

Teacher Guide

Grades 3–4

# James and the Giant Peach

Roald Dahl

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# JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH

by  
Roald Dahl

## Teacher Guide

Written by  
Jean Jamieson

### Note

The text used to prepare this guide was the Puffin Books softcover, ©1961 by Roald Dahl. If other editions are used, page references may vary slightly.

**Please note:** Please assess the appropriateness of this book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading and discussing it with your class.

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## Skills and Strategies

### Thinking

Brainstorming, inferring,  
visualizing

### Literary Elements

Characterization, simile,  
story elements, alliteration

### Writing

Poetry, creative, description

### Vocabulary

Synonym/antonym, word  
mapping

### Comprehension

Predicting, cause and effect,  
comparison/contrast

### Listening/Speaking

Discussion, drama

### Post-reading Activities

1. Start a **story map**. (Although you may start with the information you now have as to the setting, the main character and the problem, things may change as the story continues. The story map may also be changed to reflect this.)
2. The author uses poetry to have the two boys describe themselves, and to banter back and forth (pages 5 & 6). Make an **illustration** of a comic character. Write a **humorous poem** to describe the character.
3. As James chops the wood, he thinks about what other children in the world are doing at the same moment (page 6). If you were chopping wood instead of James, and were granted one wish, what would that wish be? Why would you make that particular wish? **Write down your wish** and the **reasons** for making it.
4. What will James do with the green crystals? **Make a prediction**.

### Section 3

#### Chapter 5 through Chapter 7, page 1 through 20

James runs toward the kitchen. Trying to avoid the plants on his way, James twists a foot and trips the bag. The green crystals escape from the bag and all of them go into the ground around the old peach tree. A peach starts to grow on the tree and it gets larger and larger.

#### Vocabulary

centipedes p. 12  
ridiculous p. 16  
mammoth p. 17  
massive p. 19

hideous p. 13  
absolutely p. 16  
inspecting p. 19

gracious p. 14  
extraordinary p. 16  
cautiously p. 17

#### Vocabulary Activity

List a synonym and an antonym and make your own sentences for the vocabulary words: HIDEOUS, RIDICULOUS, ABSOLUTELY, EXTRAORDINARY, MAMMOTH, CAUTIOUSLY, and MASSIVE. (See the frame on page 9.)

For example:

Vocabulary Word

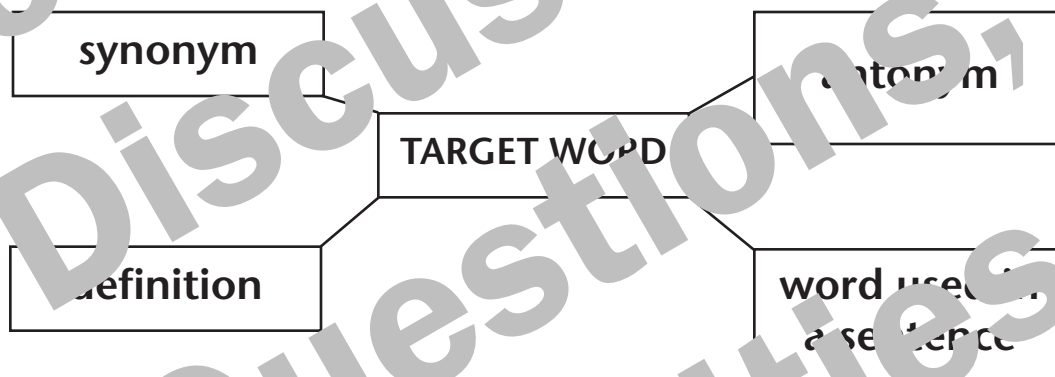
hideous  
ridiculous  
absolutely  
extraordinary  
mammoth  
cautiously  
massive

One Synonym

repulsive  
ludicrous  
perfectly  
unusual  
huge  
wildly  
large

One Antonym

attractive  
sensible  
imperfectly  
ordinary  
tiny  
carelessly  
light



**Questions for Discussion**

1. What happens as James runs to the house? (p. 11—James swerves to avoid the aunts. In doing so, he slips and falls when he is underneath the old beehive. James drops the bag and the three crystals escape.) Is James able to recover some of the crystals? (p. 12—No, James is not able to recover any of the crystals. The crystals burrow into the ground around the tree.) What does James remember about the crystals? (p. 12—James remembers that the crystals will work their magic on “whoever they make first touch, bug, insect, animal, or tree.”) What do you think might happen? (Discuss student responses.)

- As the aunts watch the peach, James starts to get a special feeling inside. What does he feel? (p. 14—"Something is about to happen. Something peculiar is about to happen.") There are other clues that add to the feeling James has. What are some of them? (p. 14—James could feel it in the air about him. There is a sudden stillness in the garden. There is not a breath of wind and the sun is blazing down on the garden.) Have you ever had a feeling that something was about to happen? (Share and discuss student responses.)
- What plans do the aunts have for the peach? (pp. 19 & 20—Aunt Sponge wants to get a shovel and start eating the peach. Aunt Spiker wants to figure out some way to make a drink from the peach.) What do you think you would do with the giant peach? Discuss student suggestions.

### Post-reading Activities

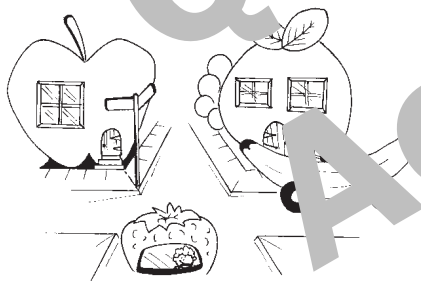
- On page 17, the peach is described as being MAMMOTH. What other words could be used to describe its size? For example:

COLOSSAL	GIGANTIC	HUGE	IMMENSE
MASSIVE	ENORMOUS	TITANIC	GARGANTUAN
PRODIGIOUS	STUPENDOUS	ELEPHANTINE	PONDEROUS
MONSTROUS	GIANT	CREAKING	BROBDIGNAGIAN

- The peach stops growing, and the author writes, "And the massive round fruit toppled over them (the aunts) and lay on the ground that they looked like midgets in another world beside it." (page 19)

For this activity, imagine that Aunt Spiker is 5 feet 6 inches tall (66 inches).

Knowing that, **estimate the size of the peach.** (Hint (page 19): The peach became nearly as tall as the tree that it was growing on as tall and wide, in fact, as a small house.")



Imagine a fruit and vegetable town! What might it look like? What unusual things might take place there? **Write a story in prose or poetry form** about a town in which all of the buildings and vehicles are made of fruits and/or vegetables. Make illustrations for your story.

- Did the green crystals make the peach grow? Will something else happen because of the green crystals? What do you think might happen next? **Make a prediction.**