



# BORIS ATE A THESAURUS

## Activity Guide

### The Story

*Boris Ate a Thesaurus* is the story of a young boy who eats a thesaurus and suddenly begins speaking in synonyms. What happens when Boris's words suddenly begin to disappear, evaporate, vanish? Will Boris swallow his pride and eat another thesaurus? Read to find out!

### What Is a Thesaurus?

Ask children to describe what a thesaurus is. Boris says, "It's a giant, green monster." Then, describe a thesaurus. As Boris's teacher Miss Simms tells her class, "A thesaurus is a book where all of the synonyms live."

### Synonyms and Antonyms

Define synonyms and antonyms for children before reading *Boris Ate a Thesaurus*. Miss Simms describes a synonym as "a word that means the same thing as another word, like *buddy*, *friend*, *pal*." In addition, explain that an antonym is a word that means the opposite of another word. In small groups, have children search for the synonyms in *Boris Ate a Thesaurus*. Then, as a large group, brainstorm one antonym for each set of synonyms.

### Preview the Book

Before reading *Boris Ate a Thesaurus* with children, help them build a connection to the book by asking questions about the book based on its cover. Hold up the book cover and ask:

- What do you think the story is about?
- What is Boris doing?
- How do you think the story will end?
- Who is the boy on the cover?
- What do you think Boris will eat?
- Why do you think Boris eats the thesaurus?

## Group Discussion Starters and Individual Writing Prompts

After reading the book, use the following prompts to start group discussions. In addition, children can write short paragraphs addressing a prompt.

- What would you do if you suddenly started speaking in synonyms?
- Boris was an ordinary kid before he ate a thesaurus. How are you similar to Boris? How are you different from Boris? Use a graphic organizer such as a Venn diagram to compare.
- Boris met the president of the United States. What famous person would you like to meet?
- After Boris ate his first thesaurus, should he have eaten more? Would you have eaten more?
- Have you ever been embarrassed like Boris? What happened?

## Be More Descriptive

Ban overused words such as *said*, *nice*, *happy*, *like*, and *big* from children's writing. As a group, brainstorm alternatives to boring, overused, tired words. Write the list on chart paper. Have children copy the list and use the new words to spice up their writing. If desired, type the brainstormed list and distribute a copy to each child.

## Story Switch!

What would happen if Boris ate a book other than a thesaurus? Challenge children to rewrite the story with Boris eating a math book, a phone book, a menu, an appliance manual, etc.

## BINGO

Use the BORIS grid (page 8) to play a version of BINGO. Fill in copies of the grid with synonyms from *Boris Ate a Thesaurus*. Be sure to make each grid different. Provide beans, coins, or other small objects for children to cover spaces. Then, call out a letter and word. If the correct space appears on the child's grid, he should cover the space with the object. The first child to cover a vertical row wins the game.

## Pass the Synonym Rolls

Draw a cinnamon roll shape on a piece of white paper. Give each child a copy of the shape. Instruct him to write a word from a predetermined word list (vocabulary words, spelling words, or other classroom words) on the shape. Each child should have a different word. Tell the child that he will have 30 seconds to write a synonym for the word on the shape. Then, each child should pass his shape to the next child, and she will have 30 seconds to write another synonym. Continue until each child has written a synonym on each shape. Discuss which words were easier to find synonyms for, which were harder, etc.

## Synonym Sentences

Ask children if they can converse, speak, talk like Boris. Do synonyms roll off of their tongues? Have children give this a go, try, shot. Provide the word list below and other synonyms from *Boris Ate a Thesaurus*. Ask children to craft, create, construct their own synonym sentences.

