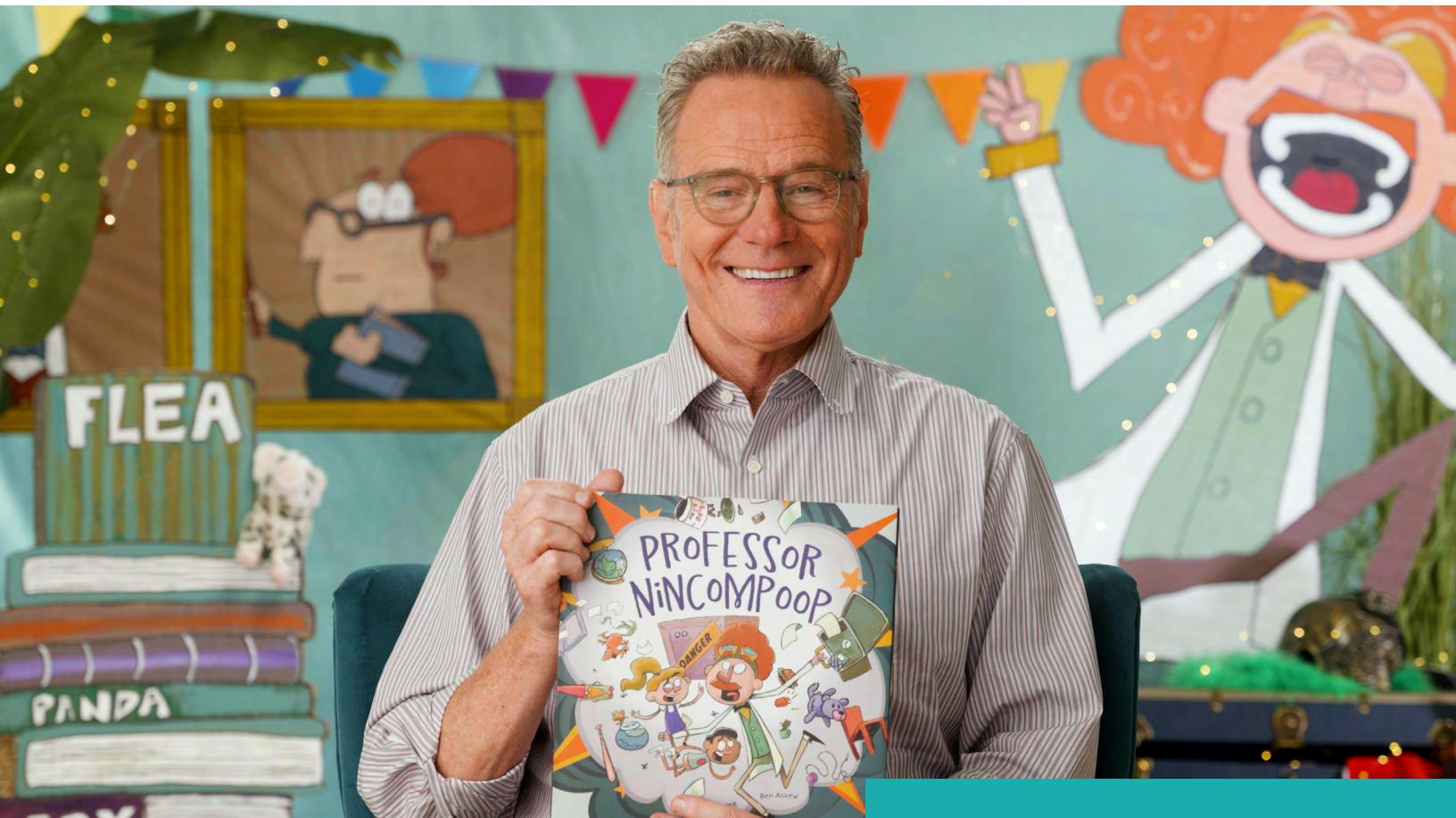


TEACHERS' GUIDE

# Professor Nincompoop

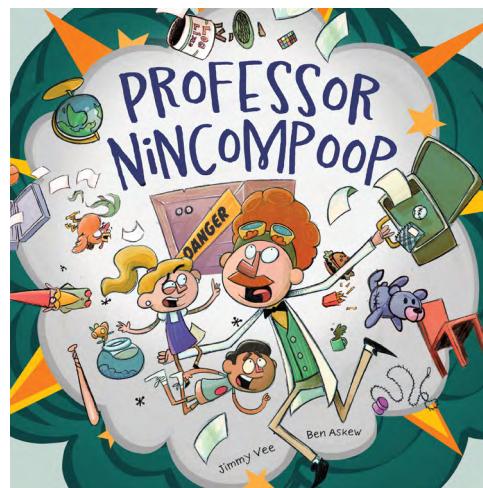
SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup>



## SYNOPSIS

A foolishly funny tale about trusting your gut.

