ENRICHMENT GUIDE

CHARLOTTE’S WEB
Based on the book by E. B. White
Adapted by: Joseph Robinette

SCHOOL DATES:

OCTOBER 17 – NOVEMBER 14, 2008

FOR ADDITIONAL MATERIALS, VISIT FIRSTSTAGE.ORG

Please be sure to share this guide with all teachers who are taking their students to see this production. Photocopy or download additional copies from www.firststage.org

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Dear Teachers and Parents,

CHARLOTTE’S WEB is a timeless and treasured tale that has spanned over generations, and continues to touch the souls of young and old audiences alike. Through the story of a runt pig, a spider, and the barnyard community of a rural Midwest farm, comes a powerful message that we all long to hear: life is special and worth cherishing at all costs—and against all odds. Against this idyllic yet rustic backdrop, the main themes of this book center on mortality and friendship. The most applicable truth in this story for us all to remember is that “It is not often that someone comes along who is a true friend....” CHARLOTTE’S WEB helps us discover how we too can help others in need, embody the humility to be helped by others, and treasure our true friends.

Enclosed in this enrichment guide is a range of materials and activities intended to help you discover connections within the play through the curricula. It is our hope that you will use the experience of attending the theater and seeing CHARLOTTE’S WEB with your students as a teaching tool. As educators and parents, you know best the needs and abilities of your students. Use this guide to best serve your children—pick and choose, or adapt, any of these suggestions for discussions or activities. We encourage you to take advantage of the enclosed student worksheets—please feel free to photocopy the sheets for your students, or the entire guide for the benefit of other teachers.

Enjoy the show!

Julia Newby
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First Stage Policies

• The use of recording equipment and cameras is strictly forbidden in the theater.
• Food, drink, candy and gum are not permitted in the theater.
• Any portable radios brought to the theater by students will be kept by the House Manager during the performance and returned to the group leader at the conclusion of the play.
• There is no smoking in the theater, by order of the Fire Marshal.
• Should a student become ill, suffer an injury or have another problem, please escort him or her to the theater lobby and ask an usher to notify the House Manager immediately.
• In the unlikely event of a general emergency, the theater lights will go on and someone will come on stage to inform the audience of the problem. Remain in your seats, visually locate the nearest exit and wait for First Stage ushers to guide your group from the theater.

Seating for people with disabilities: If you have special seating needs for any student(s) and did not indicate your need when you ordered your tickets, please call our School Group Coordinator at (414) 267-2962. Our knowledge of your needs will enable us to serve you better upon your group’s arrival at the theater.
Just before sunrise on the Arable's farm the crickets are singing and the whippoorwills are awakening. During the night a litter of pigs were born. Fern, Mr. Arable's daughter, is getting ready for school with her mother when she sees her father crossing through with an ax in his hand. Fern questions her father where he is going with the ax. Mrs. Arable explains that one of the pigs is a runt, so he is small and weak. Mrs. Arable goes on to say that Mr. Arable has decided to kill the runt. Fern runs and grabs hold off the ax and struggles with her father trying to convince him not to kill the runt. Mr. Arable asks Fern to control herself, but Fern says that it is a matter of life and death, so she cannot control herself. Fern runs in tears to her mother, who agrees that the pig would probably die anyway. Fern throws her body over the runt to protect him. Fern questions whether her parents would have killed her if she had been very small at birth. Her father says that it is different, but Fern does not see the difference. Finally, Mr. Arable gives in and allows Fern to keep the pig for awhile. Mrs. Arable helps Fern find an old baby bottle so she can feed Wilbur.

As Fern runs off for the house, Avery, her younger brother, enters from the hog house. Avery tries to prevent Fern from getting by, but she gives him a big kiss and runs by him laughing. Avery asks Mr. and Mrs. Arable what Fern has and they explain she has a guest for breakfast. When Avery discovers that Fern got a pig he asks for one too, but Mr. Arable tells Avery he only distributes pigs to early risers. Before leaving for breakfast Fern finds a perfect name for her perfect pig, Wilbur.

Wilbur is very contented living with Fern and the Arable family. Every day is happy and every night is peaceful. As Wilbur gets bigger he graduates from the baby bottle to slop made of skim milk, potato skins, leftover sandwiches and marmalade drippings. He is getting bigger and stronger by the day. One day, Mr. Arable decides that he must sell Wilbur because he is eating too much. Fern is sad that her father wants to sell Wilbur. Luckily, Mrs. Arable remembers that Fern's Uncle Homer sometimes raises pigs. She suggests that Wilbur could live there and Fern could visit him as often as she likes. Fern tells Wilbur that he'll be going to her Uncle's farm, which makes her parents laugh. Fern says that it is not funny and that Wilbur CAN talk. Mrs. Arable plays it off as her daughter's active imagination.

On the Zuckerman farm, Homer and Edith, Fern's aunt, discuss where they are going to keep Wilbur. Lurvy, Homer's farm hand, prepares for Wilbur's arrival. Homer asks Lurvy to fix the fence so Wilbur will not escape. Edith says that pigs are more trouble than they're worth, but Homer says that he could not turn Fern down. He goes on to say that when the pig gets big enough to slaughter he'll be worth more than he cost.

Fern arrives with Wilbur, introducing him to her Uncle Homer and Aunt Edith. When Wilbur sees Lurvy bring a pallet of slop into the barn he chases him until he ends up with the pallet on his head. Fern decides to stay with Wilbur until he gets used to his surroundings while her Uncle, Aunt, and Lurvy head in to the house for peaches. When her Aunt calls again Fern leaves Wilbur alone in the barn.

