



# HOW I BECAME A PIRATE STUDY GUIDE

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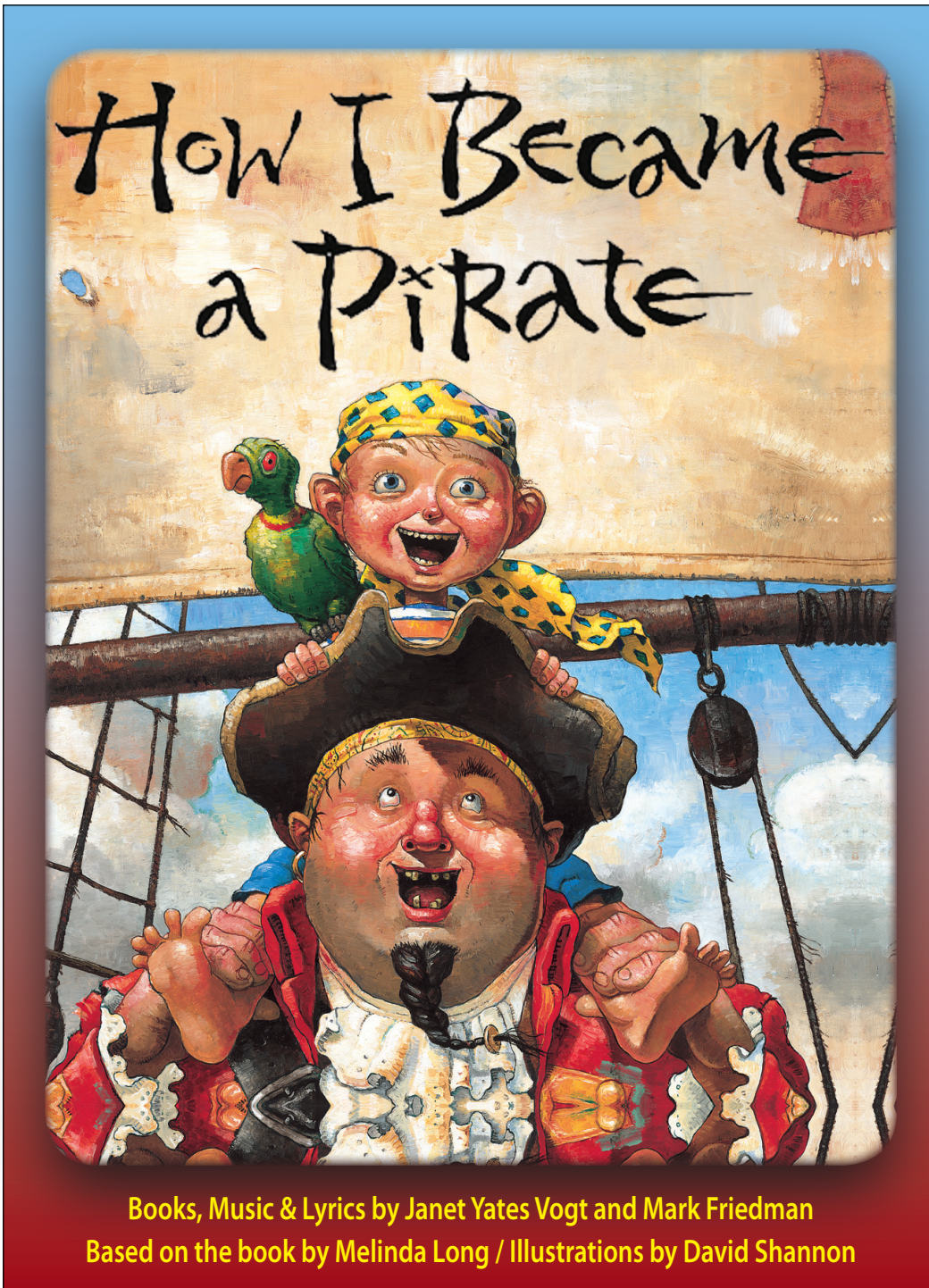
POP! FIELD TRIP  
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# DALLAS CHILDREN'S THEATER On Tour

Astonishing kids & families with the fun of Broadway-like plays & a lot more!

