



# and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day

Based on the Book by Judith Viorst

Book and Lyrics by Judith Viorst

Music by Shelly Markham

Directed by D. Scott Withers

Musical Direction by Alan J. Plado

Choreography by Laurie Trygg

Scenic Design by Holly Windingstad

Costume Design by Kish Finnegan

Lighting Design by Michael J. Eddy

Sound Design by Christopher Neumeyer

Stage Manager: Abigail Hartmann

Produced by special arrangement with  
The Dramatic Publishing Company

## The Cast

Alexander.....	Jason Powell
Nick/Albert.....	Jon Gentry
Becky/Fate 1.....	Katie McFadzen
Mrs. Dickens/Fate 2.....	Debra Stevens
Anthony/Paul.....	Israel Jimenez
Mother/Audrey.....	Kate Haas
Father/Dr. Fields/Shoe Salesman/Phillip.....	Dwayne Hartford

This production is supported in part by:



Arizona Commission on the Arts  
Bashas' Markets  
City of Tempe/Tempe Municipal Arts Commission  
Wells Fargo

Today you saw a production of *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* performed by Childsplay. Here are some things to think about and some activities to do now that you've seen the show!

Tell your family and/or friends about the play you saw.

► Tell them about the story and the characters: What happens in the beginning, the middle and the end of the play? How many characters can you remember? Which character was your favorite and why? What were some of the things the characters did? What was your favorite part of the play?

► Tell them about the costumes, scenery, props, lights, music and sound effects from the production. Draw pictures to help describe things you talk about.

► Tell them about something new that you learned from the play. For example, what could you learn about dealing with a bad day from this story?

### Some Questions to Ponder:

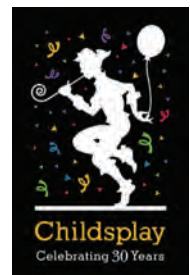
► How can you tell if someone is having a bad day? What kinds of sounds do they make? What might they look like (body language, facial expression)?

► What might your amazing, superb and absolutely wonderful day look like?

► Now that you have seen the play, how were the book and the play the same? How were they different? How did it make you feel to see the story come alive onstage?

We love to hear from our audience members!  
Send your letters, drawings or reviews to:

Childsplay  
PO Box 517  
Tempe, AZ 85280



You can email us at  
[info@childsplayaz.org](mailto:info@childsplayaz.org)

Check out our website! [www.childsplayaz.org](http://www.childsplayaz.org)



# Good Days and Bad Days

Some days are really GREAT and some are just plain TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE, NO GOOD, VERY BAD DAYS. Can you think of ways to turn a bad day into a better day? Try to think of 10 things that could happen to make you have a bad day. For each bad day, think of one way to make it better. You can write OR draw—or both!

Example:

I am having a bad day when.... I fall off my bike and scrape my knee.

I can make this bad day into a better day by...Getting a band-aid for my knee and then going out for ice cream.

"I am having a bad day when..."

"I can make this bad day into a better day by..."

"I am having a bad day when..."

"I can make this bad day into a better day by..."

I am having a bad day when..."

"I can make this bad day into a better day by..."

# Mappin' 'Round Australia

Directions: Alexander thinks that everything is better in Australia. Use the Compass and the following statements to find some of the places he might go if he were to run away to Australia.

## Australian Hot Spots

Great Barrier Reef  
Adelaide  
Sydney  
Tasmania  
Perth  
Darwin  
Melbourne  
Queensland

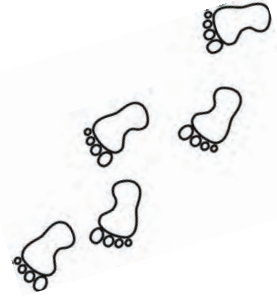


1. Perth is located on the west coast of the continent in the state of Western Australia.
2. Queensland is the name of the northeast state (region) of Australia.
3. Tasmania is a smaller island, south of Australia.
4. Darwin is a city on the north coast.
5. Victoria is the smallest state on the continent. Its capital city, Melbourne, is on the south coast of the continent.
6. Sydney, Australia's best-known city, is on the east coast in the state of New South Wales.
7. The Great Barrier Reef is located off the north east coast of Australia. It is the largest living organism in the world.
8. Adelaide is the capital city of the state of South Australia. It is located on the south coast, west of Melbourne.

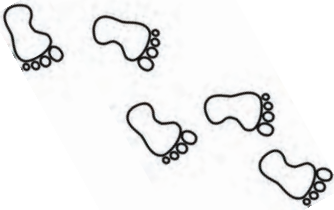
# Mappin' Your Daily Adventure

In the story of *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*, Alexander goes to school, the dentist, the shoe store, his Dad's office and back home again. In the boxes below, draw three places that you go to during your day. You can write inside or underneath the box too!

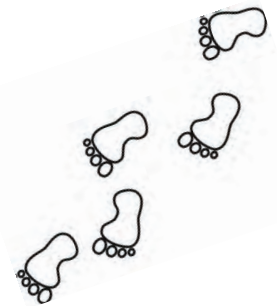
First, in the morning, I wake up and go to...



Next, in the afternoon, I go to...



Finally, at the end of the day, I go to...



# Aussie Slang

People who live in Australia speak English, but they use slang words that often are very difficult for us to understand. Read the short conversation between Alexander and his mother. It is full of Aussie slang! Use the glossary below to help you figure out what they are actually saying. It might be fun to work with a partner to read through the story!

**Alexander:** G'Day, Mum.

**Mother:** Howzat?

**Alexander:** Things are crook in Musclebrook. I'm pretty hot under the collar. Have I got a yarn for you. It's a ripper.

**Mother:** Now Alexander, don't chuck a wobbly.

**Alexander:** This arvo, I was having a chinwag with a mate of mine in kindy when this dingbat, Charles, conked me in the breadbasket!

**Mother:** What did your Chalkie say?

**Alexander:** She said we needed to solve our kafuffle. She thought we were just mucking around!

**Mother:** I think you got the rough end of the pineapple. Don't worry, I'll sort it.

**Alexander:** Ta, Mum.

**Mother:** She'll be apples, Alexander!

Once you've figured out what Alexander and his Mother are saying in Aussie slang, try to re-write the conversation in words that you know.

