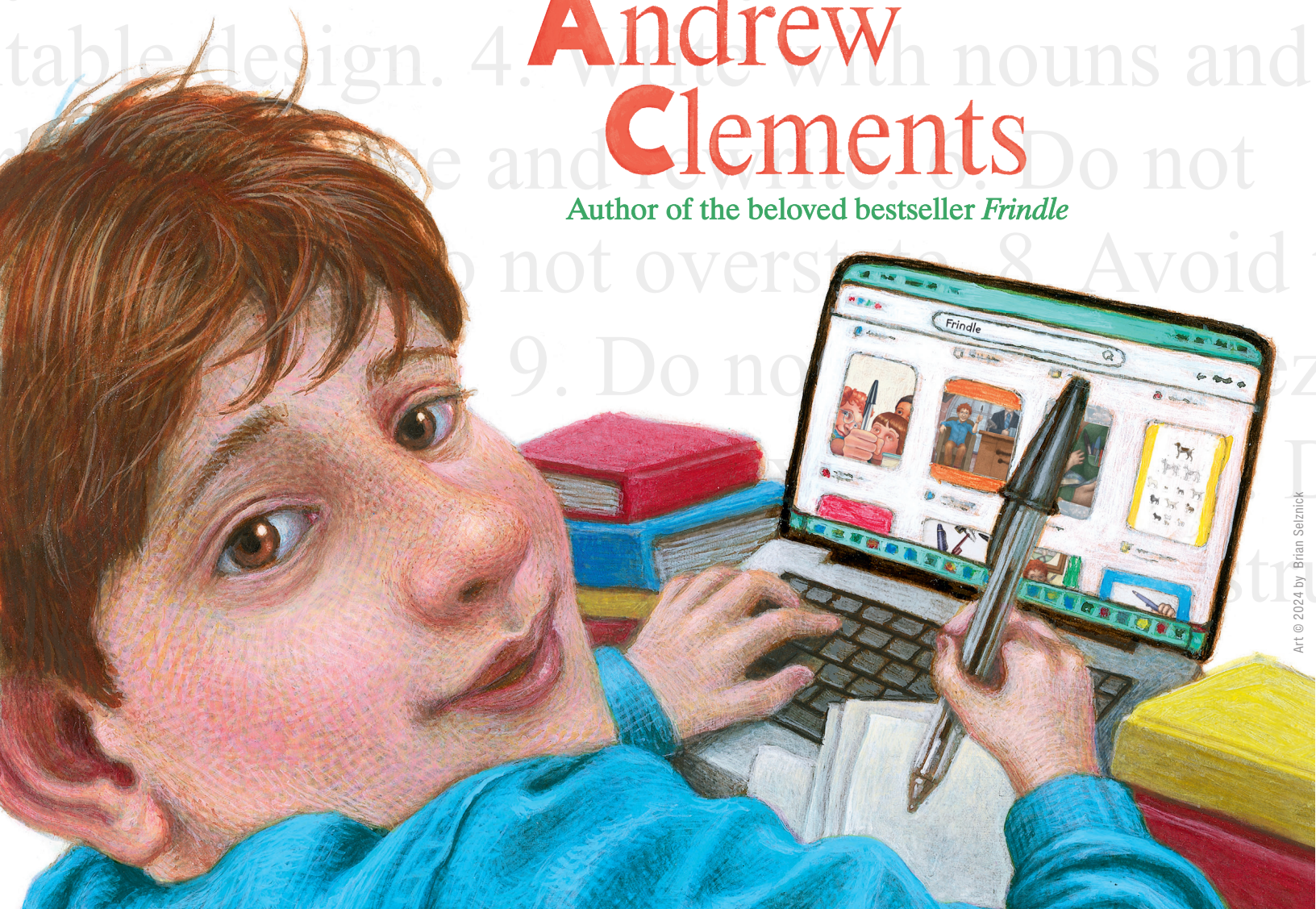


The Frindle Files

Andrew
Clements

Author of the beloved bestseller *Frindle*



EDUCATORS' GUIDE

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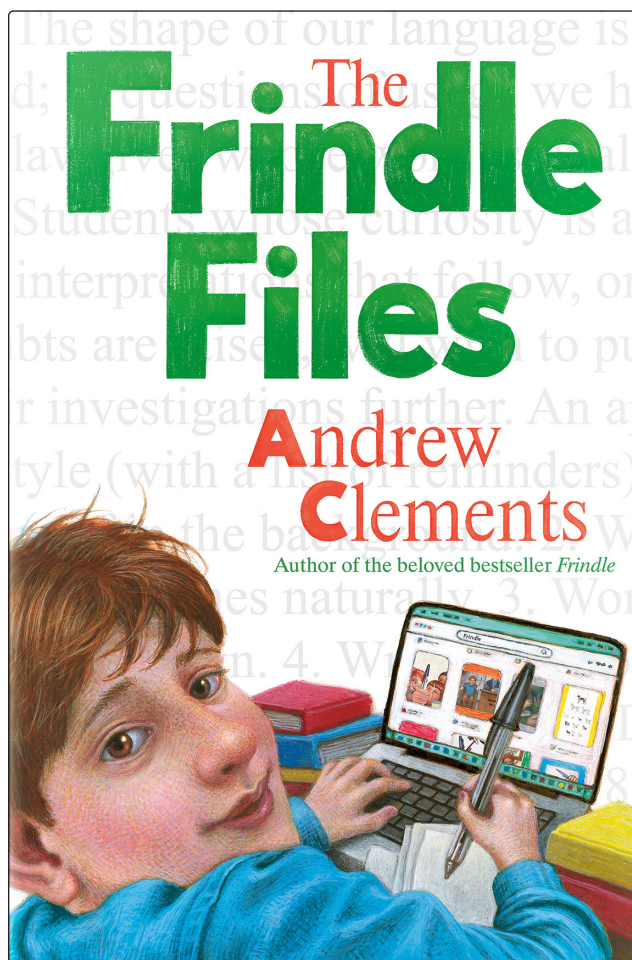


About the Book

In the long-awaited follow-up to the beloved classic *Frindle*, a new generation of kids discovers the power of words and imagination.

Josh Willet is a techie, a serious gamer. Which is why Josh and his friends can't stand Mr. N's ELA class; it's a strict no-tech zone. Mr. N makes them write everything out by hand, he won't use a Smartboard, and he's obsessed with some hundred-year-old grammar book. Then Josh discovers a secret; turns out Mr. N's been keeping a lot more than technology from his students. Together with his best friend Vanessa, and using all the computer skills they've got, Josh is determined to solve the mystery of Mr. N's past. And maybe get some screentime back, too?

Andrew Clements's final novel is a timely one—about the importance of language, the power of technology (good and bad), and how you might have to challenge what you think you know to imagine what is possible. Set a whole generation later, this new novel can be read on its own or alongside *Frindle* and is destined to be another timeless classic.



“An engaging tale for the latest generation of Clements fans.” —*Kirkus Reviews*



About the Author

Andrew Clements (1949–2019) was a *New York Times* bestselling author whose beloved modern classic *Frindle* has sold over six million copies, won nineteen state awards (and been nominated for thirty-eight!), and been translated into over a dozen languages. Before writing *Frindle*, Andrew worked as a public school teacher outside Chicago.. Called the “master of school stories” by *Kirkus Reviews*, Andrew wrote over eighty acclaimed books for kids, including, most recently, *The Friendship War* and *The Losers Club*, which *School Library Journal* called “engaging and funny . . . a laugh-out-loud first purchase” in a starred review.

Pre-Reading Activity

There are two made-up words in the novel: *frindle* and *frindy*. Review the definition of the following parts of speech: noun, adjective, and adverb. Then have students make up a word and write sentences using their word as a noun, adjective, and adverb.

Discussion Questions

1. The conflict in a novel is the problem to be solved. What is the conflict of this novel? At what point is it revealed? Explain the twists and turns that Josh encounters as he tries to solve the problem. How is conflict different than mystery? Discuss how the conflict in this novel leads to a mystery.
