

The Arden Theatre Company Presents...



James and the Giant Peach

By: Roald Dahl

Adapted for the Stage by: David Wood

Directed by: Whit MacLaughlin

F. Otto Haas Stage

December 10- February 8

What's Inside?

There are lots of really neat things that can be found in this study guide. Some pages will give you more information about the play and who helped make it happen; while others have some fun activities related to the adventures of James and his insect friends. Just take a look...

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Helping to Make the World of the Peach

A lot of people's hard work goes into making what you just saw or are going to see on stage. We get to see the people that say the words and run around the stage, but we don't want to forget about everyone else who helps to make the play a great success!

Cast

James.....	James Ijames
Old Green Grasshopper.....	Oberon Adjepong
Miss Spider.....	Ceal Phelan
Centipede.....	Brian Osborne
Ladybird.....	Amanda Schoonover
Earthworm.....	Frederick Andersen
Aunt Spiker.....	Harum "RJ" Ulmer
Aunt Sponge.....	Stephanie English

Creative Team

Director.....	Whit MacLaughlin
Composer.....	James Sugg
Set Designer.....	Matt Saunders
Light Designer.....	Brian J. Lilienthal
Costume Designer.....	Christal Weatherly
Props Master.....	Jonathon Ward
Stage Manager.....	Alana Wolff
Assistant Director.....	Meghan Walsh

What Happens to James and his Friends?

When the play begins, the tour guide is leading a group of tourists (the audience) around New York City. On this tour, they stop at what the tour guide calls "the wildest, and wackiest stop on our tour of New York"—the pit of the peach. The tour guide then explains that this is the home of James Henry Trotter. She knocks to see if he is home.

He is home! The tour guide leaves and James introduces all of his friends. The Old-Green-Grasshopper, Ladybird, the Earthworm, Miss Spider, and the Centipede all come out to meet the audience and then James begins his amazing story.

James is four years old and his parents are off to the store to do some shopping. James gives them a quick "Bye!" and returns to playing with his friends. The Trotters run into an enormous, angry rhinoceros that has escaped from the zoo while they are shopping. They try to run, but they are eaten by the rhinoceros.

Because his parents were gone, James is sent to live with his two aunts, Spiker and Sponge. The two aunts are very mean to James. They call him names, yell at him, and make him do all kinds of chores without ever thanking him or giving him a break. They even take his teddy bear away. The insects tell us what the aunts are really like through rhyme and song. Then the aunts begin to sing and rhyme about themselves. They exaggerate and lie about what they are really like, but are mean when they talk about each other. James tries to get them to take him to the beach, but they just yell at him and James goes off to cry.

While he is crying, an old man approaches James and shows him a bag of magical crocodile tongues. The old man tells James how to use them and that he has to keep a tight hold on the bag so he doesn't lose them and the magic. But as James is running off, he drops the bag of crocodile tongues near an old peach tree. James tries to grab them, but they all dive into the ground too quickly.

During the night, the crocodile tongues begin to work their magic on the old peach tree. Aunt Spiker comes out of the house in the morning, yells at James, and then notices a peach that wasn't there before. Aunt Sponge comes out and the two aunts argue about the peach. They finally agree and order James to get it for them. But as he starts to climb up the tree, the peach begins to grow until it touches the ground.

It stops growing, but before Aunt Sponge can start eating it, Aunt Spiker comes up with a better idea. Suddenly we see that the aunts have made the peach a big attraction and forced people to pay to see it. James, though, has been locked in his room the entire day. They let him out after everyone leaves and force him to clean up all the trash the huge crowd had made. As he is cleaning up, James is drawn to the peach. He finds an opening and goes inside. Eventually, he makes his way to the center of the peach and is met with a huge surprise!

He sees the five gigantic bugs we met earlier in the play. They all begin to talk about how hungry they are. James thinks that they want to eat him, but they correct him and tell him how glad they all are to finally see him. James meets each one and the Centipede asks James to help him with his boots. As he is doing this, the insects talk to James about how they all became so big and are now able to talk. He learns that they all got this way because they used the magic from the crocodile tongues when they all burrowed into the ground.

They decide to leave. So the Old-Green-Grasshopper sends the Centipede outside to break the peach away from the tree so they can roll away. The aunts hear all of this commotion and rush outside to see what is happening. The peach rolls towards them, but they are too slow. It rolls right over them, over the edge of the hill, through villages, and eventually into the sea.