## Glossary of Aussie Slang:

**Arvo**-afternoon

**Breadbasket**-stomach

**Chalkie**-teacher

**Chinwag**-having a good chat

**Chuck a wobbly**-throw a tantrum

**Conk**-to hit someone

**Dingbat**-some who is acting foolish

**Kafuffle**-argument

**Kindy**-Kindergarten

**Mate**-good friend

**Mucking around**-playing around

**Mum**-Mom

**Hot Under the Collar**-to get angry

**Howzat?**-asking someone how something is

**I'll sort it**-I'll fix it

**It's a ripper!**-It's really great.

**Rough end of the pineapple**-you got a bad deal

**She'll be apples!**-Everything will be okay.

**Ta**-Thanks

**Things are crook in Musclebrook**-times are bad

Alex: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother: \_\_\_\_\_

Alex: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother: \_\_\_\_\_

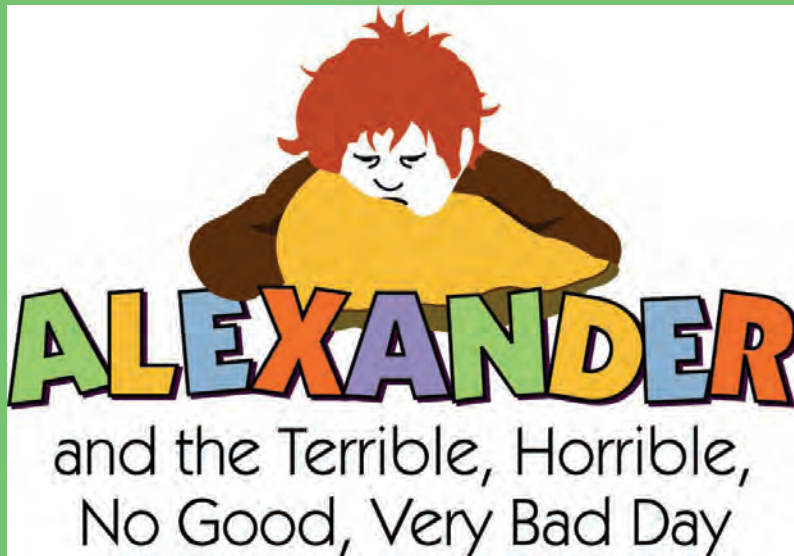
Alex: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother: \_\_\_\_\_

Alex: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother: \_\_\_\_\_

2008



A Play by Judith Viorst  
Produced by Childsplay



**Childsplay**  
Celebrating 30 Years

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## Guide for Educators

- Pre and Post Show Activities
- Arizona Standards-Based Lesson Plans
- Connects *Alexander* to Multiple Subject Areas
- Separate Workbook for Students



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Dear Educators,

We created this guide to help you prepare your students to attend *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day*, to assist you in working with students to process and reflect on the theatrical experience, and to use the play as a springboard for engagement with cross-curricular activities. Our companion guide, “Student Space,” provides a place for students to take independent ownership of their engagement with the play through creative thought and reflection. Please feel free to use these activities to suit your needs. We hope that you and your students enjoy the play and that you find this guide helpful for integrating the theatre-going activity into your curriculum.

Sincerely,

Zosia Cassie, Margaret Hoppe, Anne Negri, Xanthia Walker

Theatre For Youth MFA Candidates  
School of Theatre and Film  
Arizona State University

### How To Use This Guide

- The contents are arranged by subject area, and are described in the Table of Contents. The sidebar on the right side of each page of the guide also describes the materials on that page.
- The Arizona State Content Standards addressed by the activities are noted at the top of each lesson plan.
- All activities are incorporated into unified lessons. Please feel free to modify these to fit the specific needs of your students.
- “Student Space” is a separate workbook for your students. As you will note from the Table of Contents, certain lessons require a corresponding Student Space page.
- If you have limited time, try using the time spent traveling to and from the theatre to discuss pre and post show questions, theatre expectations, and/or encourage students to work in Student Space.

### Audience Expectations

**Please...**

- ~Use the restroom before the show. (Childsplay does not have an intermission for school performances!)
- ~Be respectful of the performers and your fellow audience members. (Remember, the actors can see and hear the audience the same way that the audience can see and hear the actors.)
- ~Stay seated and do not talk during the performance; Turn your cell phones OFF, and do not text message or use cameras or recording devices during the performance.
- ~Do not eat, drink, or chew gum in the theatre.

**Laugh, clap, and have a great time!**

## Play Synopsis

Alexander wakes up with gum in his hair and knows from the start that this is going to be a bad day. He does not get a toy in his cereal, his teacher does not like his drawing, the dentist tells him that he has a cavity and they do not have any cool sneakers in his size. It is definitely a terrible day; in fact, Alexander would simply love to run away to Australia. But in the end his mom reminds him that today is only one day and tomorrow will be another; she promises it will be better than this horrible, no good day.

### About Author and Playwright Judith Viorst

Judith Viorst has written both fiction and non-fiction books for children and adults. *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*, published in 1972, has sold over two million copies. Viorst's books for children include: *The Tenth Good Thing About Barney*; *The Alphabet From Z to A*; *Alexander, Who Used to be Rich Last Sunday*; *Alexander, Who's Not (Do You Hear Me? I Mean It!) Going to Move*.

<http://www.kennedy-center.org/programs/family/alexander/author.html>



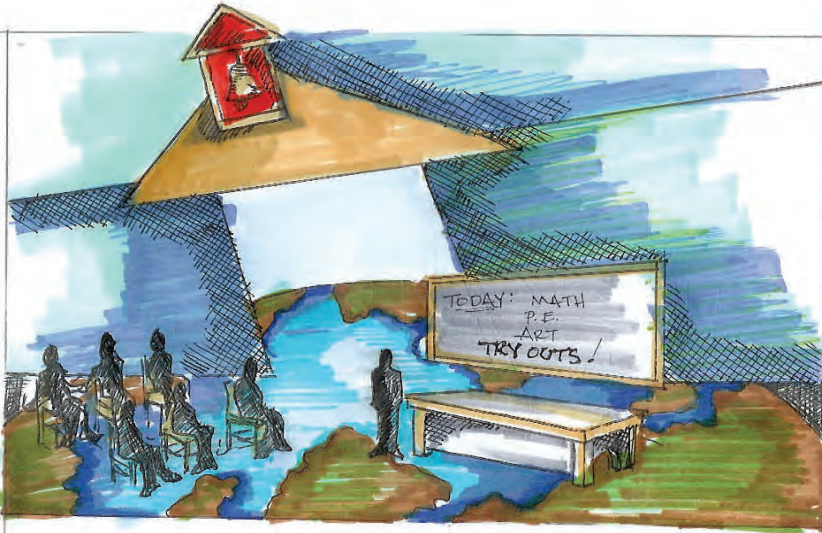
### From the Page to the Stage: Turning a Book into a Play

*Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* is based on Judith Viorst's own son! Viorst was inspired to write a book about her youngest son because he was consistently having bad days. In an interview with the Kennedy Center, Viorst states that: "Alexander seemed to be having A LOT of bad days. He fell out of trees, fell off of chairs, broke his wrist, knocked out his front teeth, and, in addition to these breaks and bruises, was involved in a variety of non-physical disasters and disappointments." Viorst felt that it was important to give young people an opportunity to think about bad days (and even laugh about them), stating: "I thought that the notion of 'a bad day,' could serve for him, and for all kids, as it does for adults, a 'container' function, suggesting that this day—this bad news—would (honest and truly!) come to an end".

