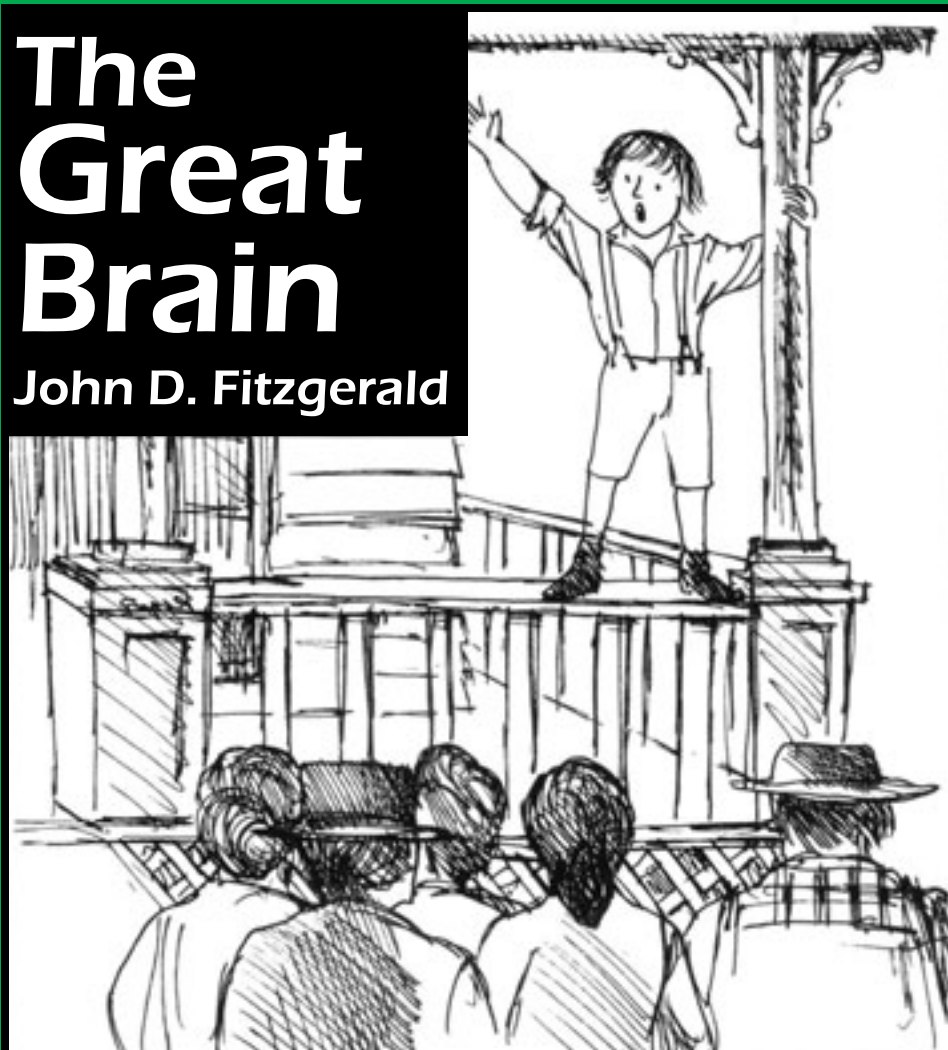


Novel·Ties

The Great Brain

John D. Fitzgerald



A Study Guide

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LEARNING LINKS

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide to use in conjunction with the book *The Great Brain* consists of lessons for guided reading. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel at its reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for reading development by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits, formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques, will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

Pre-Reading Activities (cont.)

8. The book *The Great Brain* is really a collection of short stories. In each story Tom, also known as The Great Brain, faces several problems, which he solves, usually making a profit along the way. As you read each story, fill in the chart below. In a few words, state the problems and tell how they were solved.

The Great Brain

Chapter Title	Problems	Solutions
1. The Magic Water Closet		
2. Revenge Can Be Sour		
3. The Great Brain Saves The Day		
4. Abie Glassman Finds a Home		
5. Greek Immigrant		
6. A Wreath for Abie		
7. The New Teacher		
8. The Great Brain's Reformation		

Chapter 1 – The Magic Water Closet (cont.)

Read to find out how a water closet becomes the talk of the town.

Questions:

1. How did J.D. and his brothers teach the other Mormon children “tolerance” and “understanding”? How else might they have taught them these qualities?
2. According to the story so far, how was life different in the 1890s from life today?
3. How did everyone in J.D.’s neighborhood learn that a water closet was about to be delivered?
4. Why was J.D. humiliated?
5. How did the boys know when Mamma was angry?

Questions for Discussion:

1. J.D. explained that people judged other people’s wealth and influence by the type of “backhouse” they had. What standards do people use today to judge another person’s wealth or influence?
2. Do you think it was fair of Mamma to make Tom take money out of his bank to repay children who Tom said were cheaters?

Literary Technique: Point of View

Point of view in literature refers to the person telling the story. It can be the author acting as narrator, or one of the characters telling the story.

From whose point of view is this story told?

Why do you think the author chose this point of view?

Writing Activity:

Adults have a knack for doing things that embarrass their children. Tom’s father was no exception—particularly when he had the water closet installed. Write about a time in your life when you were embarrassed or humiliated by something done by an adult in your life.