James and the insects pick themselves up and try to reorganize the inside of the peach as they wonder where exactly they are. They decide to head up to the top of the peach to find out where they are. As they step out of the peach, they are amazed by the beauty and wonder of what they see—a bright blue sky and a vast ocean. The insects all begin to worry because none of them can swim. James comforts them, though, by explaining that the peach is floating just fine right now and a ship should come along eventually. This works and they start enjoying just being with each other on top of the peach.

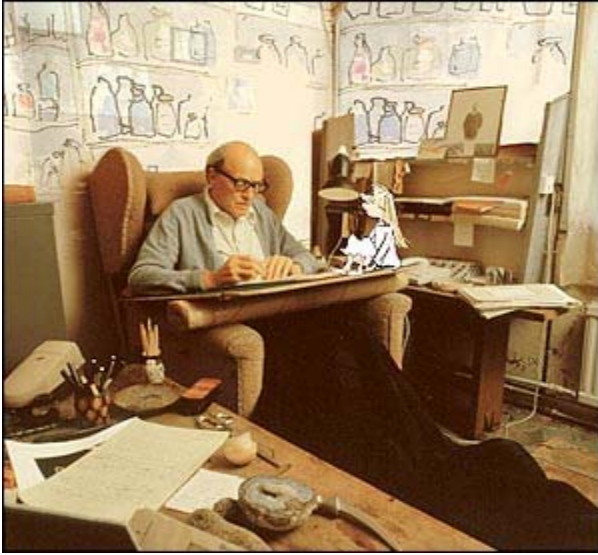
The Centipede notices something in the water. It's a shark! They think they are safe, but the sharks begin to eat the bottom of the peach. Everyone panics, but James comes up with an idea that involves the seagulls that have been flying around them. James uses the Earthworm as bait and Miss Spider's web as rope to capture the seagulls. They capture enough and are lifted out of the water. They all get some rest, and the peach continues to float through the sky.

They get hungry and begin to celebrate, but the Centipede falls off of the peach. James is quick on his feet and has Miss Spider spin him a lifeline so that he can dive down to save the Centipede. James finds the Centipede and grabs him just as a giant Octopus appears. James has to fight off the octopus. He manages to get away and the other insects pull them both out of the water.

Then one morning, as they are enjoying some peach juice, the Centipede notices land ahead. They are almost to America! The Centipede begins to chew through some of the ropes so that they can drop down slowly to the ground, but an airplane flies by and chops all of the ropes. The peach begins to fall, but the audience helps it stay up by blowing very hard together. This works and the peach lands on top of the Empire State Building.

James then tells the audience what happened after they landed. They were helped down by the Fire Department. And after one child asked to have a bite of the peach, James encouraged all the children to have a bite. They kept eating until only the pit remained. Then they moved the pit to Central Park, where it is now. James is now very happy because he has so many friends.