As Wilbur begins to eat his slop he is surprised by Templeton, a rat, who begins helping himself to Wilbur's slop. Wilbur tries to defend his food, but Templeton still manages to snatch a rotten orange. Wilbur asks Templeton if he will play with him, but Templeton is not one for playing and slops away. More and more animals come out of the barn and startle Wilbur. The goose, the old sheep, and the lamb introduce themselves. The old sheep and the lamb state that the Zuckernmans plan to keep Wilbur nice and comfortable and fatten him up with slop. Wilbur is thrilled, but unlike the other animals he does not know why they want to make him fat and tender. All of the animals leave Wilbur to go about their daily business, which leaves Wilbur lonely and bored. Suddenly he hears a friendly voice, but he cannot see who is there. Finally Wilbur sees his new friend, Charlotte A. Cavatica, a beautiful spider who lives in the eves above Wilbur's pen. Charlotte tells Wilbur about herself; that she is near-sighted and eats flies. Wilbur thinks it is cruel to capture and eat flies and bugs, but Charlotte explains that if she did not catch bugs and flies that they would increase and multiply and destroy the earth. Wilbur and Charlotte become friends.

During the early summer days Fern visits the barn almost every day and listens to the animals. One day Fern when visits, the Goose's Goslings arrive. One of the Goose's eggs does not hatch and Templeton asks if he can have it for his collection. The Goose allows him to have it; however Charlotte warns that if the egg ever breaks that the smell will be terrible. Fern has some good news too. Uncle Homer and Aunt Edith are glad that Wilbur is putting on weight. The Old Sheep informs Wilbur and the rest of the animals that Uncle Homer and Aunt Edith are fattening him up because they are going to kill him. Wilbur is scared for his life until Charlotte promises to save him.

Avery comes to the barn to collect Fern for supper. As Fern turns to leave she thanks Charlotte for whatever she is going to do to save Wilbur. Avery asks who Charlotte is and Fern points to her. When Avery sees how large Charlotte is he decides he's going to capture it. Fern pushes Avery to stop him, which causes him to fall on the rotten...
egg and break it. The smell is horrible. The animals blame Templeton, but Wilbur knows that the rotten egg saved Charlotte’s life.

Charlotte’s plan to save Wilbur’s life is tested the next morning. Lurvy brings Wilbur’s breakfast, a mixture of pancakes, doughnuts, toast, and hot chocolate. He entered the barn carrying the slop bucket and the ax, but when he sees Charlotte’s web he runs back to the house to get Homer. When Wilbur awakes he sees Lurvy’s ax and frantically looks for a way out. The Goose reminds Wilbur that Lurvy has not fixed one of the boards in the fence and Wilbur pushes the board with his snout to escape. When Homer and Edith come out they see that Wilbur has escaped. Lurvy and Homer try to catch him while his animal friends try to help him escape. Charlotte tells all of the animals to stop him because he’ll never stand a chance in the Outside world. The animals tackle him and hold him down. Wilbur struggles to get loose from his friends until Lurvy, Edith and Homer return with a bucket of slop. Wilbur cowers. Lurvy points to Charlotte’s web where it says SOME PIG. Homer and Edith are amazed. Homer tells Edith to call the minister and the Arables.

After Homer, Edith and Lurvy leave the animals congratulate Charlotte for saving Wilbur’s life. Charlotte explains that she needs to continue writing words in her web in order to save Wilbur’s life. The animals offer up suggestions including TERRIFIC, but Wilbur doesn’t think he is terrific. He thinks he is just average. Charlotte disagrees. Charlotte tells Wilbur that he is her best friend. Charlotte also recruits Templeton to collect magazine clippings to use in her web after reminding him that without Wilbur there is no slop.

Far into the night Charlotte works on her web. In the morning Lurvy sees the word TERRIFIC written in Charlotte’s web. News of “Zuckerman’s Famous Pig” spreads across the county. The Zuckermans and the Arables work together to prepare the farm for visitors. Fern asks her Uncle Homer if this means that Wilbur is not going to be killed. Uncle Homer replies that as long as Wilbur is attracting attention he is safe. Wilbur learns that with friends like Fern, Charlotte and the other animals he can face anything.

Templeton brings Charlotte another word from his nest: RADIANT. Wilbur proves that he is radiant by running, jumping and somersaulting. Lurvy comes back to leave Wilbur his slop and tells him that Homer is talking about taking Wilbur to the County Fair, which means Wilbur would get to live for at least another month.

The Zuckermans and the Arables come back to the barn with a reporter who takes photos of Wilbur and the families. When Mr. Arable mentions killing Wilbur to make ham and bacon Wilbur faints. When he comes to everyone cheers. When they all look up they notice that a new word has been written in the web. At that moment Homer decides to enter Wilbur in the County Fair. He states that if he can win a blue ribbon, he guarantees that they’ll never make ham and bacon out of him.
she begins spinning her egg sac, her great work. Inside of the egg sac are five-hundred and fourteen eggs. As the day ends, Wilbur and Charlotte enjoy the fireworks together.

As the fireworks ended Charlotte began to work on the new word and her egg sac. By the end of the night she is exhausted. In the morning Templeton returns stuffed full of food. He also has some bad news: Uncle has won the blue ribbon. Wilbur wakes and is no longer scared. He has stopped worrying about himself and has begun caring about others, like Charlotte’s egg sac. Wilbur tells Templeton that Charlotte is going to be a mother of five-hundred and fourteen baby spiders. Charlotte is sorry that Wilbur did not win the blue ribbon, but it does not bother Wilbur. Wilbur is just happy to have a friend like Charlotte. Fern and the rest of the family arrive at Wilbur’s pen and notice Charlotte’s new word. When they see the word HUMBLE they are sure that Wilbur will win the blue ribbon. When Avery comes in he is shocked. The big pig has already won first prize. Everyone is stunned. Homer tries to cheer everyone up by telling them that people are still going to come by to see Wilbur. Suddenly a voice is heard on the loudspeaker. The voice requests everyone to report directly to the pig owned by Homer Zuckerman for the presentation of a special award. Everyone is dumbfounded. Wilbur won a prize! As a crowd gathers the PA Announcer presents Wilbur with a special Gold Medallion. At the receipt of the medallion Wilbur faints out of embarrassment. Templeton bites Wilbur’s tail, which wakes him up so he can receive his prize.

