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# The Monstore

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a teacher's guide

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Created by marcie colleen

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**Tara Lazar, Author**

***The Monstore***

Tara Lazar wished there was a Monstore when she was a kid so she could've spooked her pesky little brother. Her mischievous imagination led her to write picture books. She lives in New Jersey with her husband and her two daughters (who are *always* pesky to each other—some things never change). But her website does! Visit [taralazar.com](http://taralazar.com) for stories, giveaways, and contests for kids of all ages (like Tara)!

**James Burks, Illustrator**

***The Monstore***

James Burks started drawing as a little kid and hasn't stopped since. Along the way he's written and illustrated some books of his own, including *Gabby & Gator*, *Beep and Bah*, and *Bird & Squirrel on the Run*. James lives in Southern California with his wife and two little monsters.

Visit him at [www.jamesburks.com](http://www.jamesburks.com).

**Marcie Colleen, Curriculum Writer**

Marcie is a former teacher with a bachelor's degree in English Education from Oswego State and a master's degree in Educational Theater from New York University. If Marcie could go to The Monstore, she would buy a monster who does the laundry. That way when she is busy writing in her Brooklyn, NY apartment she would always have clean underwear.

Visit her at [www.thisismarciecolleen.com](http://www.thisismarciecolleen.com).

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## **How to Use This Guide**

This classroom guide for *The Monstore* is designed for students in preschool through second grade.

It offers activities to help teachers integrate *The Monstore* into English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies curricula. Art and drama are used as a teaching tool throughout the guide.

All activities were created in conjunction with relevant content standards in ELA, math, science, social studies, art, and drama.

# Table of Contents

## English Language Arts (ELA)

Reading Comprehension	4
Vocabulary	6
Refunds, Returns, and Exchanges game	
Writing Activities	7
Writing a Business Letter	
“My Very Own Monster” Story	
For Your Eyes Only ~ Point of View	

## Math 8

Word Problems	
Eyes, Eyes, Everywhere Eyes!	
“Eye Spy” Hunt	
Des“eye”gn a Monster	
We’re in the Money	9
Monster Money	
Frankenstein’s Build-a-Monster Workshop	

## Science 10

No Refund? Recycle Instead	
The Switcheroo Swap	
Frankenstein’s Recycle-Lab	
Make a Monster Piggy Bank	
I’ve Been Slimed	

## Social Studies 11

Young Entrepreneurs	
Oh, Brother! Pesky Sister!	12

## Appendix 14

“Draw the Monster You’d Like to Buy” worksheet	
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# English Language Arts

## **Reading Comprehension**

Before reading *The Monstore*,

Help students identify the basic parts of a picture book: front cover, back cover, title page, spine, end papers, and jacket flap.

The Front Cover ~

- What do you think the book will be about? Why do you think so?
- Who do you think is the main character? Who do you think the other characters are?
- Can you guess what the story might be about? What are some clues you can find in the cover illustration?

Now read or listen to the book.

Help students summarize in their own words what the book was about.

- Where can you find The Monstore and how do you get inside?
- What can you buy at The Monstore? Why would you want a monster? What are some of the monsters good for?
- Why does Zack buy Manfred? Why does Zack want a refund?
- What is Mookie supposed to do? What does he really do?
- What is Mojo supposed to do? What does he do instead?
- Why does Zack have to move to the basement?
- What is Gracie scared of? Why? How does Zack make things better?
- How do Zack and Gracie solve their “too many monsters” problem?

Let’s talk about the people who made *The Monstore*.

- Who is the author?
- Who is the illustrator?
- What kind of work did each person do to make the book?

Take a look at the illustrations in the following spreads:

“The Monstore store” spread.



What do you think some of the special talents of the monsters are?