## BEHIND THE CURTAIN A CREATIVE & THEATRICAL RESOURCE GUIDE FOR TEACHERS



As part of DCT's mission to integrate the arts into classroom academics, the ***Behind the Curtain Resource Guide*** is intended to provide helpful information for the teacher and student to use before and after attending a performance. The activities presented in this guide are suggested to stimulate lively responses and multi-sensory explorations of concepts in order to use the theatrical event as a vehicle for cross-cultural and language arts learning.

**Please use our suggestions as springboards to lead your students into meaningful, dynamic learning; extending the dramatic experience of the play.**

Dallas Children's Theater

# BEHIND THE CURTAIN

A Creative & Theatrical Resource Guide for Teachers

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Play ..... HOW I BECAME A PIRATE

by ..... Janet Yates Vogt & Mark Friedman

Based on the Book by ..... Melinda Long

Illustrated by ..... David Shannon

DCT on Tour Producing Director ..... Sally Fiorello

HOW I BECAME A PIRATE: The Musical is presented through special arrangement with Theatrical Rights Worldwide, 1180 Avenue of the Americas, Suite 640, New York, NY 10036, [www.theatricalrights.com](http://www.theatricalrights.com).

DALLAS CHILDREN'S THEATER, one of the top five family theaters in the nation, serves over 250,000 young people from 55+ cities and 29+ states each year through its eleven main-stage productions, national tour, educational programming, and outreach activities. Since its opening in 1984, this award-winning theater has existed to create challenging, inspiring and entertaining theater, which communicates vital messages to our youth and promotes an early appreciation for literature and the performing arts. As the only major organization in Dallas focusing on theater for youth and families, DCT produces literary classics, original scripts, folk tales, myths, fantasies and contemporary dramas that foster multicultural understanding, confront topical issues and celebrate the human spirit.

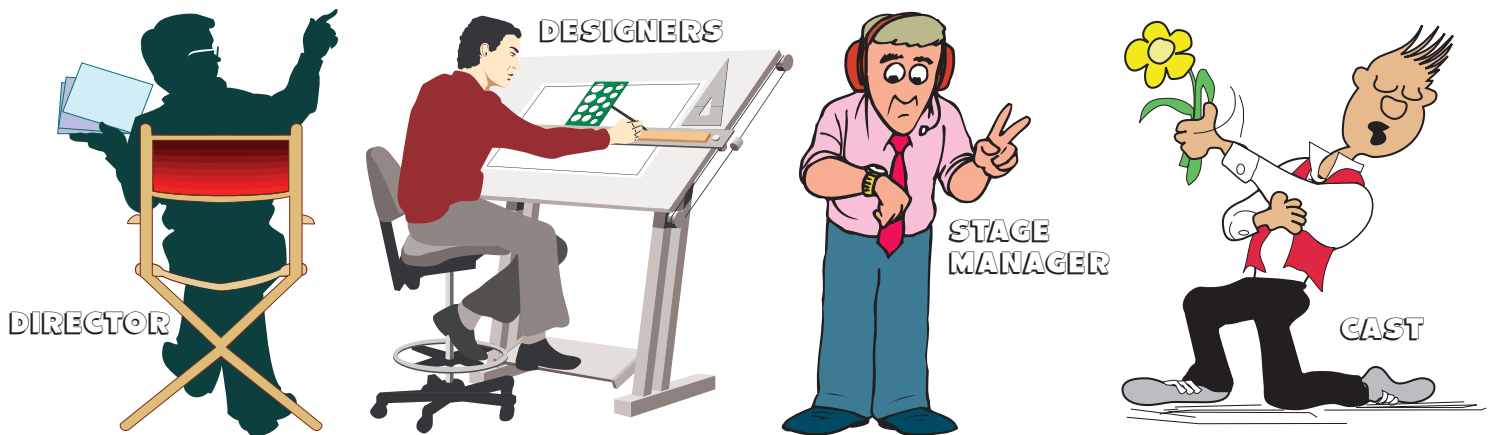
DCT is committed to the integration of creative arts into the teaching strategies of academic core curriculum and educating through the arts. Techniques utilized by DCT artist/teachers are based upon the approach developed in Making Sense with Five Senses, by Paul Baker, Ph.D.

