



Become a Word Wizard and defeat
THE WORD PIRATES with mighty activities!



THE WORD PIRATES

by Susan Cooper, illustrated by Steven Kellogg

Neal Porter books  Holiday House

HolidayHouse.com/the-word-pirates

#TheWordPirates

The Pen is Mightier Than the Sword
Activity Kit

ISBN: 978-0-8234-4597-4

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Dear Bookseller:

Welcome to **THE PEN is MIGHTIER Than the SWORD** Activity Kit
Meet captain Rottingbones and his mighty pirates . . .

Holiday House: What was the inspiration for cocreating The Word Pirates?

Susan Cooper: It was Margaret Mahy, that lovely wacky New Zealand author who died in 2012. We both missed her a lot, so we thought we'd do a book together that she might have enjoyed. And I thought it would be great fun to work with my friend Steven, because every time I'd written a picture book text before, my editors had firmly kept me away from the artist.

Steven Kellogg: The inspiration was indeed the warm friendship, the wild and delightful humor, and the high standard of professionalism that Margaret brought to her life adventure. Discovering that Susan felt exactly the same high degree of affection and gratitude for Margaret that I did made her suggestion that we celebrate her in a collaborative picture book totally irresistible.

HH: Will readers discover Margaret Mahy within the book?

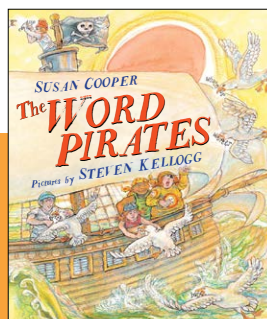
SC: You bet. She's the wizard. She loved magic, and alliteration; she lived on that green hillside in Christchurch, New Zealand, and she even had a poodle called Baxter.

SK: Absolutely! Margaret was constantly cavorting through my imagination as I drew and painted the expressions and the gestures of the Word Wizard.

HH: There is a lot of emotion in this story—what character did you emotionally connect with?

SC: I'm really fond of that young pirate who quietly picks up a pen and starts to write. Take a look—you can't tell whether it's a boy or a girl. Reminds me of me, writing my first story when I was about eight years old.

SK: I tend to become emotionally involved with all the characters as they emerge from the blank sheets of paper on the drawing table and find their places on each page of the book. The cast of this story contains a significant number of pirates and kids, so I wanted to be sure to visually present them so that I, and the reader, could get to know each of them individually.



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HH: “Pirated” words are the bane of the publishing world—but the Word Wizard is remarkably gentle in finding the pirates a new way of life.

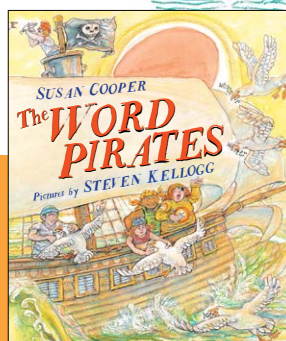
SC: Well, I think she forgave them because she figured they’d been poorly raised in pirate families and never went to school, so nobody ever told them you shouldn’t eat words. And remember, a lot of our readers might feel it’s a really grave punishment to have to spend your life eating nothing but vegetables.

SK: I am sure, too, that the Word Wizard was moved to forgive the formerly surly and cynical pirates when she saw them instantly enchanted by the blast of stories that exploded from her pen.

HH: Will there be another book from the Susan Cooper/Steven Kellogg duo?

SC: You never know! But it would have to be about pirates again, because we’ve gotten used to calling each other “Matey” and writing emails titled “Ahoy!” Steven wrote that he couldn’t wait to see the first copy of the book rolling down the gangplank, and we both call our publisher Neal Porter “Cap’n.” We even have a picture of him wearing a pirate captain’s hat.

SK: I am moved by the fact that Rottingbones and his cohorts have given up piracy and begun working determinedly on developing their deficient vocabularies and their nonexistent reading skills. If those pirates can evolve so impressively, I would eagerly pursue any manuscript ideas that Susan envisions, confident that working together once again would be just as fulfilling as this collaborative project has been, even if pirates are not equitably represented in the cast of characters.



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MAD ABOUT WORDS MAD LIBS

Oh no! The Word Pirates have eaten the words!

The Word Wizard needs YOUR help to fix up the story.

Grab a friend and read them ONLY the parts of speech listed underneath the lines. Ask them to give you a word that matches that part of speech.

