Based on Lyle, Lyle Crocodile
and The House on East 88th Street

By Bernard Waber

Music by
Richard Gray

Adapted for the Stage by
Kevin Kling

2014

This study guide is also available online at arvadacenter.org/education/study-guides
Greetings and welcome to *Lyle the Crocodile*

**Play for Young Audiences based on books by Bernard Waber**

**Music by Richard Gray and adapted for the Stage by Kevin Kling**

This study guide provides ideas for turning a day at the theater into an interactive educational experience. It includes information about the plot, good audience behavior, important words to know about theater, and reproducible pages for helping students better understand the story. Ideas presented in this study guide provide excellent strategies for extending and developing vocabulary and comprehension in all content areas. We hope you find the activities transferable across your curriculum. In addition, the guide provides information and classroom connections. This guide will help prepare students for the performance and then facilitate reflection afterwards.

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Audience 101

As members of the audience, you play an important part in the success of a theatrical performance. A live theater performance is different from watching television at home or a movie in a cinema. Since it is a live performance, it cannot be stopped and restarted. Audience members should laugh, cheer, clap and really enjoy the performance, but there are a few rules that need to be followed. Please review the following theater etiquette with your students prior to your visit:

• Food, drinks, candy and gum chewing are not permitted in the theater.

• Do not talk, whisper, sing or hum during the performance unless encouraged by the actors on stage.

• Keep feet on the floor, not on the seats.

• Performers appreciate enthusiastic applause, but not whistling or shouting.

• No photography or videotape recording of any kind.

• Please turn off all cell phones.

Theater Words to Know

Backstage - the part of a theater which is not seen by the audience, including the dressing rooms, wings and the green room

Blocking - the instructions that actors use to know exactly where they are supposed to be on stage at all times

Box Office - the place that sells tickets to a performance

Cast - the people who perform in a show

Choreographer - the person who creates dances and arranges movements for a musical

Control Booth - the place in a theater from which all the sound and lights are controlled

Crew - all the people who work together on a show except the cast

Cue - signals that are given to both the actors, the crew, the musicians and any others working on a show

Director - the person who provides the vision of how a show should be presented, who works with the actors on their roles, develops the blocking, and is in charge of the rehearsals

Green Room - a place for the performers to relax while waiting to go on stage (it is not always painted green! 😊)

Marking Out or Spike Mark - when the stage is marked with tape to show where furniture and props should be placed during the performance

Props - all the items used in a play to tell the story not including the scenery or costumes, the short forms of "Properties"

Rehearsal - the period of practice before the beginning of a show in which the actors and director work on the development of the show

Sound Effects - the noises which are produced to accompany a scene in a show, usually produced by a machine but can be produced by actors off stage

Being part of the audience is a very important job. Enjoy the show!
About the Books

- Author and Illustrator: Bernard Waber
- Play is based on *Lyle, Lyle Crocodile* and *The House on East 88th Street*
- *The House on East 88th Street* – Paperback. 48 pgs.
- Publisher – Houghton Mifflin
- Ages 4-8

Plot Summary of the Play

Mr. and Mrs. Primm move into a new house on East 88th Street in New York City. To their surprise, there is a crocodile in the bathtub! At first Mr. and Mrs. Primm are not sure if they like Lyle – after all, he IS a crocodile! The Primm’s son, Joshua, begs his parents to keep Lyle. It doesn’t take long for everyone to fall in love with Lyle. He helps young Joshua with his homework, jumps rope with the neighborhood kids, and browses through antique shops with Mrs. Primm. Much to the friendly reptile's dismay, however, he makes his neighbor's cat Loretta, crazy which in turn makes Mr. Grumps, Loretta's owner, even crazier. One day, Mrs. Primm and Lyle are shopping, when Lyle--through no real fault of his own--ends up infuriating department store big shot, Mr. Grumps, who becomes enraged that Lyle is in his store. This unfortunate situation lands the carefree reptile in the Central Park Zoo where Lyle fights back his crocodile tears. In a fun sequence of events, Lyle finds himself back with the Primms on East 88th Street, a neighborhood hero, and, startlingly, even a friend of the mistrustful cat Loretta and Mr. Grumps.
About the Author

