Paperboy

By

Vince Vawter

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed
Paperboy
By Vince Vawter

Table of Contents

Suggestions and Expectations ............................................. 3
List of Skills ............................................................................. 4
Synopsis / Author Biography ...................................................... 5
Student Checklist ..................................................................... 6
Reproducible Student Booklet .................................................... 7
Answer Key ............................................................................. 61

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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 two chapters of Paperboy 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.

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include speech impediments (stuttering), race relations, friendship and trust, loyalty, personal growth and responsibility, heroism and courage.
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**List of Skills**

**Vocabulary Development**

1. Locating descriptive words / phrases  
2. Listing synonyms/homonyms  
3. Identifying / creating *alliteration*  
4. Use of capitals and punctuation  
5. Identifying syllables  
6. Identify *personification*.  
7. Identify *anagrams*  
8. Listing compound words  
9. Identifying parts of speech  
10. Identify/create *similes*  
11. Identification of root words  

**Setting Activities**

1. Summarize the details of a setting

**Plot Activities**

1. Complete a *timeline* of events  
2. Identify conflict in the story  
3. Complete Five W's Chart  
4. Identify *cliffhangers*  
5. Identify the climax of the novel.  
6. Complete a Story Pyramid

**Character Activities**

1. Determine character traits  
2. Identify the protagonist/antagonist  
3. Relating personal experiences  
4. Compare characters

**Creative and Critical Thinking**

1. Research  
2. Write a newspaper story  
3. Participate in a talk show  
4. Conduct an interview  
5. Create a poem  
6. Write a description of personal feelings  
7. Write a book review  
8. Complete an Observation Chart  
9. Complete a KWS Chart  
10. Create a friendly letter.

**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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*By Vince Vawter*

**Synopsis**

Little Man throws the meanest fastball in town. But talking is a whole different ball game. He can barely say a word without stuttering – not even his own name. So when he takes over his best friend's paper route for the month of July, he's not exactly looking forward to interacting with the customers. But it's the neighborhood junkman, a bully and thief, who stirs up real trouble in Little Man's life. [The Publisher]

Reminiscent of *To Kill a Mockingbird* – Booklist

*Paperboy* is also a Newbery Honor Book

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**Author Biography**

*Vince Vawter*

Vince Vawter, a native of Memphis, retired after a forty-year career in newspapers, most recently as the president and publisher of the *Evansville Courier and Press* in Indiana. He lives with his wife in Louisville, Tennessee, on a small farm in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains. His debut novel *Paperboy* received a Newbery Medal Honor in 2014.

[Courtesy of the publisher]
Paperboy
By Vince Vawter

Student Checklist

Student Name: ____________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade/Level</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
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Paperboy

By Vince Vawter

Name:
Before you read the chapters:

The protagonist in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of Paperboy is Little Man, an eleven-year-old boy with a serious stutter which is complicating his life like you wouldn't believe. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. What do you think makes for an especially interesting protagonist?

Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>humongous</th>
<th>blasphemy</th>
<th>concrete</th>
<th>rehearse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>decent</td>
<td>substitute</td>
<td>concentrate</td>
<td>schedule</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Little Man really had to settle his mind and ___________ before tackling a difficult word.

2. We are going to ___________ our parts in the play at recess time.

3. We had a ___________ teacher for the afternoon.

4. Does anybody here have a copy of the bus ___________?

5. The boys found a ___________ grandfather frog down by the pond.

6. Angela was very glad she was wearing a bicycle helmet when she took a spill onto the ___________ sidewalk.

7. Our neighbor was so upset he uttered a loud ___________ for all to hear.

8. That was mighty ___________ of Charlie to loan you his baseball glove.
Questions

1. What is the **setting** of the story?

2. What strategy is mentioned in Chapter One which helps Little Man say a difficult word?

3. What clue is there in the story which indicates that Little Man's family is fairly well-off?

4. When it came to playing ball, Little Man's best friend was ____________.

5. To practice his speech drills Little Man decided to say a hard word just before he threw a paper on a porch. True or False

6. Little Man soon begins to suspect that Mrs. Worthington has a serious problem. Predict what you think this problem might be.

7. How was Mrs. Worthington's behavior troubling to Little Man?
**Language Activities**

**A. Anagrams**

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word *WAS* can also form the word *SAW*. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:

a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in the first two chapters of *Paperboy*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Anagram</th>
<th>Clue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>finger</td>
<td>Edge.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>breath</td>
<td>One who enjoys the tub.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>spread</td>
<td>Curtains.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>clean</td>
<td>A small spear.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parts</td>
<td>Snares.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>throw</td>
<td>Value.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>nose</td>
<td>Vast periods of time.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Now find two additional words from the first two chapters which have interesting anagrams to see if you can stump a classmate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Anagram</th>
<th>Clue</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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**Good to Know ~ Memphis, Tennessee**

The setting of the novel is in **Memphis, Tennessee** in 1959. With a current population of over 650,000 people it is the largest city in Tennessee and the largest city on the Mississippi River. It was first settled over a thousand years ago by people of the Mississippian Culture. European explorers arrived in the 16th Century. Sadly, during the early 1800s the city became a major slave market. In the 20th Century, Memphis developed into the world's largest spot cotton market and the world's largest hardwood lumber market. Many musicians including Aretha Franklin, Johnny Cash and Elvis Presley got their start in Memphis.
B. Even Shakespeare liked to write Quatrain Poems.

The *quatrain* is a popular form of rhymed verse. It is a poem of four lines, is usually light and can be humorous. The following famous quatrain was written by the great writer, William Shakespeare, and is taken from *Sonnet 18*.

*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?*

*Thou art more lovely and more temperate:*

*Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,*

*And summer's lease hath all too short a date.*

Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A – B – A – B**. Other rhyming schemes include: AABB, AAAA, AABA, ABBA, ABBB, and AAAB.

Your task is to write your own quatrain poem. You may choose a rhyming scheme that fits with your own personal creation. The theme should have something to do with the themes established in the first two chapters of our novel.

**The Quatrain Poem**

Now create your own Quatrain Poem. Your poem must follow the format of a quatrain poem described above (and must rhyme).

**Title:** _______________________________________________
C. Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here’s one such example: from Chapter Two: … *made the ice cubes clink.*

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The call of a blue jay.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A beautiful sunset.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your choice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter One is: *The one (knock) that sounds like Shave and a Haircut Two Bits.*

~ What is being compared in this example?

Invent your own **similes** comparing the following items with something from your own imagination:

a) a hard-thrown baseball

b) the sound of a race car

c) your choice
Extension Activity

Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A storyboard can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel. Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first two chapters of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.