

UNIT OVERVIEW

Something Fishy at Macdonald Hall

OVERVIEW

This novel study provides teachers with a highly structured format for teaching language arts, as students develop a love for reading longer materials, like novels. Various areas such as reading comprehension, vocabulary development, spelling, grammar, and writing are all entwined in this integrated approach, eliminating the need for teaching these skills separately. Activities are divided into three main sections:

1) Chapter Questions

For each chapter, students answer a thorough set of questions requiring answers in complete sentences. Reading comprehension is key as students must read and understand the *entire* book, in order to answer the questions. (One major strength of the novel study approach is that students *must understand* the novel or they will be unable to do the required assignments.)

2) Vocabulary and Language

Each chapter also includes activities dealing with such things as word meanings, use of the dictionary, spelling, parts of speech, syllables, antonyms/synonyms, punctuation and grammar.

3) Writing and Creativity

In this section, students apply what they have learned about language and grammar skills to write more effectively. Creative writing is the focus of this less-structured segment, allowing teachers more opportunity to incorporate their own ideas into developing creative writing skills. A puzzle activity is incorporated into this section to add more variety to the lessons.

STORY SUMMARY

Something Fishy at Macdonald Hall

Edward, Boots O'Neal's younger brother, has just enrolled at Macdonald Hall. Edward tells Bruno that they're old men who are over the hill.

Mr Sturgeon, the Headmaster of Macdonald Hall, is considering resigning. He feels that there are no more challenges left. In addition to this "no brain" situation, Mr. Sturgeon also has a medical condition - an ingrown toenail.

A series of escapades captures everyone's attention: the dressing of Sir John A. Macdonald's statue in a scuba suit; the Kitchen Soap-O-Rama; the blue-dyed swimming pool; apples on oak trees; loaded toasters; water balloons; class-change clocks altered; detour signs on Highway 48; underwear on a flag pole; the stuffing of the cannon with a human mannequin.

Naturally, Bruno and Boots are the logical suspects. While trying to apprehend the "Phantom", the boys are caught out after curfew. They are in the Headmaster's office and are about to be expelled when the Phantom strikes again - firecrackers in the waffle mix. The boys are exonerated. A plan to capture the Phantom succeeds and the practical joker is unmasked - it's Mrs. Sturgeon, the Headmaster's wife. She wanted to give him a purpose in life and a reason to stay at Macdonald Hall.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Something Fishy at Macdonald Hall

Gordon Korman

Gordon Korman was born on October 23, 1963 in Montreal, Quebec. He received a B. F. A. in 1985 from New York University. His memberships include: Writers Union of Canada; Canadian Society of Authors, Illustrators and Performers; Canadian Authors Association; and the Society of Children's Book Writers. His writings have won many awards, among which are the Air Canada Award, the Children's Choice Award, the International Reading Association 1986, and the American Library Association Best Book Award for Young Adults 1990.

His first book, "This Can't Be Happening at Macdonald Hall", was written as a seventh-grade English assignment. By the time he entered high school, Mr. Korman was a best-selling author. His books have been inspired by things that have happened in his own life, and these life experiences are the support guidelines for his writings. His books have slapstick humour, many settings and fun-filled escapades. There are highly energetic characters and authority figures to break up the fun. Many of his books are written for pre-adolescents and adolescents to show that kids' concerns are important. Everywhere he goes, he collects pieces of information that are stored for future books. Books written by Gordon Korman include:

This Can't Be Happening at Macdonald Hall, 1977.
Go Jump in the Pool!, 1979.
Beware the Fish!, 1980.
Who is Bugs Potter?, 1980.
I Want to Go Home, 1981.
Our Man Weston, 1982.
The War with Mr. Wizzle, 1982.
Bugs Potter: Live at Nickaninny, 1983.
No Coins, Please, 1984.
Don't Care High, 1985.
Son of Interflux, 1986.
A Semester in the Life of a Garbage Bag, 1987.
The Zucchini Warriors, 1988.
Radio Fifth Grade, 1989.
Losing Joe's Place, 1990.
Something Fishy at Macdonald Hall, 1991.
The Twinkie Squad, 1992.
The Toilet Paper Tigers, 1993.
Why Did the Underwear Cross the Road?, 1994.
The Chicken Doesn't Skate, 1996.
Save Macdonald Hall, 1996.
The 6th Grade Nickname Game, 1997.
Liar, Liar, Pants on Fire, 1997.

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CHAPTERS 1, 2

Questions

A) Illustrate your answers to the following:

1. One assignment Bruno and Boots had for misbehaving.

4. What Edward was playing for the girls.

2. What Mr. Sturgeon needed to walk.

5. Mr. Sturgeon's medical problem.

3. What Sir John A. Macdonald was wearing.

6. What Wilbur was eating for breakfast.

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CHAPTERS 3, 4

Questions

A) Write short answers to the following questions. Skim the chapters to find the answers.

- What kitchen helpers had to wear. _____
- What was found on the Formica countertop. _____
- Mark's room number. _____
- Mark's room mate. _____
- What Elmer sent to Marylou. _____
- What Elmer considered sending her. _____
- How Elmer signed the note. _____
- Mrs. Sturgeon's first name. _____
- Name of the swim coach. _____
- What was found on the springboard. _____
- What was found on the ground by the statue. _____
- Name of the gym teacher. _____
- What you do to make Rex obedient. _____
- What was put in the water of the pool. _____
- What Rex is short for. _____

B) What do you think the number 57 means?



