

Stink: The Incredible Shrinking Kid

Reviews

"Delightful full-page spot-art cartoons and playful language in large type bring the child's adventures to life. 'Things are definitely looking up, UP' with this bright addition to beginning chapter-book collections."

— *School Library Journal*

"Judy Moody's little brother, Stink . . . finally gets his turn. . . . Stink definitely measures up to his memorable sister."

— *Kirkus Reviews*

"The narrative is fun and laced with puns . . . and it's peppered with black-and-white illustrations, including comics reflecting Stink's triumphant fantasies."

— *Booklist*

"McDonald cleverly pits Stink's earnest and slightly geeky personality against his sister's more adamant one, and she introduces some characters we hope to see more of."

— *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*

About the Book

Every morning Stink Moody, made famous in the ever-popular Judy Moody series, has his sister measure his height. One day the ruler reads less than usual, causing Stink to think that he is shrinking. In his first solo adventure, along with his worries about shrinking, Stink takes home the class pet but accidentally flushes it down the garbage disposal and also discovers that Presidents' Day means a lot more than time off from school.

Of "Comic" Proportions

In his solo debut, Stink's special style comes through loud and clear—enhanced by a series of comic strips drawn by Stink himself.

Have students write a summary of the book in comic strip form. Younger students can do this activity by focusing on one or two chapters or by depicting their favorite part of the book.



Growing Takes Time

Stink is short—the shortest member of the Moody family and the entire second grade. But Stink's spirits are lifted when his mother informs him that at birth he was actually longer (twenty-two inches) than Judy was at birth (nineteen inches).

Create a "Then/Now" bar graph for the class.

Have students measure their height by working in pairs. (For best results, have one child lie on the floor while the other draws a mark to note the head and feet. Then both children can use a yardstick to determine the height.) Then have students ask parents how long they were at birth. Create a two-colored bar graph to show the then and now results. Discuss the outcome with students and hang it in the classroom.

The State Quarter Program

Stink wants his favorite president, James Madison, to be represented on the state quarter of Virginia.



The pre-existing design features the three ships that brought the first English settlers to Jamestown, Virginia.

Give students an overview of the state quarters program. (The program is a ten-year initiative, from 1999 to 2008, commemorating each of the fifty states. States are honored in the order in which they ratified the Constitution and joined the Union. State designs are submitted and selected via a process determined by the governor of each state. The U.S. Mint reviews the designs before each governor selects a final design.) Bring in a variety of quarters depicting various states and share them with the class. Challenge students to create their own state quarter and vote on their favorite.



Acrostic Name Poems

Stink's friend Sophie writes an acrostic poem about her favorite first lady, Dolley Madison.

Discuss acrostic poems, and challenge students to use their own names to write one. This is a good activity for introducing or reviewing punctuation, adjectives and adverbs, and descriptive writing.

Stink, shortest in his family.

Thinks frogs are cool.

Is nicknamed Stinkerbelle by his bossy big sister.

Newton the Newt is Stink's class pet.

Knows a lot about James Madison.

Newton's Big Adventure: A Lesson in Creative Writing

After Newton accidentally gets "disposed" of, the students in Stink's class write stories about the adventures they think

Newton might be having.

Have your students brainstorm what Newton might be doing and get their creative juices flowing by having them write their own adventure stories.



YOU'RE ONLY AS SHORT AS YOU FEEL!

Peace and Friendship: Bronze-worthy

After Stink writes a letter to the governor of Virginia, he receives a Bronze Peace and Friendship Medal.



Discuss with students what it means to be worthy of such a medal.

What are some qualities of a good friend?

What kinds of deeds or behaviors might promote peace?

Who in history or in today's world are role models for such a prize?

Have students design their own Peace and Friendship Medal and award it to someone in their community worthy of this honor (such as the principal, the school nurse, a coach, or a teacher or librarian).

For Discussion

Stink's teacher asks the class what Presidents' Day is and what it means.

What does it mean to you?

Why is it celebrated?

Can you think of any other ways to honor this day?

On page 58, Stink says that the garbage disposal is NOT part of Newton's life cycle.

What does Stink mean by that?

What is the life cycle of a newt or a toad?

Can you name other amphibians besides toads and newts?

Throughout the book, Stink is obsessed with measuring his height.

Have your students measure themselves at home and create a classroom chart of morning and evening heights.

What is the scientific reason Stink is shrinking during the day?

On pages 76-77, Stink describes the uses of a Venn diagram.

Use a Venn diagram to celebrate Newton by bringing in Fig Newtons and another type of filled cookie.

What are the differences and similarities between the two types of cookies?