Bernard Waber, author of the *Lyle, Lyle Crocodile* series is best known for *The House on East 88th Street Lyle* (published in 1962) and *Lyle, Lyle Crocodile* (published in 1965.) Mr. Waber began charming young readers in 1962 and his whimsical books became instant classics. They are perfectly complemented by his comical illustrations. Mr. Waber died in May 2013. He was 91 years old.

Books by Bernard Waber
Classroom Activities and Reproducibles

Below is a link with activities that provide downloadable, printable pdfs with direct connections and extensions to the Arvada Center play and to Bernard Waber’s Lyle, Lyle Crocodile books.

http://houghtonmifflinbooks.com/authors/waber/funwithlyle.shtml

This link will take you to a site with PDFs for:

Lyle Party Kit (Full PDF)

Lyle Invitation

Lyle Nametags

Lyle Maze

Lyle Word Search

Lyle All in a Name Game

Lyle Create a Story

Lyle How Many Words Can You Make Game

Lyle Crossword Puzzle

Lyle Advertising Fun

Lyle Double Vision Part 1

Lyle Double Vision Part 2
**Play Vocabulary and Phrases**

*Use realia, photos, videos, and/or examples to help students gain understanding of these terms.*

**Africa** – a continent far from New York City where BIG crocodiles live

**Authorities** – another name for the police

**The Big Apple** – another name for New York City

**Bouquet** – often describes a bunch of flowers; in the context of the play, the actor uses it to mean all the wonderful smells coming together in one place (a bunch of delightful smells).

**Broadway Show** – a play in a theater on a very famous street in New York City

**Crocodile** – large aquatic reptiles that live to be 70-100 years old; live in Africa, Asia, southern North America, South America, and Australia

**Cruel** – mean

**Dislodge** – to remove or take out

**Getting Up the Nerve** – means finding your courage to take a risk and try something even if you are scared

**Hors d’oeuvres** – small snacks, usually eaten before dinner

**Indigenous** – native to a certain country or region – the place where a plant or animal usually lives or came from; Crocodiles are NOT indigenous to New York.

**Lurking** – sneaking around

**Machete** – a large, heavy knife; The kitty has claws like machetes.

**New York City** – a very large city on the east coast in New York State

**Nitpicker** – someone who worries about even the tiniest details

**Productive day** – a worthwhile day when you feel like you accomplished many good things

**Rockefeller Center** – a very famous center with nineteen skyscrapers in the heart of New York City

**Rockettes** – precision female dance company that performs in Radio City Music Hall in New York City who are known for their high kicks that are all done exactly in perfect unison

**Silhouette** – the outline and shadow of a person or animal that is in front of a light

**Turkish Caviar** – fish eggs which are a very expensive, fancy food that Lyle loves to eat

**Vendetta** – a longstanding feud or argument
**Frayer Model**

Use any of the vocabulary words in a Frayer model as modeled below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition (in own words)</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>mean</td>
<td>When someone does mean things to you, like making fun of you</td>
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<td>Sharing toys</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td>Asking you to play with them</td>
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<tr>
<td>Playing mean tricks on you</td>
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Have groups of students complete a Frayer model (blank template included in Classroom Reproducibles, pg 16) for different vocabulary words and let students teach each other about their word.
**Vocabulary Sentence Frame**

After reading the book, insert a vocabulary word into the first blank in this sentence frame and have students work together to complete the frame and draw a picture as modeled below.

A ___silhouette__ is a ___shape___ that (is/has/does) the outline and shadow of a person.

