

2017-2018 Season

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KIDS!

PLAYGUIDE

Garfield: The Musical with Cattitude

book by Michael J. Bobbitt and Jim Davis
music and lyrics by John L. Cornelius II

March 2-11, 2018
Van Fleet Theatre
CPAC, 549 Franklin Ave.



The Story

Garfield, a chubby and sarcastic tabby cat, fantasizes about having the most amazing birthday in the history of birthdays. He deserves it for being the best cat ever! But, it seems that all his friends—Arlene, Odie, Jon, and even his nemesis, Nermal, have forgotten his birthday. Feeling rejected, Garfield ventures out to find adventure, but quickly learns that “home is where the heart... and the food is.”



About the Creator and Playwright: Jim Davis

Jim Davis was born in Marion, Indiana in 1945. He lived on his family's farm with his parents and younger brother. As a child, Davis was frequently sick and had to spend a lot of time indoors. During times like these, Davis would draw to pass the time. In college, Davis studied art and business before he went to work for *Tumbleweeds* creator Tom Ryan. During his working years, Davis learned the necessary discipline to become a syndicated cartoonist. He created the comic strip *Gnorm Gnat*, but newspapers didn't like the idea. This led Davis to create Garfield, the lazy, lasagna-loving, orange tabby that everyone loves.

The *Garfield* comic strip was cancelled after several months but was reinstated when over 1300 angry readers wrote in to the *Chicago Sun-Times*. Since then *Garfield* has received success after success, including several comic awards, animated cartoon shows, and Emmy awards. Davis even created his own company to take care of business concerns regarding *Garfield*. Today, *Garfield* appears in over 2,100 newspapers and is read by 200 million people.

SOURCE: garfield.com/jim-davis



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ABOUT THE SHOW



About the Playwright: Michael J. Bobbitt



In addition to Jim Davis, *Garfield: The Musical with Cattitude* was written by Michael J. Bobbitt, the Artistic Director of Adventure Theatre & ATMTC Academy. Bobbitt has directed, choreographed, and performed at many theatres in the Washington D.C. region. He was even involved in the 1996 Olympic Games. He studied creative writing and music at Susquehanna University. As a playwright, his work has been accepted to several festivals. Bobbitt is a recipient of the County Executive's Excellence in the Arts and Humanities—Emerging Leader Award. Additionally, Bobbitt has served on grants panels for The National Endowment for the Arts.

SOURCE: www.adventuretheatre-mtc.org/aboutatmtc/bobbitt.html



About the Composer and Lyricist: John L. Cornelius II



John Cornelius is a member of The American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP). His works are currently being performed more and more throughout the United States. He has written several theatrical works with his collaborator Michael J. Bobbitt, including *Garfield: The Musical with Cattitude*. He has served as a music director, arranger, and composer for a number of theatres including the Ensemble Theater, Adventure Theater, and Main Street Theatre. Cornelius has also written several works exploring the legacy of the African American spiritual. He is currently an Associate Professor of Music at Prairie View A&M University. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees in piano as well as master's and doctoral degrees in composition.

SOURCE: www.otw2017.org/speaker/john-l-cornelius-ii



Curriculum Connections



You can use this Playguide and your visit to CATCO is Kids to help your students meet the curriculum standards required in schools by the Ohio Department of Education and the Common Core State Standards Initiative. Look throughout our Playguide for the icon and you will find academic standards that correspond with the different activities listed.

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BEFORE THE SHOW



Activities



1. Most *Garfield* comics are divided up into three pictures in the newspaper. In comics, each picture is called a panel. Look at the *Garfield* comic above and read the three panels with a family member. With your family member, talk about how each panel tells part of the story: beginning, middle, and end. Does each panel make the story grow? How? After talking about it with your family member, act the story from the comic out. What was the easiest part? What was the hardest part?

Curriculum
Connection

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.3

Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.

2. In *Garfield: The Musical with Cattitude*, all of the characters forget about Garfield's birthday. This causes Garfield to become frustrated with his friends because his birthday is very important to him. Using a graphic novel or comic version of *Garfield*, think about how Garfield, Odie, Nermal, Arlene, and Jon would respond to Garfield's birthday being forgotten. Create a short scene where you act out each character's response. Remember to use voice and movement to show emotion! Rehearse and perform your scene for your family or friends. Discuss with them whether or not you think the play at CATCO will be similar to or different from your scene!



Curriculum
Connection

M CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.3

Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.



3. With a family member, go to your local library and find a graphic novel or comic book version of *Garfield* in the juvenile section. Read through the comic with a family member. After you finish, compare *Garfield* to another character in the comic. How are they alike? How are they different? How do they treat each other? After answering those questions, create a short scene with your family member with the two characters you compared. Pretend to be one of the characters and then switch roles! How do you think these characters will be portrayed in the musical at CATCO is Kids?