In turning her book into a play, and then a musical, Viorst divided the book into episodes, and then "went through the book episode by episode. I wanted to keep that narration virtually word for word, which I did, while fleshing out the events Alexander describes. And so I gave dialogue to his brothers, parents, friends, etc., and put in a lot of dramatic action, *showing* as well as *telling* Alexander's story." Viorst then made the decision to add music: "As long as I was opening up Alexander's story, I decided it would be fun to also have his story told through songs." And that, is how *Alexander* went from the page to the stage!

<http://www.kennedy-center.org/programs/family/alexander/author.html>

**Preliminary scenic design sketch of Alexander's classroom by Holly Windingstad**



Often times, when a book is adapted for the stage, the playwright makes changes to the original story. For example, in the production of *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*, the story begins with a dream sequence in which Alexander hears friends of his complaining about bad things that happened to them. **What are some other examples of characters or situations in the play that are not in the book?**

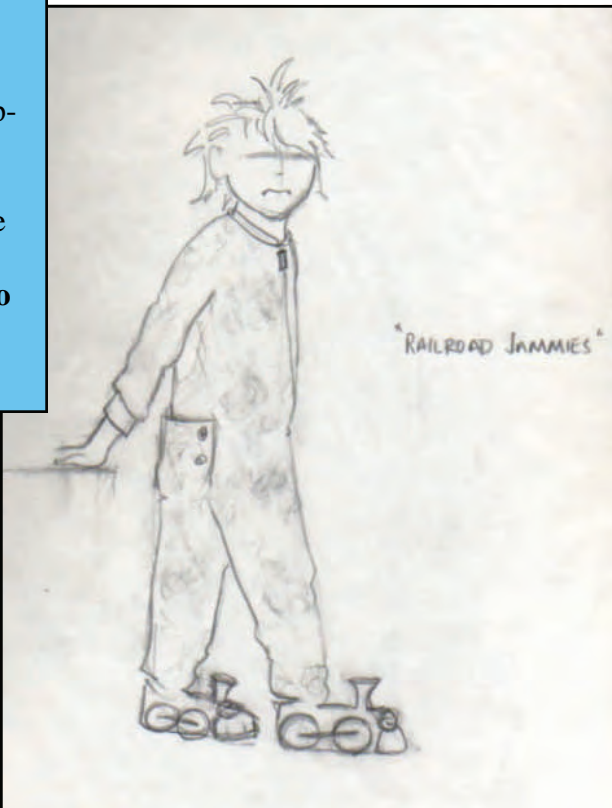
There are three different “worlds” in which the story is told. There is the real world in which most of the story from the book is told and the actors are speaking to each other. There is the narrative world in which Alexander talks to the audience about what has happened to him or how he feels about what has just happened to him. Finally, there is the fantasy world in which Alexander lets his imagination get away from him. Lights play a very important role in helping the audience know the difference between the three worlds. **How did the lighting designer use lights to create these different worlds? How did the three worlds differ from one another?**

Many of the actors in the show play several different characters. When this happens, the costume designer and wig designer must come up with ways to make the actors look different so that the audience knows they are playing new characters. In *Alexander*, three of the actors have to play both adults and kids. **Who are the actors who played these roles? How do the costumes and wigs help suggest the changes in character and age?**

**Ask your students the questions in bold before seeing the play and talk about their answers afterwards.**

When exploring the different locations for Alexander, the scenic designer wanted to include a unifying element. Because Alexander is having a horrible day, the designer wanted to show that Alexander's world seemed to go askew from the moment he woke up until he goes back to sleep that night. Therefore, all the places he visits seem to be slightly off in perspective from the way they would look in real life. **How did the designer use angles and visual perspective to make Alexander's world seem off-kilter?**

**Preliminary costume design sketch by Kish Finnegan**



# Pre-Show Discussion Questions

- Describe a day that has been terrible, horrible and no good. What happened to make it so? What did you do to make it better?
- In the future, what are some things you could do to improve a bad day?
- How can you tell if someone is having a bad day? What kinds of sounds do they make? What might they look like (body language, facial expression)?
- What might your amazing, superb and absolutely wonderful day look like?
- *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day* is a book and a stage musical. In what ways do you think they might be different? In ways do you think they might be the same?

# Post-Show Discussion Questions

- Now that you have seen the play, how were the book and the play the same? How were they different? How did it make you feel to see the story come alive onstage?
- What was your favorite moment in the play? Describe what happened, and why it was your favorite part.
- Who were the characters in the play that reminded you of people that you know in real life? What did they do onstage that reminded you of someone you knew?
- In the play, what did Alexander do to try and make his bad day better? What would you have done differently?
- In the play, Alexander's brothers make fun of him a lot. When in your life have your brothers, sisters, cousins, friends, or anyone else your age made fun of you? What did they say? What did you do to ask them to stop?

# Bringing *Alexander* to Life

**Theme:** Dramatizing a bad day.

**Grade Level:** K-3

**Time Needed:** 30-40 minutes

**Arizona Content Standards Addressed:**

Theatre: Strand 1—Create. Concept 1—Collaborate.

PO 102—Cooperate in the dramatic process.

Theatre: Strand 1—Create. Concept 2—Acting.

PO 102—Sustain a scene using appropriate language or movement with the teacher role-playing.



**Materials Needed:**

- Space in the classroom to move around.

**Framing:**

- Sitting in a circle in the classroom, introduce the story of *Alexander*.
  - \**This story is about a boy named Alexander who has a very bad day. Ask: What do you think I mean by “bad day”? Who has had a bad day? Why was it so bad? How did it make you feel?*

**Process:**

- Begin the story: *At the beginning of this story, Alexander wakes up and looks for the gum that he put in his mouth before he went to sleep last night.*
  - \**Ask: What do you do when you are looking for something?*
  - \***Ensemble improvisation:** Students lie down in their spot in the circle and act like they are going to sleep – stretching, yawning, closing their eyes.
  - \***On your signal, they will “wake up” and search for the gum. Then, they will find it in their hair and react to this.**
  - \***Going around the circle, ask each student how he/she feels about having gum stuck in his/her hair.**
- Continue the story: *At school, Alexander’s friends won’t let him play with them.*
  - \**Ask: Have your friends ever said you couldn’t play with them? Have you ever told friends they could not play with you? What did you say?*
  - \***Small group improvisation:** Have the children make small groups. Ask them to act like they are playing a game in the schoolyard (only using their bodies, no voices for now).
  - \***Explain that you are now going to play Alexander. Go up to each group and ask to play. The students are going to say no and give a reason(s) why you can’t play with them. You will keep trying to play with them but the scene will always end with them saying “no”.**
  - \***Give a few examples of this response. It is ok if the students repeat your examples because the goal is to get each of them to create dialogue with you.**
  - \***Move from one group to another and do a 30 second scene with each. Make sure that the students can see that you, as Alexander, are hurt by their responses. The other students can watch each scene.**
- Continue the story: *While he is at his dad’s office, Alexander accidentally makes a big mess.*
  - \**Ask: Have you ever made a big mess by accident? What happened? What did you say when you got in trouble?*

