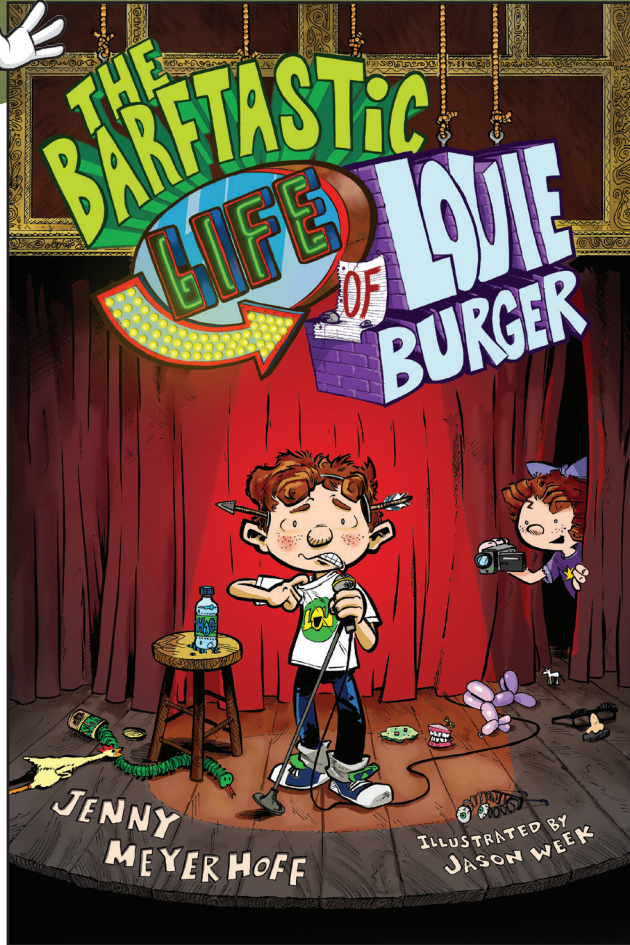


HELLO!

Welcome
to

Curriculum The Barftastic Guide to Louie Burger!



ISBN 978-0-374-30518-5 • \$13.99 • Farrar, Straus Giroux

The Barftastic Life of Louie Burger

BY

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ILLUSTRATED BY

JASON WEEK

FFIFTH GRADER LOUIE BURGER figures that with a goofy name like his, he *must* be destined to be a king of comedy like his idol Lou Lafferman. But he's only ever performed his stand-up act in his closet, where he and his dad created the most exclusive comedy club ever—if by “exclusive” you mean that no one else is ever allowed inside. With the school talent show coming up, Louie's wondering if now is his moment to kill (that's comedian talk for “make actual people laugh”). And maybe, if he brings down the house, he'll win back his former best friend Nick—who seems to be turning into one of those annoying sporty types—and fend off his dad's home-improvement obsession, which threatens to remodel Louie's comedy closet into a private bedroom for his older sister. Barftrocious!

Bring down the house in your classroom with **The Barftastic Life of Louie Burger**, while exploring writing, language, careers, and character development themes.

Discussion Questions

- ⦿ In the first chapter, each member of the Burger family toasts a “first.” What was each family member doing for the first time?
- ⦿ After Louie’s first day of school, why does Louie’s dad forget about watching him perform his comedy act?
- ⦿ Do you think Louie should give up part of his closet so Ari can have her own room? Why or why not?
- ⦿ What does Louie mean when he says Ryan Rakefield is not a real comedian because “Real comedians can be funny without embarrassing other people?”
- ⦿ Look at Louie’s Venn diagram, “Marketing Dad vs. Artist Dad” (p. 120). How does Louie feel his dad has changed since he switched careers?
- ⦿ Why do you think Nick, Thermos, Ruby, and Henry are the only ones who have seen Louie’s comedy act?
- ⦿ Louie makes up new lyrics to the song about making new friends.

**New friends stink,
Old friends are true.
Don’t wreck friendship
By adding more to two.**



How do Louie’s lyrics reflect his feelings about Nick and Thermos’ friendship?