After the presentation, the Fair comes to a close. Everyone begins to pack up. Wilbur goes to talk to Charlotte who is very tired. Charlotte feels peaceful now that she knows Wilbur is safe. Wilbur asks Charlotte why she helped him. She explains that he has been her friend and that friendship in itself is a tremendous thing. Charlotte tells Wilbur that she won’t be returning to the barn with him and Templeton. Wilbur is sad, but Charlotte asks him not to make a scene. Charlotte asks Wilbur to take her children with him. After Wilbur promises to let Templeton eat first when he gets his slop, Templeton rescues the egg sac. As Wilbur departs he turns to give Charlotte a wink, which she returns. Charlotte knows her children were safe with Wilbur. As the Fair is taken down, Charlotte dies, with no one with her.

All winter long Wilbur watches over Charlotte’s egg sac as if he were guarding his own children. Finally, the winter gives way to spring. As Wilbur watches the egg sac the baby spiders were born. Three of Charlotte’s daughters, Joy, Aranea and Nellie, decide to stay in the barn with Wilbur. As the three daughters settle in and meet the rest of the animals, Wilbur begins to tell them the story of their mother.

SETTING THE STAGE: SYNOPSIS

PRE-SHOW QUESTIONS

1. Charlotte demonstrates many qualities of what makes a good friend. What qualities do you believe makes a good friend? What do like about your best friend?

2. Fern loves Wilbur very much—he is more than just a pet to her, he is one of her best friends. Have you ever had a really close friendship with an animal? If so, what is so special about your relationship with this animal?

3. Fern takes Wilbur to the State Fair towards the end of the summer. Fern does not spend all her time at the Fair with Wilbur—she goes off to see the sights and sounds of the Fair. Have you ever been to a State Fair? If so, what were some of your favorite memories from the Fair?

4. Have you ever visited a farm? What are some of the differences between farm life and city life? What responsibilities do you think farmers and their families have that people who live in the city probably don’t have?
Joseph Robinette is the author of 51 published plays and musicals, including THE FABULOUS FABLE FACTORY, written with composer Thomas Tierney, and CHARLOTTE’S WEB, adapted from the novel by E.B. White, two of the most widely produced children’s plays in the United States. He has also dramatized the authorized stage versions of THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE, THE PAPER CHASE, and A ROSE FOR EMILY. The recipient of numerous playwriting awards, Robinette was presented the 1976 Charlotte Chorpenning Cup, given annually by the Children’s Theatre Association of America to “an outstanding writer of children’s plays who has achieved national recognition.” In 2002, as professor of theatre at Rowan University, he received the Lindback Distinguished Teaching Award for Demonstrated Excellence in the University Classroom. In 2004, he received the American Association for Theatre and Education’s best play award for his adaptation of SARAH, PLAIN AND TALL, and in 2006, he was awarded the Children’s Theatre Foundation of America Medallion “...for his body of dramatic works for children and young people in the United States and beyond.” He currently resides in New Jersey.

SUGGESTED READING

Stuart Little by E. B. White
The Trumpet of the Swan by E. B. White
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory by Roald Dahl
The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnet
Mr. Popper’s Penguins by Richard Atwater
The Cricket in Times Square by George Selden
Because of Winn-Dixie by Kate DiCamillo
James and the Giant Peach by Roald Dahl
The Mouse and the Motorcycle by Beverly Cleary
A LETTER FROM E.B. WHITE

http://school.familyeducation.com/authors/letters-and-journals/37818.html

Where did the ideas for Charlotte and Stuart Little come from?  
Why did E.B. White choose to write about a pig?  
Did his stories really happen?  
Read the answers in this letter, which he wrote to all kids everywhere shortly before his death.

Dear Reader:

I receive many letters from children and can’t answer them all -- there wouldn’t be time enough in a day. That is why I am sending you this printed reply to your letter. I’ll try to answer some of the questions that are commonly asked.

Where did I get the idea for Stuart Little and for Charlotte’s Web? Well, many years ago I went to bed one night in a railway sleeping car, and during the night I dreamed about a tiny boy who acted rather like a mouse. That’s how the story of Stuart Little got started.

As for Charlotte’s Web, I like animals and my barn is a very pleasant place to be, at all hours. One day when I was on my way to feed the pig, I began feeling sorry for the pig because, like most pigs, he was doomed to die. This made me sad. So I started thinking of ways to save a pig’s life. I had been watching a big grey spider at her work and was impressed by how clever she was at weaving. Gradually I worked the spider into the story that you know, a story of friendship and salvation on a farm. Three years after I started writing it, it was published. (I am not a fast worker, as you can see.)

Sometimes I’m asked how old I was when I started to write, and what made me want to write. I started early -- as soon as I could spell. In fact, I can’t remember any time in my life when I wasn’t busy writing. I don’t know what caused me to do it, or why I enjoyed it, but I think children often find pleasure and satisfaction in trying to set their thoughts down on paper, either in words or in pictures. I was no good at drawing, so I used words instead. As I grew older, I found that writing can be a way of earning a living.

Some of my readers want me to visit their school. Some want me to send a picture, or an autograph, or a book. And some ask questions about my family and my animals and my pets. Much as I’d like to, I can’t go visiting. I can’t send books, either -- you can find them in a bookstore or a library. Many children assume that a writer owns (or even makes) his own books. This is not true -- books are made by the publisher. If a writer wants a copy, he must buy it. That’s why I can’t send books. And I do not send autographs -- I leave that to the movie stars. I live most of the year in the country, in New England. From our windows we can look out at the sea and the mountains. I live near my married son and three grandchildren.

Are my stories true, you ask? No, they are imaginary tales, containing fantastic characters and events. In real life, a family doesn’t have a child who looks like a mouse; in real life, a spider doesn’t spin words in her web. In real life, a swan doesn’t blow a trumpet. But real life is only one kind of life -- there is also the life of the imagination. And although my stories are imaginary, I like to think that there is some truth in them, too -- truth about the way people and animals feel and think and act.

Yours sincerely,

E.B. White

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First Stage Children’s Theater’s production of CHARLOTTE’S WEB sets this story in a family farm country nestled in the Caledonia Hills, just west of Portage, Wisconsin, in 1953. This was a time of recovery and renewed hope for the future, post WWII. Below is information about Portage, WI, as well as other Wisconsin history that will be displayed in the production.