The Magical Mind of Roald Dahl



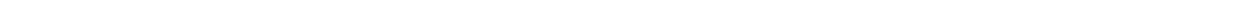
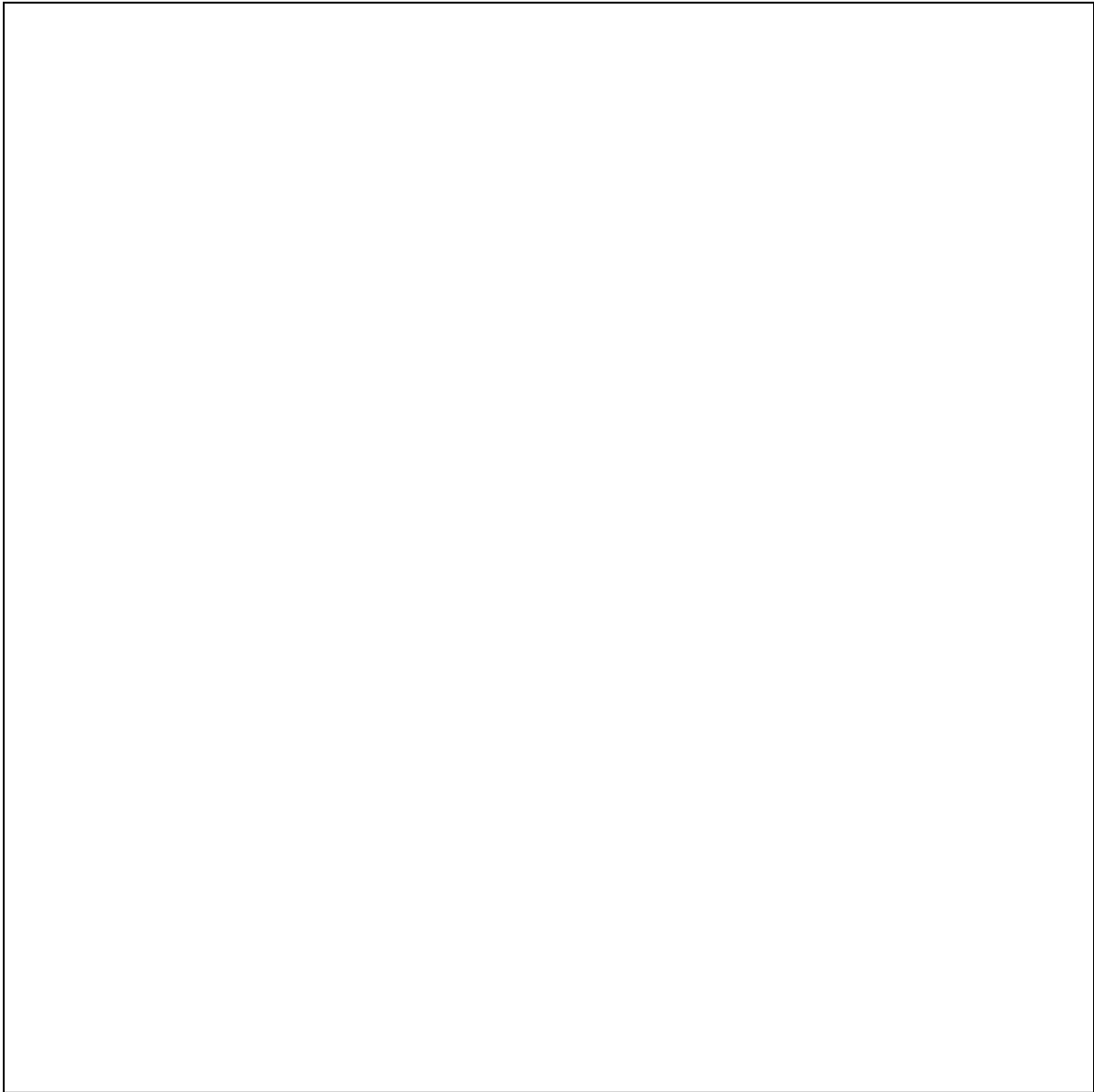
Roald Dahl writing in his hut

Roald Dahl was born in Llandaff, Wales on September 13, 1916. Roald had a big family. He lived with his parents, Harald and Sofie, and four sisters. When he was four, Roald's father and older sister both died. He was sad, but his mother raised him and his sisters with a lot of love. In fact, in his later book The Witches, the character of the grandmother was inspired by Roald's mother. This situation is very different from James in James and the Giant Peach. When his parents die—also when he is four—he is left with very mean aunts.

Roald loved stories from a very young age. When he was younger, he was particularly interested in adventure stories. He was also particularly interested in sweets. Because Roald did not do very well in the classroom, his fondest memories of childhood were linked to his visits to local sweet shops. These visits were the early inspiration for his later book Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. He didn't always do well in school, but he continued to read and think of more stories—usually inspired by his actual life.

He kept these stories in his head, though, until the 1960's. It was then that he started to realize that the bedtime stories he was telling his own children would make really good books for other children to read and enjoy. So he started working. After a little bit, he came out with his first children's book—James and the Giant Peach. Before this time, he had only been writing for adults, which isn't nearly as much fun and rewarding! He also liked writing for children because it was a challenge for him. If you can write a book that keeps the attention of a child, then you know you've told a really great story. Roald Dahl wrote many more children's books such as The BFG, The Twits, and Matilda. These books were eventually translated into over 34 languages and have brought joy to children throughout the world. As Roald himself once said "Books shouldn't be daunting, they should be funny, exciting, and wonderful." On November 23, 1990, Roald Dahl passed away while writing two more books.