### Synonym List

- buddy, friend, pal
- excuse, forgive, pardon
- apparent, clear, obvious
- developed, happened, occurred
- delighted, excited, thrilled
- ate, consumed, devoured
- extraordinary, exceptional, remarkable
- conceive, imagine, visualize
- chewed, nibbled, munched
- recall, recollect, remember
- huge, gigantic, immense
- mumbled, muttered, whispered
- big, giant, huge
- depart, go, leave
- aimed, intended, planned
- chatty, gabby, talkative
- accident, chance, fluke
- certain, confident, positive
- disappear, evaporate, vanish
- celebrated, famous, popular
- prepared, ready, set
- ashamed, embarrassed, humiliated
- troubled, upset, worried
- eager, excited, enthusiastic

## Synonym Memory Match

Before playing *Synonym Memory Match* with 2–4 children, write pairs of synonyms from the book on index cards or pieces of construction paper. (For example, write *elated* on one index card and *excited* on another). Create 4–8 pairs of synonym cards for each group. Shuffle the cards and place them facedown in equal rows. To play, the youngest player picks two cards and turns them over. If the words on the cards are synonyms, she places the cards in a pile in front of her. If the words are not synonyms, she turns the cards facedown and places them in their original positions. Play continues clockwise. When all synonyms have been matched, each player counts his synonym pairs. The player with the most pairs wins. If desired, provide a synonym guide so that children can check their answers.

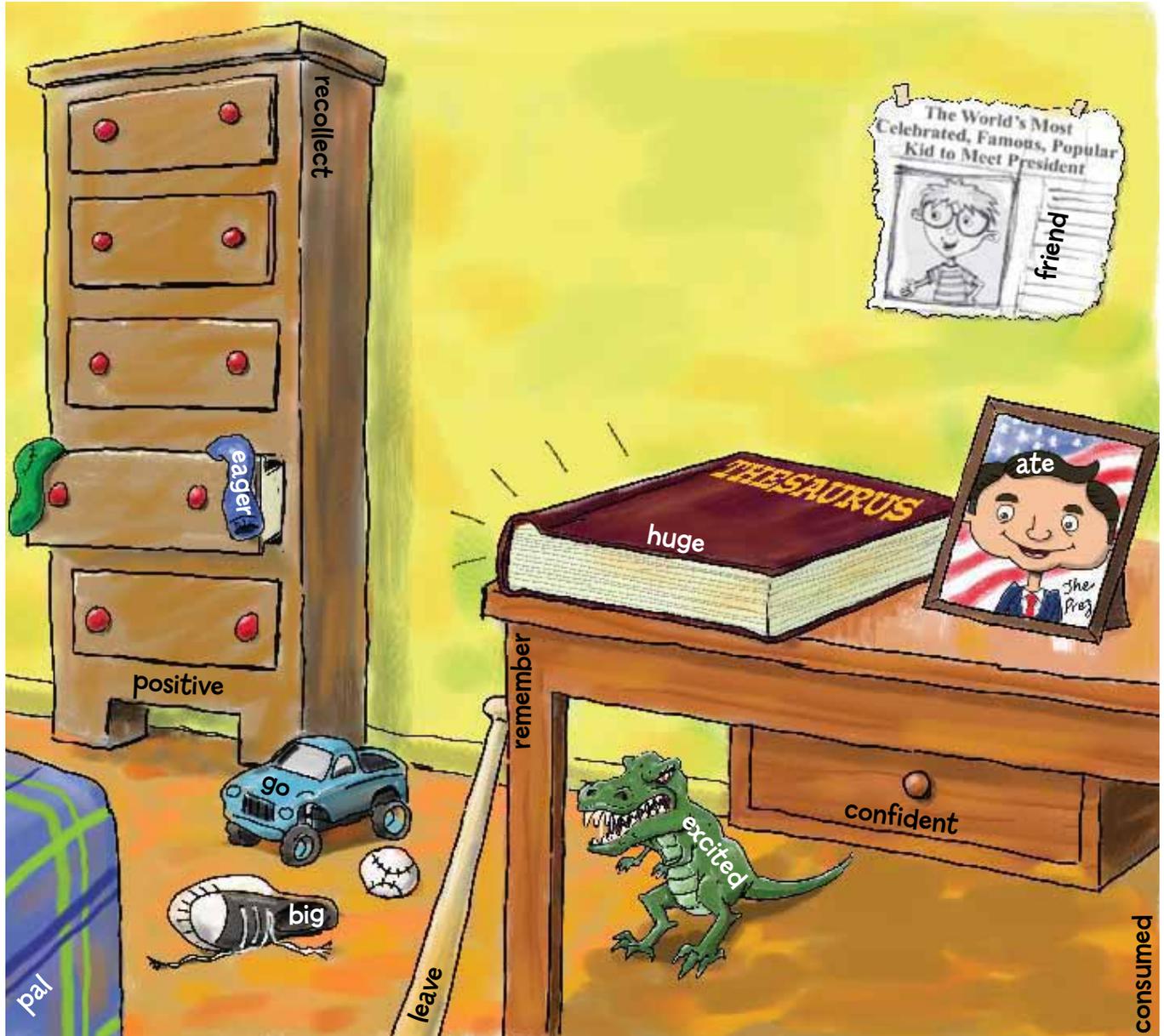
## Synonym Match-Up!

