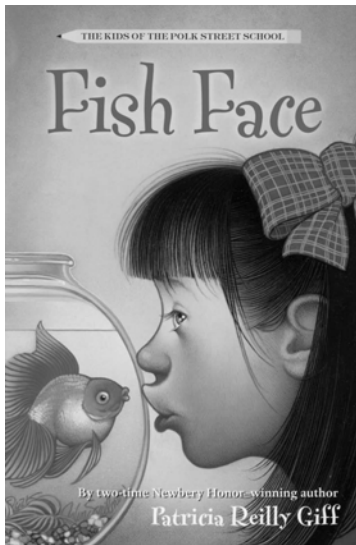


# Teacher Guide

## Expanding the Classroom

**ArtsPower  
National Touring  
Theater  
presents**



presents the  
**Bank of America SchoolTime Series**

### About the Show

**Fish Face** is based on a book in the “Polk Street School” series by two-time Newbery Honor-winning author Patricia Reilly Giff.

Emily Arrow envisioned a perfect year at Polk Street School. The problem is that Emily tends to get in trouble at times. The issue might be something like talking or being late. Emily Arrow can do plenty of things well when she has Uni (her toy unicorn) to bring her good luck. She’s one of the fastest runners around and she’s great at math. Emily hopes that Uni will help her become “the most practically perfect person at Polk Street School.” Then Dawn Tiffanie Bosco, the new kid, comes on the scene. It appears this new kid’s arrival is going to ruin Emily’s chance of reaching her goal. The new girl seems to be good at everything.

At first Emily wants to become friends with the new girl, but then she discovers Uni is missing and she begins to have a lot of bad luck. Emily and her best friend Richard Best, a.k.a. Beast, decide Dawn is the thief. These two set out to prove Dawn guilty of the crime.

### ArtsPower National Touring Theater

ArtsPower is one of America’s preeminent nonprofit presenters and producers of professional, Actors’ Equity Association theater for young and family audiences. It celebrated its 23d anniversary in 2008. ArtsPower presents more than 1,000 performances annually before audiences totaling nearly eight million people throughout forty-five states.

The touring theater has created twenty-four original musicals and dramas, many of which are based on award-winning books for young readers. ArtsPower has performed in more than 350 regional theaters, university auditoriums, and cultural centers throughout America, including The Kennedy Center in Washington, DC and New York City’s Lincoln Center.

*It’s so much more friendly with two.*


**– A. A. Milne**

**RuthEckerdHall.com**

RICHARD B. BAUMGARDNER  
CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

# Background Information

## Lore of the Unicorn



That miniature **unicorn** that Emily carries in her pocket in *Fish Face* has quite a rich history. The unicorn is one of the most curious creatures found in literature and **lore**. The **mystery** of this animal's origin has been explored for years. The unicorn's existence has been portrayed throughout centuries in stories, folklore, songs, art and poetry. Representations of the beast vary from culture to **culture**. Did or does the animal actually exist? Most scholars agree the unicorn is most likely a fantastical creation or a result of mistaken identity.

The first written reference to this powerful, one-horned animal is credited to the Greeks. The Pegasus (flying horse) myth is generally traced to Greek and Roman roots, while the origins of unicorn **mythology** are spread throughout Eastern and Western cultures. Unicorn legends are traced to Africa, China, Russia, Japan, India, Europe and America. Scholars, writers and philosophers referenced the existence of unicorns. There are even several mentions of unicorns in the King James version of the Bible. St. Augustine viewed the animal as a symbol of the unity of the faith of the Church.

*Now I believe that there are unicorns.*  
— William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

Most modern accounts of this creature describe the animal as equine or horse-like. Various observers or writers have offered differing descriptions such as deer-like, goat-like, dragon-like or as a horned lion. Many historians think that perhaps early observers such as Marco Polo were confused by what was actually a rhinoceros. Others state it might have been an oryx, an antelope often appearing to have one long straight horn instead of two. The Roman naturalist Pliny the Elder described the animal as more monster-like, with the feet of an elephant and the tail of a boar. Aristotle, Genghis Khan and Isaiah wrote of the unicorn and Julius Caesar reported seeing one in the Hercynian Forest.

