Chad Sell, author of *The Cardboard Kingdom*, telling him about a specific part of the book you enjoyed. Or, ask any questions you have about the story or the writing process.

### Quick Activity for This Chapter: Guess Who

Invite students to play a game of "Twenty Questions" to guess a classmate's favorite character from the book. Working in pairs or small groups, one student thinks of his or her favorite character in the book, but doesn't tell anyone who it is. The other student(s) may ask up to 20 yes-or-no questions to try to figure out which character it is. Students can use hashmarks on a sheet of paper to keep track of how many questions have been asked. Once the answer has been revealed, students switch roles. To extend the game, students can try other topics such as: least favorite character; the character I feel is most like me; the character I would most want to meet; or characters from other favorite TV shows, books or movies.

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# WRITE & RESPOND

## Writing Prompts for Anytime

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1. Write a short summary of the chapter you just read.
2. Choose one of the following quotes and write about what it means to you:
  - a. *Kind words do not cost much. Yet they accomplish much.* —Blaise Pascal
  - b. *When given the choice between being right or being kind, choose kind.* —Dr. Wayne W. Dyer
  - c. *Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you ever can.* —John Wesley’s Rule
  - d. *Audentes fortuna invat. (Fortune favors the bold.)* —Virgil
  - e. *Have no friends not equal to yourself.* —Confucius
3. Write a letter to one of the characters in the book. What questions would you want to ask about their life?
4. Write a series of text messages telling about your week so far.
5. Draw a comic strip about the super powers you wish you had.
6. Grab the nearest book and open it to a random page. Choose a sentence from the page as the first line in a dialogue between two characters. Write what the characters say next and try to find a way for the opening sentence to make sense. If the story is wordless, write a dialogue inspired by the page you randomly selected.
7. Compose a haiku about what you see around you. A haiku is a poem that has three lines. The first line and third line have 5 syllables, while the second line has 7 syllables.
8. Design your own code. Then, use your code to write a positive message for a friend to decode.
9. Write a description of the room where you are right now. Try to include as many details as you can.
10. Write a list of twenty great things about summertime or a topic of your choice.
11. Divide your paper into 3 sections and write a different emotion in each section (happy, sad, scared, angry, excited, disappointed, etc.). Next, make a list of times when you feel that emotion. For example: ANGRY – when my sister takes something from my room; when I miss a free throw in a basketball game; when I can’t find my shoes and it’s time to leave for school.
12. A limerick is a type of rhyming poem that has 5 lines and usually humorous. Read this poem by the famous writer Edward Lear and then try making your own limerick.

There was an Old Man with a flute,  
A serpent ran into his boot;  
But he played day and night,  
Till the serpent took flight,  
And avoided that man with a flute.

-Edward Lear

13. An ode is a type of poem that honors a certain person or thing. For example, an ode to summer might include mention of the glistening swimming pools and sweet popsicles that are common during that time of year. Compose a short ode to your favorite possession. What makes it so great? Below is an example of an ode.

**This Pen**

This pen is perfect,  
Just right for my size.  
This pen is indeed perfect,  
But there is something I despise.  
The lid is cracked and  
The ink is running low.  
The pen is a little crooked.  
I guess it is a little old, but  
Otherwise everything is fine.  
This pen is my favorite  
With its words still engraved  
And its healthy green glow.

- By Stephen, 3rd Grade

Source: <https://witsblog.org/2010/12/06/this-pen/>

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# CREATE, DO & EXPLORE

## Activities to Bring the Book to Life

### STEM, Art, English Language Arts and More

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## Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM)

### Calculate the Speed of Light with a Microwave

**Suggested Chapter Pairing:** The Professor's Library

**Materials:** 1 Microwave, 1 plate, 1 bar of plain chocolate, 1 ruler with centimeter markings, 1 calculator/online calculator

**Online Resource:** See video instructions and learn more about the science of light waves at [www.artsandvenues.com/YOBOD](http://www.artsandvenues.com/YOBOD).

**Background:** As the group of friends act out an epic battle scene, Egon calls out, "You can't superpunch a dragon at the speed of light! Physics won't allow it!" (p. 107)

**Instructions:** It's true that light travels faster than a fist ever could. In fact, the speed of light is 299,792,458 meters/second (186,000 miles/second). Students can calculate the speed of light using a microwave, a chocolate bar and a ruler. How? Light travels as a wave and its speed can be calculated by finding the length of the wave and multiplying that by its frequency (the number of times it goes up and down per second). Microwaves are a type of electromagnetic radiation, just like light waves, so microwaves also travel at the speed of light. Here's what to do:

1. ADJUST MICROWAVE - Take the turntable out of the microwave so the chocolate bar will stay in one place.
2. ADD CHOCOLATE - Unwrap a chocolate bar. Put it on a plate and put the plate in the microwave.
3. MELT - Heat the chocolate until it starts to melt in a few spots. This should only take 15-20 seconds.
4. MEASURE - Carefully take the plate out of the microwave. It will be hot! Using a ruler, measure the distance in centimeters between two melted spots. This distance

represents  $\frac{1}{2}$  a wavelength. Multiply this distance by 2 to get a full wavelength in centimeters. Convert this measurement from centimeters to meters by dividing it by 100.