No need to be serious – the Word Wizard loves silliness! Then read your new paragraph out loud. After you're done, switch places. It's your turn now!



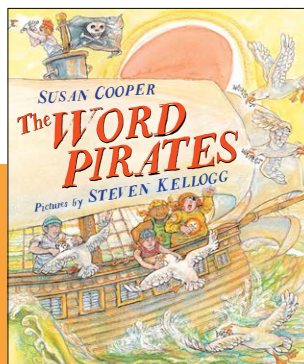
It was early _____ on the pirate ship. “Words!” roared Captain Rottingbones. “Bring me _____ words! I need _____ !”
noun *adj.* *noun*

One day Captain Rottingbones grew _____. He had learned of a Word Wizard, a _____ New Zealander whose wonderful _____ were said to be so _____ that he knew her _____ would be extra delicious.
adj. *plural noun* *adj.* *noun*

“Yo, ho, me _____ !” he cried. “Brush up the _____ ! We’re _____ south!”
plural noun *plural noun* *verb ending in -ing*

The Word Wizard lived on a _____ headland, with her _____ and her _____ , Baxter.
adj. *animal* *adj.* *animal*

Captain Rottingbones _____ his sword. The captain _____ forward, his arm high. But the Wizard raised her _____ and defeated the pirates!
past tense verb *past tense verb* *noun*



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WORD WIZARD WORD SEARCH

What are the pirates' favorite words to eat?

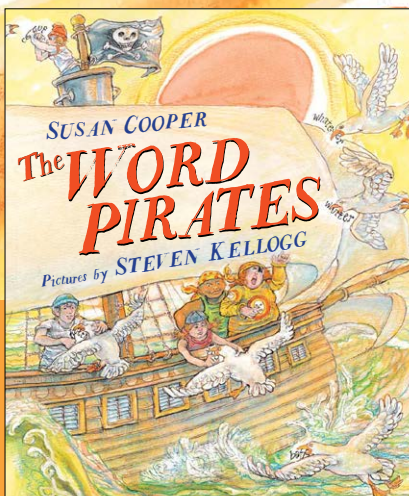
Help the Word Wizard find all the words that the pirates have eaten!



E K X S M O C B T Y J E
W F B X D A A M E P B V
U E O I P R D V L W Z F
Z N R T R L O N D D I D
U Y A V C D R W H L L K
T I J S H I P C K L A Q
N R V T G Q N M A S O F
S J N D U U E I J P V O
L C A E L B T M N P T R
O S E C Y Q D Y S E H K
V R C K M A L N A J B B
Q J O Y H P M P M X G R
L P R B K P J E Y Q L M
E T A R I P J K E M E B

WORD BANK:

WORDS	PIRATE
SHIP	CAPTAIN
OCEAN	BIRD
LUNCH	DECK



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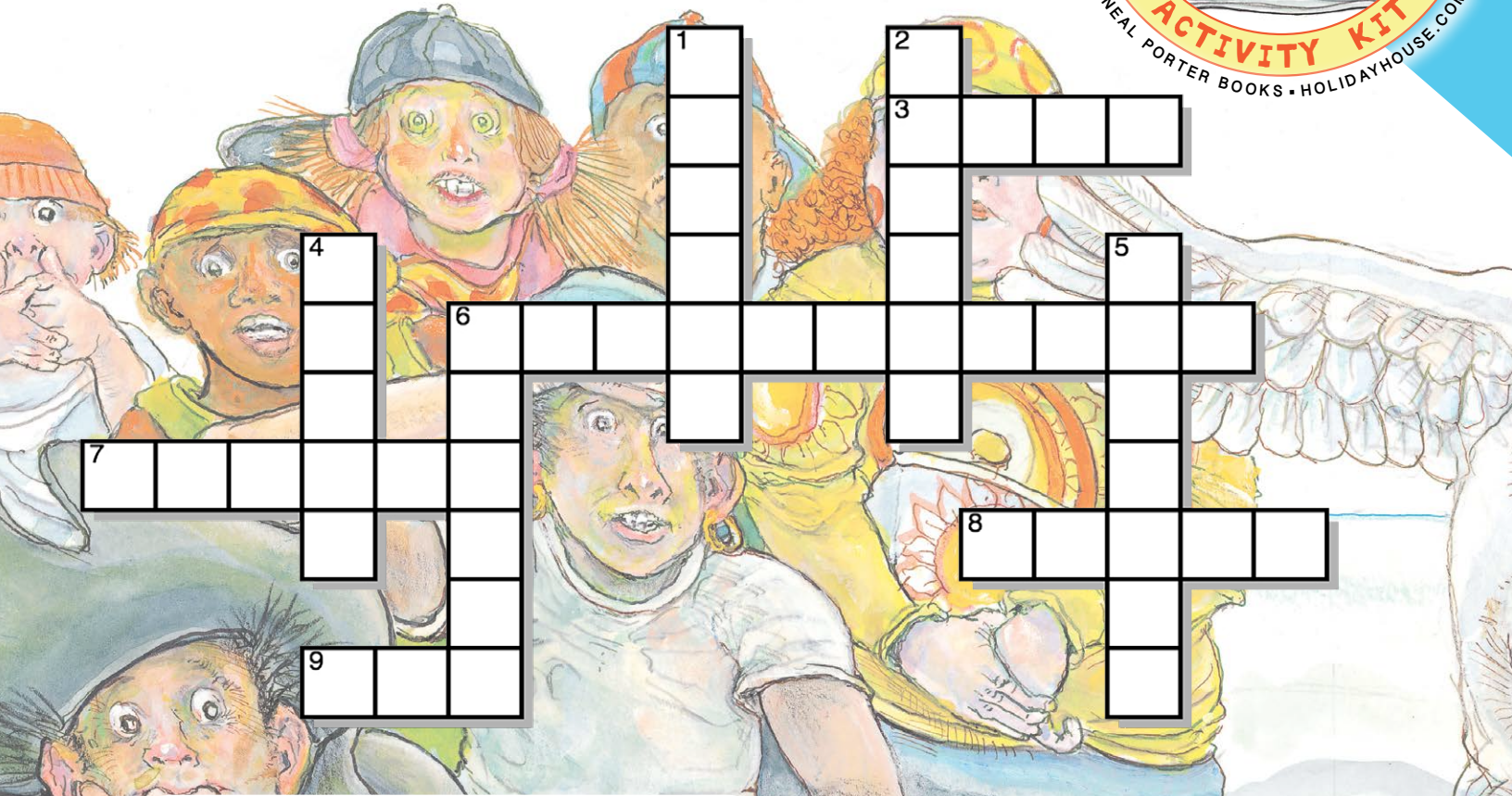
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CAPTAIN ROTTINGBONES' CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Use the clues to fill in the crossword puzzle with words from the story. The Word Wizard has her word-spinning pen . . . make sure you grab your word-spinning pencil!

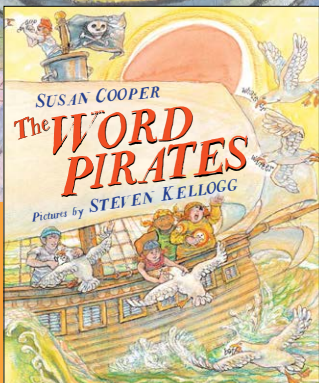


DOWN

- 1 someone who has magical powers
- 2 the author's last name
- 4 the author's first name
- 5 the illustrator's last name
- 6 the illustrator's first

ACROSS

- 3 a word that starts a story
- 6 a person who tells stories
- 7 a person who attacks and robs ships at sea
- 8 a weapon with a long metal blade
- 9 an instrument for writing or drawing with ink