Across cultures, the unicorn has different names such as the Chinese “Ki-Lin” and the Japanese “Kirin.” The one constant is the single horn in the middle of the forehead. The word unicorn, Latin in origin, translates as one (*uni*) and horn (*cornu*). The horn may be straight, spiraled or even curved back. The color is often white, symbolizing purity. The horn or alicorn was thought to be very potent,

Information courtesy of:  
<http://www.unicorn-dream.co.uk/>  
<http://www.unicornlady.net/>

with magical powers that could cure illness and counteract poison. Unicorns are ever-present in literature today, especially in modern fantasies. In fact, there's mention of the unicorn in the book *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. The character Lord Voldemort prolongs his life by drinking the silver blood of the unicorn's horn.

*“Well, now that we have seen each other,” said the unicorn, “if you'll believe in me, I'll believe in you.”*  
— Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*

## A Symbol

Is the unicorn just a beautiful, majestic animal? In China, he is a creature of good omen or fortune, and in Japan, a celestial judge. A unicorn is said to have been present at the birth of Confucius. **Legend** states that the animal traveled with a piece of imperial jade in its mouth with the prophecy of the baby's greatness written on it.

The existence of the unicorn will long be debated. The symbolism that the mystical creature brings is most likely here to stay. Historically, many mythological beasts have been portrayed as mean or evil. The unicorn displays the exact opposite characteristics. This majestic animal is a **symbol** of hope, wisdom, purity, love, strength, harmony, innocence, freedom, grace and beauty.

## The Hunt for the Unicorn



Just as Emily hunted for Uni, humans have attempted to “capture” a unicorn for years. The gentle but strong creature is said to be very fast and powerful and

much swifter than a horse. This animal has proved to be extremely hard to catch. In the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the hunt was depicted in tapestries with the beast often shown fiercely fighting to free itself of chains.

Is the unicorn in the same mysterious category as Big-foot and the Loch Ness Monster? True believers say the mystical creatures are in the most remote regions and can only be witnessed by those of honesty and virtue.

# Background Information

## Superstitions and Such

Emily is in a panic when Uni goes missing. Uni brings good luck to Emily and is usually by her side at the most important times in her life. Does she really need the trinket or perhaps just some self-confidence?

Long ago, when people lacked knowledge of the laws of nature, they sought explanations for the “unexplainable” and often created their own hypotheses. Additionally, daily lives were often full of hardships, so **superstitions** were thought to provide protection from evil.

A number of superstitions, ancient customs and folk beliefs influence our daily lives. Many people will cross fingers for luck, “see a penny, pick it up...,” steer clear of walking under a ladder, avoid opening an umbrella indoors, or are careful not to break a mirror to avoid seven years of bad luck. All of these superstitions have origins across cultures.



**Rabbit's Foot** The tradition of carrying a hare's foot may go back many centuries. Tribes would often adopt a totem, a natural object or an animal, to be the emblem of the clan. Rabbits were thought to have special insight into the spirits as they burrowed underground and hares are born with their eyes open. To carry a part of the body, especially the foot, was thought to bring good luck and prosperity. In medieval times, some believed witches turned themselves into hares and that carrying a part of one would provide protection.



**Four-Leaf Clover** The fact that four-leaf clovers are rare (the clover is usually a three-leaf plant) explains some of the fascination with them. The origins of this lore come mostly from Irish legend and the writings of Julius Caesar. The Druids frequented oak forests to hunt for clover and to hold rituals. A person carrying a four-leaf clover was thought to be able to ward off evil spirits.

**Horseshoe** The Greeks introduced the horseshoe to Western culture as a symbol of good luck because it was made from iron (an element thought to ward off evil) and was shaped like the crescent moon. A blacksmith would often hang a horseshoe on his door to ward off evil. In the Middle Ages, witches were thought to ride on brooms because they feared horses. Any sign of a horse would scare off a witch.



Information courtesy of [www.unicornlady.net/supersitions/superstitions.html](http://www.unicornlady.net/supersitions/superstitions.html), [http://lecatr.people.wm.edu/theatrical\\_supersitions\\_and\\_saints.html](http://lecatr.people.wm.edu/theatrical_supersitions_and_saints.html) and <http://www.libertyk12.org/highschool/academics/eng/fleck/id21.htm>

**Wishbone** The Romans considered fowl sacred and brought the wishbone superstition to England. Breaking the dried clavicle bone of the chicken was well established by the time the pilgrims reached the New World. The British saw the large turkey population and adapted the practice, thus making it a part of Thanksgiving festivities.



**Knock On Wood** Children often play tag and touch a tree for safety. The Greeks, North American Indians, Romans and Britons all thought the mighty oak represented strength and good luck. The North American Indians thought bragging about a potential accomplishment could backfire. To neutralize the boast, one should knock on the base of an oak tree. Now the custom itself has evolved into a common expression.



