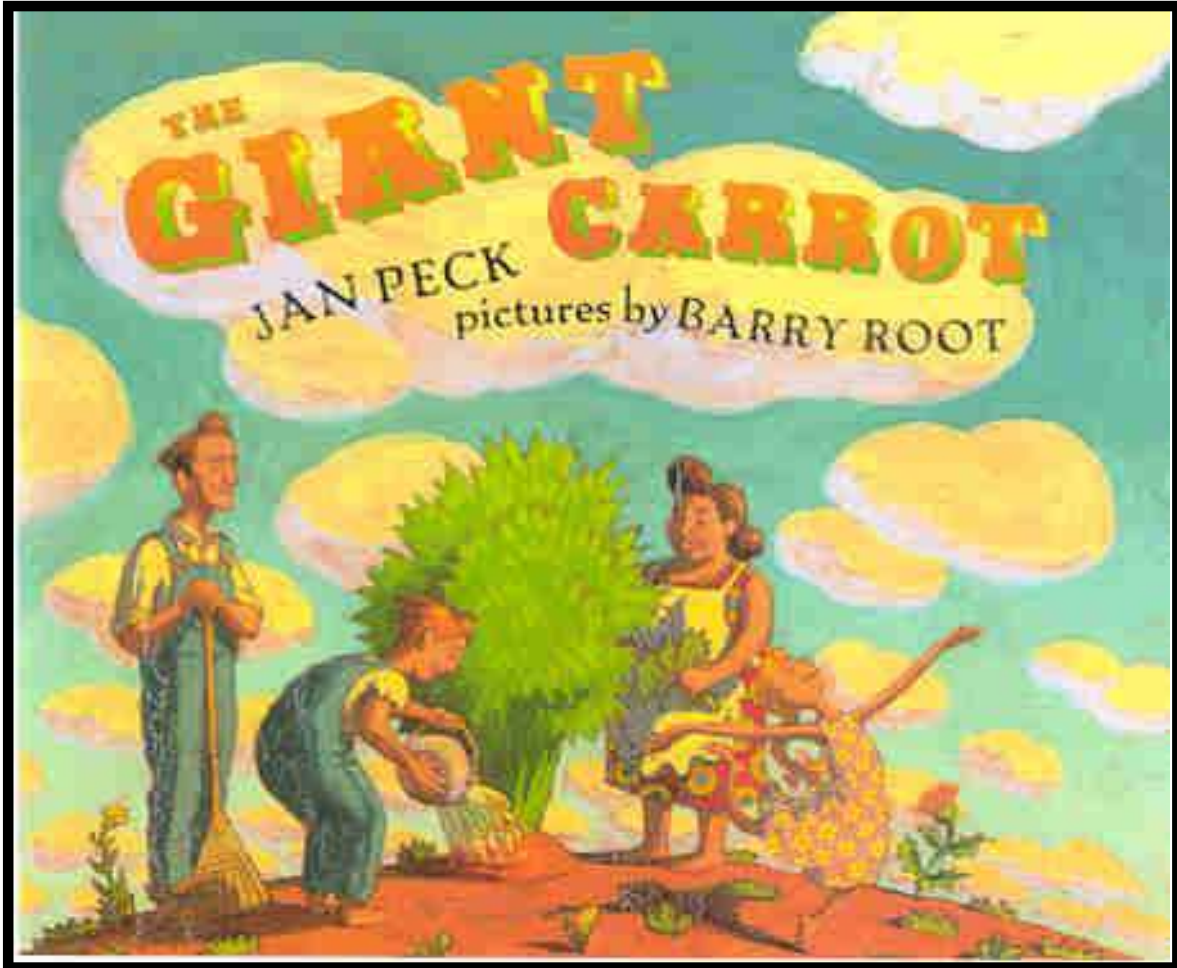


# Curriculum Guide

## *The Giant Carrot*

Study Guide by Jan Peck

Reproducible



Dial Books for Young Readers, Penguin/Putnam ISBN 0803718233.

**Award-winning Children's Book Writer**

*Jan Peck*

# PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Ask students if they've heard any folktales, such as Cinderella or Snow White. Have the students tell or write a folktale they know well. Have the students share with the class their folktales. Talk a little bit about where folktales come from: old stories that used to be told long long ago and were handed down through the generations.

