The Never Ending Story
A Study Guide

For Field Trip Performances at
Mississippi State University
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Dear Teachers and Parents,

*The Neverending Story* is an inspiring epic fantasy story rooted in the power of imagination. This play focuses on the power we possess to help one another, and save the world. When we believe in ourselves, we find the courage to take on amazing feats.

*The Neverending Story* specifically addresses the topic of bullying. The main character of the story – Bastian – struggles with finding ways to cope with bullying. When he finds a magic book and is transported to another land, Bastian discovers the importance of tolerance for others and gains a strong sense of self-worth and confidence.

This education packet includes a vast array of materials and activities intended to help you discover connections within the play to the curricula you are teaching. We hope that you will use the experience of attending a theatre performance – as well as the storyline of *The Neverending Story* – as a tool. Please pick and choose or adapt any of these materials and activities to better suit your classroom.

We can’t wait to see you when the curtain goes up!

Theatre MSU
Before the Show: Theatre Etiquette

While we will go over proper theatre etiquette before each show, please take a few moments to remind your students about theatre etiquette.

1. No eating or drinking in the theatre. This causes a mess and a distraction to our performers.
2. Go to the restroom before you sit down, or before the show actually starts. We don’t want you to miss anything!
3. Turn off your cellphone and all electronic devices before the show starts. If you are distracted by it, you might miss something really cool!
4. Sit upright with your feet on the ground – not the chair in front of you!
5. Make sure to react to what’s happening on stage. If something is funny, you should laugh!
6. Don’t talk during the performance. The actors can see and hear you, and we want them to give you the best performance they possibly can.
7. Do applaud when something happens that you like, and again when the show is over.
8. Be sure to tell the cast that they did a good job! They like to be praised just like you do!
About the Author: Michael Ende

Taken directly from www.michaelende.de

Michael Ende was born on November 12th, 1929 in Garmisch and died at the age of sixty-five in Stuttgart on August 28th, 1995. He was one of the most successful German authors of the post-war period, selling over twenty million books in forty different languages worldwide. His novels such as The Neverending Story, Jim Button, Momo, and The Night of Wishes captured the hearts of readers young and old.

About the Playwright: David S. Craig

Taken directly from http://www.playwrightsguild.ca/playwright/david-s-craig

Dramatist David S. Craig has served as an Artistic Director, playwright, performer, director, and producer of plays for over thirty-five years. As a passionate promoter and creator of theatre art, his work has reached millions of people, particularly children and their families.

He was born in Montreal Quebec in 1952, and acquired post-secondary theatre training at the Rose Bruford College of Speech and Drama in London, England from 1971-74.


Craig became sole Artistic Director in 2001 and wrote Danny, King of the Basement (2001, Dora Mavor Moore Award, German Children’s Theatre Prize nomination), Smokescreen (2005), Rocket and the Queen of Dreams(2008, Dora Nomination) and Tough Case (2012).

Other professional writing credits include: Booster McCrane, P.M. (Toronto Free Theatre, 1982), Journey from A.M.U. (1984, Dora Nomination) for the Metropolitan Toronto Special Committee on Child Abuse, Cue for Treason(Young People’s Theatre, 1986), Fires in the Night: The Story of the School on Wheels (Blyth Festival, 1998), Having Hope at Home (Blyth Festival, 2003), The Neverending Story (Seattle Children’s Theatre/Imagination Stage, 2007/08) and The Fan adapted from the
Goldoni for the Odyssey Theatre (2011, winner of the 2012 Rideau Award for Best Adaptation).

THE NEVERENDING STORY SYNOPSIS

Bastian Balthazar Bux is a young boy whose mother has just died. Bastian's father, overcome with grief does not pay much attention to the boy. One morning, on his way to school Bastian runs into a group of bullies. He runs away, and bursts into a nearby book store. Bastian then finds interest in a book there – *The Neverending Story*.

