



Monster Needs a Costume

BY PAUL CZAJAK * ILLUSTRATED BY WENDY GRIEB

Growing up with Monster is fun! He has all sorts of things to learn and experience for the first time, and the young boy who takes care of him will help him along the way. Written in humorous, read-aloud verse, the **Monster & Me™** series makes growing up a whole lot easier and a lot more interesting.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Czajak got an “F” with the words “get a tutor” on his college writing paper and after that, never thought he’d become a writer. But after spending twenty years as a chemist, he knew his creativity could no longer be contained. Living in Massachusetts with his wife, and two little monsters, Paul has rediscovered his passion for writing and looks forward to sharing his stories for years to come.



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Wendy Grieb is a storyboard artist, Illustrator, and teacher. She has worked on a variety of productions and won an Annie Award for storyboarding in 2004. She has also been an animation development artist, children’s book illustrator, and character designer for companies such as Disney, Nickelodeon, Sony, Klasky-Csupo, Mighty Media Press, White Wolf, and more. She was a storyboard artist at Disney TV for sixteen years and has worked on Disney’s hit TV show *Phineas and Ferb*. She also teaches animation at California State University–Fullerton.



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The material in this Educator’s Activity Guide was created by Michele Pickel, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Education at Concordia University, St. Paul, MN utilizing *Monster Needs A Costume* by Paul Czajak as part of her early literacy teaching curriculum and written in collaboration with Karen Latchana Kenney.

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Read It!

ABOUT THE BOOK

It's almost Halloween, and Monster needs to decide what he's going to be. With so many options—a fireman, a ballerina, a cowboy, a ninja—how will he ever decide? In this playful, rhyming story, Monster shows young readers that sometimes being creative and daring to try something new are the best solutions.

BEFORE YOU READ

- ▶ Examine the title of the book. Ask students to guess what the book may be about.
- ▶ Draw an outline of a pumpkin, bat, or other Halloween-themed shape on the board or poster paper. Ask: "What is a costume?" Write responses inside the outline.
- ▶ Look at the images of Monster in his astronaut, fireman, pear, cowboy, ballet dancer, and ninja costumes. Ask students to guess what Monster is trying to dress like for his Halloween costume. Write answers on the board.
- ▶ Ask students to think of some costumes they have worn. Tell them to draw a picture of their favorite costume. Share pictures with the class. Students should tell the class the name of their costumes and explain the parts of the costumes.
- ▶ Read the glossary words and their definitions. Ask students to look for the words as they read.

GLOSSARY

astronaut (ASS-truh-nawt) A person who travels in space.

Bartlett (BART-let) A juicy type of pear with yellow-green or red-colored skin and white flesh.

bounded (BOUND-id) To have moved forward quickly by leaping or jumping.

desperados (dess-puh-RAH-dohz) Bold and reckless criminals; bandits.

discovered (diss-KUH-vurd) To find out about something.

discouraged (diss-KUR-ijd) To lose your excitement or confidence about something.

grouch (GROUCH) Someone who is in a bad mood.

hurtled (HUR-tuhld) To have moved at a fast speed.

nimble (NIM-buhl) To be able to move quickly and lightly.

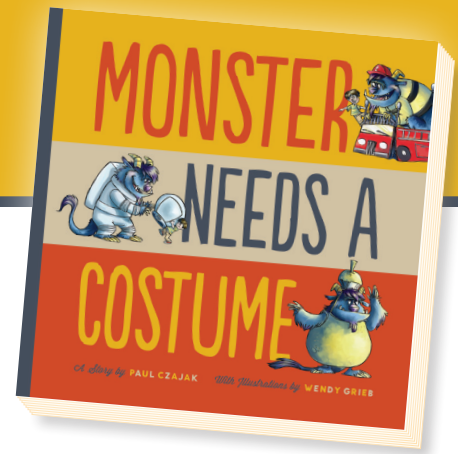
ninja (NIN-juh) A Japanese warrior who is trained in martial arts and can move silently and stays hidden from sight.

raucous (RAW-kuhss) Loud and rowdy.

tutu (TOO-too) A short ballet skirt made from layers of stiff netting.

vanish (VAN-ish) To suddenly disappear.