Wavelength in centimeters =  $\frac{\text{distance between melted spots in centimeters}}{\text{distance between melted spots in centimeters}} \times 2$

Wavelength in meters =  $\frac{\text{wavelength in centimeters}}{100}$

5. CALCULATE - The speed of light in meters per second = wavelength in meters x frequency in hertz. Most standard microwaves have a frequency of 2.45 gigahertz. This means that the microwaves move up and down 2.45 billion (2,450,000,000) times per second. Check the back or side of your microwave to find its frequency. For wavelength, use the number you found in step 4. Now calculate! Did you get a number close to the speed of light listed above?

Speed of Light =  $\frac{\text{wavelength from step 4}}{\text{wavelength from step 4}} \times \frac{2,450,000,000}{\text{average microwave frequency}}$

## Make a Robot Arm

**Suggested Chapter Pairing:** The Professor's Library

**Materials (for each robot arm):** A piece of corrugated cardboard (from a shipping box) that is a bit longer than the length of your hand and forearm, scissors, 3 plastic straws, a pencil, duct tape and string.

**Online Resource:** Find video instructions for building a robot arm at [www.artsandvenues.com/YOBOD](http://www.artsandvenues.com/YOBOD).

**Background:** In *The Cardboard Kingdom*, Connie creates a full robot costume out of cardboard.

**Instructions:** Working with small groups of students, guide students in following these steps to create a cardboard robot arm. Sharing the video instructions listed above or bringing in a completed model will help students envision the project more quickly.

1. DRAW - Outline a robot arm with three fingers, a thumb and forearm on the cardboard. The hand should be larger than yours and the forearm should be longer than yours. Cut out the arm.
2. BEND - Notice how your fingers are jointed creating three segments to each finger. Bend the cardboard fingers to create three segments. Bend the cardboard thumb to create two segments.
3. MAKE STRAPS - Take a piece of duct tape that is a little longer than your arm is wide and fold it in half the long way so the sticky sides are touching. Use this strip of tape to create an arm strap near the bottom of the robot arm. Attach the strap with duct tape.

Use a second piece of folded tape that is a little longer than your palm is wide to create a hand strap about 6" from the base of the robot fingers. Attach strap with duct tape.

4. ATTACH TUBES - Cut the straws into 16 pieces: 1 piece for each segment of the fingers and 4 longer tubes to attach at the base of the fingers. Use duct tape to attach 1 straw piece to each finger and thumb segment, plus 1 longer straw piece to the palm below each finger and thumb.
5. ADD STRINGS - Cut 4 pieces of string, each 16" long. For each finger, thread a piece of string through the straw at the tip of the finger and tie it to secure. Then thread the other end of the string through the remaining straws. Tie a loop in the loose end of the string for your finger.
6. ADJUST AND EXPERIMENT – Put your arm through the armband and position your hand so the hand strap is across your palm. Loop the strings over your fingers and adjust the length of the strings if needed. Make the robot hand open and close by pulling on the strings!

## City in a Box

**Suggested Chapter Pairing:** Megalopolis

**Materials:** A shoe box or clean pizza box for each student (this project can also be done in small groups; or as an entire class to create one large diorama), paper, thin cardboard from cereal boxes etc., markers, tape and scissors

**Background:** Under the cover of a giant tarp, Peter constructs a futuristic city with skyscrapers, hover cars and an elevated train (pp 216-217).

**Instructions:** Begin with a discussion about the unique features of Denver (or nearest city). What buildings do students notice? What well-known places have they visited with school or their family? Create a list of city landmarks. Next, invite students to imagine ways that life in Denver might be different in the future. Create a list of possible ideas for transportation, housing and the very look and feel of future Denver. *How will new technology change the way buildings look? How will climate change impact the way people live and the green spaces in the city? Will people still drive cars? Do you think certain parts of Denver like the capitol building or the iconic "cash register" building will stay the same? What might your house look like?* Next, invite students to create their vision of Denver's future in a shoe box or clean pizza box using cardboard, paper, found objects, tape and markers. Encourage students to incorporate a Denver landmark or two. Once the dioramas are complete, divide students into small groups and invite each student to take a turn presenting their vision for Denver's future to the group and then answer questions.