History of Portage, Wisconsin

Taken directly from: http://www.ci.portage.wi.us/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={DA7CE3E0-6197-4F20-9EFF-B052FE12883E}

The historical distinction of Portage lies in its unique geographical location between the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers. Here, the two rivers, one flowing north to the St. Lawrence, the other south to the Mississippi, are separated by a narrow neck of land over which, for two centuries, Indians, missionaries, trappers, traders, adventurers and settlers traveling the waterway had to portage their canoes and heavy packs from one stream to another. The settlement which grew here because of the resulting traffic was first known as “Wau-wau-onah”, Winnebago for “carry on the shoulder”. During the French occupation, it was simply “le portage” (from porter: to carry). This was eventually anglicized to Portage.

With the end of the Civil War, European immigration brought to Wisconsin a flood of settlers eager for cheap land. The portage point continued in importance for trade and transportation and Portage itself grew rapidly as a thriving farm community. A canal was finally cut between the rivers, but the new railroad that came through in 1857 already became a vigorous rival. The canal never reached its anticipated peak as a commercial highway. It was closed to traffic by the government in 1951 for lack of use. The lumbering industry brought a tide of hardy woodsmen and rivermen to Portage during its heyday. Here they began their trek north or stopped here for rowdy pleasure and relaxation on the route southward on their Wisconsin River rafts.

Agriculture took over the lumbering days, but Portage has enjoyed its share of industry too. Today the city is a progressive community treasuring the story of its past and anxious and willing to share it with visitors and guests.

For additional information about Portage, WI, and its history, visit:
Portage Memories
http://www.wisconsinstories.org/archives/portage/index.cfm?action=portage

The town of Portage began its days as a Native-American footpath between two rivers, traveled in 1673 by French explorers Jacques Marquette and Louis Jolliet.

Because of its strategic location between the Saint Lawrence and Mississippi rivers, many indigenous tribes passed through Portage to trade furs, first with the French, then the British and finally the Americans. Portage Memories is a celebration of the character of a town, its residents and the stories they have to tell about their past as a mirror of the entire state. 30 minutes (cc)
HISTORY OF WISCONSIN STATE FAIR

The storied history of the Wisconsin State Fair began in 1851 when the first Fair was held in Janesville, Wis. Approximately 8,000 – 12,000 people attended the first State Fair for the admission price of 10¢. Since then, almost a million Fairgoers enjoy the annual, fun-filled State Fair each year. In 2006, 861,408 Fairgoers devoured thousands of cream puffs, shopped ’til they dropped, rocked out to great entertainment, experienced life on a farm and created memories for a lifetime. Throughout the 156 years, the Wisconsin State Fair has created memories that have transcended generations and is steeped with the rich traditions of the State of Wisconsin – agriculture, racing, circus, entertainment and family participation.

Since 1851, the Wisconsin State Fair has migrated to numerous Wisconsin towns until it found its home in West Allis in 1892. For significant, historical reasons the Fair was cancelled five different times. The 1861 Fair, set to be held in Madison was canceled due to the Civil War as were the 1862 and 1863 Fairs. During that time the fairgrounds became a training camp for volunteer troops and was renamed Camp Randall. Years later, the University of Wisconsin-Madison football stadium would be built on that site. The next cancellation was in 1893 when the World’s Columbian Exposition was held in Chicago. Officials, anticipating a loss of attendance at the Wisconsin Fair because of that competition, canceled the Fair for a fourth time. The fifth and final cancellation happened in 1945 during World War II at the request of the US Office of War Transportation.

HISTORY OF THE MILWAUKEE BRAVES

In 1953 baseball history was made. For the first time since 1903, a major league franchise moved cities creating the way for others to follow. Milwaukee was just completing the construction of County Stadium built in hopes of luring a major league team but was preparing for the opener of the Milwaukee Brewers minor league season. Then it happened, on March 18th, 1953, Lou Perini the owner of the Boston Braves announced his team was headed west, to Milwaukee.

That began the love affair Milwaukee, and much of the world, would have with the Milwaukee Braves. The Braves would call Milwaukee home for thirteen glorious years before heading to Atlanta after an ownership change. In thirteen years the Milwaukee Braves never had a losing season, a statistic that no other franchise can claim. Fan support was fanatic and a matter of civic pride for people in Wisconsin. As a result the Braves set attendance records and shattered expectations.

The Braves won two pennants, in 1957 and 1958, and one World Series defeating the New York Yankees in game 7 of the 1957 Fall Classic. Three future Hall of Famers would play for the Braves. They were Eddie Mathews, Warren Spahn, and of course the all-time home run king Henry Aaron. During their tenure in Milwaukee, the Braves were the hot ticket and were even more popular than the Green Bay Packers. The town fought furiously to keep the Braves but in the end lost them to Atlanta after the 1965 season. For many though, the Milwaukee Braves are an all-time classic team.
CHARLOTTE IS WISE, PATIENT, AND CARING: ADJECTIVES AND CHARACTER TRAITS

Language Arts Classroom Activity

Taken from: http://readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=176

You’re terrific as far as I’m concerned and that’s what counts.
You’re my best friend and I think you’re sensational.
Now stop arguing and get some sleep. - Charlotte

Student Objectives

• review the characteristics of adjectives and identify examples in a text.
• define the literary term “character trait” and explore how to provide details that support their inferences.
• use adjectives to describe characters from a text they have read or listened to.

Activity

1. Share a basic definition of adjectives for your students, on the board or an overhead, to introduce the concept to students.
   a. Using adjectives, ask students to describe the classroom, the facilitator’s ensemble that day, and their current mood.
   b. Use items in the class to create some example sentences, for instance, “The desk is white” or “The book is interesting.”

2. Out loud, read through a chapter of Charlotte’s Web, or any other book the class is currently reading, asking students to pay close attention to the adjectives used throughout the chapter.

3. After reading through the chapter, ask students to share adjectives that they remember from the text and list the words on the board or overhead.

4. Read through the chapter again, this time pausing to add additional adjectives not already listed to the list on the board or overhead.

5. Introduce character traits simply by explaining that they are descriptive adjectives that fit the characters in a story.
   a. “When we talk about a character in a story, we can describe them with character traits, descriptive adjectives like happy or sad that tell us the specific qualities of the character.”