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Know It!

DISCUSS THE BOOK

- ▶ **What's Your Favorite?** After reading *Monster Needs a Costume*, ask students to recall what costumes Monster wanted. Write answers on the board. After reviewing them, ask students: Which costume was your favorite? Put tally marks next to each costume name to see which receives the most votes.
- ▶ **Take A Look:** Explain to students that in a picture book, the pictures can tell you as much about the characters, plot, and setting as the words. Ask students to look at the spreads in the book that show Monster in his cowboy costume. Ask: How do you think Monster feels in his cowboy costume? What details in the pictures show you how he feels? Tell students to write down their thoughts, including specific details.
- ▶ **Understanding Monstrous Words:** Explain to students that some of the words used in the book are difficult to understand for young readers. Seeing those words used in sentences along with high interest illustrations helps readers understand their meanings. Watch the short video at www.elementary.com, to see how the advanced vocabulary used in the *Monster & Me™* books challenges young readers to become better problem solvers and quicker thinkers. Ask students to complete the "Monstrous Words" worksheet on page 7. Provide dictionaries for students to use.
- ▶ **Creative Solutions:** Tell students that Monster had a big problem in the book. He couldn't decide what costume to wear for Halloween. Ask students: How did Monster solve his big problem? Then ask students to think of a time when they had a problem. Have them write down the solutions they thought of to solve their problems.