## DIY Furniture

**Suggested Chapter Pairing:** Any

**Materials:** Corrugated cardboard, scissors and duct tape/shipping tape/masking tape

**Online Resources:**

[VIDEO] This PBS Kids Cardboard construction video explores the properties of corrugated cardboard and shows how to build a simple stool (4:26):

<https://pbskids.org/designsquad/topbuilder/16/>

**Background:** The kids in *The Cardboard Kingdom* use cardboard to create everything they need for their fantastic adventures.

**Instructions:** Share with students that cardboard can be pretty stiff if you learn to use its corrugated nature to your advantage. The word “corrugated” refers to the wavy layer of peaks and valleys in the middle of some types of cardboard. Corrugated cardboard is common in shipping boxes because the corrugated layer adds strength to the box so it doesn’t crush as easily. Invite students to experiment with a piece of corrugated cardboard. Ask: *How easily does it fold up if the corrugated edge is facing up? What about if the edge is to the side? How could you use the direction of the corrugation to help you make a stool that’s strong enough to sit on?* If desired, show students the short video listed above, which demonstrates using corrugated cardboard to build a simple stool. Next, divide students into pairs or small group and have them use corrugated cardboard, tape and scissors to build a piece of cardboard furniture they can sit on.

## Meet a Real Robot

**Suggested Chapter Pairing:** The Robot

**Materials:** Internet access

**Online Resources:** Online interface with NASA’s ROV-E robot: <https://mars.nasa.gov/ask-nasa-mars/#/>

**Background:** Connie creates a robot costume and invites the neighborhood kids over for her robot-themed birthday party.

**Instructions:** Begin by inviting students to share what they already know about robots. Share that robots are used in many fields to help humans grow food, make products, get from one place to another, treat illnesses and even explore distant planets. In 2015, NASA created ROV-E, a real robot with a computer brain that helps people learn about Mars. Visit <https://mars.nasa.gov/ask-nasa-mars/#/> and invite students to ask ROV-E their questions!

# Visual Arts

## Cardboard Movie Magic

**Suggested Chapter Pairings:** The Alchemist and the Blacksmith; The Prince; Megalopolis; The Mad Scientist

**Materials:** Cardboard of all types and sizes, scissors, duct tape/shipping tape/masking tape, markers and other crafting supplies

**Online Resource:** A family uses cardboard to recreate movie scenes:  
<https://cardboardboxoffice.com>

**Background:** Using cardboard and their imaginations, the kids in *The Cardboard Kingdom* create exciting locations for their adventures like castles, laboratories and skyscraper-filled cities.

**Instructions:** Invite students to work in small groups to recreate a favorite scene from a movie. Have them use cardboard to create set pieces and props. Once the movie sets are complete, have groups take turns acting out a scene for the rest of the group. Can the audience guess the movie?

## My Inner Superhero

**Suggested Chapter Pairing:** Any

**Materials:** Paper, pencils, cardboard of all types and sizes, recycled objects (yogurt tubs, bottle caps, etc.), scissors, duct tape/shipping tape/masking tape, markers and other crafting supplies

**Background:** The kids in *The Cardboard Kingdom* use costumes to make their inner superhero visible to the world, whether that's a scientist, scribe or beast. Jack explains that the Sorceress is "what I want to be...magical. And Powerful. And amazing" (p. 188).

**Instructions:** Ask students to consider the following questions: *What about yourself makes you feel the most proud? Accomplished? Wonderful? Awesome?* Next, have them consider how they could show these qualities in a visual form. An example could be creating a shield covered in black and white hexagons if a student feels most awesome when playing soccer. Have students sketch out their superhero costume idea and then bring it to life using cardboard, tape, paint, markers and recycled objects!

## The Art of Action

**Suggested Chapter Pairing:** Any

**Materials:** A camera/smartphone and a projector (optional), paper and pencils

**Online Resources:** Tips for Creating Dynamic Poses Using Gesture Drawing with Video (5:47): <https://design.tutsplus.com/tutorials/quick-tip-create-dynamic-poses-using-gesture-drawing--cms-23890>

**Background:** In graphic novels and comics, illustrators have to show the movement of a character in only one or two panes, which means looking carefully at what body positions best show a certain movement like running, jumping, dancing or sword fighting.