6. Continue discussing character traits to students by explaining that sometimes the author may tell us the character traits directly, but more often the author will show us these traits in the things that the character does. Our job as readers is to think about the things that a character does and then describe the character with character traits.

7. Going back to the chapter previously read out loud in the class, ask students to list a number of actions Wilbur (or another main character of any story being read) does throughout the chapter, and write this list out on the board.
   a. Using this list of actions of one specific character, ask students what this tells us about how this character is feeling and thinking—what are the character traits we can bestow on this character based on his/her actions?

8. Using the attached worksheet, have students write an acrostic poem about Wilbur. Begin each line with an adjective that starts with the letter on that line. Use adjectives that describe Wilbur.
Write an acrostic poem about Wilbur.

Begin each line with a word that starts with the letter on that line.

Use words that describe Wilbur.

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A child's life on the farm is full of activities like 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA), as well as the typical childhood activities of bike riding, playing make-believe and sports. When asked what it is like to grow up on a farm, Josh Shinaberry, of a Fredericktown sheep and beef farm says, “It’s kind of fun, sometimes... well, when you get to run around and play. And when you’re up in the hay mow, sometimes, except for when you have to throw down the hay and do chores... When you’re driving the tractor you usually have fun... and when you’re driving the three-wheeler.”

While the farm is a place of exploration, the children are taught that the farm can be a very dangerous place, too. Farm kids learn to stay away from heavy machinery, like feed-grinders and tractors, and other pieces of equipment that have power take-off and/or blades. The children make a gradual progression from jobs like helping in the family garden and helping to feed the animals to harder chores like milking the cows and perhaps completely assuming a certain task when they are older.

Cindy Grassbaugh, who lives on a Howard dairy farm, thinks that she learned how to “give and take” from farming and from being involved in farming organizations. “You learn that when something needs to be done you do it as best you can. You have to take responsibility.” Cindy says that while 4-H and FFA taught her to work hard and to take her responsibilities seriously. She also had a lot of fun and gained valuable skills that will help her in her adult life. “Through the FFA I have had the opportunity to travel all over the place. I have been to Georgia, Kansas City, Missouri to the National FFA Convention, Massachusetts and the National Leadership Conference with the state officers in Kentucky.” She also credits these groups with allowing her to meet new people and giving her a chance to do some public speaking.

Travel opportunities are very important to farm kids. Especially on a dairy farm like Cindy’s, family vacations are rare and trips to far away places like Georgia or Massachusetts are even rarer. Becky Shinaberry, Josh’s mother, remarks that “a farm does not allow for vacation time”---at least not in the way that urban and suburban families take vacations. Like many farmers, the Shinaberry’s take short trips and go camping or visit with relatives. “A vacation for me is at least one night away from the farm,” Becky says. Growing up on a farm and being involved in farm organizations allows children to understand plant, human and animal relationships, develop a sense of responsibility and gain skills and experiences that will help them even if they do not chose to become farmers. Cindy Grassbaugh concludes, “People hear me complain about the 365 days a year thing. But it has given me a lot of opportunities---golden opportunities.”
**Activity**

1. Discuss farm life with the students. Do they have any ideas on what life on a farm is like?

2. Many farmers grow large gardens. Most of the food we buy is grown by farmers. Brainstorm food that might be grown on a farm. Write this list on the board.

3. Ask students what they know about farms and the job of a farmer. Explain that farmers do more than take care of animals. They must also plant food and help produce dairy products that we drink and eat.
   a. Read through *Growing Up on a Family Farm* with students. Afterwards, discuss what was discovered learning more about family life on a farm.

4. Discuss the differences between the jobs of a businessman and a farmer. Ask, “What does a farmer wear to work? What does a businessman wear to work? What is a farmer’s main job? What are some things a businessman does?”

5. Continue by asking students why farmers are important and essential to our community and society.

6. Have students think about ways city life and country life. Students should fill in the attached Venn Diagram to illustrate these differences and similarities.

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**Homer:** Lurvy, did you patch that loose board on the fence?

**Lurvy:** Oh geeze, I forgot Mr. Zuckerman. I forgot the slops, too. I better get the slops first, ’cause we got us a new pig coming today.

**Homer:** Fix the fence first. We don’t want a little runty pig running around the countryside.

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**Farm Life vs. City Life**
Activity

Have you ever considered an animal more than just a pet? Read the first chapter of Charlotte’s Web. After reading through, write a letter to Fern’s father, Mr. Arable explaining why he should spare Wilbur’s life and allow Fern to raise the pig as her pet.

For additional information that may improve your persuasive essay, you may choose to view several sites that explain the benefits of pet adoption.

- Pig Preservation Association: http://www.thepigpreserveassociation.org/index.html
- Petfinder: http://www.petfinder.org/
An analogy is a comparison between two things that are similar in some respects. Analogies are often used to help explain something or make it easier to understand. For example:

| CAT is to MEOW as DOG is to WOOF |
| DAY is to LIGHT as NIGHT is to DARK |

Fill in the correct analogies for the Farm-Life vocabulary below:

| 1. cow --> mammal : chicken --> |
| bird ☐ dinner ☐ feather ☐ delicious ☐ egg |

| 2. milk --> cow : eggs --> |
| feather ☐ lamb ☐ chicken ☐ pie ☐ orange |

| 3. sheep --> lamb : cow --> |
| ewe ☐ plant ☐ calf ☐ horse ☐ steed |

| 4. rabbit --> hop : horse --> |
| sit ☐ slither ☐ mare ☐ run ☐ crawl |

| 5. turkey --> gobble : cow --> |
| meow ☐ moo ☐ oink ☐ neigh ☐ noisy |

| 6. wall --> door : fence --> |
| gate ☐ ceiling ☐ meadow ☐ pasture ☐ closed |

| 7. herd --> cows : school --> |
| pigs ☐ horses ☐ fish ☐ chickens ☐ crows |

| 8. pork --> pigs : beef --> |
| sheep ☐ lamb ☐ chickens ☐ fish ☐ cows |

| 9. dog --> paw : horse --> |
| cob ☐ colt ☐ mare ☐ hand ☐ hoof |

| 10. goldfish --> aquarium : horse --> |
| house ☐ forest ☐ silo ☐ barn ☐ room |
All animals and crops on a farm produce byproducts for humans to use—as both perishable and nonperishable items.