Curriculum
Connection

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.3

Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

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AFTER THE SHOW



Activities

1. After seeing the performance of *Garfield: The Musical with Cattitude*, talk with your class or peers about the performance. Discuss certain elements of the play such as the characters, props, or set pieces. How did these elements help your understanding of the story? Share your opinions and make sure to respectfully consider the opinions of others.



Curriculum
Connection

Drama/Theatre: Grade 3
Cognitive and Creative
Processes: Responding and
Reflecting 4RE

Share personal opinions about a play or theatre experience and respectfully consider the opinions of others.



2. Other than speaking their lines and singing, the performers in *Garfield* had to move their bodies to show feelings. Choose two of your favorite characters from *Garfield* and write down three emotions that they felt throughout the story. How would you act out those emotions? Use physical movement, voice, and even household props to rehearse. Share your ideas with a family member or friend. Now can you try to act out the whole story from the musical from beginning to end from memory?

Curriculum
Connection

Drama/Theatre: Grade 4
Cognitive and Creative
Processes: Producing and
Performing 2PR

Manipulate voice, movement, space, design and physical objects to communicate thoughts, feelings and ideas in both improvised and scripted activities.

3. *Garfield: The Musical with Cattitude* featured a lot of music. Some of it was joyful and some of it was sad. Make a list of as many songs as you can remember from the show. How did each song express what a character was thinking and feeling? Did the music help you understand those feelings or not? Share your answers with a family member or peer.



Curriculum
Connection

Music Standards: Grade 5
Cognitive and Creative
Processes: Responding and
Reflecting 2RE

Discuss contributions of musical elements to aesthetic qualities in performances of self and others.

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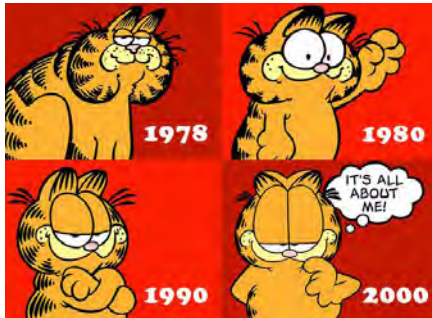
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FUN FACTS ABOUT THE GARFIELD COMIC STRIP



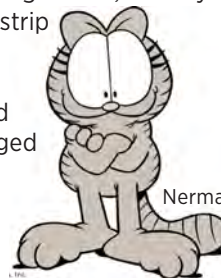
Lyman



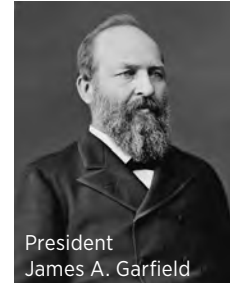
Arlene



Odie



Nermal



President
James A. Garfield



- Jon Arbuckle was a cartoonist in the first comic strip, but it was never mentioned again.
- Garfield was named after Jim Davis's grandfather James A. Garfield, who was named after the president of the same name!
- The world of *Garfield* is set in Muncie, Indiana.
- Jon originally had a human roommate named Lyman. Lyman was also Odie's owner.
- Garfield didn't always look the way we know and love. Throughout the years, Jim Davis made changes to the fat cat's appearance.
- *Garfield* merchandise brings in between \$750 million and \$1 billion each year.
- *Garfield* is syndicated in more than 2500 newspapers and journals, currently holding the Guinness Book of World Records for most syndicated comic.
- One of the most well-known pieces of *Garfield* merchandise is the "Stuck on You Garfield," a plush doll with suction cups on its paws. Jim Davis actually wanted Velcro on the paws, but there was a mistake when the doll was made and he decided to keep it that way.
- *Garfield: The Musical with Cattitude* is not the first musical version of *Garfield*. In 2011, there was a full-length musical called *Garfield Live* staged in Muncie, Indiana.
- Arlene did not appear in *Garfield* until 1980. Since then she has had both larger and smaller parts in movies, cartoon shows, and the comic strip.
- In Sweden, Norway, and Finland, Garfield's name is different.
- Garfield has appeared as a balloon in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.
- Odie's birthday is officially August 8th, the day he first appeared in the comic strip in 1978.
- When Nermal first appeared in the comic strip, he belonged to Jon's parents.