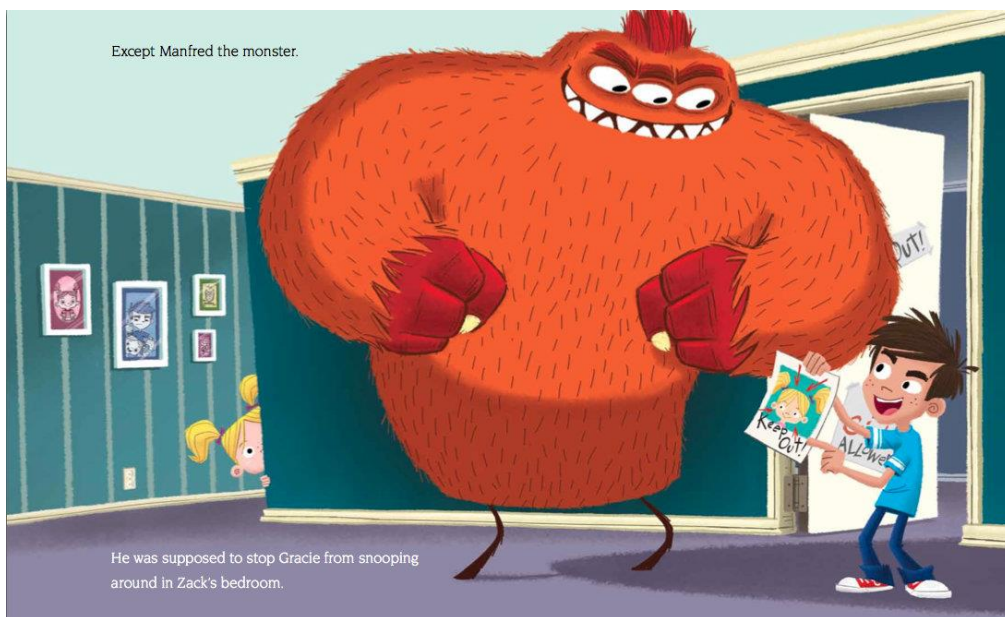
Why do you think the “goopy green” monster is 1/2 off?

How many eyes can you count? Can you find the one monster without eyes? (hint: he has glasses, but no eyes).

Which monster do you think costs the most money? Why?

Which monster do you think is the least expensive? Why?

The “Keep Out Gracie” spread.



Look at the framed photographs on the hallway wall. What can you tell from the photos?

How do you think Manfred feels? How do you think Gracie feels?

Now turn the page...how do they feel on these pages? What's different?



The “party in Zack’s room” spread.



How many monsters are at the party?

What are some of the activities the monsters are engaged in?

As a class, read *The Chicken of the Family* by Mary Amato, illustrated by Delphine Durand.

- How do Clare and Kim “tease” their little sister?
- How is this similar to how Zack treats Gracie? How is it different?
- How do both Clare and Kim’s and Zack’s plans “backfire” on them?
- Write a mash-up version of either story, in which Clare and Kim go to The Monstore to get a monster to scare Henrietta OR Zack tries to convince Gracie that she is a chicken. How would the different characters respond?

## **Vocabulary**

### **Refunds, Returns and Exchanges game**

This is a game to introduce new vocabulary words: *refund*, *return*, and *exchange*.

A refund is when the store gives back the *money* that was paid for an item.

A return is giving back to the store the *item* that was purchased.

An exchange is giving back to the store the item that was purchased and getting a different item instead.

- Pair up students.
- Give one person in the pair a quarter.

- Give the other person in the pair a small token like a ball or a button.
- When the teacher calls out “return”, the person with the small token must give it to the person with the quarter.
- When the teacher calls out “refund” the person with the quarter must give it to the other person.
- When the teacher calls out “exchange”, everyone needs to switch partners. Each pair should still consist of one person who has a quarter and one with the token.
- The teacher will speed up as the game goes on.

## **Writing Activities**

### **Writing a Business Letter**

A business letter is a great way to formally request a refund or exchange.

A typical business letter includes: a heading (the sender’s address and date), inside address (the receiver’s address), salutation, body and a closing. Help students identify each part in a business letter.

The body of the letter should be brief and clear, stating the issue and describing the requested action. The letter should be polite and professional.

As a class, compose a letter from Zack to the Manager of The Monstore asking for a refund. Be sure to be polite, fully explain the situation and request a refund.

### **“My Very Own Monster” story**

Allow students to look carefully through the illustrations in *The Monstore* and choose a monster to buy. Then create a story describing why they chose that particular monster. What does the monster do that is useful? What is the name of the monster?