- ⦿ Why is Louie upset with Thermos when she tells Ryan that Louie is a better comedian because he doesn’t need to copy anyone else’s jokes?
- ⦿ After the talent show auditions, Mrs. Adler tells Louie he has stage fright and gives him some tips. What are some of Mrs. Adler’s ideas? Have you ever felt nervous about doing something? If so, how did or could you calm your own fears?
- ⦿ Louie’s dad’s junk art is not selected by the gallery on the same day Louie blows his audition for the talent show. What was Louie’s mom’s reaction? Do you agree with her? Why or why not?
- ⦿ In the chapter called “Alone,” Louie tells Nick that Thermos is a girl version of Ryan Rakefield. Nick responds by saying that she is more like a girl version of Louie. How are Louie and Thermos similar? How are they different?
- ⦿ Why did Louie’s plan of being a sporty kid to win back Nick backfire?
- ⦿ If you were Thermos, would you have offered to be Nick’s partner for the talent show? Why or why not?
- ⦿ How did Louie’s ideas about friendship change from the beginning to the end of the book?
- ⦿ After being turned down by an art gallery, Louie’s dad makes the decision that he is not cut out to be an artist even though it has always been his dream, and Louie thinks about throwing in the towel after his first audition. By the end of the book, do you think both Louie and his father will keep trying? Why or why not?

Activities

Writing

THE GREATEST HERO IN THE HISTORY OF HEROES

Louie's teacher, Mrs. Adler, announces the first big assignment of the year: The Hero Project. Each student chooses an admirable person as his or her subject. The students then write a biography and letter, and give an oral presentation.



Why not assign the Hero Project to your own class?!

Lou Lafferman is Louie Burger's hero. But what makes a hero? Before introducing the project, discuss with your class what it means to be a hero. Does a hero have to save someone? Be perfect? Does everyone need to agree that someone is a hero, or can people be heroes to some and not to others? After the discussion, have the class brainstorm people they admire. Students then each pick one hero for their project. The subject can be alive or a figure from history, famous or not-so-famous.

Biography

- Once the students have made their selections, they will research important facts about the person's life: when he/she was born, what he/she was like as a kid, important moments in his/her life, reasons why he/she is admirable, and a quote from him/her. Students need to convey their ideas and information clearly with an introduction and concluding paragraph. Don't forget the bibliography! Students can cite websites, books, and articles they read. Once the students have finished the first part of the Hero Project, they can use their research for the letter and oral presentation.

Letter

- Louie Burger's class wrote letters to their heroes. Have your class write letters, too. The students can introduce themselves, explain the project, and share why the recipient of the letter was chosen as their hero. Even if the hero selected is no longer living, students should still write a letter. Send letters to living heroes. Who knows, your students may receive a letter, a jar of Marshmallow Fluff, or even be featured on a TV show!

Oral Presentation

- Oral presentations can give anyone stage fright! Louie gave a speech on Lou Lafferman, and Thermos and Nick gave a presentation about a fictional baseball player. Have students in your class give hero speeches. The students can either report on the person they researched or pretend to be that hero. Main requirements: include information gleaned in their research, share a quote, and explain why the person is admirable. Have the students add audio recordings and visual displays to enhance their speeches. Play a piece of music from a famous musician, share a score card from a sports hero, or project a black-and-white photograph of the hero on a screen. Take it one step further—have the class brainstorm five to ten interview questions, and have students take turns interviewing each other!

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS ADDRESSED BY THIS ACTIVITY:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.8; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.5;
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.9

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.8; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.5;
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.9

Language

BARFTASTIC DICTIONARY

In **The Barftastic Life of Louie Burger**, Louie has a real knack for creating his own words. In fact, he creates two dictionaries, the Barf and Fluff dictionaries (pages 22 and 217), based on the root words “barf” and “fluff.” Have your students create their own dictionaries using their own root words.

- Review Louie’s unique barf and fluff words, definitions, and sentences. Point out the root words, and how adding suffixes to the root creates other new words. Some are adjectives, some are nouns, and others are verbs. Either have the students select their own root word, or place pre-selected words in a bag and have each student pick one. Here are a few favorite words your class can use:

wedgie, Jell-o, booger, gag, chicken, snort, Whoopee Cushion, weasel, splat, drool, munch, bobble, glitter, gummi, morph, ninja, slushy, sling, velcro, jelly, broccoli, glasses, phlegm, dribble, slime, eyeball, bling, gadget

- Hand out a sheet of different suffixes and their meanings. By adding suffixes to their root word, each student can create a noun, adjective, and verb. Just like Louie’s dictionaries, they can write their own definitions for their made-up words. Model the lesson for the students using the root word “drool:”

Droolable - (adj.): Something or someone worthy of drool.