# Bringing Alexander to Life Continued

- \*Small group improvisation: Each group of students imagines that they are standing in a great big mess.
- \*Ask: *What sorts of things are on the floor in this mess? How much can you move around the space?*
- \*If you feel comfortable doing so, allow the students to create a bit more “mess” in their playing space.
- \*Explain to the students that they are now playing Alexander again. The students will act like Alexander and try to hide the mess. You are going to come up to each group as Alexander’s Dad and scold them for making such a big mess. They are going to tell you how it happened and that it is not their fault, but you are still not going to be happy.
- \*You will finish each scene by saying “ please don’t pick me up from work any more!” Move from student to student (similar to the scenes in #4) and do a 30 second scene with each while the others watch.

- Finish the story: *Alexander’s night is not any better than his terrible day. But, when his mother tucks him into bed, she tells him that everyone has a bad day sometimes, and that tomorrow will be better.*
  - \*Ensemble improvisation: The students act like they are going to bed again.
  - \*Explain that you are going to play Alexander’s mother now. The students will still play Alexander.
  - \*As you visit each student, he/she will tell you one bad thing about his/her day and you will comfort him/her, telling him/her that everyone has a bad day sometimes and wishing one nice thing for him/her. Then you will say goodnight.
  - \*Move from student to student, creating 30 second scenes.
- Everyone goes to sleep, then opens their eyes – the story is over and they are not playing Alexander anymore.
  - \*Ask: *How did your character feel when you got gum in your hair? How did your character feel when you told Alexander he couldn’t play with you? How do you think Alexander felt? (You can tell them how your character felt at this point). How did you feel as Alexander when your mom comforted you? What are some things that you can do if you are having a bad day?*

## Other Possibilities:

- As a pre-show lesson: You may want to “fill in the gaps” in narration between each unit if your students do not know the story, so their scenes will make sense.
- Less time: Only act out certain scenes; remove the first scene and/or the office scene and add this part of the story to your narration.
- 4-6: Students use available material and furniture to create their bedrooms. For playground and office scenes, the students can work in pairs. For the playground scene, one student plays Alexander and one his friend. For the office scene, one student plays Alexander and one his dad. Change the gender of Alexander and his dad as needed. Ask the pairs to decide on a first line and last line and focus on the conflict. If time allows, each pair can present their scene.

# Processing Conflict

**Theme:** Dealing with bullies in a constructive way.

**Grade Level:** 3-6

**Time Needed:** 45 minutes

**Arizona Content Standards Addressed:**

- Health: 5CH-F7.  
PO 2—Identify and explain the difference between negative and positive behaviors exhibited in conflict situations and strategies for mediating and resolving The conflict.
- Theatre: Strand 1—Create. Concept 1—Collaboration.  
PO 201—Collaborate to create a scenario/script as a team.  
PO 204—Collaborate in informal performances.



**Materials Needed:**

- 5-7 chairs, all of the same weight and size, a hat or some type of simple costume pieces, a big piece of paper, writing utensils (preferably markers).

**Framing:**

- If possible, clear an open space in your classroom large enough that the class can stand comfortably in a circle.
- *The Great Game of Power* demonstrates power relationships.
  - \*Place the chairs in the center of your clear space. Invite students to form a circle around the chairs.
  - \*Explain the objective: *to arrange the chairs so that one is in a clearly more powerful position than the others.*
  - \*Students may raise their hands when they have an idea of a way to arrange the chairs.
  - \*Either the instructor or the student with the idea then arranges the chairs (stacking them, creating a pyramid, turning the chairs on their backs...the possibilities are endless).
  - \*Remind students to arrange the chairs carefully and safely. After each new arrangement is made, ask:  
*Which chair is the most powerful? Why do you think it is more powerful than the other chairs?*
  - \*Allow for up to 5 re-arrangements of the chairs.

**Process:**

- Clear the chairs out of the space and sit in a circle. Take a large piece of paper and a writing utensil. As a class, brainstorm answers to the following questions, writing down key points:
  - \**What does power mean to you?*
  - \**In a classroom, who are powerful people and why—what makes them powerful?*
  - \**On the playground, who are powerful people and why—what makes them powerful?*
  - \**What is a bully? Are bullies powerful?*
  - \**What kinds of things do bullies say and do that hurt students?*
    - Make a list of 5 things that bullies do and say that hurt the students' feelings or that make them angry.
  - \*Assign each group a scenario from the list of 5 things that bullies do that hurt/anger students (if your class is large, you may brainstorm a larger list OR assign multiple groups the same scenario).

# Processing Conflict, continued

- Split the class into groups of four.
  - \*Ask each group to pick one person to be green, purple, pink, and orange.
  - \*Each group will create a thirty-second scene where green and purple are bullies, and pink and orange are students being bullied.
  - \*Make sure that students know the following information:
    - During their scene they may not use foul or inappropriate language.*
    - They may not touch each other (i.e. no hitting, kicking, pushing).*
    - Tell the students to be sure to have a first and last line for each scene.*
  - \*After a couple of minutes, have the students switch roles and begin the scene over again.
- When five minutes are up, bring the class back to a circle, and ask to see each group's work.
  - \*Begin a scene, and after the scene has developed for about 30 seconds, call "freeze" and "switch roles." Students begin again in the opposite role.
  - \*After each scene, ask:
    - What are these bullies doing?*
    - Why is that bullying?*
  - \*After the class has seen all of the scenes, have them sit down and ask the following questions:
    - How did it feel to bully someone?*
    - How did it feel to be bullied?*
    - What can kids who are being bullied say and do to stand up to bullies?*
  - \*Make a list of ways that kids can stand up to bullies. Do not allow answers that are violent or involve dangerous behavior. Try to come up with at least 5 techniques for stopping a bully.
- Have the class get up and find their own space in the center of the clear space you've been working in.
  - \*Tell the class that in one minute you are going to be in-role as a bully. You are going to bully them, and one at a time they will have the chance to stand up to you.
  - \*Give them one minute to practice.
- Option one: After a moment has passed, ask the students to get into a circle, with the instructor in the center of the circle.
  - \*The instructor goes in-role as the bully (if you'd like, you may put on a hat or another simple costume piece to distinguish yourself as the bully in this moment).
  - \*Using the scenarios brainstormed earlier, approach each student for about 20-30 seconds and bully them. Allow each student to stand up to you.
- Option two: Same as one, but instead of coming to the circle, keep the students spread out throughout the room.
  - \*Bully the entire class at once, and have them stand up to you from their positions in the room (this is more effective for larger classes, or if you are worried about time).
- Ask the class to find their own space again, or to go back to their desks and:
  - \*Write a journal entry about a time (real or imagined) that they stood up to a bully.
  - \*Draw a picture in which the student stands up to a bully.



