



UNIT OVERVIEW

My Teacher is an Alien *A Novel Study*



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, allonyms/synonyms, syllables, 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.

EVALUATION

Teachers can use the marking format provided or devise their own. Certain assignments, especially in the Vocabulary and Language section are well suited to marking by students. However, it is important teachers mark assignments requiring answers in complete sentences to monitor student progress in this crucial area.

*** Note ***

As you can see, due to space considerations, the answers have not been included. (I suppose it is only fair that if students have to read the book, so must the teachers)

READING STRATEGIES

A variety of reading approaches seems to work best. One proven method is for the teacher to read the book outloud to the entire class the first time through stopping after a chapter or two. In answering the questions, students will essentially be required to reread the chapter on their own. Not only does this "outloud" method insure that students are read to daily, but it also helps all students to understand the book regardless of reading level.

Having students read sections silently by themselves, outloud with partners or in small groups are all possible variations that will help keep student interest high.

***** Note *****

One way to gain a measure of the effectiveness of the novel study and to gauge student interest is to instruct students *not* to read ahead on their own. Basic reverse psychology dictates that students will invariably be slouching down into their desks to sneak in a chapter while the teacher knowingly turns a blind eye.

ASSIGNMENTS

With the assignments, teachers can photocopy entire booklets for each student or only the portions that the teacher wishes to use. One possible method of reducing this large amount of photocopying is to have students write down chapter questions and answers in their notebooks.

***** Note *****

If your school uses passwords for the photocopier and you are worried about the photocopy police slapping your wrists for extreme overuse, simply bribe the secretary into giving you the password for the grade two teacher and "have some fun".

Teachers are free to pick and choose assignments as they see fit as well as adding in any optional lessons they develop. (The main difficulty with this is that it alters the marking totals)

LIBRARY RESEARCH ASSIGNMENTS

In the unit, there are two short assignments requiring research materials - PICCOLO POWER and PHILLIP SOUSA. Teachers may send students to the library alone or in pairs to obtain necessary information to answer the questions. Teachers wishing to avoid the "conundrum" of going to the library could bring the encyclopedia into the class or simply photocopy the pertinent pages for each student.

CLASS SETS OF NOVELS - ORDERING

One way to order the books at a discounted price is to order directly from the publisher (Pocket Books) if your school board has an account set up. (Cover price is \$4.99 for "My Teacher is an Alien") Individual teachers receive no discount and must order through the board.

Rainbow Horizons Publishing (1-800-663-3609) is also selling the novels at a reduced price of \$4.00 per book or a saving of 20% off of cover price. (Plus \$5.00 per order for shipping) Since there are books always on hand, delivery will be prompt.

Chapter 5 - HOW STRONG IS AN ALIEN'S NOSE?

1. Did Susan recover her note in Broxholm's house? _____
2. Why? _____
3. Who did Susan decide to tell regarding her discovery at Mr. Smith's house?

4. On page 28, Susan says her mother tends to be a bit of a "fusser". Explain what Susan means by this.

5. Why was Dr. Bleekman upset with Ms. Schwartz?

6. How did Dr. Bleekman find out Mrs. Schwartz was leaving?

7. Why didn't Susan pass Pete a note asking him to meet her on the playground at recess?