The story Bastian reads is set in Fantastica, a magical land ruled by the Childlike Empress. Fantastica is being overcome by a dark force, called The Nothing. The Nothing is a formless entity that is spreading through the land and has brought illness to the Childlike Empress.

The Childlike Empress calls on Atreyu, a boy warrior, to go on a quest and find a cure for her illness. Atreyu sets off in search of the invisible oracle Uyulala, who may be able to help.

Once Atreyu reaches Uyulala, he discovers that the only thing that will cure the Childlike Empress is a new name, given to her by a human child. When Atreyu returns to the Childlike Empress with a cure, but without a child to name her, she informs him that a human child has been brought into Fantastica.

The Childlike Empress travels to see the Old Man of Wandering Mountain, who possesses a book called *The Neverending Story*. As the Old Man reads the story aloud, Bastian realizes it is the same story he is reading, but his finding of the book is included in the story now. Bastian decides that the Childlike Empress will now be called Moonchild, and is immediately transported to Fantastica.

Moonchild hands Bastian a grain of sand, and an AURYN – a powerful medallion – inscribed with “Do what you wish,” as both inspiration and a warning. For every wish he makes in Fantastica, he loses a memory of his life in the human world.

As Bastian sets out on his adventures in Fantastica, he discovers that his one true wish is to be capable of love.
CHARACTERS

Note: Characters in this play are not necessarily the same as in the book or movie. In play scripts, sometimes characters’ lines get combined, or characters are left out of the script entirely.

**Bastian:** Bastian is a young boy, around 12 years old, who is neglected by his father due to his mother’s death. Bastian is the main protagonist of the story, who after losing himself, learns that his one true desire is the capability to love.

**Atreyu:** Atreyu is the protagonist of the story Bastian reads, and the secondary protagonist of the entire story. He is a young warrior from the Grassy Plains, whose parents were killed by a Purple Buffalo when he was young. He is summoned by the Childlike Empress to go on a great quest.

**Carl Conrad Coreander:** Carl Conrad Coreander is a seemingly grouchy man, who owns the bookshop Bastian finds himself in after running away from bullies. Bastian finds *The Neverending Story* in Mr. Coreander’s bookshop and steals it.

**The Childlike Empress:** The Childlike Empress is the monarch of Fantastica. She resides in the Ivory Tower palace. She is the living embodiment of Fantastica’s life force. Her lifetime is measured in names rather than years or time.

**Engywook and Urgl:** Engywook and Urgl are a pair of married Fantastican Gnomes, who live close to the Southern Oracle. Engywook is a researcher, and Urgl is a housewife. They help Bastian and Atreyu get to the gates of the Southern Oracle.

**Falkor the Luckdragon:** Falkor is a Luckdragon who helps Bastian and Atreyu on their quests. Luckdragons do not have great physical strength or magical powers. They can breathe fire, but their greatest distinction is having great luck in everything they do.
**Gmork:** Gmork is a main villain of the story. He serves The Nothing and his primary mission is to kill Atreyu. He is a wolf-like creature, capable of speaking as though he is human.

**Morla:** Morla is sometimes called The Ancient One. She is a giant turtle, who sometimes gets mistaken for a mountain due to her size. She informs Atreyu that the Childlike Empress must be given a new name, and no Fantastican can do that.

**Yragmul:** Yragmul, or “The Many,” is a monster that lives in the land of Dead Mountains. It is a shapeshifter, often portrayed as a spider.
Humanities/Language Arts Activity (Grades 6-8)

**WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE HERO?**

*Taken from: http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=171*

1. Compare dictionary definitions of hero and idol with students and clarify the distinctions. Explain that anyone can become a hero when they act courageously and nobly. Define words for students using Webster’s dictionary:
   a. **Hero**: a person of distinguished courage or ability, admired for his or her brave deeds and noble qualities.
   b. **Idol**: any person or thing regarded with blind admiration, adoration, or devotion.