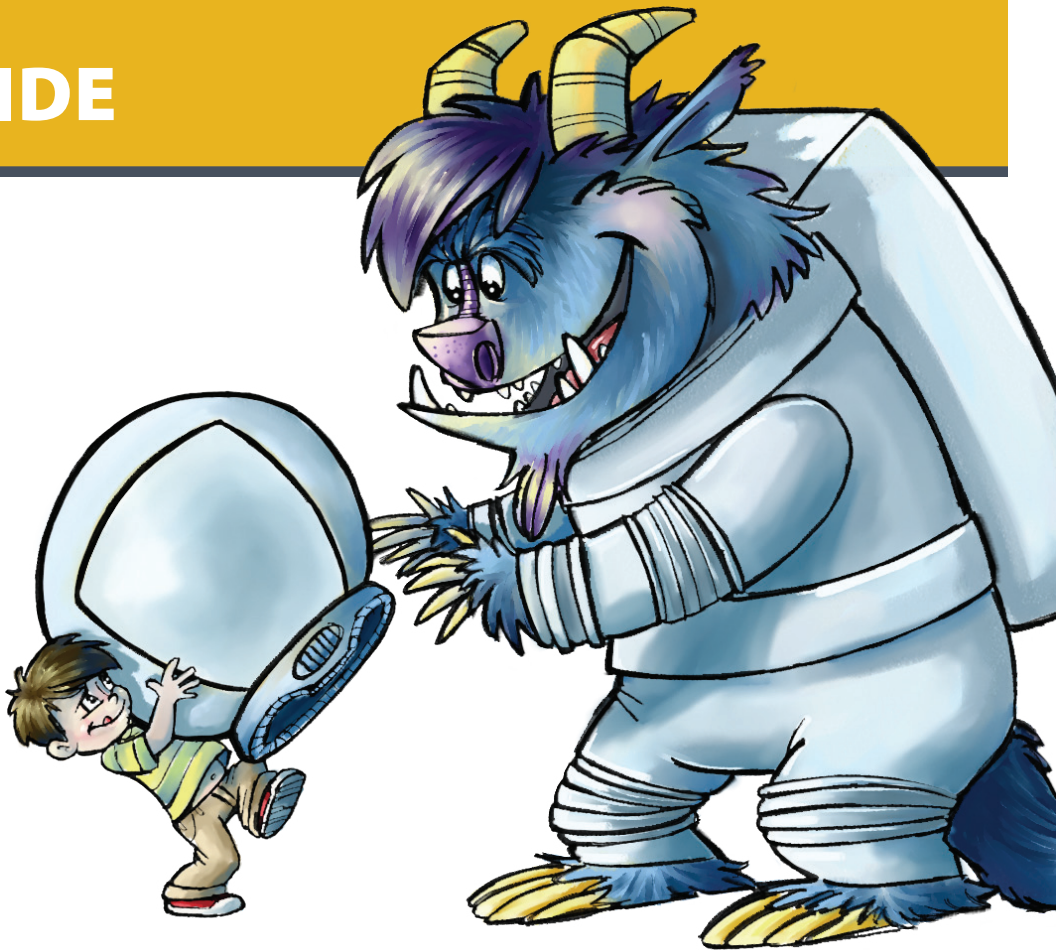


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WRITE ABOUT IT

► **What's Your Opinion?** Monster tried many different costumes in the book. In the end he combined a few to make a unique costume. Tell students they will write about three short paragraphs about their favorite costume from the book. Ask them to introduce the book's topic, state which costume they like best, explain the reasons why they like it, and add a conclusion that restates their opinion.

► **My Experiences:** Ask students to recall a Halloween costume (or a play costume) they once wore. Tell them to write a paragraph that answers this question: What was the best costume you've ever worn? They should provide details about the costume, such as the colors it had or how it felt when they wore it. If possible, ask students to provide images of them wearing their favorite costumes.



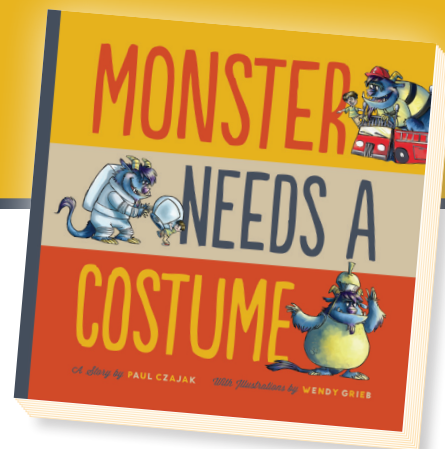
MAP IT OUT

► **Costume Ideas:** Different events caused Monster to decide to try new costumes. Monster then acted like a new character and dressed differently. Explain to students that a cause results in an effect. Then ask students to fill out the chart on page 8. If students are too young to complete the chart independently, use the chart on a board and fill it out as a group. The first column represents a "cause," while the second column represents an "effect."

► **Story Circles:** Create 3 large circles on the floor using tape. Or go outside and use chalk on the sidewalk. Use these circles to review the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Label the first circle "Beginning," label the second circle "Middle," and the third shape "End." Tell students to line up. Then explain that when you clap your hands, the student first in line should jump into the first circle. The student has ten seconds to tell a moment from the beginning of the story. After ten seconds, the student must jump into the next circle and tell a moment from the middle of the story. After another ten seconds, the student should jump into the third circle to share a moment from the end of the story.



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Try It!

FUN ACTIVITIES

- › **Create-A-Costume:** Put students in small teams and ask them to work together to create a new costume for Monster on a large piece of paper. Have one student lay on the paper, while the other students trace the body of the student who is laying down. Cut out Monster's head (on page 9) and glue it on the outline. Let the teams create a brand new, different costume for Monster. Use markers, paint, or crayons. Or cut paper or cloth scraps into clothing shapes. Challenge students to create wild and different costumes. Ask teams to label their costumes with unique names.
- › **Creative Costume Combos:** Cut out the costume names on page 11 of this guide. Fold the pieces of paper in half and drop them into a jar. Then ask each student to pick two pieces of paper from the jar. Tell students that they need to think of a way to combine the two costume ideas into one costume. Ask them to draw a picture of their newly created costumes. Students should label the parts of their costumes and think of fun names for their creations.
- › **Monster Hot Seat:** Create masks of Monster and the boy. Use the head cutouts from page 9 and 10. Glue the cutouts to poster board or paper plates. Attach craft sticks. Ask students to come up with five questions about the story. Then ask volunteers to use their masks and sit in the "hot seat." The student in the hot seat should pretend to be his or her character while answering other students' questions. Two students, a Monster and boy, can both be on the "hot seat" and work together to think of answers.