Stink and the Incredible Super-Galactic Jawbreaker

About the Book

Stink buys a huge jawbreaker, and when it doesn't actually break his jaw, he writes a letter of complaint to the manufacturer. He is surprised when in response, the company sends him a ten-pound box of candy. He then launches a letter-writing campaign in the hopes of getting more free stuff. He ends up getting much more than he bargained for!

Idiom Illustrator

Idiom references run rampant in the hilarious second Stink adventure. There are thirty-seven common idioms interspersed throughout the book, but "your guess is as good as mine" as to how many idioms there are in the English language.

Have students collect idioms, research their meanings, and then illustrate them. This would make a colorful and educational bulletin board. For a comprehensive list of idioms and their meanings, check out www.goenglish.com.



Is it Bigger than a Breadbox?

Stink refers to his super-galactic jawbreaker (page 2) as being bigger than a marble, bigger than a Super Ball, bigger than a golf ball.

Hold a class discussion about size relations (big, bigger, and biggest). Help students visualize the actual size of Stink's jawbreaker by bringing in the above-mentioned objects. This activity can also double as a grammar lesson.

In Stink: The Incredible Shrinking Kid, the first chapter is entitled "Short, Shorter, Shortest" and the last chapter is "Tall, Taller, Tallest."

Have students use these terms in sentences that illustrate the size differentials. Then challenge them to expand to other words, such as *small, smaller, smallest*.

A Nutritious Sweet

Stink claims that his jawbreaker is real food, containing vitamins A and C, as well as calcium (page 19). Judy notes that the candy consists mainly of dextrose, sucrose, and fructose—all sugars.

Hold a class discussion about how nutrition affects how our bodies function and the danger of eating too many foods with ingredients ending in *-ose*. Bring in various packaged food products and practice reading and interpreting the labels. Talk about the importance of fruits and vegetables, and have students research which ones are rich in vitamins A and C and which provide calcium. This might be a good time to introduce the new USDA food pyramid. The USDA website offers a wealth of information on the new food pyramid for kids, including creative activities, posters, and classroom materials (<http://www.mypyramid.gov/kids/index.html>).



Dear _____ :

A Lesson in Letter writing

In both Stink: The Incredible Shrinking Kid and Stink and the Incredible Super-Galactic Jawbreaker, Stink writes letters—to the governor, to the candy company, and more. In Jawbreaker, Mrs. Dempster teaches various lessons on how to write a letter.

Create your own letter-writing unit that shows students the parts of a letter. Have them practice by writing their own letters, be it for such causes as cleaning up the park or petitioning for less homework. Like Stink's teacher, put up a letter on the board with mistakes and have your students fix them.



Name Your Own Jawbreaker

After Stink writes a letter expressing his dissatisfaction with the super-galactic jawbreaker, he receives a box of 21,280 assorted jawbreakers—some with names worthy of attention (page 30).

Ask students to pretend they work for a candy company and are required to invent their own unique jawbreaker.

What would they call it?

What size would it be? What color?

What special characteristics would it have?

Have students write a mini-advertisement for their jawbreaker and share it with the rest of the class.



About the Author

A writer since childhood, Megan McDonald has gained worldwide recognition for her critically acclaimed series about Stink's older sister, Judy Moody. About the inspiration for her newest series, she says, "Once, while I was visiting a class full of Judy Moody readers, the kids, many with spiked hair à la Judy's little brother, chanted, 'Stink! Stink! Stink! Stink! Stink!' as I entered the room. In that moment, I knew that Stink had to have a book all his own."

Megan McDonald and her husband live in Sebastopol, California, with one dog and fifteen wild turkeys that like to hang out on their back porch.

Discussion Questions

Why might candy stores still refer to some candy as "penny candy" when it no longer costs one cent?

What is your favorite candy and why?



Stink writes several letters hoping to get free "stuff."

Do you think this is stealing?

Is Stink being honest in his letter-writing campaign?

In his letter, why does Stink refer to his super-galactic jawbreaker as a "mouth crayon" (page 26)?

What would you do with all that free "stuff" that Stink received?



About the Illustrator

Peter H. Reynolds is the author and illustrator of many award-winning books. He is devoted to helping people explore in art, writing, and thinking. Of Stink, he says, "I've fallen in love with the whole cast of characters in the world of Judy Moody, but Stink has always been a favorite of mine. He reminds me of myself growing up: dealing with a sister prone to teasing and bossing around—and having to get creative in order to stand tall beside her."

In addition to writing and illustrating, Peter, along with his twin brother, Paul, founded FableVision, a media company devoted to helping all learners discover their true potential. Peter H. Reynolds lives in Massachusetts.