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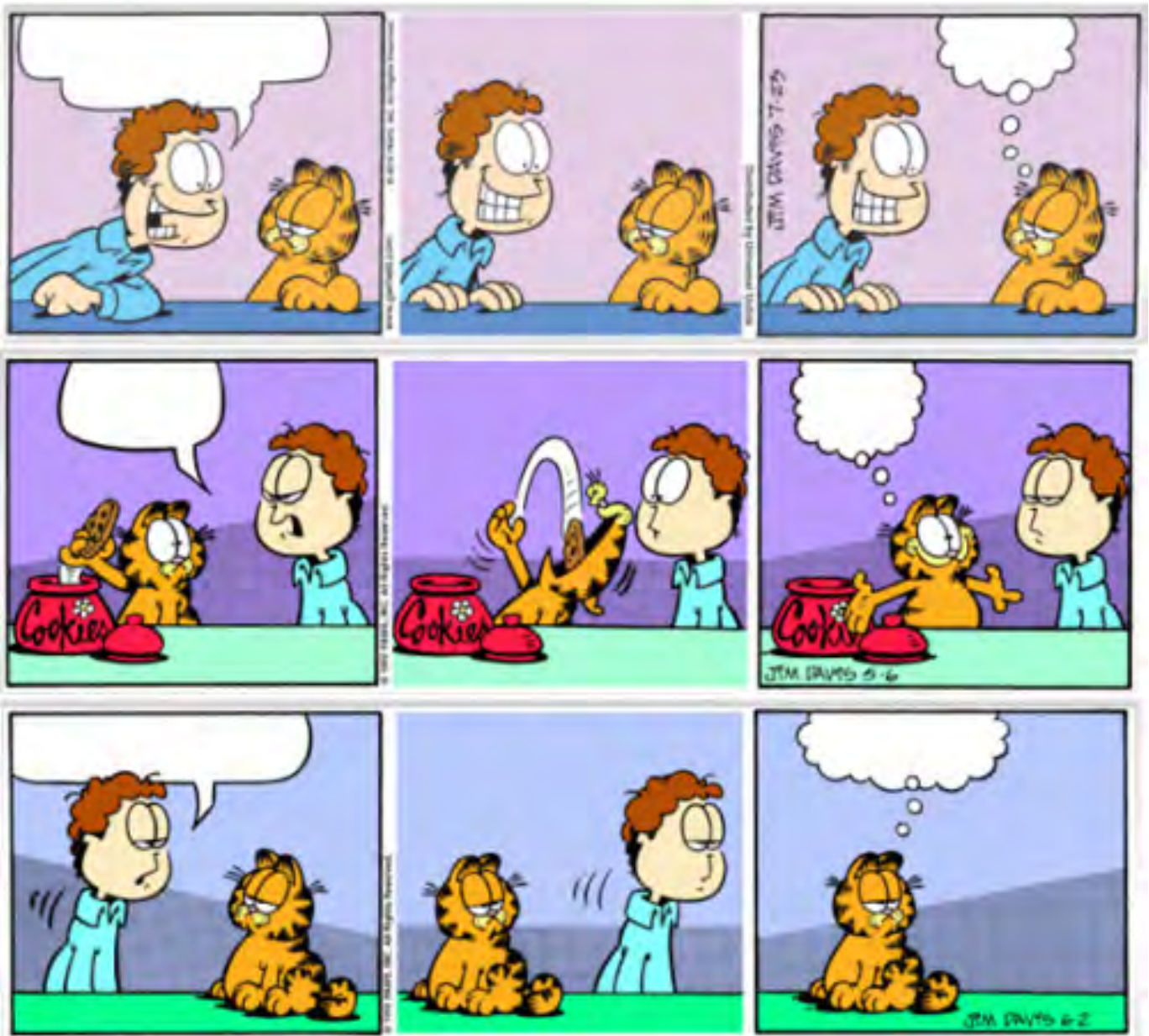
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Create Your Own Comic Strip

The activity below will help you become a full-fledged comic writer. Look at the image below. There are nine panels total, and what each character says has been removed. Remember each *Garfield* comic usually lasts three panels, so below you can write up to three *Garfield* comics. Look at what's happening in each and decide what you think the characters are saying. Keep in mind that Jon can't understand Garfield's responses, even though we can.



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How to Draw Garfield

The activity below will help you become a full-fledged comic writer.

Supplies needed: pencil; eraser; paper; and colored pencils, crayons, markers, or preferred coloring medium.

Directions:

1. Draw Garfield's eyes and nose as shown.



2. Draw his cheeks and mouth.



3. Add the outline of his head and ears.



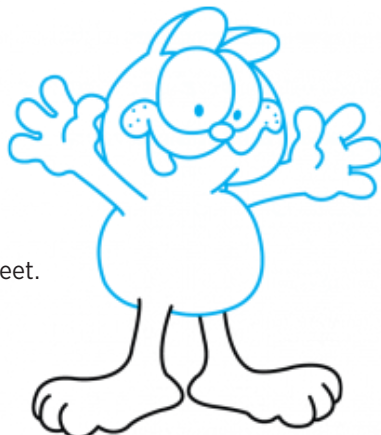
4. Draw Garfield's hands...paws.



5. Draw a circle for his tummy.



6. Add his legs and feet.



7. Draw his tail.



8. Add his stripes and other details.



9. Color your drawing in using your favorite coloring medium!

