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# Introduction

A good book can touch our lives like a good friend. Within its pages are words and characters that can inspire us to achieve our highest ideals. We can turn to it for companionship, recreation, comfort, and guidance. It also gives us a cherished story to hold in our hearts forever.

In *Literature Units*, great care has been taken to select books that are sure to become good friends!

Teachers who use this literature unit will find the following features to supplement their own valuable ideas:

- A Sample Lesson Plan
- Pre-Reading Activities
- A Biographical Sketch and Picture of the Author
- A Book Summary
- Vocabulary Lists and Suggested Vocabulary Activities
- Chapters grouped for study, with each section including:
  - quizzes
  - hands-on projects
  - co-operative learning activities
  - cross-curricular connections
  - extensions into the reader's own life
- Post-Reading Activities
- Book Report Ideas
- Research Ideas
- A Culminating Activity
- Three Different Options for Unit Tests
- Bibliography
- Answer Key

We are confident that this unit will be a valuable addition to your planning, and hope that as you use our ideas, your students will increase the circle of "friends" they can have in books!



# ***Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing***

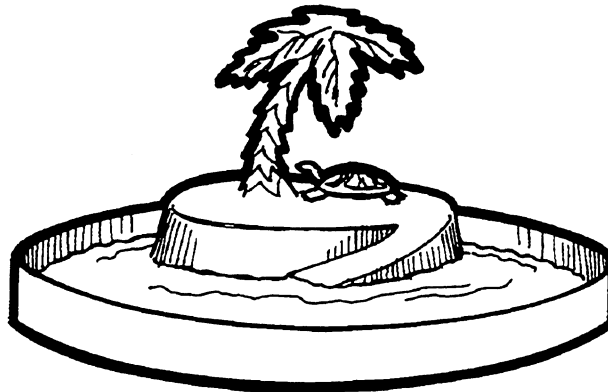
*by Judy Blume*

*(Available in Australia through Transworld Publishers)*

## **Book Summary**

Peter Hatcher is in the 4th grade, and he feels he's a big nothing. He has all kinds of problems, like having to really scrub his hands with soap, drinking too much Juicy-O! and trying to stay away from Sheila and her cooties. But Peter's biggest problem of all is much worse than any of the these. Peter Hatcher's number-one problem in life is his little brother, Fudge.

Fudge is two-and-a-half years old. He screams, throws fits, kicks, bangs his fist, and gets into all sorts of mischief. Worst of all, Fudge is always in Peter's way and getting into his stuff. In one incident Peter wins a turtle named Dribble at a birthday party, and Fudge can't seem to keep his hands off Dribble. Another time Fudge decides that he doesn't want to eat anymore so their mother tells Peter to stand on his head, hoping this will get Fudge to eat. Yet another problem occurred when Sheila was supposed to be watching Fudge at Central Park, but Fudge fell and had a terrible accident. Even though it was Shelia's responsibility, Peter's mother blames him! Once Peter even had to pretend to be buying a pair of saddle shoes instead of loafers, just to trick Fudge into trying a pair on.



All Peter wants to do is play with his best friend, Jimmy Fargo, and Dribble, and lead a normal life. But Peter always ends up helping his mother to get Fudge to behave. Peter feels like everybody gives Fudge too much attention and that his own life doesn't matter.

Things start to finally settle down a little, once Peter's dad put a lock on his door, and the school year comes to a close. Then Fudge does the most horrible, dangerous, and terrible thing of all. He eats the turtle, Dribble! Peter is outraged, both at Fudge and his parents. How could Fudge do this? Everyone is worried about Fudge, but no one is concerned about Dribble or Peter's feelings.

After spending time in the hospital, Fudge turns out to be fine but Peter has lost Dribble forever. All is not lost, however, because Peter's dad comes home with a new puppy that will grow up to be much too big for Fudge to swallow!

*Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* combines family relationships, humor, and real life experiences in a story about the trials and tribulations of a fourth-grade boy.

# Vocabulary Activity Ideas

You can help your students learn and retain the vocabulary in *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* by providing them with interesting vocabulary activities. It's always a good idea to have the words displayed somewhere in the class (a pocket chart, poster boards, or time-line strips). Here are a few ideas to try:

**Vocabulary Bee.** This is similar to a spelling bee, but in addition to spelling each word correctly, the game participants must correctly define the words as well.

**Around the World.** Make flash cards of each vocabulary word. One student stays in his or her seat while another stands next to that seat. A third student holds the cards and flashes one card to the two students. Whoever says the word first has to give the definition. If that person can't give the definition, then the other person has a chance. Whoever answers correctly moves to the next person in class and the game begins again with the third student showing new cards. (An option is to use the word in a sentence instead of giving the definition.)

**Crossword and Wordsearch Puzzles.** Ask your students to make their own Crossword Puzzles and Wordsearch Puzzles using the vocabulary from the story. Have them exchange and solve the puzzles. When the puzzles are completed, the authors can correct the work.

**Grab Bag.** Divide students into teams. Write all the vocabulary words on small strips of paper then place them in a jar, box or bag. A representative from each team grabs a pre-determined number of words. The team then writes up a short story using these words.

**Vocabulary Bingo.** Hand out blank bingo grids to students. Have them place one vocabulary word in each space on the grid. Students may place the word in any order on the sheet. Then randomly choose and read the vocabulary definitions. A student wins by covering a row or columns of words as the definitions are said.

**Alpha-Omega!** Divide students into teams. Write the vocabulary words on sentence strips. Each team comes to the front of the class and every member is handed a vocabulary strip. When the teacher says, "Start!" the members must place the cards in alphabetical order. Each team will have a turn using different sets of words. The team that alphabetizes their cards the quickest wins.

**Word of the Day.** Students choose a vocabulary word and use it at least 10 times that day. The word can be used orally and/or in a writing activity. Work with partners to help keep track.

**Where in the World?** Ask your students to find the sentence in the book with the vocabulary word. Copy the sentence down, then use the word in another sentence.

**Vocabulary Charades!** In this game, vocabulary words are acted out.

**Picture Dictionary!** Have the students work with partners or in teams to create picture dictionaries using the vocabulary words.

You probably have many more ideas to add to this list. Try them all! See if experiencing vocabulary on a personal level increases your students' vocabulary interest and retention!

# Quiz Time!

1. On the back of this page, write a one-paragraph summary of the major events in each chapter of this section. Then complete the rest of the questions on this page.

2. What does Peter win at Jimmy Fargo's birthday party?

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3. Who is Henry Bevelheimer and what is his job?

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4. How does Peter's mother feel when he brings home his prize?

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5. What is the biggest problem in Peter's life? Why is this such a problem?

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6. Describe the three ways that Peter's mother reacts to his jokes.

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7. Describe how Peter felt when Mrs. Yarby made such a fuss over Fudge.

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8. What is Mr. Yarby a "firm believer" in?

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9. During their dinner with the Yarbys, what three things did Fudge do that embarrassed Peter and his parents?

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10. Write about a time when your little brother or sister or someone in your family embarrassed you or you embarrassed them. Use lots of details. Use the back of this page to write your paragraph.