

UNIT OVERVIEW

Skinnybones 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, antonyms/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.

READING STRATEGIES

A variety of reading approaches seems to work best. One proven method is for the teacher to read the book out loud 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 “out loud” method ensure 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, out loud 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.

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.)

CHAPTERS 1, 2

Questions

Chapter 1

1. Why would Fluffy be dead if she didn't eat Kitty Fritters?

2. For what reason was Kitty Fritters chosen as the cat's food?

3. Who treated her cat like a human being?

4. Why was Alex writing a story about cat food?

5. As he was filling out his entry blank, what caused a major problem for Alex?

6. How did Alex get caught in the lie?

7. Explain this phrase: "If you were Pinocchio, right now we'd have enough firewood to last the winter."

8. Why was Fluffy so puffy?

CHAPTERS 3, 4

Vocabulary and Language

1. Use your dictionary to **FIND THE MEANINGS** of these words.

- a) ignore _____
b) fortunate _____
c) promenade _____
d) ceremony _____
e) embarrass _____
f) applause _____

2. In each group of words below, **ONE WORD DOES NOT BELONG**. Draw a **line** under the word that does not belong.

- | | | | | |
|----|------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| a) | biggest | baseball | heaviest | largest |
| b) | jerk | fool | dance | nitwit |
| c) | ceremony | speaker | announcer | chairman |
| d) | unhappy | excited | nervous | friend |
| e) | improved | growing | teacher | larger |
| f) | baseball | trophy | uniform | cap |
| g) | clapping | applause | award | whistling |
| h) | microphone | kitten | computer | typewriter |
| i) | uniform | Munchkin | gremlin | leprechaun |
| j) | stomach | ears | head | shrink |

CHAPTERS 5, 6

Writing and Creativity

1. Write a **LANTERN POEM**.

A lantern poem is a 5-line, syllable poem that is shaped like a Japanese lantern. It is written in this pattern:

Line 1: one syllable _____
Line 2: two syllables _____
Line 3: three syllables _____
Line 4: four syllables _____
Line 5: one syllable _____

2. Finish each sentence with the **REASONS**.

a) Alex knows he's not the worst player on the team because:

b) Mrs. Frankovitch says T.J. Stoner brags a lot because:

c) Alex said he couldn't use his arm for pitching because:

d) T.J. told Alex if he wasn't at the baseball field after school it would be because:

e) Alex wanted Mrs. Grayson to give him a job to do because:

f) When T.J. wanted to flip a coin, Alex said he couldn't because:

g) When T.J. looked at Alex, Alex pretended to tie his shoe because:

h) Alex thought his arm was a "goner" because:

5. **MAKE A DIAGRAM (picture)** showing a baseball diamond. Label all nine playing positions.

6. **DESIGN A BOOKMARK** to be used with this book.

CHAPTERS 7, 8

Writing and Creativity

1. Make an **ACROSTIC POEM** to tell what the characters are like, using the first letter in their names as the first letter in your character word.

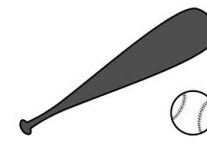
A _____
L _____
E _____
X _____

B _____
R _____
I _____
A _____
N _____

2. **FACT OR OPINION** Some of the following sentences are statements of FACT. Some are statements of OPINION. Write "F" for FACT and "O" for OPINION.

- _____ Alex's uniform was not very classy.
- _____ Baseball caps are the greatest invention of all time.
- _____ Mr. Peoples made Alex look like a grapefruit.
- _____ Mr. Peoples was feeling cranky when he cut Alex's hair.
- _____ There was a big round bald spot behind Alex's ear.
- _____ Alex thought he was the best bunter in Little League.
- _____ "Bunting's for sissies," said T.J.
- _____ There was a game scheduled for Saturday.
- _____ "Wolfman Meets the Super Heroes" was on T.V. on Saturday.
- _____ This was going to be the worst day of Alex's life.

4. **BASEBALL RESEARCH**: Read the article and answer each of the following questions with a complete sentence.



Baseball probably began in the United States about 1850. It spread throughout the world. Today, it is a major sport in Canada, Italy, Japan, Taiwan, the Netherlands, South Africa, and South America.

Baseball is played with 9 or 10 players. Two teams take turns at bat or in the field. A pitcher throws a baseball toward a player of the team at bat. The batter tries to hit the ball with a bat and drive it out of reach of the players on the field. The players advance around the field's four bases. When reaching first, second, third, and home plates, the player scores a run. The team that scores the most runs wins the game.

Players: pitcher, catcher, first baseman, second baseman, third baseman, left fielder, right fielder, center fielder, and shortstop. In some leagues, a tenth player is added. This person is called the designated hitter or "D.H." and bats in place of the pitcher. The designate hitter does not play on the field.

Equipment: baseball (small round ball), wooden bat, gloves, spiked shoes, helmet, and catcher's face guard and chest pads.