DCT founder and Executive Artistic Director, Robyn Flatt, defines the artistic mission and oversees the operation of the organization, consisting of twenty-five full time staff members and more than 200 actors, designers, theater artists and educators.

Permission is granted for material included in this Resource Guide to be copied for use in the classroom.

# CURTAINS UP ON PUTTING TOGETHER A PERFORMANCE

Every DCT performance you see is the result of many people working together to create a play. You see the cast perform on stage, but there are people that you do not see who help before, during, and after every production.



## Director

- Determines the overall performance “look” of the performance
- Guides the actors in stage movement and character interpretation
- Works with designers to plan the lights and sound, scenery, costumes and make-up, and stage actions

## Designers

- Plan the lights, scenery, costumes, make-up, sound, and actions to help bring the director’s vision to life
- There are also designers who work to create the posters, advertisements, programs and other media for the performance.

## Stage Manager

- Before the performance, creates a cuesheet to guide the crew in getting things on and off the stage during the performances.
- During the performance, the stage manager uses this cuesheet to direct people and things on and off the stage at the proper times.

## Crew

- Build and operate the scenery, costumes, props, and light and sound during the performances.

## Cast

- Includes all of the performers who present the story on stage.

## Audience

- That’s right! There can be no performance without you, the audience. The role of the audience is unique because you experience the entertainment with the performers and backstage crew. You are a collaborator in the performance and it is important to learn your role so you can join all the people who work to create this DCT production.



# CURTAINS UP ON THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE

Watching a play is different from watching television or a sporting event. When you watch T.V. you may leave the room or talk. At a sporting event you might cheer and shout and discuss what you're seeing. Your role as a member of the audience in a play means you must watch and listen carefully because-

- You need to concentrate on what the actors are saying.
- The actors are affected by your behavior because they share the room with you. Talking and moving around can make it difficult for them to concentrate on their roles.
- Extra noises and movement can distract other audience members.



**GIVE IT  
A TRY!**

## **Are you ready for your role in this performance?**

Check the box next to the statements that describe proper etiquette for an audience member.

- ☐ Try your best to remain in your seat once the performance has begun.
- ☐ Share your thoughts out loud with those sitting near you.
- ☐ Wave and call out to the actors on stage.
- ☐ Sit on your knees or stand near your seat.
- ☐ Bring snacks and gum to enjoy during the show.
- ☐ Reward the cast and crew with applause when you like a song or dance and at the end of the show.
- ☐ Arrive on time so that you do not miss anything or disturb other audience members while you are being seated.
- ☐ Keep all hands and feet and items out of the aisles during the performance.

## CURTAINS UP AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

Attending a play is an experience unlike any other entertainment experience. Because a play is presented live, it provides a unique opportunity to experience a story “as it happens”. Dallas Children’s Theater brings to life stories through its performances. Many people are involved in the process. Writers adapt the stories you read in order to bring them off the page and on to the stage. Designers and technicians create lighting effects so that you can feel the mood of a scene. Carpenters build scenery and make the “place” of the story become a real place, while costumers and make-up designers can turn actors into the characters you meet in the stories. Directors help actors bring the story to life and make it happen before your very eyes. All of these things make seeing a play very different from television, videos, computer games, or CDs and tapes of stories.

Hold a class discussion when you return from the performance. Ask students the following questions and allow them to write or draw pictures of their experience at DCT.