(Blank template included in Classroom Reproducibles, pg 18)
Comprehension Questions

Ask comprehension questions before, during, and after reading the story aloud. Encourage children to ask their own questions during classroom discussions or while sharing with a partner.

**Retelling - Literal**

1. Who is the main character of the story?
2. Is Lyle a real crocodile? Does Lyle act like a real crocodile?
3. Where did they find Lyle when the family moved into the house?
4. Where is the Primm family’s new house?

**Predictive**

1. Have a class discussion about the title and cover illustrations. Ask questions that will lead students to predict what will happen in the story and what the theme or author’s message is in the story.
2. Stop at various places in the book. Ask: ‘What do you think will happen next?’
3. How will the Primms solve the problem of what to do with Lyle and how to care for Lyle?

**Main Idea**

1. What is this story mostly about?
2. What does the author want you to learn?
3. Tell how you and your family would solve the problem of having a pet that your neighbors did not like.
4. Everyone is scared of Lyle when they first encounter him. How does Lyle’s behavior change people’s minds about him?
5. How did Mr. Grumps’ feelings for Lyle change from the beginning of the story to the end of the story?
6. What are some of the problems the family has during the story?
Comprehension Questions (con’t)

Ask comprehension questions before, during, and after reading the story aloud. Encourage children to ask their own questions during classroom discussions or while sharing with a partner.

- **Inferential**
  1. Why do you think Mr. Grumps and Loretta do not like Lyle?
  2. How has the author exaggerated what happened to tell a better story?
  3. How do the pictures help tell the story?
  4. Why do you think the zoo is referred to as “the slammer”, “the pen”, and “the pokey” (slang jail/prison terms)?

- **Personal, World, and Text-to-Text Connections**
  1. Joshua’s favorite things are pictured on his pajamas. How do people know what your favorite things are?
  2. What pets have you had or would you like to have?
  3. Which story character are you most like – Mr. Primm, Mrs. Primm, Joshua, Hector, Lyle, Mr. Grumps, Loretta, or Ms. Nitpicker?
  4. What other stories have you read about unusual pets?
  5. Has your family ever moved? If so, what do you remember about the first days in your new house and in your new neighborhood?
  6. If you have never moved, would you like to move to a new house? Why or why not?
Classroom Adventures

- Have students look up information about crocodiles and alligators. Have students complete a Venn Diagram or a Double Bubble Map* (included in the Reproducibles section) to compare and contrast the two animals. This activity can be used to then prompt a discussion about whether they are more alike or more different. (Science, Language Arts, Vocabulary Development)

- After reading the book and attending the play, have students complete a Venn Diagram or a Double Bubble Map* (included in the Reproducibles section) to compare and contrast the books and the play. (Language Arts, Vocabulary Development)

- Crocodiles are reptiles. Have your students research the distinguishing characteristics of reptiles. (Science)

- Have students compare the similarities and differences between reptiles and amphibians, as they are commonly confused. A Venn Diagram or a Double Bubble Map* can be used for this activity also. (Science)

*Double Bubble Map – You can use the blank template provided in Classroom Reproducibles, pg 15, but it’s actually better if students draw the map themselves so they can add as many bubbles as they need instead of just filling in the ones that are provided.
Links

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WPU6L2TR7To - House On East 88th St. read aloud

http://houghtonmifflinbooks.com/authors/waber/pdfs/lylefullkit.pdf - Lyle Party Reproducibles

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRupcsmEDs - Hear excerpts from the songs that students will hear during the production.

Crocodiles/Alligators

http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/animals/crocodilealligatordifferences.html

http://www.diffen.com/difference/Alligator_vs_Crocodile


Videos

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyJHPg_iOsY

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5GYxjlNbds

Make your own crossword puzzles

http://www.armoredpenguin.com/crossword/
Classroom Reproducibles
Double Bubble Map
Compare and Contrast Lyle the Crocodile

Books

Play

Both
A _______ is a _______ that (is/has/does) 

_{___________________________}.