**Instructions:** Introduce the concept of “gesture drawing” using the video listed above or by sharing the following definition and artist insight:

"A gesture drawing is a work of art defined by rapid execution. Typical situations involve an artist drawing a series of poses taken by a model in a short amount of time." (Wikipedia)

“It's an important skill to develop because you learn to capture motion very quickly, which is helpful for creating interesting and dynamic artwork. Gesture drawing can really help you capture a subtle motion, a look someone gives a loved one, or a fabulous action pose you see in a wrestling match that would work great in your superhero comic!” - Rowena Aitken, children’s book illustrator

To create a gesture drawing, one needs either a reference photo or a live model. If you have access to a camera and projector, the class can create reference photos by freezing the action of a classmate leaping, running or dancing, and then projecting it onto a screen for the whole class to study as they draw. If a low-tech option is more suitable, have students take turns striking an interesting pose for the class to draw. If students are feeling reluctant to volunteer to model, dividing the class into small groups or even pairs can help. Give students roughly 1 minute of drawing time per pose and remind them that these sketches are all about capturing the basic shapes and sense of movement of the person. They should be rough, unfinished and use basic shapes and lines.

At the end of the exercise, invite students to share their observations about the process and the sketches they made. Has this exercise changed the way they look at the artwork in the book?

## Cardboard Kingdom Masks

**Suggested Chapter Pairing:** Any

**Materials:** Copies of mask patterns (<https://ntanos.co.uk/collections/the-cardboard-kingdom>), empty cereal boxes or thin card stock, double-sided tape or fast drying glue, scissors, rulers, thin elastic string (string or ribbon can also be used), clear tape, markers and other decorative embellishments

**Online Resources:** Cardboard Kingdom Mask Templates and Instructions: <https://ntanos.co.uk/collections/the-cardboard-kingdom>

**Background:** Become your favorite Cardboard Kingdom character with these papercraft masks. Mask designs include: The Big Banshee, Professor Everything, The Beast, The Mad Scientist's moustache, The Gargoyle and The Sorceress's headdress

**Instructions:** Instructions for making each specific mask design can be found on the template sheets. Below are general instructions for this project that were written by the creator of these masks, Kostas Ntanos. These are provided here only to give educators an overview of the project.

1. PRINT PATTERNS - Print the patterns in full size on US Letter (8 1/2" X 11") paper
2. TRIM PAPER - Trim the extra paper roughly around each piece of the pattern so that you can arrange them on the card stock efficiently.
3. GLUE PATTERN - Glue the pieces to the card stock very thoroughly. Remember that the patterns will be on the inside of the finished project!
4. CUT OUT - Cut out the pieces along the solid outlines.
5. SCORE FOLDS - Score the fold lines using the corner of a ruler. Fold all the scored lines well to create sharp folds.
6. MATCH NUMBERS - Find the matching numbers and start connecting the pieces by sticking each flap to the edge with the same number. The flaps always go on the inside of the mask. (The sequence of numbers does not correspond to the order of gluing.)
7. ADD STRING - Make two small holes where indicated. Put a piece of string, ribbon or elastic through the holes and secure with a knot and some tape.
8. DECORATE - Decorate your creation however you want! You don't need to make everything look exactly like you see it in *The Cardboard Kingdom*.

Source: <https://ntanos.co.uk/collections/the-cardboard-kingdom>

# Collaboration and Community-Building

## Cardboard Carnival

**Suggested Chapter Pairing:** Any

**Materials:** Paper, pencils, cardboard of all types and sizes, scissors, duct tape/shipping tape/masking tape, markers and other crafting supplies

**Background:** It's through the efforts of all the kids in the neighborhood that the Cardboard Kingdom becomes a summer wonderland of fun and adventure.

**Instructions:** Life is more fun when people work together and collaborate! Invite students to create a cardboard game to share with the group at a "Cardboard Carnival." What could students make? Perhaps a cardboard ring toss, a shipping box corn hole set, an appliance box photo booth, toilet paper roll selfie props, a handheld maze in a cereal box, or even games that haven't been invented yet! Pick a date for the carnival, invite community members (if desired) and set out loads of cardboard and crafting supplies.

## Mission: Collaborate

**Suggested Chapter Pairing:** Any

**Materials (per group of 6 students):** an 8" by 8" piece of cardboard, a large plastic needle, a pencil, a ruler, scissors, yarn and tape

**Online Resource:** Find video instructions for weaving on a cardboard loom at [www.artsandvenues.com/YOBOD](http://www.artsandvenues.com/YOBOD).

Cardboard Loom How-to with Photos: <https://www.instructables.com/id/how-to-weave-on-a-cardboard-loom/>

**Background:** *The Cardboard Kingdom* was created as a collaboration between writer and illustrator Chad Sell and 10 other authors. In a recent interview, Chad observed, "You can exceed your own limits as a creator by allowing others to contribute."

