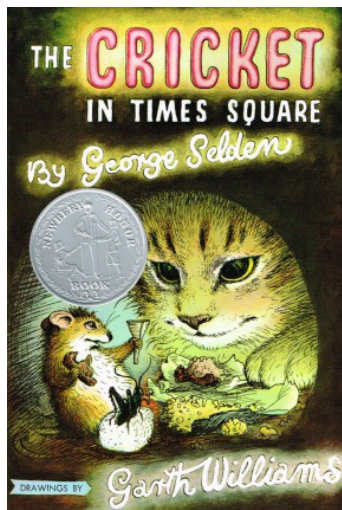


The Cricket In Times Square



By

George Selden

A Novel Study
by Joel Michel Reed

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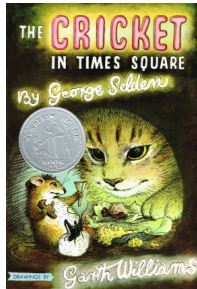


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About the author: Joel Reed has over 50 published novel studies and is the co-author of three novels. For more information on his work and literature, please visit the websites www.reedpublications.org and www.novelstudies.org.

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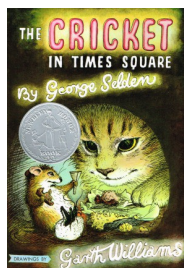
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Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on 2 or 3 chapters and is comprised of five of the following different activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language Activities
- Extension Activities

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters . . . respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking. Students will also be expected to provide clear answers to questions and well-constructed explanations. It is critical as well that students be able to relate events and the feelings of characters to their own lives and experiences and describe their own interpretation of a particular passage.

A strength of the unit is that students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A **portfolio cover** is included (p.7) so that students may organize their work and keep it all in one place. A **Student Checklist** is also included (p.6) so that a record of completed work may be recorded.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words / phrases
2. Listing synonyms/antonyms
3. Identifying / creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *foreshadowing*.
7. Identify *personification*
8. Use of singular / plural nouns
9. Listing compound words
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Listing homonyms
13. Identify/create *similes*
14. Identify *anagrams*

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Identify *cliffhangers*
4. Identify the climax of the novel.

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Relating personal experiences

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Write a description of personal feelings
6. Write a book review
7. Complete an Observation Sheet

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip

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Synopsis

Tucker is a streetwise city mouse. He thought he'd seen it all. But he's never met a cricket before, which really isn't surprising, because along with his friend Harry Cat, Tucker lives in the very heart of New York City – the Times Square subway station. Chester Cricket never intended to leave his Connecticut meadow. He'd be there still if he hadn't followed the entrancing aroma of liverwurst right into someone's picnic basket. Now, like any tourist in the city, he wants to look around. And he could not have found two better guides – and friends – than Tucker and Harry. But Chester has a hidden talent and no one, not even Chester himself, realizes that the little country cricket may just be able to teach even the toughest New Yorkers a thing or two.

A complete synopsis and other helpful reviews can be found on the following website:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Cricket_In_Times_Square

Author Biography

George Selden

George Selden Thompson (May 14, 1929 – December 5, 1989) was an American author, who wrote under the pseudonym **Terry Andrews**. He is best known for his 1961 book *The Cricket In Times Square*, which received a *Lewis Carroll Shelf Award* in 1963 and a *Newbery Honor*.

Born in Hartford, Connecticut, Thompson was educated at the Loomis School, and graduated from there in 1947. He attended Yale University, where he joined the Elizabethan Club and the literary magazine, and graduated with a B.A. in 1951. He also attended Columbia University for three summers. After Yale, he studied for a year in Rome on a Fulbright Scholarship from 1951 and 1952.