CONNECT

- › Listen to the song "Monster Mash" by Bobby Pickett or "Thriller" by Michael Jackson. Print out the lyrics as well so that students can read along with the song. Ask students to circle the names of monsters that could be used as costumes. Ask: How do you think monsters dance? If they'd like, let students dance like their favorite monsters along with the song.
- › Find a good Halloween movie suitable for the students' age group. As students watch, ask them to write down great costume ideas inspired by the movie. When the movie is finished, have students share their ideas with the class. Here are some movie suggestions:
 - › Beetlejuice
 - › Casper
 - › Coraline
 - › Corpse Bride
 - › Gremlins
 - › It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown
 - › Monsters, Inc.

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EXPLORE MORE

Visit the following Web sites to learn more about Halloween history, costumes, and monsters:

› Time For Kids, Halloween History

<http://www.timeforkids.com/photos-video/slideshow/halloween-history/17296>

Learn about the origins of Halloween, trick-or-treating, Jack-o'-Lanterns, costumes, and other ghoulish Halloween traditions.

› Disney Family, Kids Halloween Costumes

<http://family.disney.com/kids-halloween-costumes>

Need a scary and fun costume idea? Visit this site to find a costume you can make!

› British Council, Make your Monster

<http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/make-your-own/make-your-monster>

Play a game to create a monster! Then make it sing, dance, sneeze, shout, or even blow up!



COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

The activities and discussion questions in this guide support the following Common Core State Standards.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.1	Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.3	Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.8	Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1	Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.3	Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.5	Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.5.A	Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., describe foods that are spicy or juicy).
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.7	Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

MONSTER NEEDS A COSTUME

Monstrous Words

Don't let monstrous words scare you! Books contain clues to understanding difficult words. Look at these images along with the bold words used in sentences. Then guess the meaning of the bold words. After making your guesses, look the words up in a dictionary. Write down the meanings. Did you make good guesses?

The sheriff is looking for these **desperados** on the run.

Guess: _____

Dictionary: _____



Ballet dancers have to be **nimble** on their toes.

Guess: _____

Dictionary: _____

A ninja must be **stealthy** in the night.

Guess: _____

Dictionary: _____



Monster was so **exhausted** that he fell to the floor.

Guess: _____

Dictionary: _____

Now think of a few new monstrous words to describe Monster and his costumes. Use each in a sentence.