1. What was the first thing you noticed when you entered the theater? What did you notice first on the stage?
2. What about the set? Draw or tell about things you remember. Did the set change during the play? How was it moved or changed? Was there any space besides the stage where the action took place?
3. How did the lights set the mood of the play? How did they change throughout? What do you think “house lights” are? How do they differ from stage lights? Did you notice different areas of lighting?
4. What did you think about the costumes? Do you think they fit the story? What things do you think the costume designers had to consider before creating the costumes?
5. Was there music in the play? How did it add to the performance?
6. What about the actors? Do you think they were able to bring the characters to life? Did you feel caught up in the story? What things do you think the actors had to work on in order to make you believe they were the characters?



- Draw a picture of what the audience might look light from the stage. Consider your work from the viewpoint of the actors on stage. How might things look from where they stand?
- Write a letter to a cast member telling what you liked about the character.
- Write how you think it might feel to be one of the actors. Are the actors aware of the audience? How might they feel about the reactions of the audience today? How would you feel before the play began? What about after the show ends?
- Which job would you like to try? Acting, Directing, Lighting and Sounds, Stage Manager, Set designer, Costume designer or another role? What skills might you need to complete your job?
- Choose a favorite story and draw or use the computer to create a program cover design for a theatrical adaptation of your story.



# CURTAINS UP ON ADAPTATION

An adaptation is a change made in something so that it can fit a new use. *How I Became a Pirate* is an adaptation of a book, which is meant to be read, into a play, which is meant to be performed and viewed. Alyn Cardarelli took the work of Melinda Long and adapted it so that it could be performed for an audience on stage.

***Consider these questions for discussion before you attend the DCT production:***

- What kinds of things did Ms. Yates & Mr. Friedman have to consider in writing a script of the story?
- What kinds of things would Melinda Long be concerned about in giving permission for an adaptation of her story?
- Do you think the performance will be shorter or longer than the book?
- What will the characters look like? Will they match their illustrations? What differences can you expect?
- What about the story? What changes might you expect in adapting it for the stage? Why would these changes be necessary?

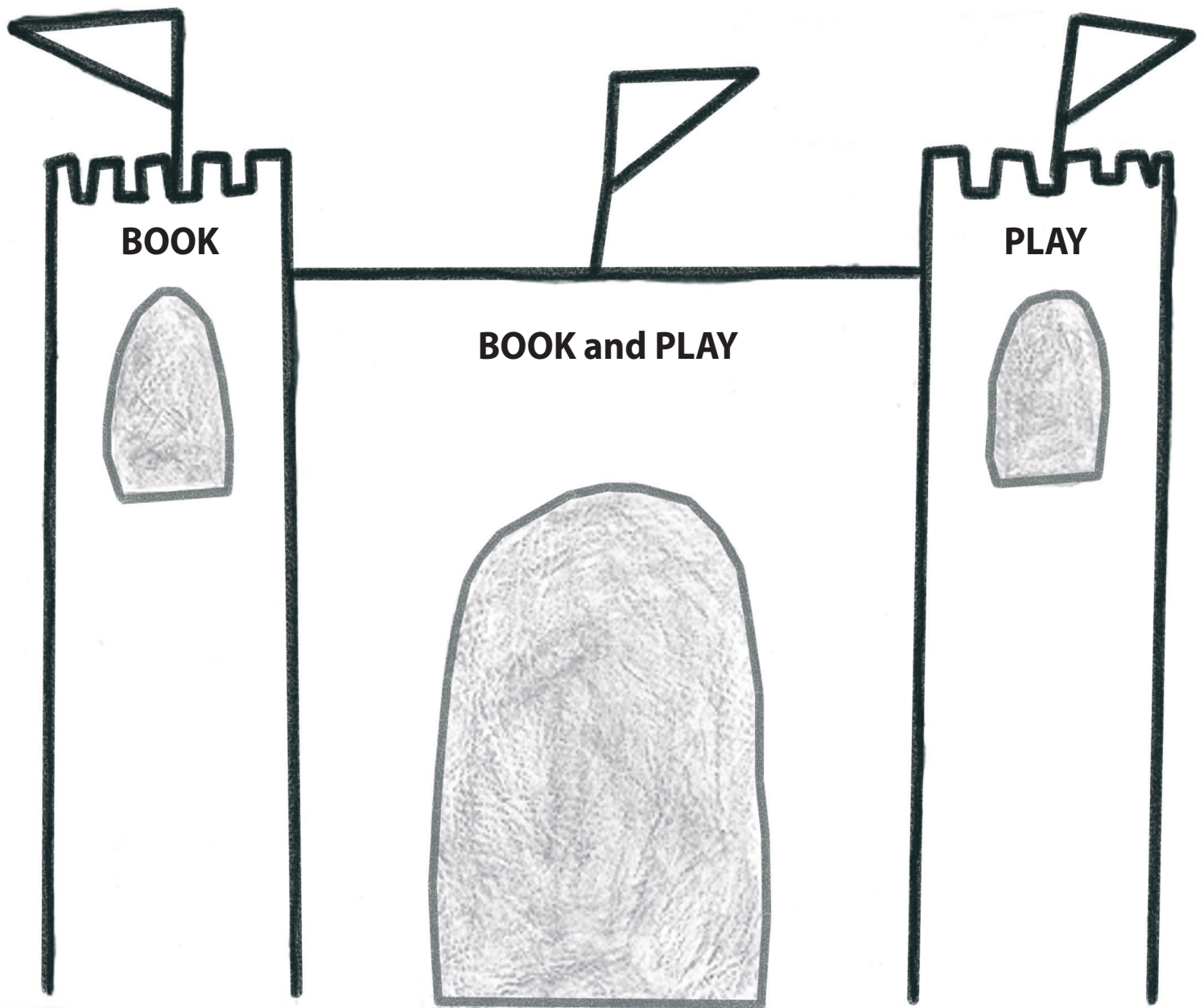
***After the performance, consider these questions:***