Make a list of synonym pairs. Then, write sentences that the words will make sense in (for example, *huge, gigantic; The \_\_\_\_\_ dinosaur towered over the building.*) Label one index card with each synonym and one index card with each sentence. You will need one card for each child. (Some sentences may have more than two synonyms to make this possible.) Pass out the cards facedown to children. Have children flip over the cards and find the other children whose cards match theirs. If a child has a synonym card, she should find the children with the matching sentence cards. If a child has a sentence card, he should find the children with synonym cards that make sense in his sentence.

# ULTIMATE SYNONYM SEARCH

Are you a word detective? Do you have a nose for sniffing out synonyms? Use your skills to discover, reveal, uncover the hidden words in Boris's bedroom. Then, draw lines to connect the matching synonyms.

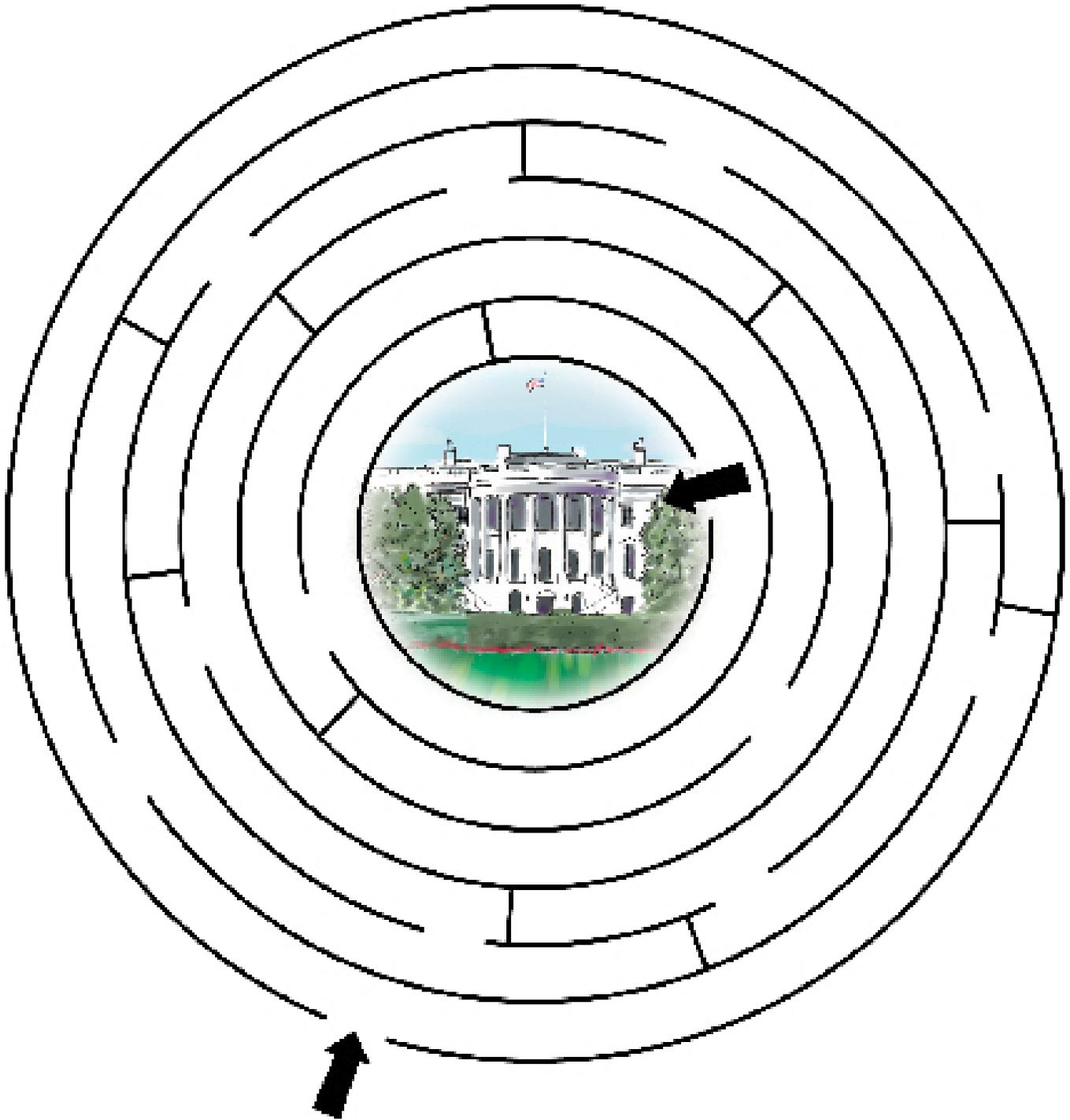
Clue: There are seven hidden synonym pairs.



