



the hoboken chicken emergency

*Book, Music, and Lyrics by Chad Henry
Adapted from the book by Daniel Pinkwater*

Synopsis

Full of the holiday spirit, big musical numbers, and a zany cast of characters, this production is in the vein of a 1930s screwball comedy.

.....
*Recommended for
everyone age 5
and older*
.....

When the Bobowicz family's turkey order gets lost on the day before Thanksgiving, it is up to Arthur to find a bird for his family to eat. He searches high and low, but there are no turkeys, or even chickens, to be found. At last he discovers Professor Mazzocchi, who sells Arthur one of his science experiments: a 266-pound live "superchicken."

No one knows what to do with the chicken when Arthur brings her home. Arthur suggests naming her Henrietta and keeping her as a pet, and his parents reluctantly agree. Arthur, elated, begins obedience training. He has his work cut out for him, as Henrietta is a chicken with a mind of her own.

When Mr. Bobowicz changes his mind, he orders Arthur to return Henrietta to Professor Mazzocchi. Henrietta promptly escapes from the professor's house, fueling the rumor mill as Hoboken residents catch glimpses of her around the city. Once the media gets hold of the story, the whole town is whipped up into a frenzy over the "one thousand-pound chicken" that is on the loose. Deciding to take action, the mayor hires a world-renowned chicken hunter, who turns out to be a fraud. Luckily Professor Mazzocchi appears and saves the day by creating peace between the town and the giant chicken.

Resource List

FOR CHILDREN

The Chicken Doesn't Skate

Gordon Korman

Education of Robert Nifkin

Daniel Pinkwater

George Shrinks

William Joyce

It's Raining Pigs and Noodles

Jack Prelutsky

SPOTLIGHT

Summer Reading Is Killing Me

Jon Scieszka, illustrated by Lane Smith

The Time Warp Trio is magically whisked into their summer reading list and subsequently into a battle between familiar characters from kids' books, including the Hoboken Chicken herself!

FOR PARENTS AND EDUCATORS

Genetic Engineering: Opposing Viewpoints

James D. Torr

Naked

David Sedaris

SPOTLIGHT

Fish Whistle: Commentaries, Uncommentaries and Vulgar Excesses

Daniel Pinkwater

Essays, anecdotes and commentaries from Pinkwater's early National Public Radio appearances are gathered together in this volume.

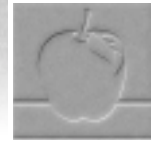
WEBSITES

www.pinkwater.com

The official website of Daniel Pinkwater, with references to published works, radio shows, and all manner of zany "Pinkwateriana."

www.gslc.genetics.utah.edu/

The Genetic Science Learning Center's site that has activities for both students and teachers.



And Zen I Wrote

By Daniel Pinkwater



...This is about how to prepare to be a good writer – or any kind of artist. It’s the kind of information you won’t get anywhere else.

When I was a student I invented a number of practices that, I vaguely hoped, would help me become a good artist. They are my own discoveries. I share them with you now, free and for nothing.

The first thing I did was teach myself to sit at a table. Seems simple, but not many people can do it. Specifically, I had a lot of trouble “getting started.” People who want to do art seem to use that phrase a lot. “I can’t seem to get started.”

Well, I had trouble getting started. So I invented this regimen. I made a goal of sitting for one hour at the table where I was supposed to do my work. The rules were, once I sat down, I was not to get up for one hour. I wasn’t obliged to do any work—but I wasn’t allowed to do anything else. It took me a few days to get so that I could sit quietly for a whole hour. If I did manage to sit for an hour—I allowed myself to regard it as my day’s successful creative work, even if I hadn’t picked up a pencil. When I was able to do an hour, I upped the time to two hours. When I got so that I could sit still for two hours, I invariably started working while sitting. I finally got it so I could sit at the table working, with planned breaks for stretches and the bathroom—I’m not a fanatic nut—for eight continuous hours. That’s a long haul for this kind of thing, as any writer or painter will tell you.

The next thing I wanted to do was develop my powers of observation—not my powers of description; that’s easier. I wanted to get beyond what I could describe and find strata of experience that I was probably missing. I did two things. The first was to watch the sun set every day for a year, September to June. (I was at college when I did this.) Every day, I went to a place overlooking the Hudson River, and watched the whole sunset. I didn’t try to make anything of it, come to any conclusions. I just sat and watched. I believe it did me a lot of good...

The other problem I wanted to address was how to make things in a sustained, spontaneous and unhesitating way. I did this by setting myself a quota of making one woodcut print every day—in addition to anything else I might do. I was obliged to make a drawing on a piece of board, carve it out, roll ink on it, and make two decent-looking prints from it sometime before going to sleep. It didn’t have to be woodcuts. It could have been poems, or radio talks.

