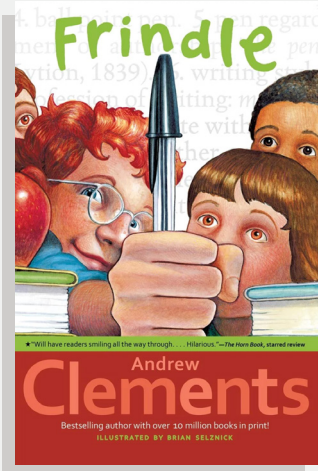


Book Club for Kids



Frindle

by Andrew Clements

1999 Winner of Rebecca Caudill
Young Readers' Book Award

Recommended Ages:

8-12



helenplum.org

Summary: Nick has plenty of ideas and most have gotten him into trouble at school. But now Nick's in fifth grade, and it looks like his days as a troublemaker are over. Everyone knows that Mrs. Granger, the language arts teacher, has X-ray vision, and nobody gets away with anything in her classroom. To make matters worse, she's also a fanatic about the dictionary, which is hopelessly boring to Nick. But when Nick learns an interesting tidbit about words and where they come from, it inspires his greatest plan yet: to invent a word. From now on, a pen is no longer a pen—it's a frindle. It doesn't take long for frindle to take root, and soon the excitement spreads well beyond his school and town. His parents and teacher would like Nick to put an end to all this nonsense. But frindle doesn't belong to Nick anymore. All he can do now is sit back and watch what happens.

Discussion Questions: Spoiler alert! Some of the questions contain key elements of the plot. Do not read if you don't want to know what happens!

1. Before reading this book, had you ever thought about how words are created? What did you find interesting about the process of creating a word?
2. Is it believable that "frindle" took off and became so well known? Why or why not?
3. Many illustrations accompany this novel. Discuss a few of your favorites in detail. For example, how does his first illustration, opposite the title page, help set up the novel? How do you know from this full-page portrait of Mrs. Granger that she won't be pushed around?
4. "Every good story," Mrs. Granger writes to Nick, "needs a bad guy, don't you think?" Do you agree? Does every good story have a villain? Can you think of any that don't?
5. "School," the author writes in *Frindle*, "was the perfect place to launch a new word." Why? What makes schools such good breeding grounds for fads? Do companies or community organizations ever use your school for promoting products or services? How?
6. Frindle is just one of Nick's great ideas. Brainstorm ways you could improve your own school or community. How can you turn your ideas into action?
7. Although Nick didn't know it until he turned 21, his new word earned him a huge amount of money. Do you think his parents were right in setting up a trust fund for him? What do you think he might have done with the money if he could have spent it earlier? What would you do if you suddenly had a lot of money of your own?

8. Do you think it's true that if you're good you'll make lots of money, or that if you make lots of money, you can consider yourself good?
9. Years after he leaves Mrs. Granger's class, Nick finds a perfect way to show her how important she was to him. What do you think your teacher's idea of a perfect gift is from a former student? Have they received it yet?
10. The book *Frindle* has won several children's choice awards. Why do you think this book is so popular?

Activities:

- Create and define your own new word. Think of an object, a situation, or behavior that you think needs a single new word all its own. Come up with ten words you think you won't find in a standard dictionary. Check the dictionary and give yourself a point for each word you don't find.
- When Nick decides to call a pen a frindle, he creates a new synonym for a word that has few. But many words, such as "friend" or "attractive" or "ugly," already have several common synonyms. Make a list of words with many synonyms. What's the largest number of synonyms you can come up with for one single word?

Adapted from Multnomah County Library.