Hidden synonym pairs are: recollect, remember; consumed, ate; leave, go; pal, friend; big, huge; eager, excited; confident, positive

# MEET THE PREZ MAZE

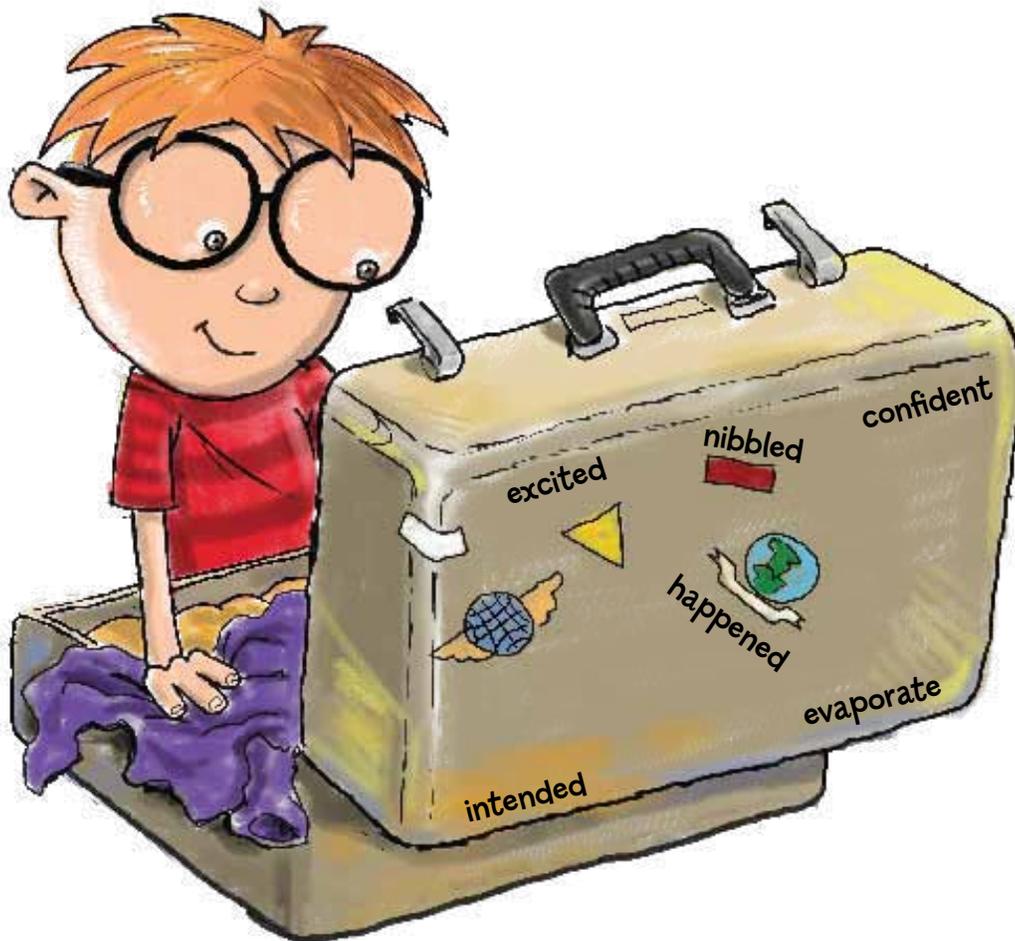
Boris is prepared, ready, set for his big day with the president. Can you help him find the White House?