**Instructions:** Invite students to work together in small groups to create a woven work of art. This project also makes a great ongoing class activity to have on hand for when students finish an activity early as it's easy to add a row or two of weaving and then put the looms away.

1. **MAKE LOOM** – Begin by marking a line that is ½” from each edge of your piece of cardboard. Starting from the ½” mark on one side, cut 1/2” deep notches every ½”. Cut the same series of notches on the opposite side of the cardboard square.
2. **STRING LOOM** - String your loom by threading a bit of yarn into the first notch on the upper left side. Leave a yarn tail of a few inches and tape it to the back of the cardboard. Carry the yarn down to the bottom left notch on the loom and then around the back to the next notch on the top. Continue until you’ve reached the last notch and then tape the loose end to the back of the cardboard.
3. **WEAVE** - Cut a piece of yarn that’s about 18” long and thread it through a plastic needle. Tie the yarn to the needle so it doesn’t slip out. Next, guide the yarn through the loom strings in an under-over pattern (under the first string, over the second, under the next, etc.). Once the needle has passed through all of the strings, pull the yarn through and leave a tail of a few inches at the end. Push the yarn up on the loom so it’s even. To make the next row, go under the strings you went over and over the strings you went under. When you get to the end of your yarn, untie the needle and leave a tail hanging off to the side.
4. **INVITE OTHERS** – Weave your piece of yarn and then invite someone else to add a piece of yarn. Take turns until the loom is full.
5. **FINISH** – Tidy up your weaving by working in the loose ends. To do this, thread the end of the loose yarn tail through the needle, insert the needle into the side of the weaving and pull the needle through. Cut off any extra yarn. You can leave your weaving on the loom, or you can take it off by cutting the strings on the backside of the loom and then tying each pair or trio of strings together with a knot. Trim the strings to make a decorative fringe and admire your collaboration!

## The Hero’s Quest

**Suggested Chapter Pairing:** Any

**Materials:** Sidewalk chalk, cardboard, dice, markers, scissors, tape, sports equipment (optional)

**Background:** On pages 50 and 51, a splash page illustration shows kids playing a life-sized fantasy board game.

**Instructions:** As a class, or working in small groups, use sidewalk chalk and/or cardboard squares to lay out a game board. Invite each student (or small group, depending on class size) to create a special square for the gameboard featuring a “hero challenge” like doing a handstand, walking backward 10 steps or doing 3 jumping jacks. Once the game is laid out, play the game in small groups, using a die to determine how many spaces a player/team can go during each turn.

## Marvelous Meringue Drops

**Suggested Chapter Pairing:** The Sorceress

**Background:** With the help of her trusty assistant, the Sorceress bakes cookies. With the power of her imagination though, the cookie dough becomes a magic potion. In the case of meringue cookies, the magic happens as egg whites turn from runny to stiff when whisked.

**Instructions:** Make these tasty cookies as a class, or bring them in as a treat.

Makes about 24

### Ingredients

3 egg whites  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar  
Food coloring, if desired  
3/4 cup sugar

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 200 degrees. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Carefully separate the egg yolks from the egg whites and place the egg whites in a large bowl. If any egg yolk is mixed in with the whites, you'll need to start over, so separate each egg in a separate bowl before adding the whites to the large bowl. An easy way to separate an egg is to carefully crack open the egg and pour it into a small bowl. Next, use your hand to gently scoop up the egg yolk, while allowing the whites to run through your fingers and remain in the bowl. Place the yolk in a separate bowl and pour the whites into your main bowl. Wash your hands after handling raw eggs!
3. Add vanilla, cream of tartar and food coloring (if desired) to egg whites; beat on medium speed until soft peaks form. Soft peaks barely hold their shape and flop over immediately when the beaters are lifted.
4. Gradually beat in sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, on high until stiff peaks form. Stiff peaks stand straight up when the beaters are lifted.
5. Spoon the meringue mixture onto the parchment paper creating 2-inch circles of batter.
6. Bake 20-25 minutes or until set and dry. Turn the oven off, but don't take the meringues out until the oven has completely cooled. Store meringues in an airtight container.

Adapted from Meringue Drops in "Simple & Delicious" March/April 2006.

# English Language Arts (ELA)

## The Story of Our Class

**Suggested Chapter Pairing:** Professor Everything

**Materials:** 2 pieces of cardboard that are at least 8 ½” by 11” (can be larger), plain paper, a hole punch and binder rings

**Background:** The scribe chronicles the adventures of the neighborhood kids over the course of the summer in the *Cardboard Kingdom*.