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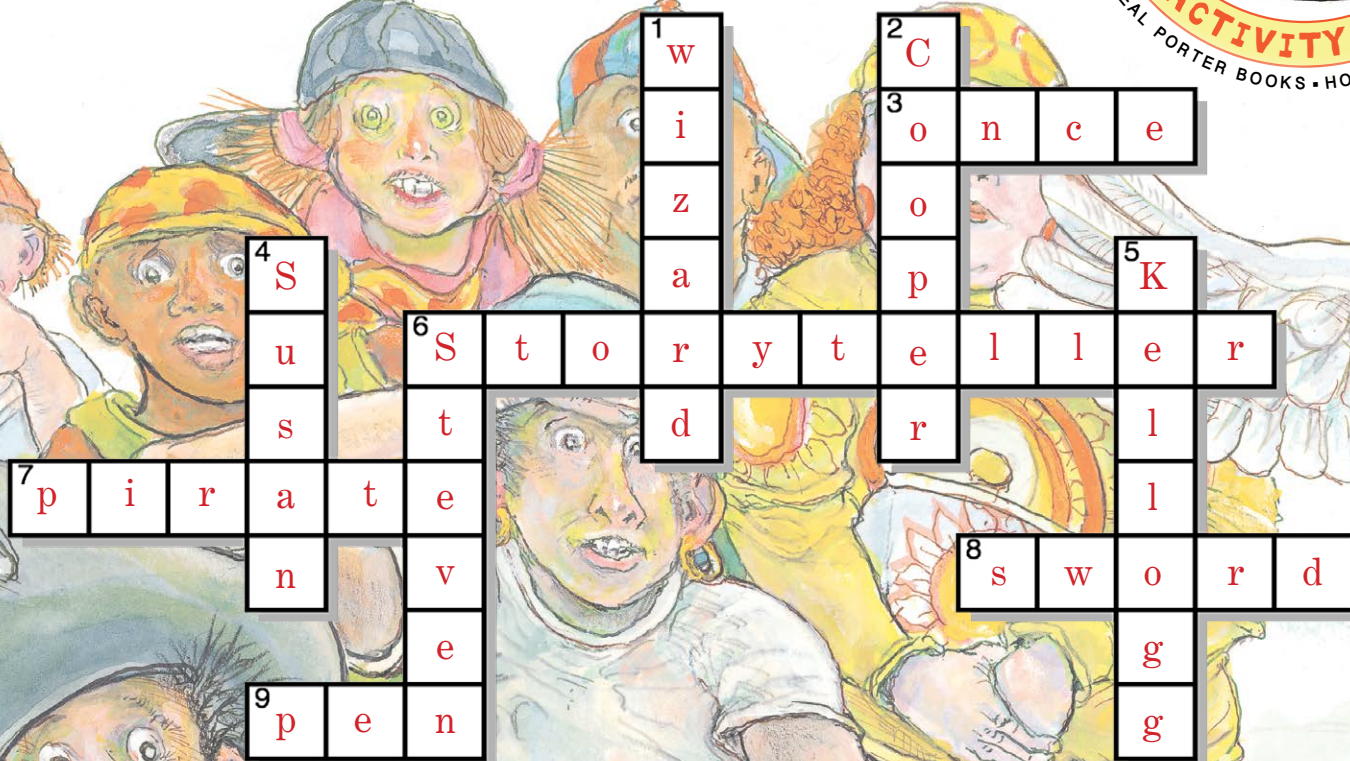
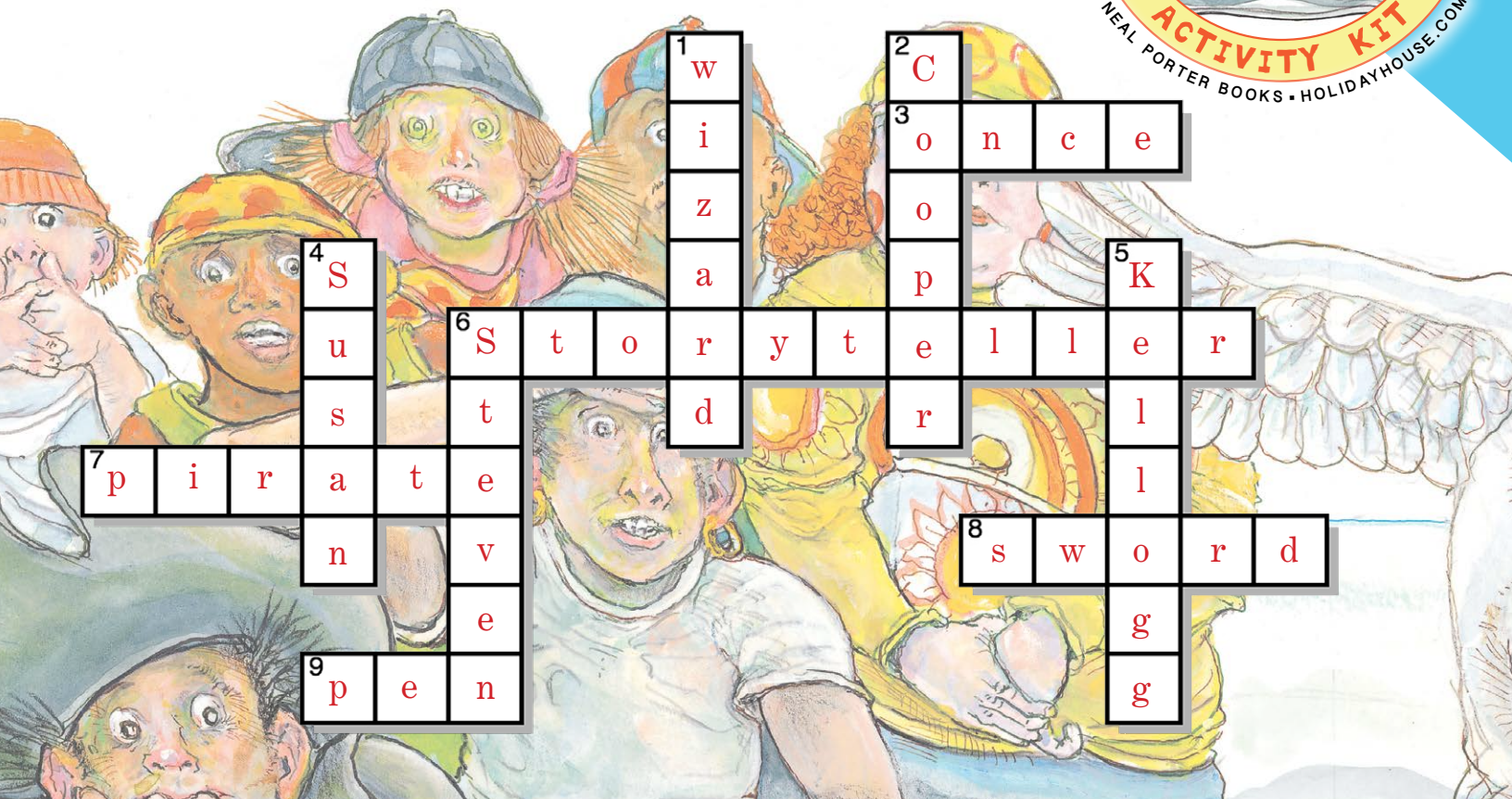
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CAPTAIN ROTTINGBONES' CROSSWORD PUZZLE