2. Tell students they are going to do a “think, pair, and share.” They will first think of their own answer to the question posed, then they’ll be given a minute to share their thinking with a partner (pair), and finally, students will be called on to share the ideas they and their partner had with the whole class.

3. Ask students to think about the following questions for one minute:
   - **What is heroism?**
   - **What qualities or characteristics do heroes have?**

4. Have students pair up and share their ideas with a partner for one minute.

5. Partners report ideas to the whole class, giving the reasons for their thinking.

6. Lists these ideas on chart paper, transparency, or board using a Brainstorming Web format with the title “**Characteristics of a Hero.**”

7. Have students identify a modern-day person who has such characteristics, giving examples to support their opinion.
   a. Make a list of these identified “heroes around us.”

8. Have students respond to the following statement in their journals:
   - **My behavior reflected a characteristic associated with a hero when...**

Extend the Lesson...

Have students identify heroic traits in Atreyu and Bastian from THE NEVERENDING STORY. Give examples of when these two characters demonstrated behavior of a hero, and how their heroic actions made a difference in the lives of others.
Humanities Classroom Activity

Cruel School: Bullying Behavior, What It Is, and How We Make It Stop

Taken from: http://school.discoveryeducation.com/lessonplans/programs/cruelschools/

Activity

1. As a class, talk about what it means to be a “bully”.
   a. Have students think of words that might be associated with a “bully” (examples: loud, mean, popular, etc.) Write these words on the board or overhead.

2. Have students think of words that might be associated with a “victim” (examples: weak, different, studious, etc.) Write these words on the board or overhead.

3. Place additional vocabulary words (attached list of 10) on the board, overhead or in handout form.

4. Have students work in assigned groups of two. Try to pair up students who might not usually choose to work together. Have them define the 10 vocabulary words. Using a dictionary or computer, the paired groups should write their definitions on paper or handout.
   a. Note: By pairing students who might not usually work together, you are creating an assignment within your assignment. Watch how students try to get to know each other. How do they work on building a new relationship? After the class has completed the vocabulary, ask the students how they felt about getting to know someone they might not have known before the assignment. Other questions might be: When you know a little bit about someone, does it change your view about that person? Why? Is it easy to make new friends?

5. After students have written their definitions, have each group give their definition of one vocabulary word to the class. These definitions can be placed on the board or overhead.

6. Once students have an understanding of the word “bully” or “bullying”, introduce the Reality Matters, Cruel Schools Facts.

7. Review the details with the class, and ask the students how they feel about their school. Where does our school stack up against these facts? What forms of bullying exist at our school? Do our students and teachers feel safe?

8. Have students answers to the following questions on their own?
   a. Can one person make a difference?
b. How is empathy the first step to stopping violence?
c. How can you become part of the solution to bullying at school?

9. Once students have completed their individual answers time should be given for students to voluntarily share their responses with the class.

Extending the Lesson—Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to “stand up” for someone?

2. What does it mean to “put yourself at risk”?

3. If you see someone being bullied, what are some things you could do?

4. Whose responsibility is it to stop bullying from occurring?

5. In what type of situations might adult involvement help solve bullying situations?

6. In what type of situations might adult involvement hurt solving bullying situations?

7. How can we learn to better accept each other’s differences?
BULLYING DEFINITIONS

BULLYING:
Definition for teacher’s use: overbearing person who tyrannizes the weak; intimidation, a person hired to do violence
Context: The act of bullying is usually targeted at others who are not as strong. Bullies are often very aggressive.

EMPATHY:
Definition for teacher’s use: intellectual identification of oneself with another, understanding the attitudes of others.
Context: When one demonstrates empathy they are putting themselves in another’s shoes to learn how they feel and or act

ALTERNATIVE:
Definition for teacher’s use: intellectual identification of oneself with another, understanding the attitudes of others.
Context: When one demonstrates empathy they are putting themselves in another’s shoes to learn how they feel and or act

VICTIM:
Definition for teacher’s use: person, or thing, destroyed or sacrificed; person who suffers; dupe or prey.
Context: People usually do not choose to be victims but often cannot solve the problem without help from others.