# Dear Alexander & Good Days, Bad Days

**Theme:** Expressing feelings and empathy, letter-writing.

**Grade Level:** 2-6

**Time Needed:** 10-15 minutes

**Arizona Content Standards Addressed:**

Writing: Strand 3—Writing Applications. Concept 1—Expressive.

PO1—Write a narrative based on imagined or real events.

Writing: Strand 3—Writing Applications. Concept 3—Functional.

PO2—Write communications, including friendly letters.

**Materials Needed:**

- Pencils, Student Space page 1.

**Process:**

- Using page 1 of Student Space, each student writes a letter to Alexander. In this letter, they tell him about one of their terrible days and how it made them feel.

**Theme:** Describing bad days and how to make them better.

**Grade Level:** K-6

**Time Needed:** Variable, this can be a very short activity or a longer activity.

**Arizona Content Standards Addressed:**

Writing: Strand 1—Writing Process. Concept 1—Prewriting.

PO1—Generate ideas through prewriting.

**Materials Needed:**

- Pencils, Student Space page 2.

**Process:**

- Please see the template for this exercise on page 2 of the Student Space.
- Some days are really GREAT and some are just plain TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE, NO GOOD, VERY BAD DAYS. Can you think of ways to turn a bad day into a better day? Try to think of 10 things that could happen to make you have a bad day. For each bad day, think of one way to make it better. You can write OR draw—or both!

Example:

I am having a bad day when.... I fall off my bike and scrape my knee.

I can make this bad day into a better day by...Getting a band-aid for my knee and then going out for ice cream.

“I am having a bad day when...”

“I can make this bad day into a better day by...”

# Grown up For A Day

**Theme:** Imagining an adult workplace.

**Grade Level:** K-6

**Time Needed:** 45 minutes (possibly longer, depending on length of time spent on drawing/collage work).

**Arizona Content Standards Addressed:**

Writing: Strand 1—Writing Process. Concept 1—Prewriting.

PO1—Draw a picture about ideas generated through class discussion.

Visual Art: Strand 1—Create. Concept 1—Creative Process.

PO 101-301—Contribute to a discussion about ideas for his or her artwork.

PO 203—Develop plans for his or her own artwork.



**Materials Needed:**

- Images from magazines and newspapers that depict people at work, scissors, glue sticks, pieces of tag board or cardstock, basic coloring supplies.

**Framing:**

- In the play, Alexander visits his father's office, a magical, mysterious, and captivating place where he is allowed to touch nothing! In this visual art-based activity, students are invited to imagine the careers they might like to have in the future.

**Process:**

- As a class, brainstorm types of jobs and careers. Define the terms “job” and “career” if your students have not encountered these terms before. Some helpful questions to ask in brainstorming:
  - \**What do people in your family do for work?*
  - \**What do you know about working?*
  - \**Why do people work?*
- Hand out art activity supplies to each student, leaving magazine clippings and images in the center of the room. Ask each student to draw a picture of themselves now, as students. Ask them to answer these questions through their drawing:
  - \**How do you feel about being in school?*
  - \**What are the kinds of things you are learning about in your drawing?*
- After they've completed this first drawing, give the students a second piece of cardstock. Ask them to close their eyes and imagine that they are adults. Ask the students to think about the following questions:
  - \**What kind of job do you have?*
  - \**Where do you live?*
  - \**What kinds of things do you do at your job?*
- The students will then create a collage of themselves working at their future jobs. When the collages are complete, have each student share her or his artistic depiction of what they do now, and what they would like to do in the future.

**Other Possibilities:**

- 5-6: Have students research on the internet the amount of education/training needed to have their imagined careers. Students create a career-path plan, beginning with where they are now in their education and ending with their dream jobs.
- Share information with the class about “Take your Child to Work Day.” If students decide to do it, have them create a report about their experiences to share with the class.

# If I Were in Charge of the World

**Theme:** Creating an ideal world.

**Grade Level:** 2-4

**Time Needed:** 45 minutes

**Arizona Content Standards Addressed:**

Visual Arts: Strand 1—Create. Concept 1—Creative Process.

PO 102—Make and explain revisions in art work.

Visual Arts: Strand 1—Create, Concept 2—Materials, Tools, and Techniques

PO 101—Identify and experiment with materials, tools, and techniques in his or her own artwork.



**Materials Needed:** Pencils, crayons/pencil crayons, Student Space page 3.

## Framing:

- At the beginning of *Alexander*, the company sings a song entitled “If I Were In Charge of The World”. This comic strip project gives students a chance to create an illustrated story about what life would be like if they were in charge of the world.
  - \*Ask: *What would you do if you were in charge of the world? How would that world look, smell, taste, sound, and feel? What are some things that you find in a comic book (discuss hero, villain, conflict, special powers etc.)?*

## Process:

- Using the four boxes, students create a story (in the style of a comic book)-- through illustrations, captions, and speech bubbles -- about what life would be like if they were in charge of the world.
  - \*Box 1 introduces the setting and main character, who is in charge of the world. This main character can be the student.
  - \*Explain: *In this story, you are in charge of the world. Where does the story begin? What are you, as the main character, doing in this scene?*
  - \*Box 2 introduces a conflict (and possibly a villain). *What is a problem that you might encounter if you were in charge of the world?*
  - \*Box 3 shows how the main character solves the problem. *What might you do to solve the problem? Do you use special powers?*
  - \*Box 4 shows the main characters celebrating because they solved the problem. *How would you celebrate if you were in charge of the world?*

## Other Possibilities:

- Make a mural that combines many of the students’ ideas.
- Students present their comic strips to the class.
- Student write their own verse of the song, using the ideas they have gleaned from this project.
- Discuss some actions that the students could take to realistically make their world more like their ideal worlds. Put some of these ideas into play.
- K-2: Students tell their stories mainly through pictures, with very little writing.
- 4-6: Students create their own comic book templates.

# Mappin' 'Round Australia

**Theme:** Using the cardinal directions and a compass rose to find locations in Australia.

**Grade Level:** 2-5

**Time Needed:** 15-20 minutes

**Arizona Content Standards Addressed:**

Social Studies: Strand 4—Geography. Concept 1—The World in Spatial Terms.

PO 2—Interpret political and physical maps using a compass rose and cardinal directions.

Reading Comprehension: Strand 3—Informational Text. Concept 2—Functional Text.

PO 4—Interpret information in functional documents for a specific purpose.

**Materials Needed:**

- Pencils, Student Space page 4.

**Framing:**

- Ask students to locate Australia on a globe or world map. Perhaps briefly discuss the fact that it is not only a country but a continent as well.