Professor Nincompoop has discovered a new species of animal he's sure will be his ticket into the Professors Hall of Fame. But when his two biggest fans, Nick and Tess, start to smell a rat, the professor doubles down on his ridiculous tale that sounds more like science fiction than scientific fact. Will the professor's discovery indeed be new? Will his story indeed be true? Or will the kids make a surprise discovery of their own?



## THEMES IN THE STORY

- Humor
- Critical Thinking
- Logic
- Instincts
- Skepticism
- Truth vs. Exaggeration



**Written by:** Jimmy Vee

**Illustrated by:** Ben Askew

**Published by:** Belly Laugh Books

**Read by:** Bryan Cranston

**Suggested grade level:** 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup>

# ELA COMMON CORE STANDARD

**Reading Literature:** Students read and respond to works of literature with emphasis on comprehension, and making connections among ideas and between texts with a focus on textual evidence.

Standards listed below are for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades, but can be adapted to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade standards.

## BEFORE VIEWING

**Standard:** CCSS.SL.1.1, CCSS.SL.2.1

**Objective:** Tap into prior knowledge and build background to prepare for viewing the story.

**Procedure:** Build background with students by discussing the following points. This may be done on the carpet with A/B partners or at their desks.

- Based on the title *Professor Nincompoop*, what kind of character do you think the professor might be?
- Look at the cover illustration. What clues does it give you about what could happen in the story?
- The title uses the word "nincompoop." What do you think that word means?
- What do you already know about scientists or professors?
- Have you ever read a story about someone who exaggerates or makes things up?
- What does it mean to "trust your gut?"

## DURING VIEWING

**Standard:** CCSS.SL.1.2, CCSS.SL.2.2

**Objective:** Watch the story and answer the following questions.

**Procedure:** Stop the video at the noted times to ask questions or pose prompts from the suggested list below:

- What do you think will happen next? (1:17)
- The professor claims he can talk to 743 animals. Do you think that's true? What makes you say that? (1:46)
- Why do Nick and Tess start to question the professor's story? (2:53)
- The professor shows them a tiny box for a "massively massive" critter. Does that make sense? Why or why not? (3:10)
- Do you think the professor's discovery will turn out to be real? (4:20)
- How do you think Nick and Tess feel when they first hear the professor's amazing tale? How do their feelings change as he keeps talking? (5:11)
- If you were in the kids' situation, what would you do? Would you question the professor or believe him? Why? (6:00)

# AFTER VIEWING

**Standard:** *CCSS.RL.1.1, CCSS.RL.2.1*

**Objective:** Students will ask and answer such questions as *who, what, where, when, why* and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

**Procedure:** Students will discuss the following questions with their carpet or desk partners:

- What is the main message of the story? What did it teach you?
- Why do you think the author gave the professor such a silly or funny name?
- What part of the story surprised you the most? Why?
- Why is it important not to believe everything you see or read, especially on the internet?
- Can you think of a time when you had to decide whether someone was telling the truth? How did you figure it out?
- Do Nick and Tess' actions remind you of something you've experienced with a friend or a grown-up?
- Have you read any other stories that feel similar to this one? What makes them alike?

# READING RESPONSE

**Standard:** *CCSS.RL.1.1, CCSS.RL.2.1*

**Objective:** Answer the reading prompt using details from the text to support the response.

**Materials:**

- Reading response journal
- Pencils

**Procedure:**

1. After listening to the story of *Professor Nincompoop*, invite students to choose one of the following prompts:
  - *What do you think happens to Professor Nincompoop after the story ends?*
  - *If you could create a brand-new adventure for the professor, Nick and Tess, what would it be about?*
2. Allow time for students to discuss the prompt.
3. Have students write their responses answering the above prompt in their reading response journals.