**Superstitions in Sports** Athletes are known to be very superstitious and ritualistic. Some athletes wear a certain article of clothing or a specific color. Babe Ruth touched first base with his foot on his way to the outfield and Jack Nicklaus always carried three pennies in his pocket when he golfed. Racecar driver Rick Mears never allowed peanuts anywhere near his car. Baseball players often avoid walking on the lines of the field as do tennis players on the court (“step on a crack...?”). Some baseball players spit in their hands before picking up a bat to swing and will often tug at their gloves. Lending a bat to another player is considered a jinx. Rituals abound throughout all varieties of sports.



**Traditions in Theater** Athletes are not the only superstitious professionals. An actor knows never to mention *Macbeth* in the theater or the curse of the play will descend. Saying “good luck” is not allowed, rather “**break a leg**” is appropriate. The expression has several potential explanations including the wish for one to bow or break the leg at the knee. Another is to outwit the sprites (spirits who enjoy causing trouble). The stage should never be left dark. A ghost light should always be lit to keep the ghost company and happy. Tripping backstage or before an entrance is considered good luck. And what about the generally viewed bad luck of a cat? Some believe a cat living in a theater brings good fortune. Whistling backstage in a theater is prohibited and please, no peacocks!

Whether called traditions or superstitions, rituals play a part in our daily lives. Time will tell how long the list will grow as new traditions evolve.

# Vocabulary

## Show Related

**Accusation**—the act of accusing; the fact of being accused; a charge of wrongdoing

**Conflict**—an extended struggle or fight

**Culture**—the beliefs, social practices, and characteristics of a racial, religious, or social group

**Envy**—painful or resentful awareness of an advantage or possession enjoyed by another and the desire to possess the same thing

**Jinx**—to bring bad luck

**Legend**—a story coming down from the past whose truth is popularly accepted but cannot be verified

**Lore**—a particular body of knowledge or tradition

**Mystery**—something that has not been or cannot be explained

**Mythology**—a collection of traditional or legendary stories, usually concerning a being, hero or event, with or without a determinable basis of fact, esp. one concerned with deities or heroes of a particular people; Greek mythology

**Perfect**—flawless; without fault or defect

**Pride**—too high an opinion of one's own ability or worth; a feeling of being better than others

**Reconcile**—to win over to friendliness

**Ritual**—an established or prescribed procedure for a religious or other rite or act

**Sportsmanship**—fair play, respect for opponents, and gracious behavior in winning or losing

**Superstition**—a belief or practice resulting from ignorance, fear of the unknown, or trust in magic

**Suspect**—*verb*; to believe to be guilty without proof

**Symbol**—something that stands for something else; especially something real that stands for or suggests another thing that cannot in itself be pictured or shown: the lion is a *symbol* of courage

**Unicorn**—an imaginary animal generally represented with the body and head of a horse and a single horn in the middle of the forehead

Definitions courtesy of:  
<http://www.wordcentral.com>, <http://dictionary.reference.com/>,  
*The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*

## Art Form Related

**Acoustics**—theater's qualities that determine the audibility and trueness of sound

**Antagonist**—the person or the force working against the protagonist (main character) in a play

**Apron**—the section of the stage in front of the curtain

**Batten**—a long piece of wood or pipe from which scenery, lights and curtains are suspended; also used at the top and bottom of a backdrop

**“Break a leg”**—a superstitious and widely accepted alternative to “good luck” (which is considered bad luck)

**Climax**—the turning point in a play

**Designers**—people who plan the scenery, costumes, lighting or sound for a play

**Duet**—a musical composition for two voices or instruments

**Ghost light**—a light left burning overnight on stage to keep friendly spirits illuminated and unfriendly spirits at bay

**Musical director**—person who teaches the songs to the cast and conducts the orchestra during performances; may also write the musical arrangements

**Playwright**—a person who writes plays

**Producer**—a person who raises the money for a play and hires the people necessary to present it

**Score**—a written or printed piece of music with all the vocal and instrumental parts arranged on staves, one under the other; the music itself

**Sound check**—a thorough test of the sound system before a performance

**Stage manager**—person responsible for the technical details of a theatrical production, assisting the director during rehearsal, supervising the lighting, costuming, setting, prompting, etc., and assuming full responsibility for the stage during the performance of a play

**Understudy**—a performer who learns the role of another in order to serve as a replacement (substitute) if necessary

**Wardrobe**—the general name for the costume department, its staff and the space it occupies

Definitions courtesy of: [www.theatrecrafts.com/glossary](http://www.theatrecrafts.com/glossary),  
<http://dictionary.reference.com/> and *The Stage and the School* by Harry H. Shanker and Katharine Anne Ommanney

# Expanding the Classroom through Discussion

## Pre-Performance Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever been the “new kid” or ever felt left out at school? At a party? If so, describe your feelings.
2. Have you ever met someone who turned out to be very different from your “first impression”? How so?
3. Do you have a good luck charm? If so, when do you use it?
4. What does “don’t *judge* a book by it’s cover” mean?
5. What comes to mind when you think of a *substitute* teacher?