After reviewing the list of farm animals and crops below, match the animals and crops to the product they generate.

- chicken
- sheep
- pig
- cow
- goose
- wheat
- bacon
- eggs
- wool
- milk
- bread
- down
Activity

1. Ask students if they have ever visited a State Fair before.
   a. What are the different attractions they saw and took part in at the Fair?

2. As a class, visit a number of different state’s State Fair websites...including Wisconsin’s own State Fair site, and have students list a number of similarities between the attractions offered at all of these Fairs.
   a. List these similarities on the board.
   b. Sites include:
      i. California Mid-State Fair: http://www.midstatefair.com/
      ii. Ohio State Fair: http://www.afroam.org/history/slavery/main.html
      iii. Iowa State Fair: http://www.iowastatefair.org/index.html

3. After viewing them, have students create a tri-fold advertisement brochure for one of these Fairs...or ask them to create a brochure for the Fair the Zuckermans’ attend in their hometown!

4. Display these colorful and exciting brochures throughout the classroom and have students share their fun Fair findings with the class!
• No other animal produces a wider range of by-products than pigs do.
  • Pigs can’t sweat as they don’t have sweat glands.
  • A pig can run a 7 minute mile!
• A pig’s squeal reaches 110-115 decibels, the same as the sound of a jet.
  • There are over 100 million pigs raised in the United States.
  • The average American eats 46 pounds of pork.
  • Sows can give birth (farrow) up to three times a year.
• From breeding, it takes 3 months, 3 weeks and 3 days (112-115 days) for the baby piglets to be born.
  • Litter sizes will vary from 8-10 piglets.
  • Piglets will weigh about 3-4 pounds at birth.
• It takes about 5-6 months for a pig to reach market weight of 220-260 pounds.

• There are nine major swine breeds.
  • Sow - female hog that has farrowed a litter of pigs
    • Boar - male hog
  • Barrow – male hog that has been castrated
  • Gilt – female hog that has not farrowed a litter of pigs
Do you sweat like a pig? Chances are you don’t, especially if you can wring out your shirt at the end of a hot day. Contrary to popular belief, pigs are unable to sweat; instead, they wallow in mud to cool down. Their mucky appearance gives pigs an undeserved reputation for slovenliness. In fact, pigs are some of the cleanest animals around, refusing to excrete anywhere near their living or eating areas when given a choice.

Pigs are misunderstood in many ways. Many people think of them as portly and stupid, but the Nature program The Joy of Pigs shows us how intelligent pigs really are. (They are naturally lean, too, unless they are overfed by humans.) Pigs are smarter than any other domestic animal. Their ability to solve problems, like the pig I.Q. test on The Joy of Pigs, is well-documented, and they are considered by animal experts to be more trainable than dogs or cats.

Pigs are difficult to classify. In popular culture, they appear as everything from sweet simpletons (Charlotte’s Web) to wicked tyrants (Animal Farm) to brave heroes (Babe). To pig farmers, the animal is a commodity. To truffle harvesters, pigs are reliable hunters whose keen sense of smell locates these pricey fungi. To scientists, pigs are unique as one of the only large mammals that exists, in one form or another, in every part of the world.

Every continent bears the imprint of the pig’s feet -- preferably in a nice mud puddle. Red river hogs in West Africa, bearded pigs in Borneo, pig-like peccaries in Bolivia, and outlandishly tusked Indonesian babirusa all enjoy similar lifestyles of food, water, and a good roll in the dirt. These pigs’ European ancestors became some of the first domesticated animals thousands of years ago. Wherever humans have ventured, they have brought pigs along with them. Colonists carried pigs with them to distant lands, proliferating pig farming throughout the world.

In the United States, raising hogs is big business. In 1997 alone, United States hog farmers raised more than 58 million head to support growing demands for pork. But the popularity of pigs as pets is growing, and many Americans now keep pigs in their homes. So when dinner’s served in those homes, it’s made for a pig, not from one! Smart, Clean, and Lean.
How do spiders differ from insects?
- Spiders have two body parts, eight legs, chelicerae or fangs, pedipalps, no wings or antennae. Insects have three body parts, six legs, mandibles, wings, and antennae.

What traits are typical of spiders?
- Production of spider silk, pedipalps used in mating, venom, and external digestion.

How long do spiders live?
- Most spiders live for 1 to 2 years. Tarantulas and trapdoor spiders live for 6 to 20 years. In temperate regions, spiders overwinter as eggs or adults.

What do spiders eat?
- All spiders are predators. They do not eat plants, but only other living animals. Insects, spiders, invertebrates, some small vertebrates are the typical prey items.

How do they eat?
- Spiders use venom to kill or paralyze their prey. Venom is transported through a duct in the fangs. Digestive enzymes are regurgitated to liquefy prey externally. No solid food is eaten. Prey may be crushed by the chelicerae or wrapped.

How do they grow?
- The exoskeleton (external skeleton) of the spider must be shed or molted. Molting is necessary for growth, but a risky part of a spider’s life as it leaves him vulnerable to other spiders.

Where are spiders found?
- Everywhere but in oceans and Antarctica. They are common in gardens.

How does silk work?
- Silk is extremely strong and flexible. Webs are enlargements of the spider’s sensory system. Webs slow down and entangle prey. Orb webs are designed to capture prey with little silk, and translate the force of a flying insect throughout the web so it does not bounce out.

Are many spiders poisonous?
- Although there are more spiders than all vertebrate species combined, spiders are relatively poorly known and needlessly feared. Actually, there are VERY few spiders whose bites require medical attention and these species are very rare in Colorado. Most spiders do not have fangs that are strong enough to pierce human skin or venom which can affect us. Of the 38,000 spider species described, there are only four species in the USA which are poisonous (black widow, brown recluse, hobo, and yellow sac spiders). Only the ranges of the black widow and brown recluse may be uncommonly found in Colorado.
Did you know that Spider Silk is...