**Process:**

- Give students copies of “Mappin' 'Round Australia”, Student Space page 4. Complete the worksheet by following the directions given and labeling each dot on the map.



**Other Possibilities:**

- Have students break up into teams and research major cities or regions of Australia. *What are some of the major tourist destinations in each state?* Perhaps research the aboriginal culture and experience as a comparison to the Native American experience on this continent.

# Mappin' Adventures & Aussie Slang

**Theme:** Use drawing skills to identify different parts of a daily routine.

**Grade Level:** K-6

**Time Needed:** 15-20 minutes

**Arizona Content Standards Addressed:**

Visual Arts: Strand 1—Create. Concept 2—Materials, Tools, and Techniques.

PO 001—Identify and experiment with materials, tools, and techniques in his or her own artwork.

Visual Arts: Strand 1—Create. Concept 4—Meanings or Purposes.

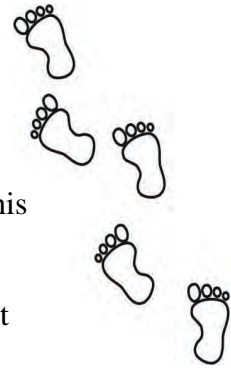
PO 101—Select and use subject matter and/or symbols in his or her own artwork.

**Materials Needed:**

- Pencils, colored pencils/markers/crayons, Student Space page 5.

**Process:**

- In *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*, Alexander goes to school, the dentist, the shoe store, his Dad's office and back home again. On their page, students will draw three places that they go during your day. Encourage students to use drawing and writing skills.



**Theme:** Decoding Australian slang.

**Grade Level:** 3rd-6th

**Time Needed:** 30 minutes

**Arizona Content Standards Addressed:**

Reading: Strand 1—Reading Process. Concept 4—Vocabulary.

PO 2—Use context to determine the relevant meaning of a word.

Reading: Strand 1—Reading Process. Concept 6—Comprehension Strategies.

PO 5—Connect information and events in text to experience and to related text and sources.

**Materials Needed:**

- Pencils, Student Space page 6.

**Process:**

- Read the short conversation between Alexander and his mother on page 6 of Student Space as a group.
- Allow students to work in pairs and use the Aussie slang glossary on their page to help them figure out what Alexander and his mother are actually saying in the dialogue.
- Once they've figured it out, ask the pairs to write a new dialogue between Alexander and his mother that 'translates' the conversation.

**Other Possibilities:**

- Students re-write this conversation between Alexander and his mother again, but this time using school-appropriate slang that they use.

# Invisible Ink

**Theme:** Making observations, asking scientific questions, testing predictions with invisible ink.

**Grade Level:** 2-6

**Time Needed:** 30 minutes

**Arizona Content Standards Addressed:**

Science: Strand 1—Inquiry Process. Concept 1—Observations, Questions, Hypotheses.

PO 2 (K-4), PO 1 (5-6)—Formulate a relevant question through observations that can be tested by an investigation.

## Materials Needed:

- Baking soda (sodium bicarbonate), water, measuring spoon, measuring cup, bowls for small groups, spoons to stir, paper, paintbrushes or cotton swabs (we recommend paintbrushes), purple grape juice from concentrate.

## Framing:

- At school, all the children in Alexander's class show their teacher, Mrs. Dickens, their drawings. When it is Alexander's turn, he shows Mrs. Dickens his picture of an invisible castle and she reprimands him for having too much imagination!
  - \*Now it is the students' turn to create an invisible message (or picture).
  - \*Discuss: *Why do you think that the message will be invisible? What materials and conditions do you think help the invisibility process?*
  - \*Formulate a scientific question about this experiment. Eg. Do baking soda and water make an invisible solution with which we can write on paper?
  - \*Formulate a prediction. Eg. I predict that the baking soda and water will make a completely invisible solution, and we will not be able to read the messages.

## Process:

- Mix equal parts baking soda and water in bowls for small groups of students to share.
- Give each student a piece of paper and a paintbrush or cotton swab.
  - \*The students dips their paintbrushes or swabs into the baking soda/water solution and use the solution as "ink" to write a short message on their papers.
- Wait for the ink to dry while students rinse their paintbrushes.
  - \*Observe: *What do you think is happening right now? What do you think is going to happen when we add grape juice to the message? Why?*
- Pour a small amount of grape juice into bowls to be shared by a small group of students.
  - \*Students dip their paintbrushes or swabs into the grape juice and paint over their messages.
  - \*This is when it is easier to use a paintbrush than a swab, as the paintbrush covers more of the paper at a time.
  - \*The reaction between the baking soda (a base) and the grape juice (an acid) reveals the message on the paper!
- Discuss: *Was your prediction correct? Why do you think we were able to see the message?*
  - \*Define acids and bases and how they work, discuss other possibilities for coding messages.

# Bubbles to Bubbles: A Bubble Gum Experiment

**Theme:** Implementing the scientific method to explore the properties of bubble gum.

**Grade Level:** 4-6

**Time Needed:** 30-45 minutes

**Arizona Content Standards Addressed:**

Science: Strand 1—Inquiry Process. Concept 1—Observations, Questions, and Hypotheses.

PO1: Formulate a relevant question through observations that can be tested .

Science: Strand 1—Inquiry Process. Concept 2—Scientific Testing (Investigating and Modeling).

PO5: Record data in an organized and appropriate format.



## Materials Needed:

- A variety of different bubblegum (such that each student can have enough to conduct the experiment) rulers, pencils and paper to record findings.

## Framing:

- As a class, review the steps of the scientific method (Formulate a Question, Observe, Form a Hypothesis, Test Hypothesis and Collect Data, Analyze Data to Prove or Disprove Hypothesis).

## Process:

- Formulate the Question as a class: Which brand of bubble gum blows the biggest bubble?
- Break the class into pairs or small groups. Gather materials needed for experiment:
  - \*Bubble Gum
  - \*Ruler
  - \*Paper and Pencil
- Ask each pair to observe their bubble gum (size and rigidity) and select which brand will produce the largest bubble.
- Record hypothesis based on these observations. Create a list ranking each brand of gum.
- Create a test for the gum. Select the order in which to test the gum. Decide on a standard period of time to chew before blowing the first bubble, to chew between bubbles and how many bubbles will be tested for size. Create a chart with which to record this information.

Type of Gum	Bubble 1 (30 s of chewing)	Bubble 2 (30 s of chewing)	Bubble 3 (15 s of chewing)
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- Take turns within the group or pair as the gum chewer/bubble blower and the information recorder.
- After all types of gum have been tested, take the average of the recordings of bubble size. Then order the results and compare to the hypothesis.
- As a class, compare the results: which gum blows the biggest bubble?