TAUNTING:
Definition for teacher’s use: to reproach with insulting words; sarcastic remark.
Context: Words do hurt. Constant insults can be damaging and taunting can escalate to anger or worse.

RELENTLESS:
Definition for teacher’s use: showing no sympathy, unyieldingly severe, mean, or harsh.
Context: Relentless behavior means it goes on without end, it is continuously harsh behavior.

**Ridicule:**
Definition for teacher’s use: showing no sympathy, unyieldingly severe, mean, or harsh.
Context: Relentless behavior means it goes on without end, it is continuously harsh behavior.

**Ethics:**
Definition for teacher’s use: relating to morals or moral principles; philosophy of human character and conduct, of distinction between right and wrong, rules of conduct.
Context: To behave ethically means to conduct oneself within society’s rules of accepted behavior. This is often considered “doing the right thing.”

**Intervention:**
Definition for teacher’s use: to come or be between, to “intervene” between others to stop behavior, solve a problem, speak for another, and avoid an incident from happening.
Context: Examples of acts of intervention are physically stopping someone from doing something, talking to adults who can help stop a situation, helping two people solve an issue, and assisting someone in need.

**Influence:**
Definition for teacher’s use: power over people or things; to act on the mind; to have the capacity to effect others’ behaviors and opinions; to move or compel a person to some action
Context: Positive influence means to have an improved effect on others, negative influence has the effect of making others do bad things.

**Fantasy Genre**
Fantasy is a genre that has magic, secondary worlds, mythical creatures, quests, and great battles between good and evil. Common elements in the genre are dragons, wizards, elves, trolls and other imaginary characters. Some books have minimal fantastic elements, but anything that is not possible in the real world is considered Fantasy.

Almost every book of fiction possesses a plot, characters, setting and themes. Each genre has common themes unique to it. Fantasy is no exception. Some of its themes are:

- **Quests**, both internal and external.
- **Struggles** between good and evil, light and dark, or law and chaos.
- **Coming** of age.
- **Heroism**.

Quests help the characters to grow as they strive for an object or ideal. The struggles between opposing forces are to achieve or restore balance to the world. Themes of heroism and coming of age bring about growth in characters.

Activity: Understanding Fantasy

1. **Place students in pairs.** Have each pair come up with their own definitions of “real” and “imaginary”, and write these definitions on sentence strips.

2. **Next, have the pairs share what they came up with.** On the board, identify the key elements stated in students “real” and “imaginary” definitions—make sure to note specific factors mentioned more than once.

3. **Once all the definitions have been shared and listed on the board, have students identify the common components mentioned in their definitions and, using these factors, come up with a class definition of “real” and “imaginary”.

A language arts classroom activity

*Taken from: http://www.suite101.com/lesson.cfm/17284/2862/1, http://www.lessonplanspage.com/LAIntroToScienceFiction79.htm*
4. Next, pass out an excerpt from The Neverending Story by Michael Ende, or The Martian Chronicles by Ray Bradbury (or another Sci-Fi/Fantasy short text that is appropriate for your students).

5. Have the students “actively” read the text once for meaning. On the second try, have them underline aspects of the text that make it “real” or “believable” and circle aspects that make it “imaginary” or “unbelievable”.

6. Set up a T-chart on the board with “Realistic Aspects” on the right side and “Imaginary Aspects” on the left side. Compile a list of what they have found.