This wasn’t all I did. I did conventional things, took classes, read stuff, listened to advice. Some of it was useful, some was not.

And it still took me a while to get to be a swell writer—but those exercises I just told you about were the most useful things I did. Fun too. It puts me in a good mood just thinking about them.

Excerpted from *Fish Whistle: Commentaries, Uncommentaries and Vulgar Excesses*

Activity

- Have your class go outside and find a tree, a flower, or some other plant. Let them sit and watch it closely, quietly, for 10 minutes. After 10 minutes go back to your classroom and have the students write down everything they noticed about the tree or plant. Did they notice things that they wouldn’t have noticed if they had just walked by?

- Daniel Pinkwater decided that he would make a woodcut every day. Have your students choose something that they would like to try to do every day for one week: write a poem, draw a picture, send an e-mail to a friend, listen to a favorite song, play with a pet, etc. After the week is over, talk about their experiences as a class. Were they able to make their quota? Did they enjoy it, or not?



Musical Theatre

Musical theatre uses many of the resources of the theatre arts—not only visual spectacle and spoken dialogue, but also music, lyrics, song, and dance. These resources help musicals to compress time and emphasize relationships between characters. As David Duvall, the Musical Director for SCT's *The Hoboken Chicken Emergency*, puts it, "The music in a musical can make things larger than life, it can bypass thought—we feel the story go through us."

For example, chapter two of Daniel Pinkwater's novel begins with Arthur, a typical American boy, trying to train his giant chicken:

Henrietta galloped after him, crashed into him, and, after they had both gotten their balance, followed Arthur around the playground, clucking. She wasn't all that stupid—just slow, and clumsy.

Chad Henry, when creating his musical, used this scene from the book as inspiration for the song *Walk This Way*. The staging of this song not only gives the audience insight into the personalities of the different characters singing it, but also it allows us to see their changing relationship. In the novel, that process takes weeks and many conversations and scenes, but in the musical, it happens during one three-minute song.

ARTHUR:

... GIVE IT A GO
 GIVE IT A SHOT
 GIVE YOUR ALL
 I MEAN, ALL THAT YOU'VE GOT
 GIVE IT A FLING, GIVE IT A TRY
 MAYBE YOU'LL STUMBLE
 BUT MAYBE YOU'LL FLY
 IF YOU'RE FEELIN' DOWN, AND TROUBLE'S AROUND
 JUST WALK MY WAY
 CAUSE SPEAKIN' FROM MY OWN PERSONAL POINT OF VIEW
 I COULD WALK A MILLION MILES
 BUT I'D BE LOST WITHOUT YOUR SMILES
 AND I'D COME WALKING BACK TO YOU!

The example above illustrates the unique way that musicals can show character interactions. Henrietta's awkward dancing at the beginning of the number shows her initial clumsiness and wariness, but as she and

The score, or music, (shown above in Duvall's handwriting) for *Walk This Way* furthers the story line and character development.

Arthur grow closer she grows more coordinated and confident. Even the timing and pitch of Henrietta's clucking illustrate the growing friendship between the two. Duvall says, "Harmonics, the arrangement of notes into patterns, is a universal language, deeper than words."

Linda Hartzell, SCT's Artistic Director, sums it up, "The music in musical theatre allows you to do and show just about anything onstage—it can take us to any time and place instantly, it can tell a story, create a mood, show the most exciting moments. If you listen for it, there is music in everyday life—hearing the music of children laughing can be an almost religious experience for me—and musical theatre, when it works right, allows us to put those moments up on stage."

Activity

- Have your students transform a chapter of a book they are reading into a song. Remind them that a song can take us anywhere and let us become any character instantly.

You can take it a step further and have them perform the song complete with costumes, music and an audience.



ARTS—communicate, connect

EALRs

COMMUNICATION—listen and observe, communicate clearly, work in a group



NEWS IS POWER

In *The Hoboken Chicken Emergency* reporter Bob Pontoon exaggerates and twists the news until it isn't true anymore. This kind of reporting uses **sensationalism**. Can you imagine what the world would be like if our only source of news came from reporters like Bob Pontoon?

Beginning in the 1890s, newspaper publishers realized that they could tell stories any way they wanted. The more shocked people became from reading the stories, the more likely they were to buy the papers. And many people had no way of knowing what was true or false, so they believed the stories they read. This trust gave newspapers a lot of power.

Sensationalism had a big effect on the Spanish-American War of 1898, also known as "The Newspaper War." Part of the reason the U.S. went to war was because of the way two competing New York newspapers described important events. People became panicked by what they read and put pressure on the government to go to war, even though some stories were false.