*Optional story starter:* I knocked five times fast, handed over a bag of squirmy worms and crawled inside The Monstore, where I met \_\_\_\_\_ and decided to take him/her home.

OR

Create the Monstore story as a class and then have each individual student draw a picture of the monster they bought.

*\*see the Appendix for a special drawing sheet.*

### **For Your Eye Only ~ Point of View**

On top of the cash register in The Monstore there is a little one-eyed blue monster named “Peepers”. “Peepers” appears





in most of the store scenes. In the “party in Zack’s room” scene, he is seen again and continues from that point to be included in just about every illustration. Sometimes he is hidden, but look closely.

Either as a class or individually, explore *The Monstore* from the point of view of this little one-eyed monster. What does “Peepers” see? How does “Peepers” feel? What does “Peepers” do?

Advanced classes will be able to actually re-write *The Monstore* from “Peepers” point of view. However, if the class is less-advanced, simply have them create captions and thought-bubbles for him.

*Additional Challenge:* Pick another character, such as Gracie, Manfred, or the Manager and write from their point of view.

## Math

**Word Problems** *For younger students, the use of pictures or props might be needed to figure out word problems.*

- 1) Zack pays \$5 for Manfred the monster and he then pays \$3 for Mookie. How much money has Zack spent on monsters?
- 2) The Monstore sells Zack 4 monsters. Zack buys 2 more monsters. How many monsters has Zack purchased?
- 3) There is a sale at The Monstore. A monster costs \$6. The sale takes off \$1. How much does the monster now cost?
- 4) Zack had \$10 in his piggy bank. He spent \$7 on monsters. How much money does he have left in his piggy bank?
- 5) The monsters love squirmy worms. Gracie gives them 10 bags. They quickly gobbled up 9 bags. How many bags of squirmy worms do the monsters have left?

## **Eyes, Eyes, Everywhere Eyes!**

*The Monstore* is filled with eyes. In fact, on the cover of the book there are 17 eyes. Some of the monsters have one eye, and at least one purple monster has 8 eyes.

Have the students go on an “eye hunt”. Younger students can count the eyes on each page. More advanced students can add up the number of eyes on each page to find out the total number of eyes in the book.

### “Eye Spy” Hunt

Hide paper or googly eyes throughout the classroom, keeping in mind the ages, abilities and heights of the hunters. It can be a good idea to have kids work in pairs. The hunter or pair of hunters that find the most eyes win.

### Des“eye”gn a Monster

In answer to simple addition and subtraction problems, students will create monsters with the correct number of eyes. (ie.  $4+5=9$  so the student will draw a monster with 9 eyes). Display these math monsters on a classroom bulletin board in increasing number order.

### **We’re in the Money**

Spend some time helping students identify money coins (penny, nickel, dime and quarter) and dollar bills. Some more advanced classes can even discuss the values of the money.

Begin a class discussion about the purpose of money (food, toys, clothes, charity, etc). Play with the idea of what costs more—a car or a loaf of bread; a beach ball or a diamond ring?

What are some ways to earn money? How do you think Zack pays for all of those monsters at The Monstore?

### Monster Money

Have students create their own play money. Be sure to include the “value” of the money on the money itself.

Assign prices to the monsters which are in *The Monstore*. Using their own “monster money”, students need to determine which monsters they can afford.

### Frankenstein’s Build-a-Monster Workshop

Give each student some pennies.

Place different art supplies (pom poms, googly eyes, feathers, glue, etc.) into cups with price tags for each cup.

Students can “buy” the supplies by counting out the correct amount of pennies for each item.

Have them create a monster picture using their purchased items.

If they run out of money, students can “earn” more by completing various “chores” around the classroom.



## Science

The policy at The Monstore is “no returns, no exchanges, no exceptions”. Zack believes he deserves a complete and total refund. Yet what he gets instead is a house *smooshed* full with monsters.

### **No Refund? Recycle Instead!**

Perhaps what Zack really should do is *recycle* those monsters! Recycling is taking an item you don’t need any more and using it in a totally different way.

### The Switcheroo Swap!

Ask students to bring from home a useful item that they no longer need or want.