- Were there any characters or events that were in the book but not in the play? Why do you think these choices were made?
- Did the changes make the story stronger or was it weaker because of them?
- What do you think the set and costume designers need to consider when bringing the book to the stage?
- What things helped to tell the story on stage?



Use the sandcastle template on the next page to illustrate the similarities and differences between the book and DCT's performance of *How I Became a Pirate*.

**"HOW I BECAME A PIRATE" COMPARE AND CONTRAST SHEET  
BOOK VS. STAGE PERFORMANCE**





## CURTAINS UP ON THE AUTHOR

**MELINDA LONG** says she spent her childhood burying treasure in her backyard and has always had an affinity for pirates. She is a former teacher with the ability to speak pirate fluently and insists on bedtime stories for both pirates and landlubbers! Ms. Long lives in South Carolina with her husband and two children not too far from actual former "pirate hangouts".

## CURTAINS UP ON THE ILLUSTRATOR

**DAVID SHANNON** is both an author and illustrator of many books for children. He was born in Washington, D.C., but grew up across the country in Spokane, Washington. Mr. Shannon studied art and graduated from the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California then moved to New York City. He currently lives in Los Angeles where he remains a fan of baseball and plays softball.



**GIVE IT  
A TRY!**

***The words tell one part of the story and the pictures tell another part."***  
**–David Shannon**

As Mr. Shannon's words suggest, it is the role of an illustrator to bring life to an author's story through pictures. Try the following activity in order to gain insight into the difficulties of both the author and the illustrator in collaborating on a project.

You will need:

- Writing paper
- Drawing paper
- Pencils
- Drawing pencils, crayons, markers, colored chalk, or watercolors

Provide each student with writing paper and pencil. Encourage them to pursue the role of the author and write a clear description of a character or scene from their imaginations. The descriptions should be four or five sentences with vivid adjectives to paint a picture with words of the character or place.

Next, ask the students to trade papers with each other and switch roles to that of the illustrator. Provide them with drawing materials and encourage them to follow the author's word description as closely as possible when creating the images.

Follow up with a discussion of the difficulties each faced as author and as illustrator in the exercise.

## CURTAINS UP ON DISCUSSION

- What do you think makes pirates so appealing to readers and writers?
- What did Jeremy learn from his experience with the pirates?
- What was Jeremy able to teach the pirates, aside from his attempt with the soccer ball?
- Whom do you believe learned the greater lesson?
- What other stories do you know that teach us the value of our homes?
- What kind of bedtime routines do you share with your family?