Roald Dahl turned bedtime stories that he told his children into some really good books for other children. Think about some bedtime stories that you have heard. You know what your story is in words, but what would it be like in pictures? Pick your favorite one and draw pictures of the characters and what happens. Don't forget to tell us what's happening in your picture.



From Book to Stage

As we just learned, James and the Giant Peach was actually a children's book written many years ago. So how did a book written years ago end up being a play on stage for you to see? Well, a man named David Wood did what is called an adaptation. When you go from book to stage, you take the characters and the situations they are in from a book and write a play very similar to that. This is what David Wood did with James and the Giant Peach. He read the book many times and then he wrote a play that best represented the book. And most people would say that he did a pretty good job!

David Wood was born in Surrey, England on February 21, 1944. At the age of 6, David got hooked on theater after he saw Peter Pan with his family. He began to perform magic acts for younger children as a teen. He learned a lot about children's theatre from that and used those skills to write over 45 children's plays—many of which are adaptations from popular books. He has also written over 20 children's books and 15 full length plays. He has also worked as an actor, director, and songwriter. He stays pretty busy, doesn't he?

His first children's play was performed in 1967. Over the years, he continued to write for children. Although James and the Giant Peach was Roald Dahl's first children's story, it wasn't adapted by David Wood until 2001. David now lives in Wimbledon, South London and continues to write for children.

David Wood on a school visit



Busy Insects

Match James' friends with the jobs they now have in New York City

Old Green Grasshopper



VP of Sales for high-class boots and shoes

Miss Spider



Violin player for the New York Philharmonic

Earthworm



Works on 5th Avenue

Ladybird



Advertises face cream

Centipede



Runs a rope factory

Why would the insects choose to work these jobs?
Would they be good at these jobs?

What's your dream job?

Rhyme Much?

This play has a lot of rhyming in it. Rhyming is when the end of sentences or phrases have the same sound. For example "I like red. I go to bed." would be a rhyme. Much of the rhyming is used to describe certain characters. It can be describing what they look like or how they act. Just like David Wood did when he wrote this play, I want you to write a rhyme that describes you. I'll go first and then you can give it a try.

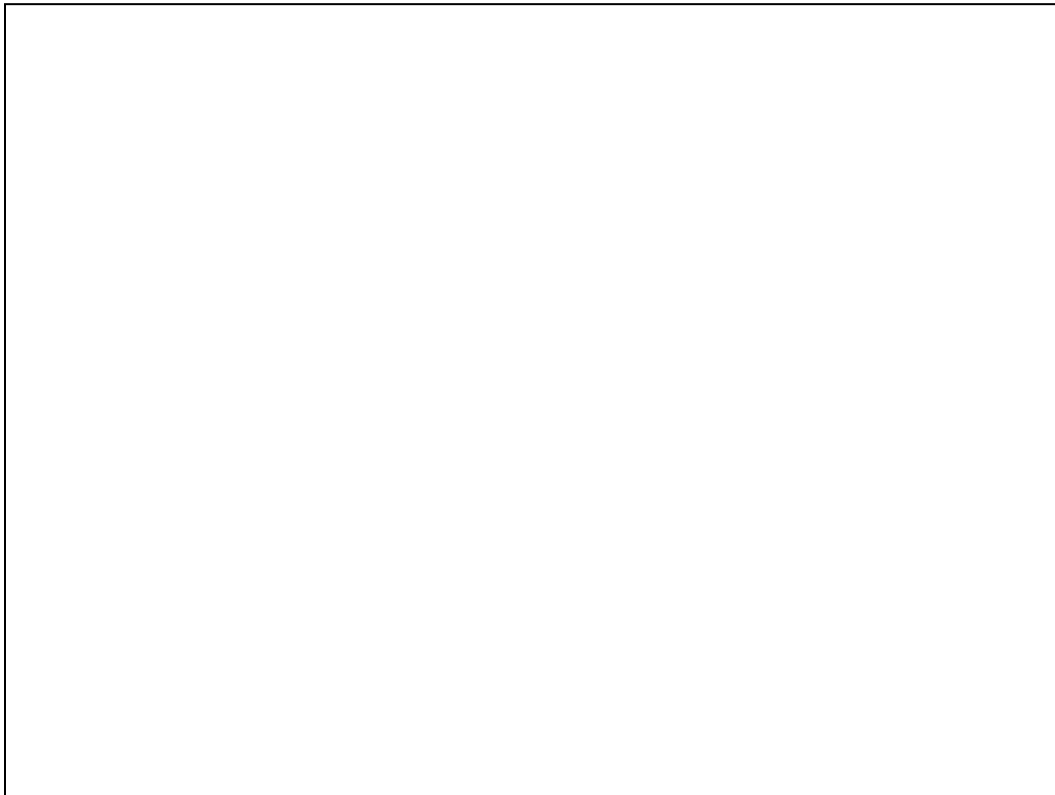
My thick blonde hair is as light as the sun.
Its messy appearance shows my passion for fun.
Travel down south to find my blue eyes.
A little bit further to get some words from the wise.
But enough about me; I'm as boring as poo.
I'm eager to hear so much more about you!