**Note:** Younger students may use a sentence stem to help them with their responses.

For example:

I think Professor Nincompoop will \_\_\_\_\_.

# WRITING – CREATE A HYBRID ANIMAL

**Standard:** *CCSS.2.W.2 – Write informational text*

**Objective:** Students will create a make-believe animal by combining two real animals. They will draw their animal and write sentences to describe it.

**Materials:**

- Hybrid Animal Graphic Organizer (*page 8*)
- Hybrid Animal Writing and Drawing Page (*page 9*)
- Pencils

**Procedure:**

1. Let students know that they will be inventing a brand-new animal by mixing two animals together. They will give their animal a name and share their new hybrid animal.
2. Give the definition of a hybrid and examples.
3. As a class, talk about animals and write ideas on the board. Discuss what animals eat (*herbivore, carnivore, omnivore*), where animals live (*forest, ocean, desert, jungle*), and animal body parts and characteristics (*fur, feathers, paws, scales, wings, fins, claws, beaks, horns*).
4. Ask students to choose two animals and complete the graphic organizer by writing the hybrid animal's name, what it looks like, what it eats, and where it lives.
5. Have students draw a picture of their hybrid animal and write four or more sentences describing their animal using their ideas from the graphic organizer.

# ART CONNECTION – CREATE A 3D HYBRID ANIMAL

**Art Standard:** Make art or design to explore personal interests, questions, and curiosity.

**Objective:** Students will create a 3D model of their hybrid animal using their writing and drawing as a guide.

**Materials:**

- Completed Hybrid Animal Graphic Organizer and Writing and Drawing Page
- Clay
- Foam pieces
- Recycled materials (boxes, tubes, bottle caps, etc.)
- Paint
- Crayons, markers or colored pencils
- Glue
- Scissors

### ART CONNECTION – CONTINUED

#### Procedure:

1. Have students look at their Hybrid Animal page. Remind them to notice their animal's body parts, colors and special features.
2. Ask students to think about which materials will work best for their animal. For example, clay for the body, or recycled materials for wings or tails.
3. Instruct students to use the materials provided to build a 3D model of their hybrid animal. Encourage them to include details that match their drawing and writing.
4. Have students add details by using paint, color and decorate their models to bring their animals to life.
5. When finished, students participate in a gallery walk to look at their classmates' hybrid animals and talk about what they admire.

**Optional Extension Activity:** Students may keep their hybrid animal with them during the ELA block and reread their writing, or share their animal with a partner.

### TECHNOLOGY LESSON – HOW DO YOU KNOW IF SOMETHING YOU SEE OR HEAR IS TRUE?

**Objective:** In this short technology lesson, students learn that not everything they see or hear, especially on screens, is true. Students practice being careful thinkers by asking simple questions to decide what information is real and what might be made up.

#### Materials:

- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Teacher-prepared statements or pictures
- Crayons and paper (optional)

#### Procedure:

1. Ask students: *"Have you ever seen something on a screen that surprised you? Do you think everything we see or hear is always true?"*
2. Explain that sometimes people make mistakes, and sometimes they make things up. That is why it is important to stop and think before we believe something.
3. Tell students that good thinkers ask questions. Write these questions on the board and read them together: *"Does this make sense?"* *"Who told me this?"* and *"Can I ask a grown-up I trust?"*
4. Read or show simple statements. After each one, ask students if they should believe it right away, or stop and check. Examples: *The sun gives us light*, *You never need sleep*, and *A cow can jump over the moon*. Students should respond with thumbs up (makes sense) or thumbs down (does not make sense).
5. Ask students to explain their thinking using sentence starters: *I think this is true because...* and *I think this is not true because....*

## TECHNOLOGY – CONTINUED

### Procedure:

6. Ask: *"Is everything we see or hear true?" "What can we do if we're not sure?"*
7. End by saying together: *"Stop, think, and ask for help."*

**Optional Extension Activity:** Students draw one thing that is true and one thing that is pretend, or practice stopping and thinking during a video or story.

# MY HYBRID ANIMAL BY \_\_\_\_\_

Animal Name: \_\_\_\_\_

This animal is a:  Amphibian  Bird  Fish  Insect  Mammal  Reptile

## MY ANIMAL'S FACTS

Height/Size: \_\_\_\_\_

Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Color: \_\_\_\_\_

It has: \_\_\_\_\_

What it eats: \_\_\_\_\_

Where it lives: \_\_\_\_\_

Predators: \_\_\_\_\_

Lifespan: \_\_\_\_\_

An Interesting Fact About My Animal:

Why They Matter in Nature:

My animal's habitat is...

