



The Great Dictionary Caper

Judy Sierra (Illustrator) , Eric Comstock (Illustrations)

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Words have secret lives. On a quiet afternoon the words escape the dictionary (much to the consternation of Mr. Noah Webster) and flock to Hollywood for a huge annual event—Lexi-Con. Liberated from the pages, words get together with friends and relations in groups including an onomatopoeia marching band, the palindrome family reunion, and hide-and-seek antonyms. It's all great fun until the words disagree and begin to fall apart. Can Noah Webster step in to restore order before the dictionary is disorganized forever?

The Great Dictionary Caper Details

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Download and Read Free Online The Great Dictionary Caper Judy Sierra (Illustrator) , Eric Comstock (Illustrations)

From Reader Review The Great Dictionary Caper for online ebook

Jj says

Cute illustrations, but they were so very BUSY that they often become visually overwhelming and distract and detract from the text. In this case, that is a big concern, because the whole point of the book is WORDS.

Also, the incorrectly spelled word "ryhming" is just not something one can overlook or ignore in a book about words like this.

Adorable, but substantially flawed.

Holly says

The author misspelled the word rhyming (Ryhming) in the final copy. As in, I don't have an Advanced Reader Copy and this is about to go on my library's shelves. This looks especially bad when you consider this book is about words/grammar/spelling. The book looks like a picture book for the very young but I'm not sure how many very young children would be super interested in antonyms and all that. Not sure who this book is intended for to be honest.

Kelly says

Mm, some parts of this book didn't make sense. The title made the book sound more interesting than it was. I think it tried to be too full of words and types of words, like antonyms, than to have a storyline. It felt less like the words had escaped and more like they were just telling us about a bunch of types of words. I think the illustrator did the best he could with illustrating words that aren't as concrete as nouns.

Also, did they misspell rhyming on one page?! (Ryhming). Yikes.

Robin Loughlin says

I think this book would best be used as a teaching tool, when learning different types of words such as verbs, nouns, homophones, and antonyms, and anagrams. If read too quickly, the reader won't get much out of it, but if you slow down and look at the words, how they are typed, and what they mean, it can be used as a teaching tool and to get discussion going to try and come up with other words in that category.

Beverly says

This was a cute book but kind of quirky. The words in the dictionary are tired of being cooped up all the time and decide they need a break. The rest of the book is merely brightly colored pages of groupings of words

that belong together (i.e. rhyming words, anagrams, palindromes, etc.). Personally, I found it a little too busy and overwhelming but a child would probably enjoy it.

Caitlin Ostberg says

Typography is my favorite.

Kristine Hansen says

Words come to life in this fun volume that playfully exposes children to the idea that words have special uses and meanings. A lot of fun, especially in seeing how the words interact. Any word nerd is going to love this book!

Beverly says

I found the book quite amusing and loved the glossary in the back. However, the word "rhyming" is misspelled as "ryhming." I wonder how the editor missed that.

Jillian says

I liked the idea of this book more than the execution, alas. It wouldn't do at all well as a storytime read, or really as a read-aloud at all. A good deal of the "story" is told through illustrations ("Story" in quotes because there's no real plot to speak of...) and so it really needs to be a one-on-one or an independent read.

It's a great take on wordplay, introducing some fun grammatical concepts like interjections and conjunctions in a way that shows what they do. I'm always going to be partial to Schoolhouse Rock, but this book would do just fine if you don't have access to the videos.

Make sure, teachers, to offer extra credit to the students who find the misspelled word in the book about the dictionary!

Stephanie Bange says

Perhaps this is not fair to her, but I have become used to excellence from Judy Sierra. This one gets a lukewarm OK rating.

In the story, Noah Webster opens his dictionary to let out words for a word parade. When they begin to misbehave after awhile, he makes them get back in the dictionary, but then sees them doing the same

misbehaving in Roget's thesaurus.