I'll Take Some Crocodile Tongues!

When James gets the crocodile tongues from the old man, it is a very important part of the story. Without them, the peach would never grow and the he would never make friends with the insects and escape his aunts. For such an important part, isn't it weird that we don't get to actually see the crocodile tongues?

Actually, that is a very purposeful decision made by the writer and director. By doing this, the audience—you—gets to **IMAGINE** what you think they look like and because of that you are more interested in them because they become a very personal part of your experience of seeing the play. So now it's your time to let us know what you saw. Pretend like the Old Man opens the bag so that you can look inside! In the box below, draw what you see!



Searching...

See how many words from the list below you can find in the word search.

C I E X Q K M Q Q N D O V W E
S E C T R H I N O C E R O S A
L J N V P S K I X R P V I C R
L T V T P E T Z E E L H R N T
U P I O I A A D R P N O H A H
G Y N A T P A C H P C D Y M W
A G Y P B R E S H O F V M D O
E L A I A C I D D H Y H E L R
S D F P G R T I E S Z X D O M
A L H A D M L S X S Q L P S G
U A C H O E F E K A G M D J K
N A T T A H N A M R A N Q A W
N D O C T O P U S G E S T O K
H I R S Y R K R I I X P P H H
R A L I P K E C R M L I C S T
Q Q T O B I L F T N I K A K I
X S S G I Y D U T Q O E Z G P
H J O Y I V D E H W U R N O R
S B D L G E C A R C S P N W N
J A M E S Y H L L S K R A H S