1. _____

2. _____

MONSTER NEEDS A COSTUME

Costume Ideas

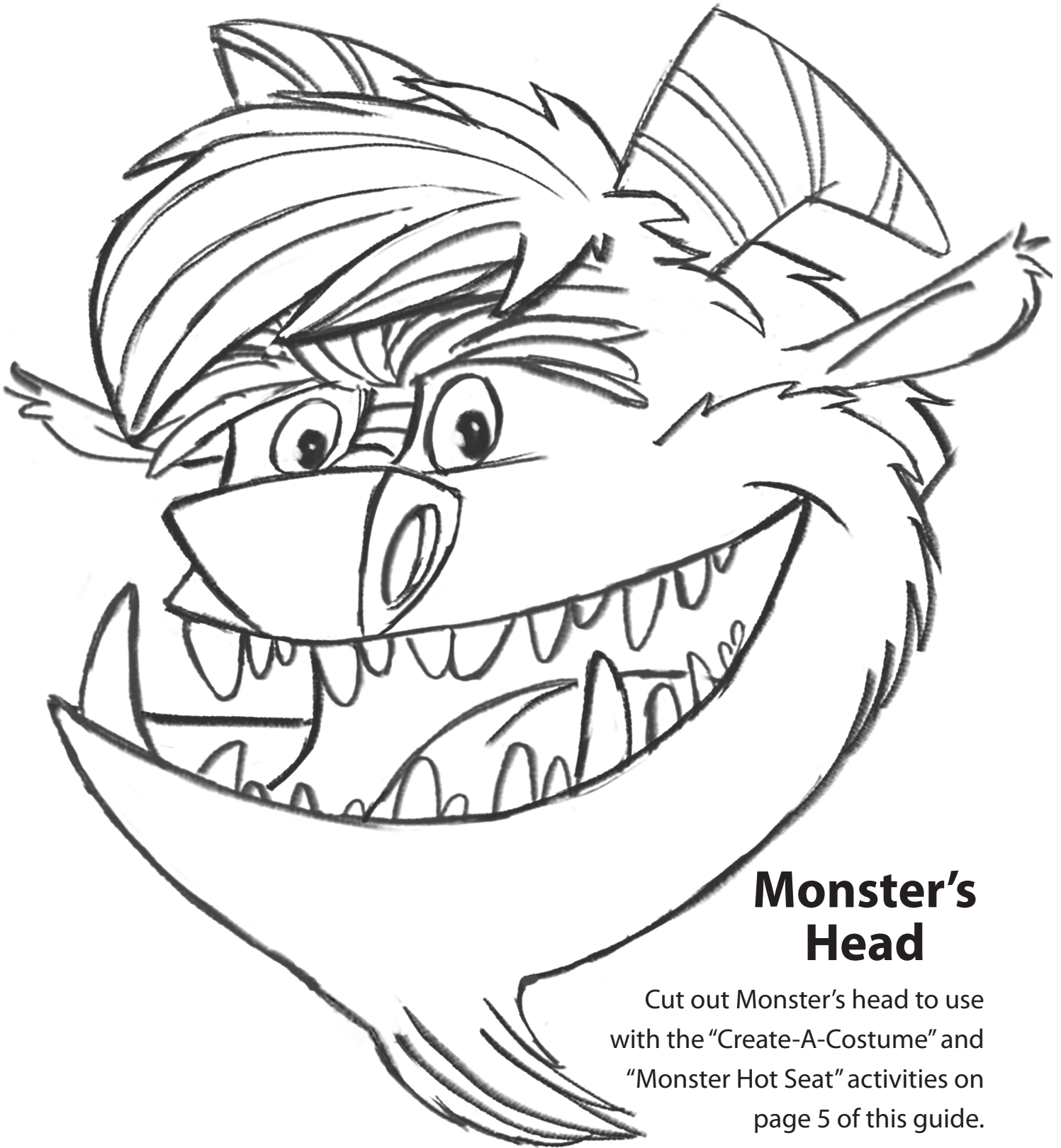
Certain events helped Monster come up with new costume ideas. Fill out the chart below to explain what happened to make Monster want a new costume. In the first column, explain what inspired Monster's costume idea. In the second column, explain what costume Monster chose and how he pretended to be that character.

WHAT INSPIRED MONSTER?

MONSTER'S COSTUME IDEA



MONSTER NEEDS A COSTUME



Monster's Head

Cut out Monster's head to use with the "Create-A-Costume" and "Monster Hot Seat" activities on page 5 of this guide.

MONSTER NEEDS A COSTUME



Boy's Head

Cut out the boy's head to use with the "Monster Hot Seat" activity on page 5 of this guide.

MONSTER NEEDS A COSTUME

Creative Costume Combos

Cut along the dotted lines to use with the "Creative Costume Combos" activity on page 5 of this guide.



SPIDER	GHOST	WITCH	PUMPKIN	POLICE OFFICER
WEREWOLF	PRINCESS	SCARECROW	MUMMY	ZOMBIE
VAMPIRE	ROCK STAR	SUPER HERO	BAT	PIRATE
RAT	SKELETON	RACECAR DRIVER	ALIEN	ROBOT
ICE QUEEN	FAIRY	OWL	CHEERLEADER	FOOTBALL PLAYER
KNIGHT	FORTUNE TELLER	RAVEN	SWAMP MONSTER	SEA MONSTER
FLY	GARDEN GNOME	DRAGON	SECRET AGENT	UNICORN
NERD	TROLL	CENTIPEDE	BODY BUILDER	NURSE
LEPRECHAUN	WIZARD	PILOT	MERMAID	DINOSAUR
DETECTIVE	CAVE BOY OR GIRL	MAD SCIENTIST	STATUE OF LIBERTY	CRAZY CAT LADY