**Instructions:** Capture the uniqueness of your class by creating your own book using two sheets of cardboard for the covers, some sheets of plain paper, plus a hole punch and binder rings to keep everything together. Begin with a discussion about what students would most like to know about each other. Ask them to consider what aspects of a person tell you most about who they really are. Is it the way they look or the part of town they’re from? Or is it their likes and dislikes? As a group, come up with a list of questions and create a survey for everyone to fill out. Remind students that it’s okay to leave something blank if they don’t feel like sharing that information about themselves. Collect the surveys into your class book and then add self-portraits to accompany the surveys. As the summer progresses, invite students to capture important events through drawings and short articles to add to the book.

## The Legend of Me

**Suggested Chapter Pairing:** The Huntress

**Materials:** Paper and pencils

**Background:** When Shikha tracks down her brother Vijay to ask him to come inside for dinner, she puts on a headband and grabs a toy bow and arrow. When she joins the kids playing in the yard, she explains that she is “Shikha, Hunter of Brothers, Guardian of Cookies.”

**Instructions:** Invite students to consider a title they would like to have. Would they be “Sonia, Solver of Math Problems”? Or perhaps “Jose, Master Friend-Maker”? Have students work in pairs to support each other in brainstorming ideas for their own claim to fame. Next, have students write their own heroic backstory to answer the question of, “How did you become known throughout the land by this unique title?”



## Just Add Words

**Suggested Chapter Pairing:** The Sorceress

**Materials:** Paper and pencils

**Background:** Some parts of *The Cardboard Kingdom* are wordless like the book's first chapter, "The Sorceress."

**Instructions:** Working in pairs or small groups, ask students to re-read the chapter titled "The Sorceress." Next, have students take turns "reading" the chapter aloud by providing their own retelling based on the illustrations in the chapter. Remind students to include details about the setting, the appearance of the characters and the characters' feelings as they describe the story. Once students have had a chance to retell the story orally and discuss the chapter, ask them to write down their version of the story using pencils and paper.

## Dare to Be Different

**Suggested Chapter Pairing:** The Mad Scientist

**Materials:** Paper, pencils and colored pencils

**Background:** When Amanda's father reminds her that people are different for a reason and she should never be afraid to be different, Amanda vows to use her cardboard science experiments to help make her friends even more different and awesome (p. 150).

**Instructions:** Have students think of a character from a book they read this past school year. Ask: *What made that character stand out? Was there something that made him or her self-conscious? What do you think Amanda would make for that character? How would it help?* Invite students to sketch out their idea and label all the awesome features. Working in pairs, have students share their sketch with a classmate and answer questions about their inspiration and design.

## Destination: Dominican Republic

**Suggested Chapter Pairing:** The Mad Scientist

**Materials:** Paper, colored pencils, scissors, glue sticks and internet access (or informational texts from the library)

**Online Resources:**

CIA World Factbook: Dominican Republic: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/dr.html>

[VIDEO] Geography Now! Dominican Republic (9:15): <https://youtu.be/dQv3t5VCc3U>  
[VIDEO] Five(ish) Minute Dance Lesson: Merengue (5:11): <https://youtu.be/daaHi0jtHlw>  
[VIDEO] Five(ish) Minute Dance Lesson: Bachata (the National Dance of the Dominican Republic) (3:09): <https://youtu.be/moDuehwe5wk>

**Background:** Amanda comes from a Dominican American family. Her father’s stories of mythical creatures like ciguapas (mythical women of the mountains with backward feet), galipotes (shape-shifters) and la bruja (a Dominican witch) influence her ideas as she conducts cardboard experiments in her backyard laboratory.

**Instructions:** Using online resources or books from the library, invite students to learn about the island nation of the Dominican Republic and create a travel brochure covering basic facts like location, capital, population and official language plus information and photos (or drawings) of the places they’d want to visit. For even more fun and learning, use the videos listed above to teach your students the basics of Bachata and Merengue!

## Be Your Own Boss

**Suggested Chapter Pairing:** The Alchemist and the Blacksmith

**Materials:** Paper and pencils

**Background:** Alice’s drink stand offers potions to satisfy all her customers’ needs, from curing curses to refueling robots to making beasts feel more beastly.

**Instructions:** Share with students that many businesses get their start by solving a problem people have. Ask students to think about their neighborhood and people they know; what kinds of challenges can they identify? Perhaps it’s dogs that need to be walked or flowerbeds that are full of weeds. Ask them to brainstorm products or services that could help address these challenges. Next, have students write a list of 5 needs or problems they see and an idea for a business that could help address each problem.

For a more involved project, have students select one of their ideas and write more about their new business concept including a business name, a list of supplies they would need, a list of additional research questions to answer (would their business need permits? Are there any special skills they’d need to learn?) and a basic sales pitch for their business.