ADAPTATION

BAIT

CENTIPEDE

CROCODILE

DAHL

EARTHWORM

FRIENDS

GRASSHOPPER

JAMES

LADYBIRD

MAGIC

MANHATTAN

OCTOPUS

OLD MAN

PARADE

PEACH

PIT

RHINOCEROS

RHYME

SEAGULLS

SHARKS

SPIDER

SPIKER

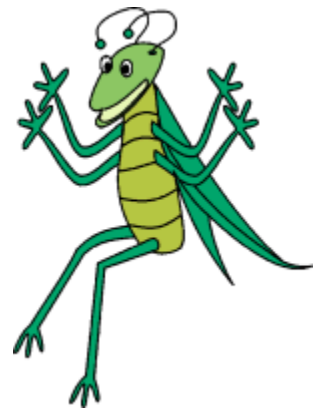
SPONGE

VIOLIN

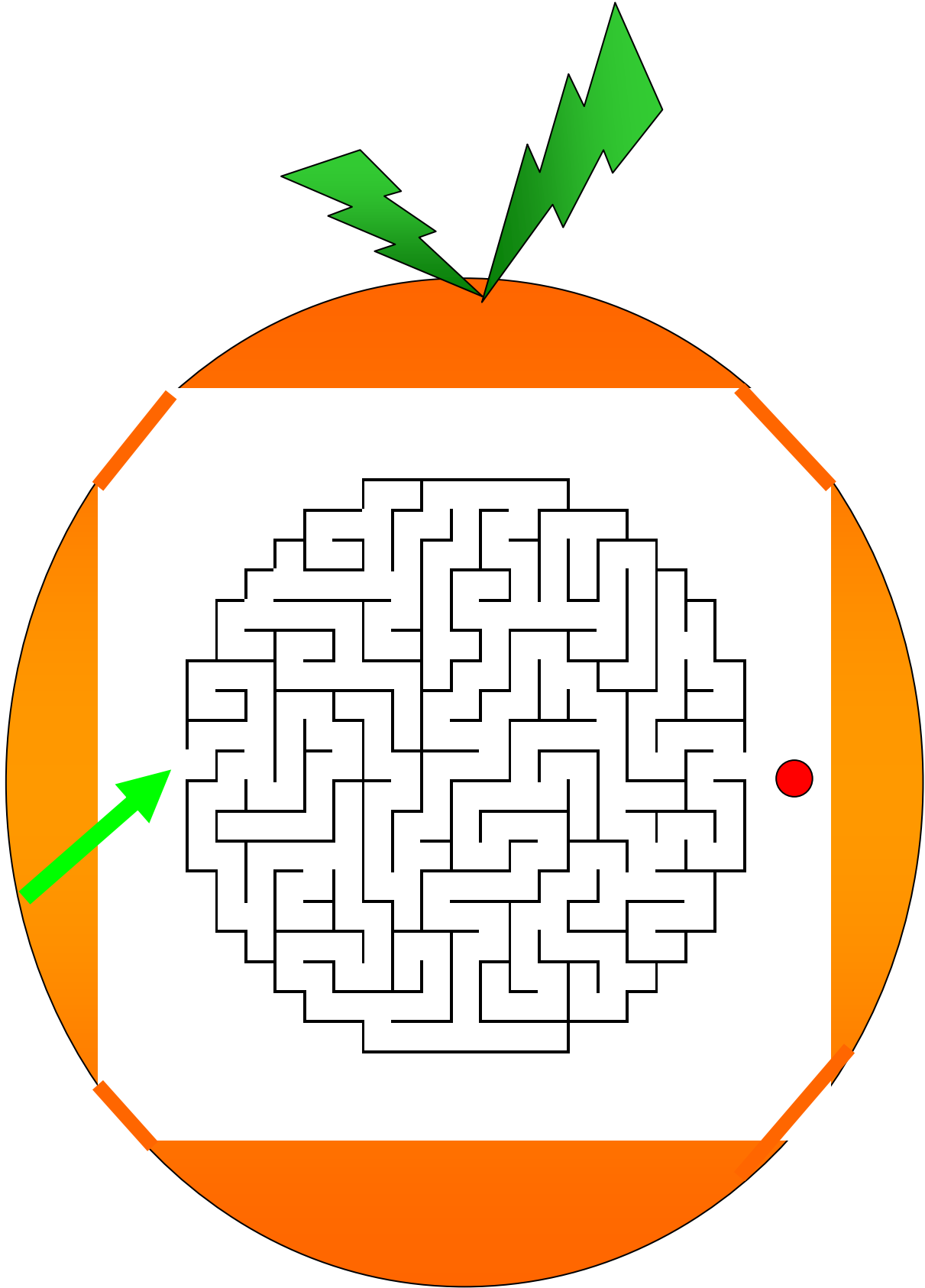


The Most Exciting Day!

When people came to visit the peach, a lot of them said that it was one of the most exciting days of their lives! After all, it isn't everyday that you see a huge peach, right? And I'm guessing that you have never seen a giant peach. But that doesn't mean that you haven't had an exciting day! So why don't you tell me about it? Use the rest of this page to draw or write about a day that was very exciting!



Exploring the Peach



Make your way through the peach like James did!

Can They Really do That?

James and his insect friends work very well together to get through some tough times in the story. This is easy to do because they are the same size and can talk to each other, but what about in real life? Do the insects that James meet work with humans even when they're very small? Yes. Insects help us all out probably more than you would think. Here are some facts about how James' friends help you and me every day.



Grasshoppers and spiders are sometimes eaten as good sources of protein.



Centipedes, spiders, ladybugs, and grasshoppers are all insectivores (this means that they eat other insects). Many insects reproduce so quickly that if they all were to survive, they could literally bury the earth in a season! So it's very useful to have other insects to keep the numbers under control.



Gardeners are particularly fond of ladybugs because they eat the pests that can ruin their crops. In fact, the Mall of America releases thousands of ladybugs into its indoor park as a natural means of pest control for its gardens.



Many scientists are researching the possibility of using spider venom in creating medicines and pesticides (chemicals that kill garden pests).