## CURTAINS UP ON MATHEMATICS

The pirates have a terrible time with numbers and Jeremy helps them keep count throughout the story. Even Stubby Barbossa, their Certified Pirate Accountant, could use some extra practice with his facts. Try the following activity to measure your ability as a CPA!

Use the Treasure Map Mathematics master on the next page as a springboard sheet for students' math practice. Instruct students to number each of the squares on the map in sequence from the starting point to the X. Then provide students with math facts questions either on the board, from a book, or on a handout and have them work their way to a treasure by writing the correct solutions on the lines.

## CURTAINS UP ON LANGUAGE ARTS

### ***"There's No Place Like Home" Poem***

Jeremy Jacobs enjoys his adventure with the pirates until it's time for bed and he has no one to tuck him in or read him a bedtime story and he starts missing home.

Think about those things about home that are special to you and use the following format to write a poem about home. Extend the activity by encouraging students to illustrate their poems and display them in the classroom or hallway.

Home

(write three words that describe your home)

(write three things you love to do at home)

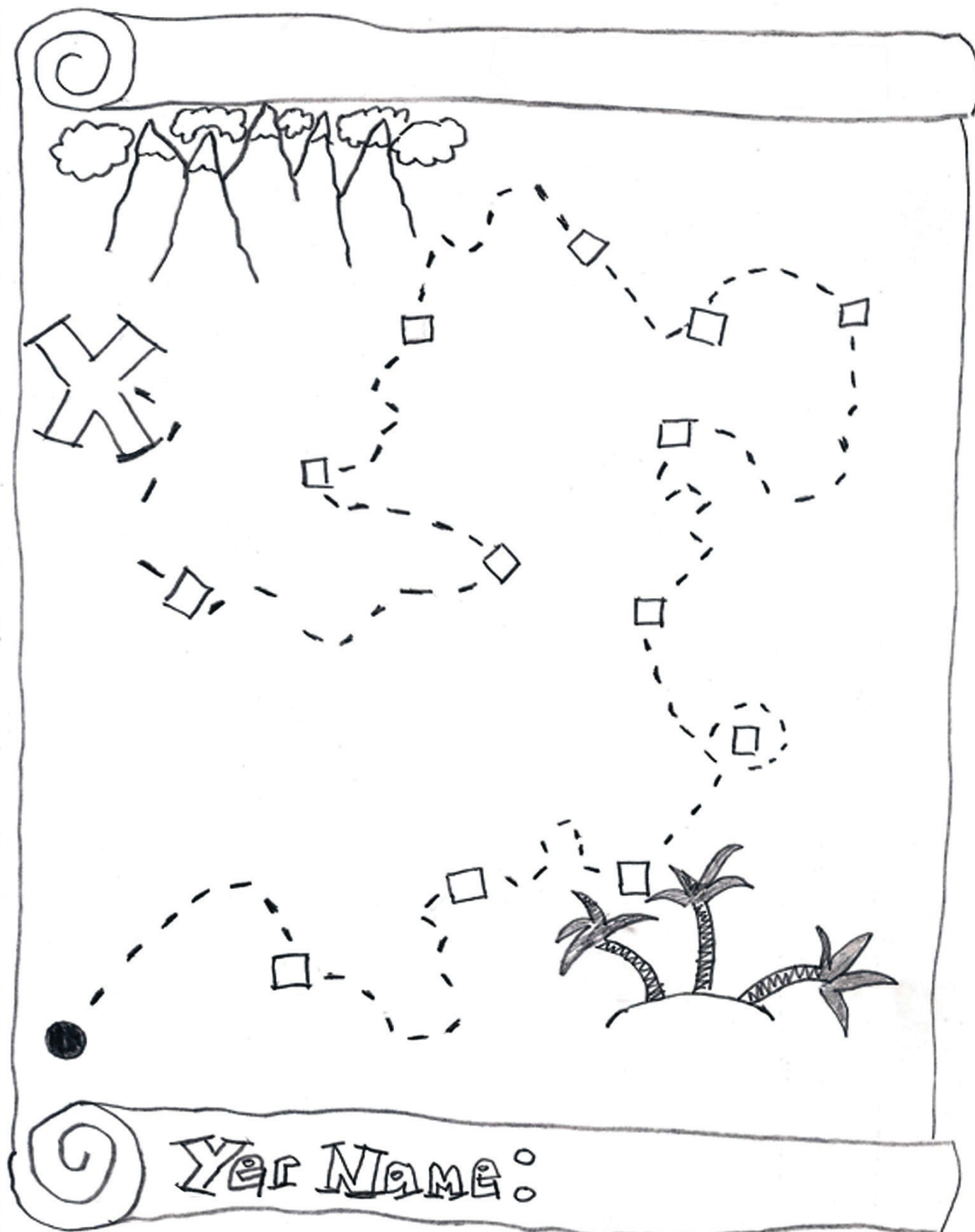
(write the names of those who live with you at home)