---

## Post-Performance Discussion Questions

1. What words or adjectives would you use to describe the character of Dawn? What about Emily? Which was your favorite character in the play and why?
2. Do you think Uni actually brought good luck to Emily? Explain. Is it a good idea to strive to be “perfect”? Why or why not?
3. What feelings or emotions did you feel during the play? How is a musical different from a play? How does the music help to set the mood?
4. Emily and Beast like to make fish faces. What special inside jokes do you and your friends share?
5. Why is the set important?

*It is said that the unicorn never existed. However, it is marvelously clear that when the unicorn was first described and centuries later when the tapestries were woven, everyone believed in unicorns.*

**– Marianna Mayer, *The Unicorn and the Lake***

# Teacher Guided Activities

## Friendship—The Perfect *Blendship*

Discuss the Golden Rule with students: *Treat others as you would like to be treated.* Ask “What does friendship mean to you?” Think about and discuss another expression: *A friend in need is a friend indeed.*

### The New Kid on the Block

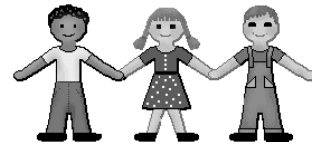
1. What does it feel like...
  - ...to be the new kid in school?
  - ...not to be invited to a party?
  - ...if a friend moves away?

Discuss the feelings and make a chart on the board. Have students illustrate the emotions described. In comparison, illustrate the emotions that friendships elicit.

#### Alternatives:

- A. Act out the emotions for others to guess.
  - B. Act out a typical first day for a new student with students assigned roles.
2. Discuss and list on the board things a student could do to help welcome a new child to your school. What greeting could be used and what actions would show openness?
  3. Share the terms “bystander” and “*upstander.*” If a peer is being picked on, a person makes a choice whether to stand “up” for that child or not.

### Being A Friend



Have students brainstorm on the following:

1. Complete the sentence: A friend is someone who...
2. When friends disagree, what are some ways to resolve a problem?  
Aside: Do friends always have to like the same things and do the same things? (*Remember, variety is the spice of life!*)
3. To have good friends, one must be a good friend. What does this mean?

#### Extensions:

1. What does it mean to be a good citizen? Have students picture in their minds the people they wish to become. What qualities would they have?
2. Make a collage about friendship or write a “recipe” for friendship, listing all the necessary steps and ingredients.
3. Make a poem spelling out the word *FRIENDSHIP*. (For example, starting with “F” is for fun, “R” is for....)
4. Interview a classmate and ask questions about his/her best friend: his/her name, how they met, what they have in common, what makes them different. As a class, discuss some of the things friends have in common and some qualities that might be different.

### Getting to Know You

How well do classmates really know each other? Have each student interview another (writing down the questions and answers) to get to know one another better by asking questions such as: “What is your favorite thing to do on a Sunday afternoon? What is your favorite color? ...movie? ...book? ...flavor of ice cream?” Who knows? Perhaps, by getting to know one another better, students may discover things they share in common and find new friends.

**Extension:** Play a game. Put all of the interviews in a “hat” and pull them out randomly. Read the descriptions and have students try to identify the person. (Of course, the student who interviewed the chosen subject is asked to remain quiet during that turn.)

# Teacher Guided Activities

## Witty Word Works

**Fish Face** is an alliteration, the repetition of a sound at the beginning of two or more neighboring words. Think about the tongue twister, *Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers*. Another example: *Jenna Jacobs juggled the jiggly jumping jello*.



Have students develop their own alliterations and poems. To get started, select a letter and have students list words in different categories such as adjectives, famous people, animals, places, names, food, etc. Students may use magazines, books, catalogs, baby name books, atlases and such to find words. Remember that words can start with different spellings but have the same sound, such as *call* and *kite*. Another example: *phenomenal fat fish*. Students may work individually or in groups and then present their work to the class. Artwork may accompany the poems. Finally, compile and produce a class book.