2. Mr. N is the only teacher at Clara Vista Middle School who doesn't allow laptops in class. What do his students think of this, and how would they characterize him at the beginning of the novel? Explain why Mr. N requires work to be handwritten in blue or black ink. Why does Josh think this requirement pointless? Discuss Josh's argument that handwritten assignments are bad for the environment. How does Josh change his mind by the end of the novel?
3. Josh borrows a pen from his mom to complete a writing assignment for Mr. N. The word *frindle* is written on the pen. What is special about the word? Why does Josh's mom think the pen might be a collector's item someday? How does the pen ignite curiosity in Josh? Explain why Josh creates the word *frindy*. How does he get other students to use the word? Debate whether he receives the response he is looking for from Mr. N.
4. How does Josh's interest in computers and coding contribute to his approach to solving problems? Josh likes to "master the basics first, and then use that know-how to tackle the more challenging stuff" (p. 43). What are the basics in Josh's problem? Discuss the more challenging stuff. How does Josh violate his own rule and skip ahead? What complications does this create?
5. Nicholas Allen, age eleven, was the inventor of *frindle*. How does Josh discover that Nicholas Allen and Allen Nicholas are the same person? Explain the trap Josh sets for Mr. N. What does he think the trap will prove? How does Mr. N react when he sees the pen? What troubles Josh about Mr. N's response?
6. Describe Josh and Vanessa's friendship. What makes them good partners in solving problems? Josh says no one had ever won an argument with Vanessa. How does this define her character? Why is Josh reluctant to tell Vanessa about *frindle*? Explain his dilemma about revealing his secret about Mr. N and *frindle*. Why does he decide to tell Vanessa? What is Vanessa's idea about approaching Mr. N? Why does Josh think this a bad idea?
7. Explain why Josh, Vanessa, Miguel, and Hunter hold up their laptops in class rather than the paperback copy of *The Elements of Style*. How does Mr. N explain the value of the book over the computer? Josh finds a free online version of the book. Why does he text the link to his friends? How does Mr. N know that the free ebook is riddled with errors? Why doesn't Mr. N tell Josh about the mistakes? At what point does Josh begin to think that he has taken the experiment too far?