As a class, explore ways to use each item, including alternate purposes. Then hold an auction and allow

students to trade their unwanted item for something else.

### Frankenstein’s Recycle-Lab

Each student should bring from home one item found in the recycling bin (plastic bottles, tin cans, milk cartons, newspaper, etc).

Using all of the items and some additional art supplies, create a sculpture of a monster which can be displayed in the classroom.

### Make a Monster Piggy Bank

Using an item found in their home recycling bin, students will make a piggy bank and decorate it to look like a monster. Don’t forget to name him/her!

## **I've Been Slimed!**

Anyone can make a monster out of paper and paint, but only a *scientist* can make one using these materials!

- 4-oz bottle glue
- borax
- water
- food coloring

Prepare these solutions first and then use just the amount needed to make perfect slime.

### *Borax Solution*

Take about a half cup of hot water and stir in borax until it stops dissolving. The solution may be a little cloudy. That is fine. Use the liquid part for making slime, not the gritty stuff at the bottom of the container.

### *Glue Solution*

The trick to making translucent extra-slimy slime is using the right glue. Use white glue and the slime will be opaque. If you want clear jelly-like slime, use glue gel. It is usually pale blue, but a little food coloring can turn it any color.

1. Stir 4-oz of glue into 1 cup of water.
2. Add a couple of drops of food coloring. The radioactive chemistry green-yellow color is obtained by adding 2 drops of yellow or 2 drops yellow and 1 drop of green coloring, depending how green you want the slime.

### **Make Slime**

Just mix together 1/3 cup of the borax solution and 1 cup of the glue solution. For bigger batches of slime, just use 1 part borax solution and three parts glue solution. It is fine to use your hands.

### **Store Your Slime**

When not using the slime, keep it in a sealed plastic bag so that it won't dry out. It will stay moist and disgusting for a couple of weeks if stored the bag in the refrigerator.

## Social Studies

Students should explore their own city, including the mall, and make a list of the various kinds of stores they find.

Some stores, such as grocery stores or department stores, sell lots of different items. Other stores like specialty stores sell very specific items. A simple Google search can turn up some very unique stores.

- How many stores do they find that sell many different things?
- How many specialty stores that sell only one kind of thing?
- What is their favorite store and what do they buy there?
- What is the silliest store they discover?
- What kind of store do they wish they could find?

### **Young Entrepreneurs**

Zack and Gracie decide to open up their own business selling the monsters that they cannot return to The Monstore.

Explain to students that someone who starts their own business is called an “entrepreneur”.

What kind of businesses would they like to start?

- A bake sale?
- A lemonade stand?
- A babysitting service?
- A lawn mowing business?
- A garage sale?

Be creative.

Each student should draft up a business plan including the name of the business, description of what the business does, a price list and contact information.

Create a poster to advertise the business.

Very creative students could also create a commercial for their business.

*For Fun:* Create a poster and/or commercial to advertise Zack and Gracie’s The Monstore 2. What makes this store different than The Monstore?

## Oh, Brother! Pesky Sister!

Zack wants to buy a monster for one reason only—to scare and keep Gracie away. But by the end of the story Zack helps Gracie get rid of the terrible tiara and they start a business together.

Sibling relationships are very interesting. At times our brothers and sisters are our best friends, but sometimes we just need our space and want to be left alone!

Here are some activities to help your students explore sibling relationships.

- Make a list of the pros and cons of having a sibling.
- Interview grown-ups who have siblings and discover the difference between the way they got along with their sibling when they were kids in comparison to as adults.
- Brainstorm a list of ways to make sure your sibling “keeps out” of your stuff. Be creative and fun!
- Draw a picture of your favorite moment with your sibling. Give it to them as a gift.





Monsters  
For  
Sale!



No  
Exchanges!

No  
Returns!



Monsters  
For  
Sale!



No  
Exchanges!

No  
Returns!



# Draw the monster you'd like to buy at The Monstore!

Monster's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Talents: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

More fun books and kid stuff at [TaraLazar.com](http://TaraLazar.com)

Monsters  
For  
Sale!



No  
Exchanges!

No  
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