## Fairy Tale Rewrite

**Suggested Chapter Pairing:** The Prince

**Materials:** Paper and pencils

**Online Resources:**

Strategies for Creating Fractured Fairy Tales:

[http://www.marilynkinsella.org/Workshop%20papers/Fractured\\_Thoughts\\_workshop.htm](http://www.marilynkinsella.org/Workshop%20papers/Fractured_Thoughts_workshop.htm)

**Background:** “It’s only boring if you stick to the script!” exclaims Jack in the chapter titled “The Prince.” As the kids act out the plot of a fairy tale movie, they discover it’s actually more fun to change the story to suit their own personalities.

**Instructions:** Working together as a class, brainstorm a list of fairy tales and write it on the board. Review the essential elements of a story: setting (when and where the story takes place), characters (the main character, also called the protagonist, supporting characters and the antagonist or “enemy” of the protagonist), and plot (what happens in the story). Share with students that reinventing a classic fairy tale can be as simple as changing one element and then imagining what would happen as a result. What if Rapunzel had rescued herself? What if Cinderella lived in Denver? Invite students to rewrite a story of their choice by changing a character, the setting or even the whole plot!

## **Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**

### **The Perfect Part**

**Suggested Chapter Pairing:** The Prince

**Materials:** Paper and pencils

**Background:** As Miguel and his friends act out one of his favorite movies, “The Prince and the Pea,” the kids take turns playing different roles until eventually they find one that really suits them.

**Instructions:** As a quiet journaling activity, ask students to imagine they have been asked to play a part in their favorite movie. *Which role would be perfect for you? Why? How would this role really highlight your unique gifts and talents?* Have students write a list of 5 reasons they would give the movie director. For example, “I would be perfect for the role of the clever inventor because I like math and science and am always making toys for my friends out of cardboard.” If students feel a perfect part for them doesn’t exist in any movie they’ve seen, have them write a character description for the role they’d love to play in a future film.

# Make Your Own Journal

**Suggested Chapter Pairing:** The Bully

**Materials (for each student):** 1 empty cereal box, 10 sheets of plain paper, scissors, colorful duct tape (or other decorating supplies), markers, a pencil and a rubber band

**Online Resource:** 50 Writing Prompts for Elementary School Children:

<https://www.thoughtco.com/quick-writing-prompts-p2-2081846>

**Background:** For Roy, it's hard moving to a new neighborhood to live with his grandmother while his mom is away.

**Instructions:** Share with students that a personal journal is an effective tool many people use to help them work through their feelings and untangle challenging problems in their lives. Journals can also give students a space to quiet their minds and re-center on a busy day. To create a personal journal:

1. **CUT COVER** - First, fully open the cereal box so it lays flat as a single sheet of cardboard. Next, cut a piece of cardboard that is the same size as a sheet of paper. Trace around a sheet of paper to get the size just right.
2. **ADD PAGES** - Stack about 10 sheets of plain paper on top of the cardboard sheet and bend the whole pile in half to create a booklet. Have the cereal box side facing out for an instantly decorated cover, or have the blank side facing out and decorate it.
3. **FINISH AND DECORATE** - Bind the cover and pages together with a rubber band wrapped around the center crease of the booklet. Decorate the cover and start writing, doodling and dreaming!

## 10 Journal Writing Prompts to Try:

1. How was your day?
2. List 20 things that make you smile.
3. Do you consider yourself to be a patient person? Why or why not?
4. Write about a time you gave something of yours to someone who needed it. What did you do?
5. What is the best gift you ever received? What made it so special?
6. What is your favorite game? Is it a video game or a board game? What do you like about it?
7. If I were ruler of the universe for the day, I would \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Do you think of yourself as a team player? Why or why not?
9. List 5 people who you couldn't live without and why.
10. If I had three wishes, I would \_\_\_\_\_.

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# Resources

## Check Out These Websites and Books

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### Teaching with Graphic Novels

[VIDEO] Gene Yang: Creating a Graphic Novel (5:34)

Gene Yang, author of the graphic novel *American Born Chinese*, discusses the elements of a graphic novel/comic (panel, gutter, word balloon) and shows the process from finding an idea, to creating an outline, drawing sketches, defining characters and creating final images using a computer.

<https://youtu.be/DTkfcL8iPtc>

Wikipedia Glossary of Comics Terminology

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary\\_of\\_comics\\_terminology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_comics_terminology)

PDF Showing Comic/Graphic Novel Terms with Sample Images

<http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/comic/comicdefinitions-text.pdf>

Get Graphic!

A website where educators can learn more about graphic novels, investigate booklists and explore graphic novel news and information.