8. *The Zen of Python* states: “Simple is better than complex. Complex is better than complicated” (p. 73). In your own words, what does this mean? How is Josh’s frindy prank simple? Why is the laptop scheme complex? What becomes complicated about Josh’s project?
9. Investigative skills are someone’s ability to collect data and draw conclusions to reveal important facts: Discuss Josh’s investigative skills. Explain his approach to research. How does he make predictions and test his hypothesis?
10. When does Josh realize the problems created by the pirated ebook? Explain Josh’s path to identify the pirate. Why does Josh find the ebook insulting? Josh asks Ms. Hernandez, the Python Coding Club sponsor, how to search for domain name registrations. Discuss Josh’s surprise when she leads him to Mr. N for help.
11. At what point is *For Wilbur!* launched? What is the significance of the name of the project? Explain what Josh means when he says, “The most important thing right now is the message. Because if *that* part’s not right, this project won’t work” (pp. 144–145). Identify the message. When does it become obvious to Josh that Mr. N is using *For Wilbur!* to teach a lesson?
12. Why does Mr. Ortega, the principal of Clara Vista Middle School, demand that *For Wilbur!* be shut down? How does he change his mind once he knows the details?
13. A cliff-hanger is a plot device that leaves the reader in suspense about what happens next in the story. Identify the cliffhangers in the novel. Which one is the most dramatic?
14. Theme is the underlying message in a novel. What is the central theme of this novel? At the end of the novel, Mr. N gives Josh a copy of *Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt to read. Explain the significance of the Babbitt novel to the central theme of *The Frindle Files*.



Curriculum Connections

1. Mr. N gives his students an assignment to describe something they think is beautiful. Complete this assignment. Follow the rules of *The Elements of Style*: “Vigorous writing is concise.” Share writing in class.
2. Josh asks his mom about *frindle*. Discuss the metaphor she uses in explaining the word: “It was more like the teachers were the beach, the kids were the ocean, and the waves kept coming” (p. 49). Write a short paper that discusses how this metaphor applies to Josh and the *For Wilbur!* campaign. Write a concluding paragraph about whether the waves keep coming at the end of the novel.
3. Nicholas Allen went to the University of Massachusetts. Josh finds a front-page article from the student newspaper: “UMASS Sophomore Created Frindle.” Write the article. Make sure to include what, when, why, and how.
4. An acrostic poem is when the first letter of each line spell out a word. Write an acrostic poem, using *For Wilbur!* as the vertical or spine word, that addresses Josh’s understanding of what Mr. N wants his students to know about issues related to the internet.
5. Miguel interviews Josh for his YouTube channel. Allow students to work with a partner to re-create this interview. Include additional questions that ask Josh to contemplate what he has learned from his campaign. Give a shout out to Mr. N.
6. Brainstorm the qualities of a good teacher. Then using the rules for good writing from *The Elements of Style*, write a persuasive letter nominating Mr. N for Clara Vista Middle School’s Teacher of the Year.
7. Ethics is a group of standards that help frame right and wrong. Sponsor a class debate that focuses on the ethical dilemma posed in this book regarding pirated material on the internet. Include in the debate why Mr. N thinks the Babbitt novel is a good book for Josh. Make concluding remarks that support your arguments.
8. At the end of the novel, Mr. Ortega does an interview with KCBS2 News. Re-create this interview. Include remarks from Josh, Vanessa, Miguel, Mr. N, other teachers and students, and Josh’s mom.

Vocabulary/ Use of Language

The following words are used in *The Elements of Style*, 4th ed.: *advisable* (p. 40), *sparingly* (p. 48), *duration* (p. 63), *vigorous* (p. 93), *concise* (p. 93), *sparse* (p. 94), *dense* (p. 94), and *readability* (p. 94). Try to define the words, taking hints from context.



*This guide was prepared by Pat Scales,
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