Another example of sensationalism was the 1938 "War of the Worlds" radio broadcast. As millions of listeners tuned-in to a popular radio show, a play about an alien invasion was aired. To add to the effect, it was performed as if it was really a live news broadcast. Some people listening thought the invasion was truly happening. They crowded the roads, tied up phone lines, hid in cellars, loaded guns, and even wrapped their heads in wet towels to protect themselves from poisonous gas.

These examples show how the media can use its power over the public. The way Bob Pontoon reports

the news has a similar effect on the people of Hoboken. For instance, when Henrietta gets scared and climbs a tree, Pontoon reports: "The invasion of a giant rampaging polar bear has sent shock waves through this normally sleepy community." The people in the play do not know he is lying and they believe this "news" is the truth. They become frightened of something that does not even exist.

Activity

- Build your own news story:
 - Write your own news story based on real, factual information.
 - Take that story and rewrite it using sensationalism.
 - Discuss how these different types of stories might affect the public.

Sensationalism still sells papers today, especially **tabloid** newspapers reporting about famous people. Millions of people read the tabloid *The National Enquirer* each week, a larger number than read *The New York Times*, one of the country's most respected newspapers. Maybe this is proof that people still like to be shocked with the news.


DEFINITIONS

Sensationalism—arousing intense interest; intended to shock or thrill
Tabloid—a newspaper with many pictures and short, often sensational, news stories

An American battleship, The Maine, exploded in the Havana Harbor during the Spanish-American War. Despite evidence suggesting that the explosion came from inside the ship itself, newspapers of the day used sensationalism to say that the explosion was an attack from the Spanish.

—The Granger Collection




EALRs
 READING—understand meaning
 WRITING—write for a purpose, learn writing process
 COMMUNICATION—communicate clearly, evaluate
 SOCIAL STUDIES—analyze and synthesize



Thanksgiving

TRADITIONS



THE FIRST THANKSGIVING

Each November in America we celebrate Thanksgiving. In 1863, Abraham Lincoln declared the last Thursday of November to be a day of Thanksgiving. It was after that time that Thanksgiving was celebrated every year in the U.S. But the roots of this holiday go much farther back into our history.

The Pilgrims had a feast after their first **harvest** in 1621. "The First Thanksgiving" was most likely eaten outside. Native Americans were invited to this dinner, and it's possible that turkey and pumpkins were served. Today, our Thanksgiving holiday is based on this celebration.

THANKSGIVING IN OTHER CULTURES

Americans are not the only people who have a celebration after the Fall harvest.

The Greeks and Romans

The Ancient Greeks and Romans worshipped many gods and goddesses. Their harvest goddesses were honored at an autumn festival each year. They were given gifts of seed, corn, cakes, fruit, and pigs. It was hoped that these celebrations would bring good harvests for the next year.

The Chinese

The ancient Chinese called their harvest festival *Chung Ch'ui*. They held this celebration during a full moon. It was considered to be the birthday of the moon. Special "moon cakes," which were round and yellow like the moon, were baked. The families ate a thanksgiving meal and feasted on roasted pig, fruit, and the "moon cakes." It was said that during the festival, flowers would fall from the moon. Those who saw the flowers would be rewarded with good fortune.

The Jews

Jewish families also celebrate a harvest festival called *Sukkot*. *Sukkot* has been celebrated for over 3,000 years and takes place each fall. It lasts for eight days. The Jewish people build small huts out of branches to remind them of the churches of their ancestors. These huts are built as temporary shelter. Inside the huts, fruits and vegetables are hung. On the first two nights of *Sukkot* the families eat their meals in the huts under the evening sky.

Thanksgiving Facts

Did you know that potatoes were not on the Pilgrims' Thanksgiving menu?



Do you know what the Horn of Plenty, or **Cornucopia** is? It comes from Greece and we still see it today during Thanksgiving.

(Cornucopia illustrated above)



George Washington declared a National Day of Thanksgiving in 1789, although some were opposed to it.



Thomas Jefferson didn't like the idea of having a national Thanksgiving Day.



In 1941, Congress proclaimed Thanksgiving a national holiday.



Canada celebrates Thanksgiving on the 2nd Monday in October.

Activity

- People celebrate Thanksgiving in many different ways. Most families have their own traditions. What are your family's traditions on Thanksgiving? Do you have certain family members who come to visit, or do you and your family spend Thanksgiving at someone else's house? What are your favorite Thanksgiving foods? Write down or draw a picture of some of your fondest memories of Thanksgiving.

