

Word Games from *Miss Alaineus*

Name Nouns

All names are proper nouns, but in *Miss Alaineus*, all the characters have names that are also objects: Sage, Star(r), Forest, Cliff, Mrs. Page. Try the following activities:

- Make a list of nouns that are both a “person” and a “thing.”
- Use these “noun names” in a sentence or two, like Sage does in the story.

For example:

- Forest is not a *thicket of trees*. Forest is a boy. A sick boy.
- I called my best friend, Starr, who is not a *luminous celestial object seen as a point of light in the sky*.
- My mom called Mrs. Page, who is not a *single side of a printed sheet of paper usually found bound in a book*.

OR

- Make up definitions for common objects everyone knows, just as Sage does for *tree* and *automobile*. Try to make the definitions sound like those in a dictionary.

Miscellaneous -isms

Write a list of words or phrases that anyone in the group has mistaken. Ask relatives, friends, and neighbors for their word tangles. Then make pictures of the most amusing mistakes and put them together in a book.



Mrs. Page's Extra Credit Assignment

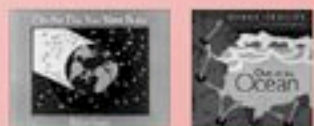
Read the directions on the dedication page of *Miss Alaineus* and then read Sage's twenty-six sidebar sentences. Pose this question: Can you complain about your day using three words that begin with the same letter? Be inventive, crazy, experimental. Stretch the truth, but above all—complain! (Make this a contest. Work through the alphabet with daily requests for the best complaint.)



Debra Frasier was tucking her nine-year-old daughter into bed one night when her daughter said, “Mom, today I figured out that *miscellaneous* is not a person.” This incident became the seed for *Miss Alaineus: A Vocabulary Disaster*. Debra also wanted to explore the theme of a mistake carrying a person to a new discovery, as that is what so often happens to her.

Debra is the author and illustrator of the modern classic *On the Day You Were Born*, winner of the Parents' Choice Gold Award, as well as *Out of the Ocean*, the award-winning story and picture glossary about finding things at the edge of the sea.

For more ideas about how to use Debra Frasier's books, visit www.frasierbooks.com



Below you'll find all twenty-eight of the defined words included in *Miss Alaineus: A Vocabulary Disaster*.

Reprint this page enough times to provide at least one word OR definition to each participant. Cut words and definitions into separate slips. Mix them up and have each person secretly choose one slip. Set a time limit and have each participant who has a word pair up with the participant having the proper definition for that word. (Keep it short and quick—maybe three minutes.) When a pair is made, the two participants should sit at once. When all words are reunited with their meanings, have each team read its word and definition. (Expect some chaos OR propose a no-talking-only-reading rule while searching.)

catastrophe	a momentous tragedy
disaster	an event bringing great misfortune
triumph	a true success
daunted	discouraged or disheartened
calla	a cup-shaped lily growing in the Tropics
forest	a thicket of trees
star (r)	a luminous celestial object seen as a point of light in the sky
(Mrs.) page	a single side of a printed sheet of paper usually found bound in a book
pride	an unduly high opinion of oneself
goeth	Old English for "to go"
ancestor	an ancient relative long dead
museum	a building for exhibiting objects about art or history or science
cliff	a high, steep face of rock
dinosaur	a prehistoric, extinct reptile, often huge
grinned	to draw back the lips and bare the teeth, as in a very wide smile
sage	one who shows wisdom, experience, judgment
miscellaneous	1. consisting of various kinds or qualities 2. a collection of unrelated objects
humbled	aware of one's shortcomings, modest, meek
devastated	wasted, ravaged
ruined	destroyed
finished	brought to an end
gold	a bright yellow precious metal of great value
mistake	something done, said, or thought in the wrong way
impossible	not capable of happening
knew	to apprehend with certainty
wildly	in a manner lacking all restraint
astonishment	great shock and amazement
mysterious	full of mystery, hard to explain or understand