7. Next, explain how in Sci-Fi/Fantasy the reader must “suspend their disbelief” in order to understand the nature of the story or plot. Discuss “suspension of disbelief” and come up with a class definition of this term.
**WHAT’S IN A NAME?**

**Art/Language Classroom Activity**

*Taken from: http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/elem/Michael-Name.htm, Submitted by: Michael Gerrish*

Names have meanings. Parents choose names for a variety of reasons: to honor family members, remember someone from their past or someone who is famous, or because the name might be popular at the time the baby is born.

Sometimes we see qualities in people that match the name they have been given; and, sometimes their personalities are the opposite of what their name means.

(Teacher creates list of names in class). Listed below are the names of class members; each name has at least one definition. Does your name perfectly describe who you are or is it way off base?

**Materials:**
- Drawing paper
- Colored pencils
- Rulers
- Construction Paper
- Markers
- Crayons

1. Using pencils and a ruler, draw a border around your drawing paper
2. Make a border design of manuscript letters Aa-Zz in your best handwriting.
3. In the center of the paper, write your first name in letters large enough to almost fill the space inside the border. Make sure the letters are thick and bold!
4. Look at your name’s definition. Draw designs around the insider of the letters of your name that match your name meaning.
5. Add design elements that reflect your personality!
6. Be sure to add lots of color and variety!
MORLA THE TORTOISE: TURTLE & TORTOISE FACTS
Science Classroom Lesson
Taken directly from: http://www.peteducation.com/article.cfm?c=17+1797&aid=1492

Some interesting facts about turtles and tortoises:

- Turtles have been on the earth for more than 200 million years. They evolved before mammals, birds, crocodiles, snakes and even lizards.
- The earliest turtles had teeth and could not retract their heads, but other than this, modern turtles are very similar to their original ancestors.
- Several species of turtles can live to be over a hundred years of age including the American Box Turtle.
- One documented case of longevity involves an adult Indian Ocean Giant Tortoise that when captured as an adult was estimated to be fifty years old. It then lived another 152 years in captivity.
- Turtles live on every continent except Antarctica.
- Turtles will live in almost any climate warm enough to allow them to complete their breeding cycle.
- While most turtles don’t tolerate the cold well, the Blanding’s turtle has been observed swimming under the ice in the Great Lakes region.
- Turtles range in size from the 4-inch Bog Turtle to the 1500 pound Leathery Turtle.
- North America contains a large variety of turtle species but Europe contains only two species of turtles and three species of tortoises.
- The top domed part of a turtle’s shell is called the carapace and the bottom underlying part is called the plastron.
- The shell of a turtle is made up of 60 different bones all connected together.
- The bony portion of the shell is covered with plates (scutes) that are derivatives of skin and offer additional strength and protection.
- Most land tortoises have high domed carapaces that offer protection from the snapping jaws of terrestrial predators. Aquatic turtles tend to have flatter more aerodynamically shaped shells. An exception to the dome-shaped tortoise shell is the pancake tortoise of East Africa that will wedge itself between narrow rocks when threatened and then inflates itself with air making extraction nearly impossible.
- Most turtle species have five toes on each limb with a few exceptions including the American Box Turtle of the carolina species that only has four toes and in some cases only three.
- Turtles have good eyesight and an excellent sense of smell. Hearing and sense of touch are both good and even the shell contains nerve endings.
• Some aquatic turtles can absorb oxygen through their skin on their neck and cloacal areas allowing them to remain submerged underwater for extended periods of time and enabling them to hibernate underwater.

• Turtles are one of the oldest and most primitive groups of reptiles and have outlived many other species. One can only wonder if their unique shell is responsible for their success.
WHO SAID IT?