# LOSS FOR WORDS

Boris was getting ready for his trip to the White House when he noticed that he was at a loss for words. Can you aid, assist, help him? Look on Boris's Synonym Suitcase below and choose the accurate, correct, right word to complete each sentence. Write the correct synonym in each blank.

1. "I carried a thesaurus with me to school and chewed, \_\_\_\_\_, munched on it for lunch."
2. "My words were starting to disappear, \_\_\_\_\_, vanish."
3. "I was certain, \_\_\_\_\_, positive that I could do it."
4. "I explained that I never really aimed, \_\_\_\_\_, planned to eat a thesaurus. It just sort of developed, \_\_\_\_\_, occurred."
5. "I was eager, \_\_\_\_\_, enthusiastic to learn new words that would last forever."



Answers: 1. nibbled; 2. evaporate; 3. confident; 4. intended, happened; 5. excited

# THESAURUS TWISTER

Boris loves riding the Thesaurus Twister. But, his words always become jumbled, tangled, twisted. Can you help him decode, decipher, unscramble his words?

Example: thedgiled      clue: excited      Answer: delighted

1. denrif      clue: pal

\_\_\_\_\_

2. medcouns      clue: ate

\_\_\_\_\_

3. leph      clue: aid

\_\_\_\_\_

4. tarms      clue: clever

\_\_\_\_\_

5. nocsets      clue: competition

\_\_\_\_\_

6. yatts      clue: delicious

\_\_\_\_\_

7. citggain      clue: huge

\_\_\_\_\_

8. draey      clue: prepared

\_\_\_\_\_

9. sernaw      clue: reply

\_\_\_\_\_

10. mugnais      clue: funny

\_\_\_\_\_



Answers: 1. friend; 2. consumed; 3. help; 4. smart; 5. contest; 6. tasty; 7. gigantic; 8. ready; 9. answer; 10. amusing

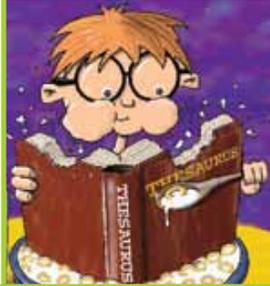
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# DESIGN YOUR OWN BOOKMARKS

Copy the bookmarks below and have children design and color their own bookmarks.

**Devour a  
good book.**

*Boris Ate a Thesaurus*

**Sink your teeth  
into a  
delicious story.**

*Boris Ate a Thesaurus*

**Get a real taste  
of adventure.**

*Boris Ate a Thesaurus*

**Books are for  
READING,  
not for  
EATING.**

*Boris Ate a Thesaurus*