- Strong enough to stop a speeding bullet;
- Elastic enough to stretch many times its length;
- Able to absorb moisture to stay flexible;
- Useful in healing wounds;
- Capable of stopping a 747 flying at full speed!

Spider silk is a protein. When it is inside the spider’s body it is a liquid. Spiders have special spinning organs called spinnerets located toward the back and under their abdomens. When the spider releases silk from the spinnerets, it becomes a solid.

Molecules in the liquid link together to become a very large molecule called fibroin. A strand of spider silk is actually made of many threads, sometimes thousands, released together.

How Spiders Build an Orb Web:

1. Bridge line.
The spider makes a bridge line between two objects such as branches. The spider strengthens the bridge with more strands of silk.

2. Anchor line
The spider attaches an anchor line and drops downward to anchor it. The “y” shape is the 3 radial lines of the web.

3. Silk framework
The spider adds a framework of silk.

4. More radial lines
The spider adds additional radial lines. These go from the center to the outer frame of the web.

5. Dry silk spiral
Starting in the center, the spider spins a spiral of dry silk. The silk spiral holds the radial lines apart.

6. Sticky spiral
Then the spider reverses direction and lays down a sticky spiral. The spider ends up in the middle and waits for prey to get stuck.
COLLECT A WEB
Science Classroom Activity

Materials

- Hair Spray
- White Spray Paint
- Black Poster Board
- Plastic Wrap

Activity

1. Find a web
   a. Look around you -- there are webs everywhere. When you find one you want to capture, be sure to chase the spider out of the web.

2. Spray the web
   a. Hold the can of white spray paint about 12 inches from the web at an angle.
   b. Spray on both sides two or three times.

3. Build up a thick coating
   a. Make sure that the web has a thick, even coating of spray paint.
   b. You can also spray the poster board with hair spray. This makes the board a little sticky so that the web will cling better.

4. Capture the web
   a. Position your poster board behind the web.
   b. Slowly and carefully pull the poster board against the web -- capturing the web on the board.

5. Preserve the web
   a. After the paint is dry, preserve your web by covering it with clear plastic wrap.
   b. You can even frame your web!
Materials:
* Styrofoam cups
* sugar cubes
* warm water

Activity
1. Begin by asking students to raise their hands if they’ve ever been bitten by a spider.
   a. When were you bitten? How did it happen—while you were sleeping, or working in the garden, etc.? What happened once you were bitten—what happened to you and what do you think happened to the spider?

2. Continue the class discussion by then asking students if they know what happens when a spider bites its victim.

3. Explain to students that spiders use venom on their prey.
   a. Define the word prey for students, and ask students to share what sorts of insects serve as prey for spiders. Continue by asking students to discuss how spiders catch their prey, and then eat this prey.

4. Inform students that they will be performing an experiment that simulates the effect of a spider’s venom on its prey.

5. Split students up into groups of four, and pass out a Styrofoam cup with several sugar cubes in the bottom to each group.
   a. Explain to students that the cubes are like the inside of an insect’s body—HARD!

6. Next, pass out small cups of water and instruct the students to pour a few drops of water onto the cubes.
   a. Have students record what happens to the sugar cubes when the water comes into contact with them.
   b. Ask students to share their findings and then continue by explaining that the water dissolves the sugar cubes just as the spider’s venom dissolves the insect’s body when the spider spreads venom into the insect’s body.
      i. Because a spider can turn its food to liquid, it can eat without chewing!

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I’m near-sighted. I’ve always been near-sighted. It’s good in some ways, not so good in others. Watch me wrap up this fly! First, I dive at him!! Next, I wrap him up! There. Now I give him an anesthetic so he won’t feel pain. He can’t feel a thing now. He’ll make a perfect breakfast for me! -Charlotte
The goal during this activity is to observe communication of thought, feelings and ideas.

Materials

- A ball of thick white yarn

Activity

1. After reading the book and/or seeing the production of CHARLOTTE’S WEB, ask students to list as many examples as possible of Charlotte demonstrating acts of friendship towards Wilbur.
   a. Continue by asking students to list qualities that make a good friend.

2. As a class, come up with a definition of friendship.

3. Ask students if they think people can spin webs like spiders.
   a. This question usually stirs up the curiosity, and next comes the rules of the game.

4. Introduce the activity with the above question & suggest that we should try to spin a web as a group...

5. Join group in a big circle (sitting down) and show them the white yarn...
   a. Explain that you will begin spinning the web by holding the end of the yarn ball tightly in your lap and then picking a friend to toss the remaining ball to... “I pick John to help spin our web”...

6. When “John” (the first student chosen to catch the yarn ball) catches it, share something you like about him (i.e., “I like how John shares with his friends”)...
   a. Remind John to hold the yarn string tight in this lap, as he picks the next friend to toss the ball of yarn to...

7. The activity proceeds until the ball is complete, or until all students have been included at least once into the web/

8. It’s fun to see how huge your life size web has become. Sometimes it’s fun to see if the group can stand up together without getting tangled in it too!
Directions: Use your skills in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to answer these barnyard questions.

1. For your birthday, your uncle gave you a 55 pound pig. You plan to raise it to 245 pounds and then sell it. How many pounds does it need to gain?

2. If it gains about 1.6 pounds each day, how many days will it take to reach 245 pounds? (round to the nearest whole number). How many months is that?

3. Your uncle has three sows (mother pigs) that together have 36 piglets. If they each have the same number of piglets, how many are in each litter (group of piglets)?

4. If one sow only has four piglets and the remaining two have equal numbers, how many piglets do they each have (using the piglets from number 3)?

5. One sow and her piglets use 58 bushels of corn to grow. If corn costs $2.75 per bushel, how much will you spend on corn?

6. You sell your 250 pound pig for $55 per one hundred pounds. How much money do you make? This will give you the gross income. To calculate the net income, you would need to consider all other expenses of raising a pig (i.e. feed, housing, equipment).

2. Control myself? This is a matter of life and death and you talk about controlling myself.

3. I only distribute pigs to early risers who are trying to rid the world of injustice. It just shows what can happen if a person gets out of bed promptly.