1. No. They fill your mind with fantasy and make believe. Real things, Bastian. Useful things. That’s what’s important.
2. Listen, “sonny.” I don’t like children. I know it’s popular to think that children deserve everything, but as far as I’m concerned they’re good for nothing except screaming, whining, breaking, and smearing books with jam.
3. I don’t like math books. They don’t have any characters. I like stories about heroes on exciting adventures that take me to another world.
4. The Ivory Tower is full of messengers who have brought the same message. Everywhere, the Nothing is destroying Fantastica.
5. The Childlike Empress is wise and if she has chosen me there must be wisdom in it.
6. It’s not backwards! It’s normal! You’re the one who’s backwards. Who wants to grow old when you can grow young?
7. This night is dark and full of life. The Nothing is dark and full of death. I failed those people, Artax. I thought I could protect them.
8. It’s hopeless to be hopeless. I’m hope-full!
9. That’s better. For your arm to heal it has to hurt. If it hurts you know you’re not dead. And dead you almost were until I found you.
10. I do care. I care so much. And I’m coming! Moonchild! I’m coming!
POST-SHOW QUESTIONS

1. While reading, Bastian had the desire to warn characters in the story about danger. Did you want to warn or in some way communicate with some of the characters in THE NEVERENDING STORY? If so, which characters and when? Have you felt this way about characters in other books?

2. Why does Bastian dislike school so much? If you were one of Bastian’s classmates, what could you do for Bastian to make his school experience more positive? What do you do to make your classroom community a positive and nurturing place to be?

3. The Auryn is a symbol of the Childlike Empress and, therefore, all of Fantastica. What do you believe the Auryn represents? If you had to design a new symbol for Fantastica, what would it look like and what would it represent? If you had to design a symbol for your classroom, what would it look like and represent?

4. Bastian chooses a new name for the Childlike Empress. What was this name he chose for her, and why do you think he chose this specific name for her and for Fantastica? If you had to name the Childlike Empress, what name would you give her and why?
WHO SAID IT? ANSWER KEY

1. Father
2. Bookseller
3. Bastian
4. Chancellor
5. Atreyu
6. Sassafranian Adult
7. Atreyu
8. Falkor
9. Urgl
10. Bastian
OTHER RESOURCES:
Neverending Story fan site: http://www.fantasien.net/tnes/
Definition of stages of the mythic hero journey:
http://home.rmi.net/~seifert/id22.html
American Museum of Natural History Mythic Creatures exhibit:
http://www.amnh.org/ology/mythiccreatures
http://www.eslprintables.com/printable.asp?id=345372

BOOKLIST:
The Neverending Story by Michael Ende
The Night of Wishes by Michael Ende
Momo by Michael Ende
Ophelia’s Shadow Theater by Michael Ende

Fantasy
The Graveyard Book by Neil Gaiman
Moribito: Guardian of the Spirit by Nahoko Uehashi
The Cabinet of Wonders by Marie Rutkoski

Adventure
The Gecko and Sticky 1: The Villain’s Lair by Wendelin Van Draanen
Gregor the Overlander by Suzanne Collins
Tunnels by Roderick Gordon and Brian Williams
Kiki Strike: Inside the Shadow City by Kirsten Miller

Epic Quests
The Dark is Rising by Susan Cooper
The Prydain Chronicles by Lloyd Alexander
The Search for Delicious by Natalie Babbitt
The Last of the High Kings by Kate Thompson

Literacy
Inkheart by Cornelia Funke
Zooman Sam by Lois Lowry
Just Juice by Karen Hesse
**Imaginary Lands**
The Wonderful Wizard of Oz by L. Frank Baum
The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe by C. S. Lewis
Redwall by Brian Jacques

**Mythical Creatures**
Mythological Creatures: A Classical Bestiary: Tales of Strange Beings, Fabulous Creatures, Fearsome Beasts and Hideous Monsters from Ancient Greek Mythology by Lynn Curlee
Fablehaven by Brandon Mull
Percy Jackson and the Olympians series by Rick Riordan
The New Policeman by Kate Thompson

**Unlikely Heroes**
Heroes of the Valley by Jonathan Stroud
Artemis Fowl by Eoin Colfer
Guardians of Ga’hoole series by Kathryn Lasky
So You Want to Be a Wizard by Diane Duane