

UVU Tye Center Presents

New Kid

Written by Dennis Foon
Directed by Scott Savage

- IN THIS ISSUE:
- Pg 2: Situational Shifts
Decoding Messages
 - Pg 3: Mad Gab Phrases
Learning the Lingo: On stage and Off
 - Pg 4: The Adventure of New
Spot the Setting: Utah Clues in *New Kid*
Credits



SITUATIONAL SHIFTS

A person’s authority, confidence, or influence changes depending on the situation. How do different characters in the play shift, or not, based on where they are and who they are with?

The Older Sibling: At home, they’re “the bossy one,” but at school, they might be shy and easily overlooked.

The Student: In math class, they may feel inadequate. But in art, they’re the one everyone looks to for ideas.

Mench: At school, Mench is comfortable and teases Nick. At Nick’s house, she is less confident.

The Teacher: The teacher scares the students when they teach about the rules, but the parents love them at parent-teacher conferences.

DECODING MESSAGES

A substitution cipher is an encryption technique in which each letter of the plain text is replaced by another letter, often determined by a keyword or by rotating the alphabet. For this activity, we used the keyword HOMELAND.

Here’s how the cipher alphabet was built:

1. Input the keyword HOMELAND (without repeating letters).
2. Find the last letter of the keyword alphabetically — in this case, O.
3. Continue the alphabet from P through Z, then wrap around with A through N, skipping any letters that already appear in the keyword.
4. Place this sequence after the keyword to complete the scrambled alphabet.

Use this key to decode the ciphered phrases (which are quotes from the script) back into plain English.

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

1. JVC’YL HZ ZBYHUNL BV BDLT HZ BDLJ HYL BV JVC.
2. THJOL BDLJ BDVCNDB P GHZ ZBCWPE. P EVU’B RUVG. P EPEU’B CUELYZBHUE.
3. PA HUJVUL OVBDLYZ JVC, QCZB PNUVYL BDLT.

THE MAD GAB PHRASES

Decipher these series of words that, when spoken aloud, sound like a well-known phrase or saying.



Canoe Key Pass Egret?



Weed Owns Tan Ditch Ants.



Made Divorce Pea Whiff Ewe.



Kitten Scene Gulf Aisle!



Aid Are Crank Loud.

LEARNING THE LINGO: ON STAGE AND OFF

During rehearsals for *New Kid*, Director Scott Savage gave the cast an unusual assignment — attend an advanced language class in a language they didn’t know, then write about the experience. The goal was to help actors connect more deeply with the play’s themes of communication, isolation, and belonging.

For Genesie Smith, who plays Mother, that class was ASL 2010, taught by Marlene Malm. She expected to quietly slip into the back row, but instead walked into a silent circle where all eyes turned toward her. “I went to introduce myself,” Genesie recalls. “And then remembered the teacher is deaf. I got some help from the students, but I sat down feeling awkward and out of place.”

Much of the class was devoted to learning new vocabulary through pictures and signing. Genesie found the visual aids helpful, but once the group launched into conversation, context slipped away. “I could catch the humor and tone of what people were saying,” she explains. “Someone (I think) asked the difference between the sign for ‘plunging a toilet’

and ‘churning butter,’ and I think someone made a joke about their similarity. I’m not quite sure what it was, but their communication was comical.”

The experience offered unexpected insight into her character. “It made me think of Mother at the grocery store, where the language barrier feels unbearable. I understand now that impulse to just drop everything and leave.”

Genesie also discovered how much energy the experience demanded. “I had to give 100% of my focus just to grasp a little of what was happening. It was exhausting. I can see why Mother wants her home to remain a safe space in her own language — because she can’t find that comfort anywhere else.”

In the end, the assignment didn’t just teach Genesie a few new ASL signs — it deepened her understanding of what it means to be a stranger in a language and brought her closer to the heart of her role.

THE ADVENTURE OF NEW



NEW FOOD
What is a new food you have tried recently? Did you like it?



NEW PLACE
What is a new place you went to? Was it exciting or scary?



SOMEONE NEW
Introduce yourself to someone around you that you haven’t met.



NEW KID
Have you ever been the new kid at your school? How did you feel?

SPOT THE SETTING: UTAH CLUES IN NEW KID



SPOT THE SETTING

Write down things you saw that showed the play was set in Utah.

Learning Stage is published by the Theatre for Youth and Education (TYE) Center at Utah Valley University. This issue was created by TYE Center Admin Support II/ *New Kid* manager Meredith Campbell with graphic design by Jane Bergeson. Thank you to Genesie Smith for sharing your language class experience!

- DECODING ANSWERS:
1. “You’re as strange to them as they are to you.”
 2. “Maybe they thought I was stupid. I don’t know. I didn’t understand.”
 3. “If anyone bothers you, just ignore them.”

- MAD GAB ANSWERS:
1. Can you keep a secret?
 2. We don’t stand a chance.
 3. May the force be with you.
 4. Get in single file!
 5. A dark rain cloud.