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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- What folktale did *The Giant Carrot* come from? *The Turnip*, an old folktale from Russia.
- Who are the characters in *The Giant Carrot*? Papa Joe, Mama Bess, Brother Abel, and Little Isabelle.
- What does each character want? Tall Papa Joe wants a tall glass of carrot juice; Wide Mama Bess wants a wide bowl of carrot stew; Strong Brother Abel wants a jar of strong carrot relish, and Sweet Little Isabelle wants a little cup of sweet carrot pudding. Notice that they want something that is like themselves.
- How does each character help the carrot grow? Papa Joe digs the soil, spreads the compost, and rakes the leaves; Mama Bess plants the carrot seed and weeds; Brother Abel waters the carrot; and Little Isabelle sings and dances to the carrot.
- What happens after the carrot grows? They cannot pull it out of the soil.
- What do the family members learn by the end of the book? That working together they can accomplish great things and even the smallest person can make a big difference.
- What would you make to eat if you had a giant carrot? Carrot cake, carrot salad, cooked carrots, carrot ice cream?

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# CROSS CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES

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**SCIENCE**—Let's grow a Giant Carrot.

Usually a carrot seed is very tiny about the size of this period.

But for a Giant Carrot, we'll make the seed the size of your fist.  
(Make a fist.)

Now plant the seed in the ground. (Act like you are burying your fist with your other hand.)

Now water your seed. (Act like you are pouring water over your fist and make the sound effects, shhhhhh!)

Oh, look! Here's a little root. It's called a radicle. Can you say, radicle? (Stick out your index finger from your fist and make it grow down toward the ground.)

Bring out the sun to warm up the seed. (Hold your other hand high and out like sunrays.)

Oh, look! Two little baby leaves. They are called cotyledons. Can you say, cotyledon? (Hold up your two first fingers from your fist.)

Now water your plant again. (Act like you are pouring water over your plant and make the sound effects, shhhhhh!)

Grow more leaves. (Spread out all your fingers and then stretch you arm up and up and up.)

We just grew a Giant Carrot and this is how real seeds grow. This is real botany!

**HISTORY**— The Big Turnip is an old Russian folktale told by traveling minstrels in the 1200's. Have the students research what life was like at that time? Did they have computers, radios, phones, or television?

What type of clothes did the people wear? What did they do for entertainment? What did people do to make a living? What did they use for transportation? What type of houses did they have? How do the folktales show the concerns of people at that time? How are people the same now? How are people different?

# CROSS CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES

**MATH**— Have a contest to see who can bring in the longest carrot, the largest circumference carrot, and the most mass carrot. Measure and weigh your carrots and have a special award for the winners. Check my Website at <http://janpeck.com/page3.htm> to print out a Giant Carrot bookmark as an award.

**WRITING**— Jan Peck used *The Big Turnip* to springboard the idea for *The Giant Carrot*. What are some other fruits, vegetables, or objects that you could use to write your own story? Also brainstorm different characters. You can use animals, as well as friends, family and pets for your characters. Write your story and share it in your classroom.

**ART**— Draw and color pictures of *The Giant Carrot* or your own version of the story. Notice that the illustrator's name is Barry Root. Isn't that funny since a carrot is a root.

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Little Isabelle's Carrot Puddin'  
(Ask Mama or Papa to help you.)

When smooth, stir in gently:

Combine and blend until smooth:

4 slices bread, cut into cubes

1 cup peeled and grated carrots

1/4 cup raisons

1/2 cup milk

1/4 cup chopped nuts

2 whole eggs

Pour into greased baking dish. Bake for one hour at 350 degrees F.

1/2 teaspoon nutmeg

Serve hot or cold in coffee cups.

1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

Delicious with ice cream too.

2 tablespoons melted butter

1 cup honey (I told you it's as sweet as Isabelle.)