The presentation of the text and the examples given make reading this book aloud a somewhat short and choppy experience, making for disjointed storytelling. Each "unit" in the word parade (action verbs, contractions, homophones, antonyms, palindromes, archaic words, proper nouns, anagrams, rhyming words, non-rhyming words, interjections, and conjunctions) "passes" by with many examples of the featured word concept on a two page spread. Eric Comstock's retro illustrations feature silhouettes and line drawings that enhance the example words drawn as if characters, using many different fonts. The words themselves are the focal illustrations. His limited choice of turquoise, olive green, orange, black and white adds to the retro feel. Altogether, it's "cute", but not clever.

This would be useful in language arts units/English classes studying parts of speech.

An additional purchase, for PreSchool-grade 3.

Jesse says

Berry has no idea what homonyms or antonyms are, but she still found the book hilarious. I liked the combination of text and pictures to illustrate (see what I did there?) the meanings of the more difficult words.

La Coccinelle says

This book is actually kind of fun... though I would have a few reservations about recommending it to younger children.

Set around the idea of a bunch of words escaping from a dictionary, this book shows off different types of words, with (mostly) clear illustrations. We see onomatopoeia, antonyms, contractions, action verbs, rhymes, anagrams, palindromes, and more. The illustrations looked very retro to me, which I kind of liked.

My only complaint is that, on some pages, it wasn't always clear which type of word was which. For example, on the conjunctions page, those words are mixed together with interjections. Yes, the interjections page came immediately before, but there's no colour or illustration difference setting off the two types of words, so if these are new concepts, there might be some confusion.

Other than that, though, this is a fun look at many different kinds of words. The section with archaic words was especially entertaining. At least that page didn't cause a garboil in my head. (Thankfully, those words are included in the glossary at the end.)

Quotable moment:

Brownd2 says

disappointing all around...definitely not a true picture book...way too advanced for the young picture book audience...more for an english class...title was deceiving...no real adventure to be had...

Kim says

This was cute . . . but I simply must dock an otherwise-earned star from a lexicological book that includes a misspelled word ("Ryhming")!

Alex (not a dude) Baugh says

When I first opened *The Great Dictionary Caper*, I have to admit to more than a little bit of skepticism as I read the first page: "Words can get bored. They sit in the dictionary, day in, day out. It's time for a break." Then I looked down at the illustrations and I began to really chuckle. Sure enough, there were words like skate, truck, ride, and go escaping the dictionary and heading a word parade. Naturally, the onomatopoeia marching band was at the head of the parade, playing such favorite sound words as clang, tra-la-la, boom, and the not often heard Oom-pah-pah, among others.

Every parade needs a grand marshal and this one is led by that "self-centered one letter word 'I'" and followed by the extraordinarily wonderful 34 letter word "supercalifragilisticexpialidocious." From then on, Sierra introduces young readers to a veritable parade some of the cleverest wordplay about anthropomorphized literary and linguistic terminology that ever marched through Hollywood.

There are homophones tangoing two by two (I, eye), and even three by three (to, too, two), antonyms playing hide and seek, action verbs that jump, bounce and somersault, and in an attempt to avoid any "garboil," archaic words marched with a few oldies but goodies from Shakespeare, like the insulting "sweep".

My kiddos love the subtle but humorous nod Sierra pays to one of last year's favorite books *Nothing Rhymes with Orange* by Adam Rex under words with no rhymes.

It's not always easy to get kids to really pay attention to terminology, no matter how important a teacher/parent might think it is for them to know. Sierra has presented this otherwise not terribly exciting subject with simple but humorous definitions and has even included some terms that are not usually taught until kids are older, such as palindromes and anagrams, which kids usually love once they grasp these concepts.

Complimenting Sierra's premise, Comstock's digitally rendered illustrations, done in a limited palette of orange, olive green, turquoise blue and black really capture the very essence of each word with a playfulness kids will definitely appreciate.

Alas, all parades must come to an end, and so does this one when none other than Noah Webster corrals all the escaped words back into the dictionary. My conclusion: this is a book that is sure to give your young readers a whole new appreciation for what they can find between the covers of a dictionary.

This book is recommended for readers age 4+
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