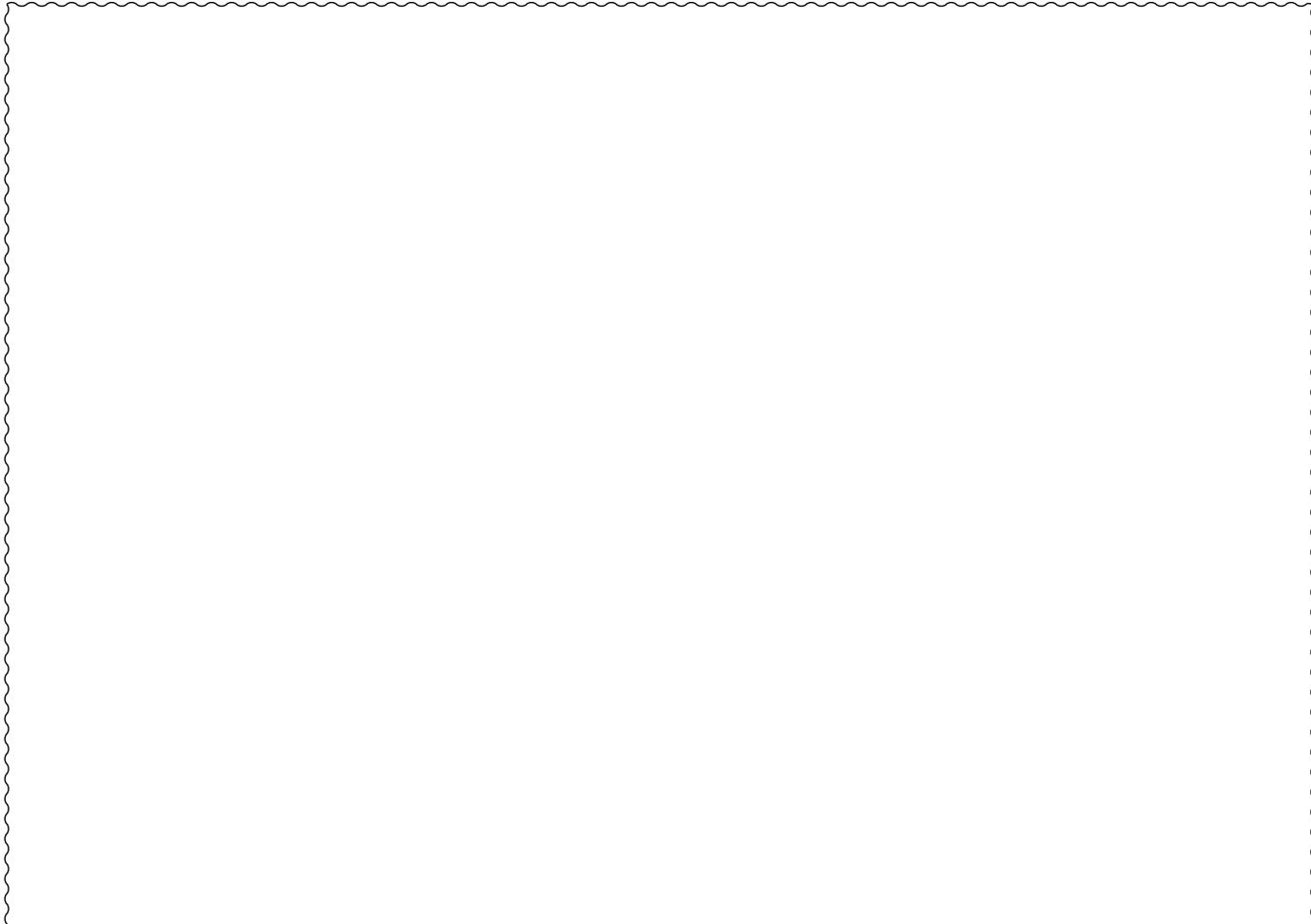
Here is a picture of my animal:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## ANIMAL NAME



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## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide enhances the English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum by providing supplemental learning opportunities alongside quality children's literature, engaging students as they listen to expressive read-alouds.

Suggested story related activities in this guide are aligned with ELA Common Core Standards.