The solution—no peeking until you are done!

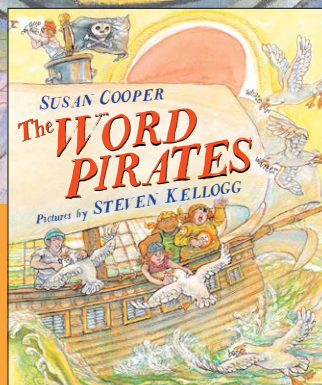


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YOUR TURN! WRITING ACTIVITY



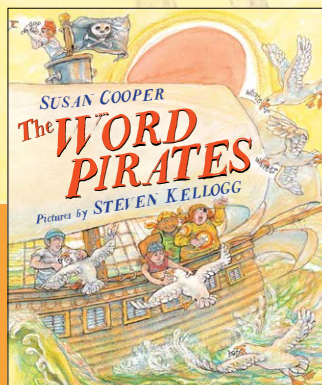
The Youngest Pirate's First Story Writing Activity

Write the next chapter of *The Word Pirates*!



And one day the youngest
pirate picked up a pen,
and, very carefully, began
to write . . .





9780823443598

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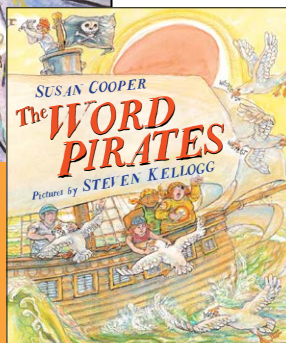
Meet author Susan Cooper and illustrator Steven Kellogg



SUSAN COOPER is a Newbery Medalist and the author of the classic fantasy series *The Dark Is Rising*, as well as many other works for children, including the picture books *The Magician's Boy*, *The Silver Cow* and *The Selkie Girl*. Born in England, she now lives in coastal Massachusetts. She is a recipient of the Margaret A. Edwards Award for lifetime achievement from the Young Adult Services Library Association.



STEVEN KELLOGG is a revered author and illustrator who has published over 100 children's books, including the Pinkerton series, *Snowflakes Fall*, and *How Much Is a Million?* A recipient of an honorary doctor of humane letters from the University of Findlay and the Regina Medal, he lives in upstate New York.



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