## Other Possibilities:

- Try working together as a class throughout this experiment if not all students are able to participate in chewing gum.
- Test the bubble size of sugar free chewing gum vs. standard bubble gum.

# Shoe Size Smarts

**Theme:** Measurement skills.

**Grade Level:** 2nd-5th

**Time Needed:** 45-50 minutes

**Arizona Content Standards Addressed:**

Math: Strand 1—Number Sense and Operations. Concept 3—Estimation.

PO 3—Record actual linear measurements for objects.

Math: Strand 1—Number Sense and Operations. Concept 1—Number Sense.

PO 11—Identify symbols, words, or models that represent proper fractions.



## Material Needed:

- Pieces of paper on which to trace feet, pencils, tape, rulers or measuring tape.

## Framing:

- In *Alexander*, Alexander goes to the shoe store with his mother to buy new shoes, but all the shoes that Alexander wants don't come in his size. Alexander has to try on the boring, white shoes and, unfortunately, they fit him perfectly.
- Discuss:
  - \*Have you ever had your feet measured at the shoe store? If yes, what did they use to measure your feet?
  - \*Do you know your shoe size?
  - \*Guess how many inches your foot measures?

## Process:

- Split students up into pairs.
  - \*Tape the paper to the floor. (Take off shoes, but keep socks on.)
  - \*Place foot in the middle of the paper and the partner uses a pencil to trace around the outside of their partner's foot.
  - \*Take foot off the paper and with a straight edge draw lines that connect at the four points (a rectangle shape)
  - \*Use a ruler and measure the length of the foot from the top/toe of the rectangle to the bottom/heel. Write this number in inches down.
  - \*Use the ruler again to find out the width of the foot. Measure in the opposite direction across the rectangle. Write this number in inches down. (Repeat with the other foot, feet aren't exactly the same size.)
  - \*Use the chart on the right to find out actual shoe sizes.

## Other Possibilities:

- Create a class chart of all of the foot sizes in the class. Find the average and the mean.
- 4-5: Discuss the metric system. Where is it used and why is it different? Find out their foot length and width in centimeters. Find an international shoe chart and have the students find out what their shoe size is in different countries.

Inches	US
5.38	6.5
5.56	7
5.75	7.5
5.88	8
6.06	8.5
6.25	9
6.38	9.5
6.47	10
6.67	10.5
6.83	11
6.98	11.5
7.14	12
7.30	12.5
7.46	13
7.77	1
7.93	1.5
8.09	2
8.25	2.5
8.40	3



# Tooth Time!

**Theme:** Using math skills to examine teeth.

**Grade Level:** 4th-6th

**Time Needed:** 30 minutes or multiple-day activity

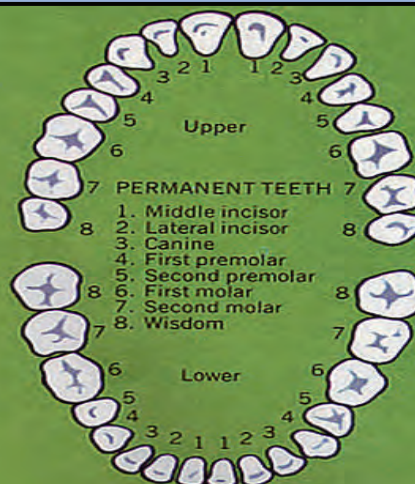
**Arizona Content Standards Addressed:**

Math: Strand 1—Number Sense and Operations. Concept 2—Numerical Operations.

PO9—Add whole numbers.

Math: Strand 1—Number Sense and Operations. Concept 3—Estimation.

PO1—Solve grade-level appropriate problems using estimation.



**Material Needed:**

- Pencils, paper, mini magnifying glasses (if available), Student Space page 6.

**Framing:**

- Alexander takes a trip to the dentist's office with his brothers, but he doesn't want to cooperate with the dentist. When Alexander finally "opens up," the dentist finds a cavity. Alexander is upset because he is the only one in his family who has a cavity.

**Process:**

- Begin by identifying the different types of teeth we have in our mouths:
  - \**Incisors*-the teeth in front, our sharpest teeth, used for cutting food.
  - \**Canines*-the teeth at the corners of your mouth, they grasp and tear food.
  - \**Premolars*-the teeth located just behind the canines, used for crushing your food.
  - \**Molars*-the last teeth at the back of the mouth, they are the biggest and they grind food into small pieces.
- Split the class into pairs and distribute mini magnifying glasses.
  - \*Students count how many teeth their partners have. (No touching other people's mouths!)
  - \*Write the number of teeth on the board.
  - \*Estimate how many teeth there are in the classroom in total.
- Discuss: Are the number of teeth in each person's mouth comparable with the class? Ask them if they've always had the same amount of teeth.
- Data Collection:
  - \*Students ask one student from every other grade in the school how many teeth they have.
  - \*They should use page 6 of Student Space to record these numbers.
  - \*Make a chart or graph of their findings at the computer lab. This link will take them to an online graphing program for students:  
<http://nces.ed.gov/nceskids/createagraph/default.aspx>

**Other Possibilities:**

- Have students formally present their findings and their graph to the rest of the class. They can describe how they gathered the data and what was challenging about the project.

# Book List

## Judith Viorst Books

- *Alexander, Who's Not (Do you hear me? I mean it!) Going to Move*
- *Alexander, Who Used to Be Rich Last Sunday*
- *Absolutely Positively Alexander: The Complete Story*
- *Rosie and Michael*

## Bad Day Books:

- *Don't Rant and Rave on Wednesdays!: The Children's Anger-Control Book* by Adolph Moser David Melton
- *Today I am Lovable: 365 Positive Activities for Kids* by Diane Loomans
- *Oh No! Where Are My Pants? And Other Disasters: Poems* by Lee Bennett Hopkins, Illustrated by Wolf Erlbruch

## Related Books:

- *Enemy Pie* by Derek Munson, Illustrated by Tara Calahan King
- *The Recess Queen* by Alexis O'Neill, Illustrated by Laura Huliska-Beith
- *Stand Tall, Molly Lou Lemon* by Patty Lovell, Illustrated by David Catrow
- *My Secret Bully* by Trudy Ludwig, Illustrated by Abigail Marble
- *Words Are Not For Hurting* by Elizabeth Verdick, Illustrated by Mareika Heinlen

# Resources

- **Links to Penpals in Australia:**  
<http://www.ipfusa.com/teacher.html>  
[http://www.europa-pages.com/school\\_form.html](http://www.europa-pages.com/school_form.html)
- **Information on Take Your Child to Work Day:**  
[http://www.calendarmine.com/Holidays/American\\_TakeYourChildtoWorkDay.asp](http://www.calendarmine.com/Holidays/American_TakeYourChildtoWorkDay.asp)
- **Childhood Depression**  
[www.kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelings/understanding\\_depression.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelings/understanding_depression.html)  
[www.cshch.org/resources/mentalhealthtoolkit.cfm](http://www.cshch.org/resources/mentalhealthtoolkit.cfm)
- **Emotional Development Stages:**  
[www.headroom.net.au/family/index.html](http://www.headroom.net.au/family/index.html)

# Bibliography

- **Map of Australia:**  
[http://www.abcteach.com/directory/basics/social\\_studies/places/australia/](http://www.abcteach.com/directory/basics/social_studies/places/australia/)
- **Picture of Judith Viorst:**  
[http://www.tantor.com/AuthorImage/Viorst\\_J.jpg](http://www.tantor.com/AuthorImage/Viorst_J.jpg)
- **Invisible Ink Experiment:**  
<http://chemistry.about.com/cs/howtos/ht/invisibleink2.htm>

2008



Childsplay  
Celebrating 30 Years



## STUDENT SPACE

A  
Place  
To  
Say  
What  
**YOU**  
Think!