Droolade - (n.): Sweet drink with a dash of drool, or the last sip of a drink at the bottom of a can.

Droolify - (v.): Make into drool, or cover with drool.

- For a little more of a challenge, have students can look up their own suffixes. Have dictionaries available, both print and digital, for reference.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS ADDRESSED BY THIS ACTIVITY:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.4



Careers

CAREER DAY

Louie Burger wants to be a comedian like Lou Lafferman. Louie’s dad is changing careers, from a marketing professional to an artist. Invite several parents or other adults to come into the class and discuss their occupations.

- Ask the class what they would like do when they grow up. Have students interview an adult working in the chosen career by asking the following questions; ask these questions of your guests on Career Day as well:
 - How old were you when you knew what you wanted to be?
 - What kind of schooling did you need to be in your profession?
 - Why did you want a job in this field?
 - Did anyone inspire you?
 - Were there times you questioned yourself or your choice in careers?
 - What is the best part of your profession?

Have students share what they learned from individual interviews with the rest of their class.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS ADDRESSED BY THIS ACTIVITY:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.4

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.4

Language

HUGELY EXCELLENT IDIOMS

When Louie says his little sister “marches to the beat of a baked potato,” does she really march like a potato? No! Louie means his sister is VERY strange.

Louie Burger makes up his own idioms and expressions, but what are idioms?

- Explain to the class that idioms are groups of words that don't always mean exactly what they say. For example, when a classmate tells you that the spelling test was a “piece of cake,” do they mean the teacher served everyone cake? Of course not! A “piece of cake” means it was easy.
- Write an idiom on the board. Ask the class if they have ever heard of the idiom before. Have them guess what it really means.
- Brainstorm other idioms with the class. Write all of the idioms on the board, and discuss their true meanings. Have students select their favorite idiom from the list or look up other idioms. Hand each student a piece of paper. On the top of their piece of paper, have them write their idiom. Below it, they draw a literal interpretation of what their phrase means. For example, if they chose “It was raining cats and dogs,” the students could draw a picture of cats and dogs falling from clouds. On the back side of the paper, students write and draw the real meaning of the phrase. If they don't know the meaning, they can research it. Louie uses his made-up idioms and expressions in a sentence. At the bottom of the back page, have the students write their idiom in a sentence.
- Have students fold their papers so that the written idiom at the top is no longer visible when viewing the literal drawing of the idiom. Students can then take turns sharing their literal drawings, while the other students try to guess the idiom. After they correctly guess the idiom, have the class determine the real meaning.
- Extend the lesson with a “Back Like Barf Idiom Wall.” Your class may have thought they were done with idioms, but they are back like barf (meaning something unwanted that returns anyway). Idioms are everywhere! Designate a place in the classroom where students can post idioms they continue to find while reading.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS ADDRESSED BY THIS ACTIVITY:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.5; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.5

Character Study

CHARACTER VENN DIAGRAM

Louie Burger makes a Venn diagram of his father, “Marketing Dad vs. Artist Dad” (p. 120). Before-career-change Dad wore suits and built Louie a stage in his closet. After-career-change Dad wears t-shirts and wants to give Louie's closet to his sister. The only similarities between Marketing and Artist Dad are hairy feet, a bald spot, and nose hair. Yikes!

- Venn diagrams offer a great lesson for discussing the development of a single character, or the similarities and differences between two characters. Begin the activity by discussing the Marketing Dad vs. Artist Dad Venn diagram. Brainstorm other characters that changed from the beginning to the end of the book and pairs of characters that would be fun to compare and contrast. Write ideas on the board. Divide the class into groups of three or four students, and have each group select a character or pair of characters from the list and create their own Venn diagrams.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS ADDRESSED BY THIS ACTIVITY:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.3