<https://www.buffalolib.org/content/get-graphic/teachers>

Graphic Novels in the Classroom, A Teacher Roundtable

A group of educators share their thoughts and best practices for using graphic novels in the classroom.

<https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/teaching-graphic-novels/>

Scholastic Guide to Using Graphic Novels with Children and Teens

A free PDF guide that includes a genre overview, discussion questions, activity ideas, booklist and more.

<https://www.scholastic.com/content/dam/teachers/lesson-plans/18-19/Graphic-Novel-Discussion-Guide-2018.pdf>

Comics & Graphic Novels: Teaching Comics

<https://libguides.spsd.org/comics/teaching>

Reading Rockets: Graphic Novels for Kids: Classroom Ideas, Booklists, and More  
<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/graphic-novels-kids-classroom-ideas-booklists-and-more>

Good Comics for Kids  
A collaborative blog filled with reviews of comics for kids.  
<http://blogs.slj.com/goodcomicsforkids/>

### **In Print**

*Teaching Graphic Novels: Practical Strategies for the Secondary ELA Classroom* by Katie Monnin

## **Making Comics and Graphic Novels**

Free online comics/storyboard maker  
<https://www.storyboardthat.com/storyboard-creator>

Smile Comic Maker  
<https://www.scholastic.com/kids/games/make-a-comic/smile-comic-maker/>

Printable Comic Strip Templates  
<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/kids-activities-and-printables/printables/writing-worksheets/create-your-own-comic-strip-template.html>

### **In Print – Best for Teens/Adults**

*Comics Confidential: Thirteen Graphic Novelists Talk Story, Craft, and Life Outside the Box*  
Compiled and Edited by Leonard S. Marcus

*Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* by Scott McCloud

*Making Comics: Storytelling Secrets of Comics, Manga and Graphic Novels* by Scott McCloud

*Drawing Words and Writing Pictures: A Definitive Course from Concept to Comic in 15 Lessons*  
by Jessica Abel and Matt Madden

*Make Comics Like the Pros: The Inside Scoop on How to Write, Draw and Sell Your Comic Books and Graphic Novels* by Greg Pak and Fred Van Lente

### **In Print – Best for Kids**

*Telling the Story in Your Graphic Novel* by Frank Lee

*The Drawing Lesson: A Graphic Novel That Teaches You How to Draw* by Mark Crilley

*Write Your Own Graphic Novel* by Natalie M. Rosinsky

## More Activity Ideas

Paper and Pencil Games  
Simple games for all ages.  
<http://www.papg.com>

Made for STEAM (STEM + Art = STEAM)  
Fun and easy STEM lesson plans that include a high-quality video demonstrating the project and explaining the science behind it.  
<https://www.madeforsteam.com>

CS Unplugged, Computer Science without a Computer  
Explore binary numbers, computer coding and the concepts behind modern day computers without needing a computer.  
<https://classic.csunplugged.org/binary-numbers/>

Hands-on Science Resources for Home and School  
A wealth of projects to try and a handy search tool to match student/class to projects based on age, time and interests.  
<https://www.sciencebuddies.org>

### In Print

*Out of the Box: 25 Cardboard Engineering Projects for Makers* by Jemma Westing

## Activity Pages

The following activity pages can be used with these Quick Activity ideas:

- Friend Finder – page 45
- Defender of the Block – page 33

# Activity Page: Friend Finder

**Instructions:** 1. Write your answer for each category below. 2. Find someone else who has the same answer and have that person sign your sheet in that section. 3. Try to find a different match for each section.

<p>1. Favorite dessert</p> <p>Your Answer: _____</p> <p>Your Match: _____</p>	<p>2. Favorite class in school</p> <p>Your Answer: _____</p> <p>Your Match: _____</p>
<p>4. Favorite color</p> <p>Your Answer: _____</p> <p>Your Match: _____</p>	<p>3. Number of siblings</p> <p>Your Answer: _____</p> <p>Your Match: _____</p>
<p>6. Type of pet (or none)</p> <p>Your Answer: _____</p> <p>Your Match: _____</p>	<p>5. Favorite sport to play</p> <p>Your Answer: _____</p> <p>Your Match: _____</p>
<p>7. Shoe size</p> <p>Your Answer: _____</p> <p>Your Match: _____</p>	<p>8. Do you like reading <i>The Cardboard Kingdom</i>?</p> <p>Your Answer: _____</p> <p>Your Match: _____</p>



# Activity Page: Defender of the Block

**Instructions:** 1. Using one of the four game boards below, players take turns drawing line segments connecting two dots. When a player completes a square with their line, they put their initial in the square as the “defender of the block” and take another turn. The game continues until all the lines between the dots have been drawn. The player with the most squares/blocks wins!