4. Well, I admit it's nice to have a pig around the place again. I haven't had delicious, leftover slops in an age.

5. Do you want a friend, Wilbur? I'll be a friend to you. I've watched you all day and I like you.

6. Coming. 'Bye, everybody. I love you. Thank you, Charlotte, for whatever it is you're going to do to save Wilbur.

7. You're terrific as far as I'm concerned and that's what counts. You're my best friend and I think you're sensational. Now stop arguing and get some sleep.

8. I know. But I can face anything with friends like you. Friendship is one of the most satisfying things in the world.

9. Well, sir. That does it. I have an announcement that you can print in the newspaper. I'm going to enter this pig in the County Fair. If he can win a blue ribbon, I guarantee we'll never make bacon and ham out of him.

10. I'm suddenly very tired. I have something very important I must do soon. I know I won't be able to help you much longer.

11. Humble has two meanings. It means "not proud" and it means "close to the ground." That's Wilbur all over.

12. This is the first night I've ever spend away from home. I'm glad you're with me, Charlotte. I never feel lonely when you're near.

13. Even if I don't win the blue ribbon...and the worst happens...I will never forget you.

14. Bravery is just one of the many things I've learned from you, Charlotte...my friend.

15. He's not dead. He's fainted. He gets embarrassed easily.

16. You have been my friend. That in itself is a tremendous thing. After all, what's a life, anyway? We're born, we live a little, we die.

17. It is not often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer. Charlotte was both.

1. Why do you think someone would want to be Wilbur's friend? How would you convince someone that Wilbur would make a good friend?

2. What are some actions Wilbur does that shows that although he is cute and cuddly, he still behaves like a pig?

3. Mr. Arable tells his wife, Mrs. Arable, that he believes animals talk. Do you think Mr. Arable really believe that animals talk or is he teasing Mrs. Arable? Do you believe animals talk? If so, how, and what do they talk about?

4. If you were Charlotte, what would you have written in your web about Wilbur? Why did Charlotte like Wilbur so much?

5. Do you think Charlotte's three daughters will write words in their webs too, like their mother did? What will they write?
Directions: Use your skills in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to answer these barnyard questions.

1. For your birthday, your uncle gave you a 55 pound pig. You plan to raise it to 245 pounds and then sell it. How many pounds does it need to gain?
   
   \[ 245 \text{ pounds to sell} - 55 \text{ pounds now} = 190 \text{ pounds to gain} \]

2. If it gains about 1.6 pounds each day, how many days will it take to reach 245 pounds? (round to the nearest whole number). How many months is that?
   
   \[ \frac{190 \text{ pounds needed to gain}}{1.6 \text{ pounds each day}} = 118.75 \text{ or } 119 \text{ days} \]
   
   \[ \frac{119 \text{ days}}{30 \text{ days each month}} = 3.9 \text{ or } 4 \text{ months} \]

3. Your uncle has three sows (mother pigs) that together have 36 piglets. If they each have the same number of piglets, how many are in each litter (group of piglets)?
   
   \[ \frac{36 \text{ piglets}}{3 \text{ sows}} = 12 \text{ piglets per sow} \]

4. If one sow only has four piglets and the remaining two have equal numbers, how many piglets do they each have (using the piglets from number 3)?
   
   \[ 36 \text{ piglets} - 4 \text{ piglets} = 32 \text{ piglets} \]
   
   \[ \frac{32 \text{ piglets}}{2 \text{ sows}} = 16 \text{ piglets per sow} \]

5. One sow and her piglets use 58 bushels of corn to grow. If corn costs $2.75 per bushel, how much will you spend on corn?
   
   \[ 58 \text{ bushels} \times \$2.75 \text{ per bushel} = \$159.50 \]

6. You sell your 250 pound pig for $55 per one hundred pounds. How much money do you make? This will give you the gross income. To calculate the net income, you would need to consider all other expenses of raising a pig (i.e. feed, housing, equipment).
   
   \[ \frac{250 \text{ pounds}}{100 \text{ pounds}} = 2.5 \]
   
   \[ \$55 \text{ per one hundred pounds} \times 2.5 = \$137.50 \text{ (gross income) for your pig} \]
   Wilbur

2. Control myself? This is a matter of life and death and you talk about controlling myself.
   Fern

3. I only distribute pigs to early risers who are trying to rid the world of injustice. It just shows what can happen if a person gets out of bed promptly.
   Mr. Arable

4. Well, I admit it’s nice to have a pig around the place again. I haven’t had delicious, leftover slops in an age.
   Templeton

5. Do you want a friend, Wilbur? I’ll be a friend to you. I’ve watched you all day and I like you.
   Charlotte

6. Coming. ‘Bye, everybody. I love you. Thank you, Charlotte, for whatever it is you’re going to do to save Wilbur.
   Fern

7. You’re terrific as far as I’m concerned and that’s what counts. You’re my best friend and I think you’re sensational. Now stop arguing and get some sleep.
   Charlotte

8. I know. But I can face anything with friends like you. Friendship is one of the most satisfying things in the world.
   Wilbur

9. Well, sir. That does it. I have an announcement that you can print in the newspaper. I’m going to enter this pig in the County Fair. If he can win a blue ribbon, I guarantee we’ll never make bacon and ham out of him.
   Homer

10. I’m suddenly very tired. I have something very important I must do soon. I know I won’t be able to help you much longer.
    Charlotte

11. Humble has two meanings. It means “not proud” and it means “close to the ground.” That’s Wilbur all over.
    Charlotte

12. This is the first night I’ve ever spend away from home. I’m glad you’re with me, Charlotte. I never feel lonely when you’re near.
    Wilbur

13. Even if I don’t win the blue ribbon...and the worst happens...I will never forget you.
    Wilbur

14. Bravery is just one of the many things I’ve learned from you, Charlotte...my friend.
    Wilbur

15. He’s not dead. He’s fainted. He gets embarrassed easily.
    Homer

16. You have been my friend. That in itself is a tremendous thing. After all, what’s a life, anyway? We’re born, we live a little, we die.
    Charlotte

17. It is not often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer. Charlotte was both.
    Charlotte