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## Praise for Jan Peck's

### *The Giant Carrot*

- \* The Kentucky Bluegrass Award 1999 Master List
- \* Named to the 2000-2001 Arkansas Diamond Award Master List
- \* Named to the 1999-2000 Pennsylvania Young Readers' Choice Award Master List
- \* Named to the 1999-2000 Maryland Black-Eyed Susan Award Master List
- \* "Best Children's Books of the Year" for 1998--Bank Street College
- \* Starred Review in School Library Journal

"A delightful variation of the folktale 'The Turnip.' This tale begs to be read aloud . . . a fine, humorous sense of story . . . a succulent story to savor."

— School Library Journal Book Review Star

Dial Book for Young Readers, 1998, 32 pages, full-color illustration, ISBN 0-8037-1823-3, \$15.99. Penguin Putnam Inc. Ages 4-9



## About the Author

Jan Peck and David Davis teamed up about five years ago to present a program to reach every student.

"Our goal is to put on the most entertaining, inspiring, motivating school program you've ever had!"

Our highly interactive presentation includes:

An impromptu Jazz Band (with shades, mock musical instruments, and hats) using Davis's Children's Choice Award winning book: *Jazz Cats* and starring your students and teachers.

A GIANT 6'6" CARROT and a dramatic play of *The Giant Carrot* starring your students as the actors.

You'll take a dive *Way Down Deep in the Deep Blue Sea* and go on a *Pirate Treasure Hunt*, me maties!

Inspiration for writing, reading, and drawing. Encouragement, inspiration and help with taking the (TAKS) creative writing test for Texas 4th Graders!

Special surprises and gifts for all students and teachers! For ages PreK-6th; large and small groups.

Please see our website at <http://janpeck.com/2-4-1.htm> or write to [janpeck@mindspring.com](mailto:janpeck@mindspring.com) for more information.

Jan Peck is an organic gardener and a former cook for Auntie Em's, a vegetarian, health-food restaurant in Cowtown, so she knows plenty about carrots.

She's the author of *The Giant Carrot* (Dial Books for Young Readers, 1998), *Way Down Deep in the Deep Blue Sea* (Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2004), *Way Up High in a Tall Green Tree* (Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2005), *Way Far Away on a Wild Safari* (Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers 2006). Her story "The Perfect Dog" is in the best-selling book *Chicken Soup for the Kid's Soul* (Heath Publications, 1998).

Jan is a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, the past Regional Advisor and President for the North Central/ Northeast Texas Chapter and has been a freelance editor for *Boys' Life* magazine.

# WHAT READERS ARE SAYING

A delightful children's book for all ages.

Reviewer: A reader

Author Jan Peck has given a new twist to the old Russian folktale "The Giant Turnip". Beginning her book, Mrs. Peck states the background of her story. A delightful tale of a giant carrot takes the basis of her tale. From Papa Joe's desire to have "a tall glass of carrot juice" to sweet Little Isabelle's desire to have "little cups of carrot puddin'", this tale flows smoothly. The repetition and building of this tale adds a joy for children. Before long, the children are joining the story. A great addition to any library - public, private, school and home.

Mother Approved!

Reviewer: A reader

My daughter got dressed up and did a beautiful creative dance for me last week. When she was done, she said, "Mom, don't I look like that pretty little girl in the carrot book?" That in itself wouldn't be amazing except for the fact that WE DON'T OWN THIS BOOK! WE HAD CHECKED THIS BOOK OUT FROM THE PUBLIC LIBRARY ABOUT 6 MONTHS AGO! I'm buying my copy today! The illustrations grab you. They're realistic, colorful and created with a sense of humor. I could say the same for the text which builds page to page allowing each member of the family to play a role in contributing to the success of the giant carrot. My children love this book, especially when I read it with a "southern drawl."

Popular!

Reviewer: A reader

I conduct a weekly preschool storytime at a public library in California. After I finished reading this book, there was a physical confrontation between two children who both wanted to check it out! What a crowd-pleaser, and a pleasure to read aloud.

Delightful!

Reviewer: A reader

The prose glows as warmly as the sun-drenched illustrations. Definitely one of the best of the recent crop of picture books. I just wish the author had included, not only a recipe for sweet carrot puddin', but also one for wide Mama Bess's thick carrot stew! Yum!

A rollicking fun read.

Reviewer: A reader

The Giant Carrot has a lot going for it. It is fun for kids to listen to, fun for them to read, fun to act out, and filled with fun illustrations and a wonderful message of cooperation and the joy of finding one's own place.