Information courtesy of [www.wordcentral.com](http://www.wordcentral.com),

<http://www.tangischools.org/dept/tech/tlessonplans/smartboard/A%20is%20for%20Alliteration%20TCLP.doc>,

<http://42Explore.com/figlang.htm>

## Very Superstitious

Emily is in a panic when Uni goes missing. Uni brings good luck to Emily and is usually by her side at the most important times in her life. Does she really need the trinket, or perhaps just some self-confidence?

If you step on a crack, do you think it will REALLY break your mother's back? Have you ever seen someone throw salt over his/her shoulder? Brainstorm and discuss other expressions, superstitions or familiar rituals. Think about athletic events and holidays. Ask students to share familiar rituals along with their own practices. Ask, "Do you have a lucky pair of shoes or a lucky number or color?"

### Activity:

Gather materials such as coins, ribbon, construction paper, paint, trinkets, beads, glue and such. Have students create their own good luck charms.

### Extension:

In books and on the Internet, have students research the origins of specific rituals they find interesting and then share the information they have found with the class.



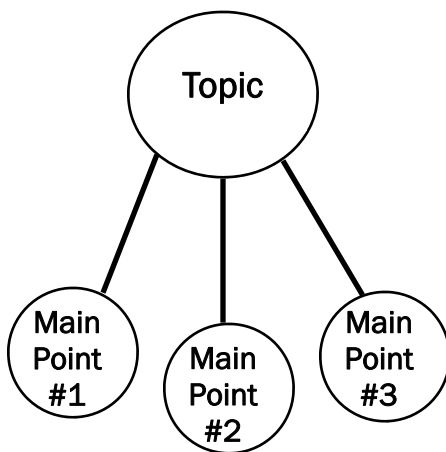
Language Arts: Reading, Writing, Communication, Information, Media and Technology Literacy;  
Social Studies: History; Visual Arts: Skills and Techniques

# Bank of America SchoolTime Series

## Florida Writing Connections

What does it mean to be a “good sport”? Think of a time that you were a good sport, either in an actual sports activity or when playing or working with a group. Describe this incident.

### Helpful Hints



Character Counts; Language Arts: Writing

We want to hear from YOU! Write to us at The Marcia P. Hoffman Performing Arts Institute at Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Road, Clearwater, FL 33759

**RUTH ECKERD HALL**  
RICHARD B. BAUMGARDNER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Support is provided in part through the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts; the Pinellas County Cultural Affairs Department, the Cultural Council, and the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners; the City of Clearwater; Publix Super Markets Charities; Wachovia Foundation; the Doyle Family Foundation; and the Leading Ladies of Ruth Eckerd Hall.

The Marcia P. Hoffman Performing Arts Institute, All Rights Reserved 2008

### Additional Resources

Ask your school or local librarian for help in locating these books for you and your students!

Other books in the Polk Street School Series by Patricia Reilly Giff:

**Pickle Puss**

**Say “Cheese”**

**Snaggle Doodles**

**Sunny-Side Up**

**The Beast in Ms. Rooney’s Room**

**The Last Unicorn**

by Peter S. Beagle

**We Are Best Friends**

by Alike

**Fish Eyes: A Book You Can Count On**

by Lois Ehler

**Will I Have a Friend?**

by Miriam Cohen

**Best Friends For Frances**

by Russell Hoban

**The Brand New Kid**

by Katie Couric

**Blizzard of the Blue Moon (Magic Tree House Series)**

by Mary Pope Osborne

**Timothy Goes to School**

by Rosemary Wells

**The Cooperative Sport and Games Book: Challenge Without Competition**

by Terry Orlick

**Unicorn Races**

by Stephen J. Brooks

**Check out these Internet sites for additional information!**

[www.randomhouse.com/features/patriciareillygiff/books.htm](http://www.randomhouse.com/features/patriciareillygiff/books.htm)

[www.unicorncollector.com/legends.htm](http://www.unicorncollector.com/legends.htm)

[www.goodcharacter.com](http://www.goodcharacter.com)

[www.atozkidsstuff.com/friendship.html](http://www.atozkidsstuff.com/friendship.html)

### Student Guide Standards

**Page 1** – Language Arts: Writing, Communication; Theatre: Aesthetic and Critical Analysis; Visual Arts: Skills and Techniques

**Page 2** – Language Arts: Reading; Social Studies: Geography

**Page 3** – Brain Teasers; Language Arts: Reading, Writing; Mathematics: Numbers; Visual Arts: Skills and Techniques

**Page 4** – Language Arts: Reading, Communication