When earthworms move around, it aerates and mixes the soil. This helps plants to grow bigger and better.



Earthworms are able to change dead leaves and other natural debris into rich humus, which makes the soil better for growing plants and food.

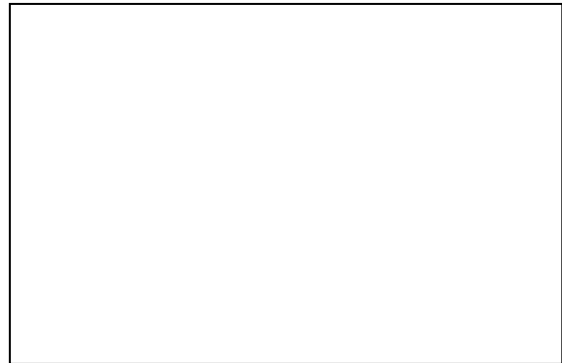
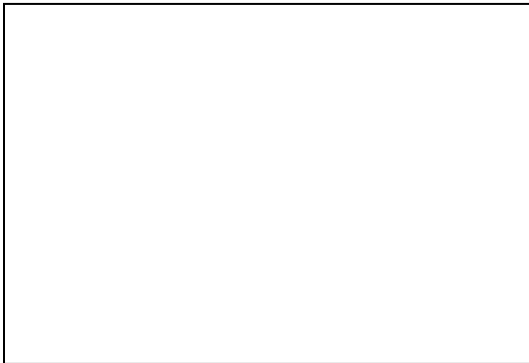
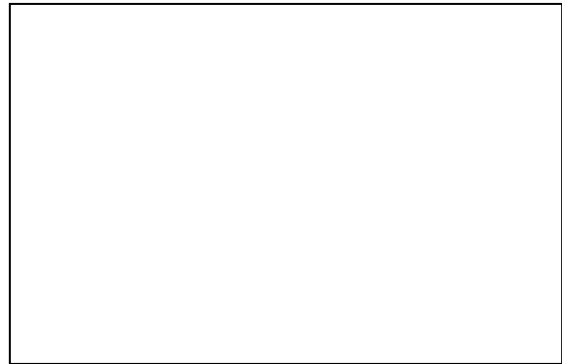
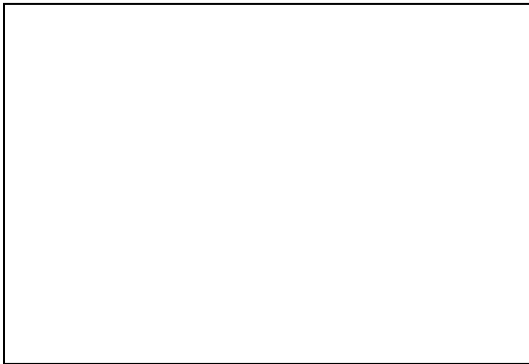


Centipedes are a main source of nutrition for many animals around the world.

How have insects helped you?

In James' Shoes

Imagine you are James. What if the flock of birds wanted to eat the peach instead of the school of sharks? Create a short comic that shows what you would do to help you and your friends. Don't forget the title.



Now it's Your Turn...

<p>Pick your favorite character:</p> <p>_____</p>	+	<p>Pick your least favorite character:</p> <p>_____</p>
↓		
<p>Imagine they went somewhere together. Where should they go?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	→	<p>Every place looks a certain way. What does this place look like? Be specific.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
←		
<p>We rarely leave home empty-handed. What kinds of things did these characters bring?</p> <p>1: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>2: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	→	<p>Explain what these characters are wearing:</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
↓		
<p>Write down sounds you might hear: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>		

Let's Talk About Some Things

Here are some questions that should get you thinking about the play and the story a little bit more. These are good to talk about in a group or to write out what you think.

1. How would you feel if you had to live with Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker? Why?
2. What fruit or vegetable would you like to make gigantic? Would it be good to live in? Why?
3. Have you ever seen a news story about large food? What was it about?
4. What insect would you like to spend the day with? Why?
5. Did you like the music and the animation in the play? Would it have been the same if there wasn't any music or animation?
6. Did the actors' costumes (what they were wearing) make them really look like insects? Or did you have to use your imagination a little bit?
7. What do you think would have happened if James had actually swallowed the crocodile tongues?

