

Giant Whizzpoppers and Wonder: A Study of Roald Dahl's *The BFG*

Lesson Overview

Target Age: 11 years old (Grade 5-6)

Duration: 60-90 minutes

Subject: English Language Arts / Creative Writing

Materials Needed

- A copy of *The BFG* by Roald Dahl
- A clean, empty glass or plastic jar
- Scraps of colorful paper or "fairylights" (optional: glitter, cotton balls, or glow sticks)
- Art supplies (markers, pens, ribbons, labels)
- "The Gobblefunk Glossary" (printed or handwritten list of BFG vocabulary)
- Notebook or writing paper

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the learner will be able to:

- **Analyze** the unique characterization of the BFG through his use of "Gobblefunk" language.
- **Identify** the difference between a "Trogglehumper" (nightmare) and a "Phizzwizard" (good dream).
- **Construct** an original dream narrative using invented vocabulary and descriptive imagery.
- **Design** a physical "Dream Jar" that represents a specific tone or mood.

1. Introduction: The Giant's Secret (The Hook)

The Scenario: Ask the student: "If you could hear everyone's whispers from miles away, what would you do with that power? Would you be a hero or a villain?"

The Fact: Roald Dahl didn't just write books; he invented over 500 new words! This language is called **Gobblefunk**. Today, we aren't just reading a story; we are becoming "Dream Catchers" and "Word Wizards."

2. Body: Content & Practice

Step 1: The Magic of Gobblefunk (I Do)

Explain that the BFG speaks differently because he never went to school. However, his words are often more descriptive than "proper" English.

Example: Instead of saying something is "delicious," the BFG says it is "**scrumdiddlyumptious.**" Instead of a "fart," it's a "**whizzpopper.**"

Discussion: Does the BFG's language make him seem scary or friendly? Why do you think Roald Dahl chose to give him such a silly way of speaking?

Step 2: Decoding the Giants (We Do)

Review a list of common Gobblefunk words together. Play a quick "Translation Game":

- **Teacher/Parent:** "I am feeling very *biffsquiggled.*"
- **Student:** (Guesses the meaning based on context: confused/puzzled).
- **Teacher/Parent:** "That movie was a total *trogglehumper!*"
- **Student:** (Guesses: nightmare/scary thing).

Step 3: Character Deep-Dive (We Do)

Compare Sophie and the BFG. On a piece of paper, draw two circles (Venn Diagram).

- How are they the same? (Both are lonely, both are small in their own worlds).
- How are they different? (Size, education, diet—snozzcumbers vs. human food).

Step 4: The Dream Jar Project (You Do)

The BFG catches dreams with a net and keeps them in jars. Now, it's the student's turn.

1. **The Writing:** Write a 5–8 sentence description of a "Golden Phizzwizard" (a wonderful dream). You **must** include at least three Gobblefunk words (real or invented).
 - *Example:* "In my dream, I was flying over a splendiferous mountain made of chocolate..."
2. **The Jar:** Decorate the jar to match the dream.
 - If it's a happy dream, use bright colors, glitter, or yellow paper.
 - If it's a "Trogglehumper," use dark colors or jagged shapes.
3. **The Label:** Create a formal label for the jar (e.g., "A Dream of Flying Over London" or "The Whizzpopping Adventure").

3. Conclusion: The Dream Catching Recap

Summary: Today we learned that characters are defined not just by what they do, but by *how they speak*. We explored how Roald Dahl uses humor and invented language to make a giant seem gentle instead of terrifying.

Learner Recap: Have the student "present" their Dream Jar. They should read their dream aloud, using their best "BFG voice."

Final Takeaway: Language is a tool. You can use it to create entirely new worlds, just like Dahl did!

Success Criteria

The student has succeeded if they:

- Correctly identified the meaning of at least 3 Gobblefunk words.
- Completed a Venn Diagram showing at least 2 similarities and 2 differences between Sophie and the BFG.
- Created a Dream Jar with a written narrative that uses descriptive "Gobblefunk" style language.

Assessment Methods

Formative (During the lesson): Quick-fire translation game and observation of the Venn Diagram activity.

Summative (End of lesson): Evaluation of the Dream Jar writing. Check for: Use of vocabulary, narrative flow, and creative effort in the physical project.

Differentiation & Adaptability

- **For Struggling Learners:** Provide a "fill-in-the-blanks" dream template where they only need to provide the adjectives and Gobblefunk words.
- **For Advanced Learners:** Challenge them to write a dialogue between the BFG and a "Cannybull" giant, showing the contrast in their personalities through their speech patterns.
- **For Group Settings:** Have students trade "Dream Jars" and try to guess what the dream is about just by looking at the decorations before reading the label.