Field: infield, outfield, foul territory. The bases are on the edge of the infield. The outfield is the space after the bases. The foul territory is the area outside the other two territories.

How to Play: One turn at bat is called an inning. There are nine innings. Each player has three strikes, or chances, to hit the ball when it is pitched. If no one catches the ball when it is hit, the batter begins to run to first base. If the ball is caught, the batter is out. Pitches that are not strikes are called balls. If a batter has four balls, he may go to first base.

Tag-Up On a Fly Ball: If a person hits the ball into the outfield and it is caught by a fielder, a person on base must go back to the base they started from and "tag-up" before they can start running.

3. **CHARACTER PROFILE**: Draw an outline of each character in the circle inside each box. Using the words from the bottom box, place the correct adjectives on the lines under the picture in each box. There will be 3 adjectives for each character.

ALEX

T.J.

MRS. GRAYSON

FLUFFY

BRIAN

umpire	friend	kind	buddy	comedian
athlete	"midget"	feline	glutton	nauseated
fair	bunter	teacher	braggart	popular

3. CROSSWORD PUZZLE



announcer	microphone	square dance
cereal box	Most Improved Player	stretch
coach	Mrs. Hurley	summer
Frankovitch	Randy Tubbs	toad sucker
large	shrink	tuba
Luckv Charms Guv	small	uniforms

Across

- The man calling out the awards.
- Alex's last name.
- The size of uniform that Alex wanted.
- What is used to make voices louder.
- The picture Alex brought to school in Kindergarten.
- What Randy had done to Alex's uniform.
- The opposite of winter.
- The size of uniform that Alex got.

Down

- The baseball award that Alex received.
- Where Alex found the picture of the leprechaun.
- The name T.J. called Alex in Chapter 3.
- What Alex would rather do than play baseball.
- The biggest kid on the baseball team.
- The leader of the Little League baseball team.
- Alex got sent to the office for wearing this on his head.
- What Alex hated most about baseball.
- What would happen to the uniform when it was washed.
- Alex's Kindergarten teacher.

4. Circle the **SUFFIX** in each of these words. Clue: Suffixes are added to the ends of words.

- a) screeched e) graduation i) interested m) bunted q) yelling
- b) interviewed f) naturally j) screamed n) streaking r) playing
- c) cancelled g) smiled k) saying o) loudly s) guys
- d) watched h) closely l) warming p) hollered t) turning

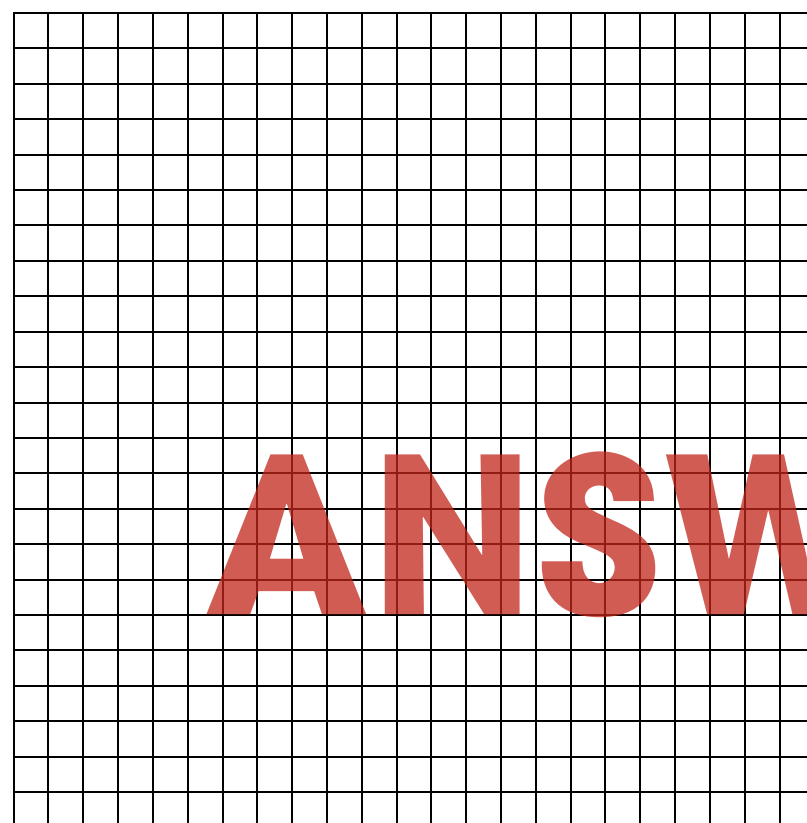
5. Circle the **PREFIX** in each of these words. Clue: Prefixes are added to the fronts of root words.

- a) deserve d) become g) around j) return m) disbelief
- b) encourage e) unfortunate h) before k) remember n) remind
- c) retrieve f) infield i) almost l) behind o) mistake

6. **WORD SCRAMBLE:** Make a word scramble using the following words. Make sure the words only connect at one place. The words may only go **down** or **across**.