# Dear Alexander...



At the beginning of *Alexander*, you hear letters that children have written to Alexander, telling him about their own terrible days and how it made them feel .

These letters help the audience (and Alexander) learn that everyone has a bad day sometimes, for many different reasons.

Now it is your turn to write a letter to Alexander! Tell Alexander about one terrible day that you had and how it made you feel. Who was involved in your bad day (sisters, brothers, parents, teachers, friends, the dentist)? When did it happen? Where did it happen? What happened? How did it make you feel?

**Dear Alexander,**

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# Good Days and Bad Days

Some days are really GREAT and some are just plain TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE, NO GOOD, VERY BAD DAYS. Can you think of ways to turn a bad day into a better day? Try to think of 10 things that could happen to make you have a bad day. For each bad day, think of one way to make it better. You can write OR draw—or both!

Example:

I am having a bad day when.... I fall off my bike and scrape my knee.

I can make this bad day into a better day by...Getting a band-aid for my knee and then going out for ice cream.

“I am having a bad day when...”

“I can make this bad day into a better day by...”

“I am having a bad day when...”

“I can make this bad day into a better day by...”

I am having a bad day when...”

“I can make this bad day into a better day by...”

# Mappin' 'Round Australia

Directions: Alexander thinks that everything is better in Australia. Use the Compass and the following statements to find some of the places he might go if he were to run away to Australia.

## Australian Hot Spots

Great Barrier Reef  
Adelaide  
Sydney  
Tasmania  
Perth  
Darwin  
Melbourne  
Queensland

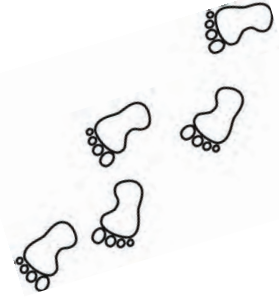


1. Perth is located on the west coast of the continent in the state of Western Australia.
2. Queensland is the name of the northeast state (region) of Australia.
3. Tasmania is a smaller island, south of Australia.
4. Darwin is a city on the north coast.
5. Victoria is the smallest state on the continent. Its capital city, Melbourne, is on the south coast of the continent.
6. Sydney, Australia's best-known city, is on the east coast in the state of New South Wales.
7. The Great Barrier Reef is located off the north east coast of Australia. It is the largest living organism in the world.
8. Adelaide is the capital city of the state of South Australia. It is located on the south coast, west of Melbourne.

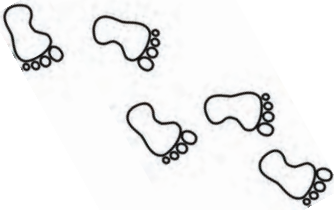
# Mappin' Your Daily Adventure

In the story of *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*, Alexander goes to school, the dentist, the shoe store, his Dad's office and back home again. In the boxes below, draw three places that you go to during your day. You can write inside or underneath the box too!

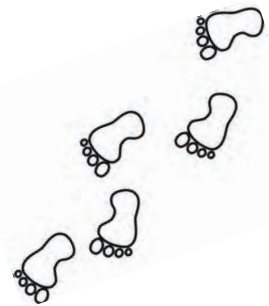
**First, in the morning, I wake up and go to...**



**Next, in the afternoon, I go to...**



**Finally, at the end of the day, I go to...**



# Aussie Slang

People who live in Australia speak English, but they use slang words that often are very difficult for us to understand. Read the short conversation between Alexander and his mother. It is full of Aussie slang! Use the glossary below to help you figure out what they are actually saying. It might be fun to work with a partner to read through the story!

Alexander: G'Day, Mum.

Mother: Howzat?

Alexander: Things are crook in Musclebrook. I'm pretty hot under the collar. Have I got a yarn for you. It's a ripper.

Mother: Now Alexander, don't chuck a wobbly.

Alexander: This arvo, I was having a chinwag with a mate of mine in kindy when this dingbat, Charles, conked me in the breadbasket!

Mother: What did your Chalkie say?

Alexander: She said we needed to solve our kafuffle. She thought we were just mucking around!

Mother: I think you got the rough end of the pineapple. Don't worry, I'll sort it.

Alexander: Ta, Mum.

Mother: She'll be apples, Alexander!

## Glossary of Aussie Slang:

Arvo-afternoon

Breadbasket-stomach

Chalkie-teacher

Chinwag-having a good chat

Chuck a wobbly-throw a tantrum

Conk-to hit someone

Dingbat-some who is acting foolish

Kafuffle-argument

Kindy-Kindergarten

Mate-good friend

Mucking around-playing around

Mum-Mom

Hot Under the Collar-to get angry

Howzat?-asking someone how something is

I'll sort it-I'll fix it

It's a ripper!-It's really great.

Rough end of the pineapple-you got a bad deal

She'll be apples!-Everything will be okay.

Ta-Thanks

Things are crook in Musclebrook-times are bad

Once you've figured out what Alexander and his Mother are saying in Aussie slang, try to re-write the conversation in words that you know.

Alex: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother: \_\_\_\_\_

Alex: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother: \_\_\_\_\_

Alex: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother: \_\_\_\_\_

Alex: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother: \_\_\_\_\_



# Tooth Time! Data Collection

## *Kindergarten*

Name of student you interviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

How many teeth do they have? \_\_\_\_\_

## *First Grade*

Name of student you interviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

How many teeth do they have? \_\_\_\_\_

## *Second Grade*

Name of student you interviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

How many teeth do they have? \_\_\_\_\_

## *Third Grade*

Name of student you interviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

How many teeth do they have? \_\_\_\_\_

## *Fourth Grade*

Name of student you interviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

How many teeth do they have? \_\_\_\_\_

## *Fifth Grade*

Name of student you interviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

How many teeth do they have? \_\_\_\_\_

# If I Were In Charge of the World Comic Book

**I am in charge of the world, so I...**

**One day I encountered a problem...**

**I solved the problem by...**

**Then I celebrated by...**