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CHAPTERS 5, 6

Questions



A) Describe what happened to Cathy as she started to climb the drainpipe.

B) Why does Cathy say, "Starting tomorrow, we're waitresses!"?

C) Where did Boots find his brother, Edward, when he snuck out of town?

D) What did Mom promise if Edward flunked out?



CHAPTERS 5, 6

Vocabulary And Language



A) Capitalize and punctuate the following sentences. Use your book if necessary.

1. it contained cold cuts a slab of lasagna salisbury steak potato chips an assortment of cookies and cupcakes and almost half of a lemon meringue pie
2. were going to take this lean mean killing machine and turn him into a chubby slow happy paunchy pooch

B) Commas are used to separate things in a series. For Example: Wild animals are deer, bear, and moose. Complete the following sentences. Don't forget the commas!

1. Four sports are _____.
2. Five fish are _____.
3. Seven classmates are _____.



CHAPTERS 9, 10

Writing And Creativity



A) Cathy did a map showing all the defences and boobytraps. Sketch what you think the map looked like.



CHAPTER 21

Questions



A) Indicate whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F):

- ___ 1. Mr. Sturgeon went to Ottawa General Hospital for the operation.
- ___ 2. The operation was for an ingrown toenail.
- ___ 3. Surgery was scheduled for eight o'clock in the morning.
- ___ 4. Mr. Sturgeon was in a semi-private room.
- ___ 5. Bruno and Boots visited him in the hospital.
- ___ 6. The hospital was next to Macdonald Hall.
- ___ 7. Mr. Sturgeon was to take a month off after the operation.
- ___ 8. Students were waiting in the lobby.
- ___ 9. Pete, Larry, Mark, and Wilbur pretended to be doctors.
- ___ 10. Edward sped into the room on a wheelchair.
- ___ 11. Sidney sped into the room on a wheelchair.
- ___ 12. Cathy and Diane pretended to be nurses.
- ___ 13. Miss Scrimmage came to visit Mr. Sturgeon.
- ___ 14. Elmer and Marylou did not visit Mr. Sturgeon.
- ___ 15. The "Student Express" is the name of the school newspaper.
- ___ 16. Sidney crashed into the wall with the wheelchair.
- ___ 17. Elmer belonged to the Music-by-Mail record club.
- ___ 18. Mark Davies held a camcorder under Mr. Sturgeon's nose.
- ___ 19. The newspaper headlines read "Phantom Strikes Again".
- ___ 20. Everyone knew the identity of the Phantom.
- ___ 21. The boys kept silent about the identity of the Phantom.
- ___ 22. The boys kept silent out of respect for Mr. Sturgeon.
- ___ 23. The boys kept silent because no one would believe them.
- ___ 24. I enjoyed reading this novel.
- ___ 25. I intend to read more novels by Gordon Korman.

C) **WORDSEARCH** - Mr. Wong's class was studying "Mineral Deposits Throughout the World". Find the rocks and minerals in the wordsearch puzzle. Names may be found running horizontally, vertically and diagonally. No names are backwards.

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

sandstone
 obsidian
 onyx
 quartz
 diamond
 nickel
 beryl
 limestone

jasper
 iron
 mercury
 tin
 zinc
 gold
 granite
 flint

emerald
 galena
 garnet
 halite
 asbestos
 basalt
 silver
 slate

gneiss
 cobalt
 copper
 opal
 azurite
 amethyst
 mica
 carbon

ANSWER KEY

15, 16 - Questions

at Macdonald Hall would just be another third-rate school.
 to expel Bruno and Boots. He placed his trust in the boys and he felt he lied to them.
 somebody set off firecrackers in the waffle mix at breakfast. It happened when Bruno and Boots were with Mr. Sturgeon, proving that they were not the Phantom. (A feather was also present.)
 to observe the curfew.
 The crest on the T-shirt is the insignia of the Royal Geophysical Society.
 Elmer - trying to make himself more glamorous to Marylou; has access to feathers; made up a fake boyfriend so he would be the suspect, rather than Elmer; probably has T-shirt from R.G.S.
 Howard - has ability; has motive; sneaks out at night.
 Cathy and Diane - boobytrapped the orchard.
 Mark - writes articles about the Phantom; was on the scene when Bruno and Boots were caught. He was glad he was staying. (She also knew her plan as the Phantom had succeeded.)

15, 16 - Vocabulary and Language

were 2. was 3. is 4. am 5. seems 6. are
 happy, happier, happiest - big, bigger, biggest - crazy, crazier, craziest - brilliant, more brilliant, most brilliant - stubborn, more stubborn, most stubborn - quick, quicker, quickest - funny, funnier, funniest - dumb, dumber, dumbest - promising, more promising, most promising.
 slipping, sincerely, expelled, dismissed, raced, humbly, smiling, reassured, retiring, thoughtfully.
 dawn 2. lousy 3. terrible 4. good

15, 16 - Writing And Creativity

response. For example: "Phantom Still On The Loose", "Bruno And Boots Innocent".
 response. For example: Collection of maggots, snake skins from around the world.
 wordsearch - student response.