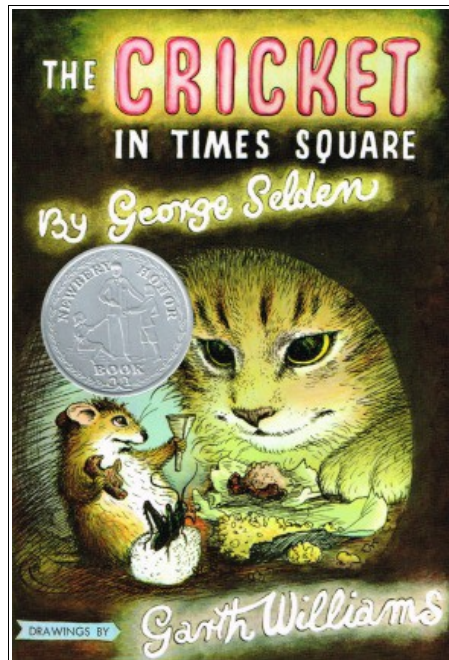
In 1974, under the pseudonym of Terry Andrews, Selden wrote the novel *The Story of Harold*, the story of friendships, and mentoring of a lonely child. It could be construed as somewhat autobiographical in the sense the author writes of a character who writes children's books. The relationship to the boy and also the author's own feelings regarding his own existence are the main keys in this novel.

Selden remained unmarried; a resident of Greenwich Village in New York City, he died there at age 60 from a gastrointestinal hemorrhage.

Biography courtesy of Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Selden_\(author\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Selden_(author))



The Cricket In Times Square

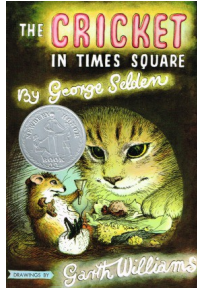


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Name: _____

The Cricket In Times Square

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Chapters 1-2
Tucker / Mario



Before you read the chapter:

Briefly predict what you believe the plot-line of *The Cricket In Times Square* will be about.



Vocabulary:

Write a list of three different antonyms* for each of the following words.

Word	Antonym 1	Antonym 2	Antonym 3
Whisper			
Friend			
Crawl			
Afraid			
Little			

* A word or phrase that means the opposite of another word.

Questions

1. Describe the **setting** of the story as Chapter One begins.

2. Where does Tucker Mouse live?

3. What was the strange noise that Tucker and Mario heard in the subway station?

--

4. How did Mario's mother and father react to Mario's pet cricket?

5. Briefly describe how to tell the temperature using a cricket.

6. Using resources from your school library or the Internet research what Crickets eat.



Language Activity

A. Many authors seem to enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here's an example of an alliteration: “. . . **g**rouching, **g**rouching, **g**rumbling, **g**ripping about something or other.”

Using your imagination, create your own examples of **alliteration** using three out of the five following topics. Each example must contain a minimum of three words.

A cricket chirping.	
A mouse squeaking.	
A Cat purring.	

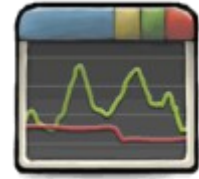
B. Lions and Tigers and Bears, Oh My!

There are seemingly endless varieties of animals that have lived in our world, and have been the inspiration for countless writers, adventurers and even film-makers. Such animals include; lions, tigers, bears, dogs, sheep, monkeys, elephants, giraffes, pigs, mice, kangaroos, deer, hippopotamus, horses, buffalo, rhinoceros, lizards, and even insects!



Your task is to create an information card featuring your favourite animal. Your card will resemble a sports card (i.e. baseball, football, hockey...). The front of the card will feature an appropriate picture of the animal of your choosing, and the back at least four fascinating facts you have researched from sources in your school library or on the Internet.

C. Chapter Three contained an important literary devices called a **cliffhanger**. A cliffhanger usually occurs at the end of a chapter when the author leaves the reader in suspense. How is this true in Chapter Three? Why do you think the author ended the chapter this way?



D. The bombardier beetle is undoubtedly one of the most fascinating creatures found in the insect world. One of the amazing features of the bombardier beetle is their unique defence mechanism. This tiny creature is capable of firing a series of small carefully timed explosions at it's prey by mixing together two chemicals (catalases and peroxidases) that are stored separately inside it's body.



Using resources from your school library or the Internet research a completely different kind of insect and list at least three fascinating facts about the insect you selected.

Extension Activity

Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A storyboard can describe one scene – or the entire novel.

Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first two chapters of *The Cricket In Times Square*. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.



1	2
3	4
5	6