- diamond
- baseball
- filming
- doomed
- Stoner
- plate
- God
- strike
- graduation
- umpire
- embarrass
- bleachers
- Alex
- Frankovitch
- coach
- glove

WORD SCRAMBLE



ANSWER KEY

28: Chapters 7, 8 Vocabulary & Language:

a) circled b) embarrassing c) idiot d) experiment e) uniform f) sponsored g) bunter h) league i) puke j) scheduled k) announcement l) attention m) ignore n) lame o) jumped p) cornflakes q) calmly r) napkin s) Mr. Peoples t) Alex u) T.J. Stoner v) Alex's mother w) Mrs. Grayson

29: Chapters 7, 8 Vocabulary & Language:

a) Alex's mother b) Alex's dad c) Alex's Coach d) T.J. Stoner e) Alex f) games g) bugs h) players i) team's j) night's k) mops l) parents m) cereals n) napkins o) friend's

30: Chapters 7, 8 Writing & Creativity:

a) Answers will vary. b) O c) O d) F e) F f) O g) O h) F i) F j) O

31: Chapters 7, 8 Writing & Creativity:

a) Answers will vary. b) Answers will vary.

32: Chapters 7, 8 Writing & Creativity:

a) Answers will vary.

33: Chapters 9, 10 Questions:

Chapter 9. 1. The bleachers were packed with people and Channel Six news was at the game. **2.** 124 **3.** 124 **4.** a) e) the people in the bleachers go home. b) Make the cameraman go home. c) Send a lightning bolt. Close enough to see everyone away but far enough away that no one got hurt. **5.** Caught a pop fly and caught a grounder.
Chapter 10. 1. He couldn't spit because he was too nervous. **2.** He went to the bench and cried. **3.** Because no one even tried hitting the ball. **4.** The pitcher got mad and told him to stop. **5.** a) 1. He put his glove on top of his head so the ball wouldn't hurt him and the ball landed in the glove and then fell on the ground. b) He interfered with the play at base. **6.** Booga, Booga!

34: Chapters 9, 10 Vocabulary & Language:

a) a roofless section of seats in tiers b) to make a harsh, shrill cry or sound c) a sudden overwhelming fear d) justworthiness in a person or thing e) an effect or event that surpasses all known human powers f) a person selected to rule on the plays of a game g) having good fortune, lucky h) to inspire with courage or confidence i) batter b) booga booga c) confidence d) conversation e) excitement f) exit g) God h) graduation i) ridiculous j) screamed k) strike l) weekend m) notice n) take c) mad d) holler e) make f) run g) sun h) spot i) ground j) try k) bat l) mop m) shut n) win o) sorry q) tum r) wring

35: Chapters 9, 10 Vocabulary & Language:

a) ed b) ed c) led d) ed e) ion f) ly g) d h) ly i) ed j) ed k) ing l) ing m) ed n) ing o) ly p) ed q) ing r) ing s) t) ing t) ing u) de b) en c) re d) be e) un f) in g) a h) be i) al j) re k) re l) be m) dis n) re o) mis

36: Chapters 9, 10 Vocabulary & Language:

2. b) 19 **c.** 8 **d.** 7 **e.** 13 **f.** 12 **g.** 21 **h.** 20 **i.** 2 **j.** 19

37: Chapters 9, 10 Writing & Creativity:

a) they were there to see T.J. set a world record. b) he had never lost a game and this would be his 125th. c) he led the game to be cancelled. d) they were the only people who came to watch them play. e) he was trying to spit was too nervous. f) he was trying to concentrate to pitch the ball. g) he couldn't see where the ball was and didn't hit it to hit him. h) he was planning to hit the ball out towards him. i) Davy Washington, their clean up hitter, was being off the field with stomach problems. j) he interfered with the play at first base.

38: Chapters 9, 10 Writing & Creativity:

a) nervous b) relieved c) panicked d) desperate e) calm f) thankful g) peppy h) mad i) proud j) humiliated

39-40: Chapters 9, 10 Writing & Creativity:

a) was probably invented in the United States. **2.** There are 9 players on a team. **3.** There are 4 bases. **4.** The team with the most runs wins the game. **5.** First baseman, Second baseman, Third baseman, pitcher, catcher, left-fielder, right-fielder, centre-fielder and short stop. **6.** A baseball bat and a baseball are needed to play baseball. **7.** An inning is a turn at bat. **8.** The 2 kinds of pitches are strikes and balls. **9.** If a person hits a ball and it is caught, and another player on the team has run to the next base they have to return to the original base they were on.

41: Chapter 11 Questions:

1. Alex had pushed his dresser in front of his door to keep his father out. **2.** Parents say this when they are talking to their children but they aren't listening. **3.** He planned on staying in his room for the rest of his life. **4.** Alex tried putting pretzels and graham crackers to make a sandwich. **5.** They were having fried chicken, mashed potatoes and corn on the cob for dinner.