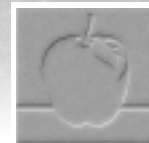
DEFINITIONS

Harvest—the process of gathering in crops

Cornucopia—a curved horn filled to overflowing symbolizing abundance

EALRs

COMMUNICATION—listen and observe, communicate clearly and effectively, analyze and evaluate
 SOCIAL STUDIES—analyze and observe, investigate, understand impact of ideas
 CIVICS—understand core values of democracy, international relationships, and responsibilities of citizenship



GENETIC ENGINEERING: *It Isn't Just Fiction Anymore*

Frankenstein and *The Attack of the 50 ft. Woman* had past generations shaking in their boots, but for most of us, such science-fiction novels and movies are cult classics that we enjoy for laughs. At the time that those stories first appeared, however, they mirrored societal fears that were far from funny.

It is out of that cultural history that Daniel Pinkwater's *The Hoboken Chicken Emergency* emerges, with a genetically mutated chicken "the size of Godzilla." With his satire he pokes fun at our fears. Yet he lets us know that we don't have to fear change just because we don't understand it. Ironically, in the 24 years since Pinkwater's spoof premiered, genetic engineering has leapt out of the realm of science fiction and into our kitchen cupboards. Today's children are living with scientific advances that once filled their grandparents with deep concern.

Current biotechnology echoes the "mad" science of fifty years ago. *Biotechnology*, the manipulation of biological forms using microbes, allows scientists to make *transgenic organisms* (organisms that have cells that contain genes spliced from some other living thing, such as bacteria, viruses, plants, or animals). These new organisms have the potential to eliminate disease, hunger, and suffering for much of the planet's population. Genetically altered salmon grow to three times their normal size. Corn and potatoes currently on the market produce their own pesticides. Some bananas now contain vaccines against disease.

Scientists can even clone some mammals, such as sheep and cattle. But, genetic experimentation can lead to unsuccessful or inconclusive results. And these results can also stir up controversy. The Kellogg Corporation was immersed in controversy recently because they used StarLink®; a genetically altered corn that the FDA has not approved for

human consumption, in their cornflakes.

The scientific community, as well as the rest of society, is split with regard to the merits of genetic research. Clearly there are both negative and positive viewpoints on this issue. And there are still more philosophical and ethical questions than there are answers. Genetic engineering asks the collective conscience of our society to stretch beyond its wildest fears and most impossible dreams.



Some cloned cattle may live up to 50% longer, but Dolly, the first sheep cloned in 1997, appears to be aging at twice the speed of a naturally born sheep.

Activity

(from the Genetic Science Learning Center
<http://gslc.genetics.utah.edu/>)

- All living things are made up of genes, and genes are made up of DNA—the stuff that determines the heredity of a living thing. A mutation is the permanent change in something's DNA. DNA consists of strands of protein, just like a sentence consists of strands of words.

For example:

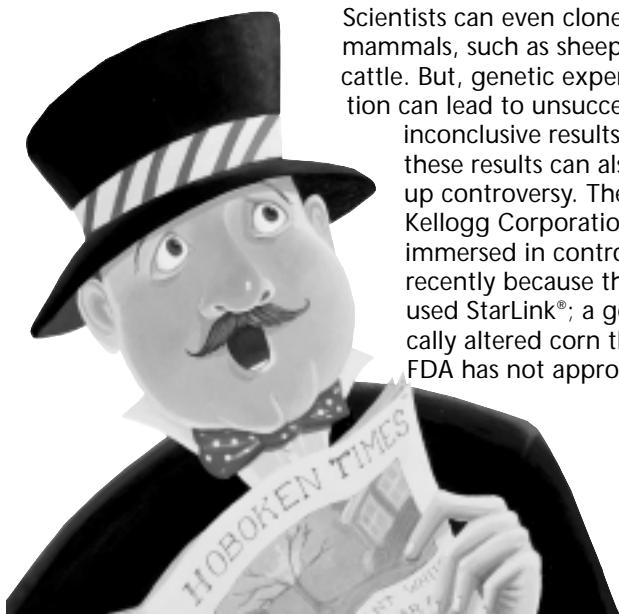
The sun was hot but the old man did not get his hat.

You would probably write this sentence like this:

The sun was hot but the old man did not get his hat.

This sentence represents DNA, with each word representing a strand of protein. Write the sentence on the board and let your class mutate it by inserting or deleting letters within the sentence. It's easy to make mutations that create "nonsense" sentences. Can they make mutations that keep or change the meaning of the sentence without creating nonsense?

- Have the class imagine and draw their own genetic mutation. It could be a plant, animal, or human.



EALRs

SCIENCE—use concepts and principles; apply skills

ARTS—communicate, connect art to other areas