Home

*(continued on page 11)*



TREASURE MAP MATHEMATICS MASTER



## **LANGUAGE ARTS** continued

### ***“Talk Like a Pirate Day”***

Enjoy a celebration of your trip to DCT with a “Talk Like a Pirate Day” of your own. Use the “Pirate Head Cloth Thingy” and “Pirate Flag” activities to decorate and pass out the following vocabulary list to students and encourage them to “talk like a pirate” throughout your day. Add to the list any words the students might discover in their pirates studies.

Ahoy-hello

Avast-beware

Me Harties-friends

Drop Anchor-we’re there

Grub-food

Grog-drink

Scurvy Dog or Bilge Rat – unfriendly names to call another pirate who takes your share

## **CURTAINS UP ON READING**

If you enjoyed this story, you might try other books by the author and illustrator:

By David Shannon: *No, David*  
*David Goes to School*  
*David Gets in Trouble*  
*Duck on a Bike*  
*The Rain Came Down*  
*How Georgie Radburn Saved Baseball*  
*A Bad Case of Stripes*  
*The Amazing Christmas Extravaganza*

All available from Scholastic Books

By Melinda Long: *Pirates Don’t Change Diapers*  
Available through Scholastic Books

And from Simon and Schuster:  
*Hiccup Snickup*  
*When Papa Snores*



## CURTAINS UP ON ART

### ***Do-It-Yourself “Pirate Head Cloth Thing”***

“Methinks Jeremy Jacobs be a fine addition to a pirate crew. And so, I present him with his pirate head cloth thing.” –Captain Braid Beard

You will need:

- 20 x 20 inch square of plain fabric or a plain light-colored bandana
- Fabric markers or other permanent ink markers

Provide each student with a square of fabric and allow time to decorate it with permanent markers. Once dry, wear them for your “Talk Like A Pirate Day!” or to the performance at Dallas Children’s Theater!

### ***Design a Pirate Flag***

You will need:

Pirate flag masters for each student  
Drawing pencils, crayons, or markers

Pirates flew flags on their ships in an effort to appear bold, fearless, and frightening. Below are pictures of some actual pirate flags and the names of the captains on whose ships they flew. Talk with your class about what the flags might be trying to depict. Use the pirate flag master and allow each student to design his or her own pirate flag. Cut out the flags and tape them to students’ desks (or ships, if you will!) for your own “Talk Like a Pirate Day” celebration.

You might extend the activity with older children by having them research in groups the pirates listed and their flags.



*Walter Kennedy*



*Bart Roberts*



*Henry Every*



*Edward England*



*Richard Worley*



*Christopher Moody*



*Stede Bonnet*



*Edward Low*



*Bart Roberts (2nd Flag)*



*Jack Rackam*



*Blackbeard (Edward Teach)*



*Emanuel Wynne*



*Thomas Tew*



*Christopher Condent*

-image from The Dangerous Book for Boys by Conn & Hal Iggulden

