

Brendan Buckley's Universe and Everything in It

by Sundee T. Frazier

Annotation

Budding rock hound, Brendan, knows he is a scientist because he likes to ask questions and find answers. Questions like what is dust and who is the grandfather that Mom says is “gone?” Why don’t his parents talk about him or invite him to the house? Does it have something to do with his biracial heritage? Join Brendan on his quest for answers, his experiences with racial-based misunderstandings, and his need to bond with his white grandfather. (Grades 4-6) (AR 4)

Realia

Items: Microscope, Journal, Gems

Statement: Brendan is a curious scientist who loves to conduct experiments. During a trip to the mall, he encounters a new intriguing subject to study. Will studying this subject present him with life changing results? Follow Brendan as he completes his experiment while uncovering his family’s hidden past.

Food

Garlic bread, Sardines, Spaghetti noodles, *Mountain Dew*, Sunflower seeds, Root beer, Crackers, Lemonade, Grapes, Olives, Tuna salad

Challenging Words

accomplice	(p. 106 HB)	integrity	(p. 100 HB)
catapult	(p. 25 HB)	metabolism	(p. 61 HB)
combustion	(p. 146 HB)	Pangaea	(p. 125 HB)
confidential	(p. 2 HB)	prospector	(p. 82 HB)
expedition	(p. 91 HB)	radioactive	(p. 7 HB)
expert	(p. 46 HB)	refraction	(p. 15 HB)
humerus	(p. 7 HB)	senior	(p. 51 HB)
hypothesis	(p. 59 HB)	serenity	(p. 108 HB)
ignorance	(p. 168 HB)	specimen	(p. 51 HB)
indomitable	(p. 158 HB)	trajectory	(p. 27 HB)

Figurative Language

Similes

- “Her hair is short and black, but on top it’s orange and piled up high like curly popcorn.” (p. 5 HB)
- “Flabby skin hung from her humerus like a turkey’s neck.” (p. 7 HB)
- “My skin tingled, as if I were a big peach getting peeled.” (p. 165 HB)
- “My heart bounced around like a heated molecule.” (p. 97 HB)
- “I felt like a big, angry thunder spirit.” (p. 167 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “He’s not getting my drift.” (p. 7 HB)
- “Whether he talked or you did, he wanted to get straight to the point.” (p. 74 HB)
- “As for me, I’m tireder than a petting zoo pony.” (p. 170 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Discuss why Brendan felt that he did not earn his new Tae Kwon Do belt. Ask students what actions he could have taken to be more respectful to his parents. Also discuss what happened when Brendan was dishonest.
- Encourage your students to write about a time when they noticed a bully. Have students discuss how they felt about the bully and the effects bullying has on other people. Let students share their experiences with the class.
- Arrange for your students to go on a field trip to a retirement home. Once there, have students spend the morning interacting with the residents by participating in activities such as playing games or reading with them. Follow up the field trip by having students create digital stories to share their experiences.
- Have a guidance counselor come to speak about how people in society may experience difficulties because of their racial or cultural backgrounds. Have students create a list of five things society can do to be more accepting of people with various racial and cultural backgrounds.

Language Arts:

- Have the students write their own daily journal of their questions and observations about life.
- Review the structure of essays with students. Then have the students write an essay about what makes their family unique.
- Create a Venn diagram with your class to compare and contrast Brendan with his grandfather.
- Teach students how to write friendly letters. Then have them write a letter or create a card for someone special in their family.

Science

- Have students try to answer some of Brendan’s science questions. These questions included how many legs do centipedes have and what is inside a black hole.
- Teach students how to use a microscope. Have them collect a small amount of dust to examine under a microscope during class.
- Have students learn about rocks and gems like Brendan. Let each student pick their own rock or gem. Have them research their rock or gem and make a flash card for a deck of cards. Then make the cards available for students to play memory with them.
- Take your students to the library to research famous geologists.
- Invite a scientist from a local university to present information to the class about his/her career.
- Plan a rock hunting expedition for your students. Help them identify the rocks they find.
- Teach your students the steps to the scientific method by completing a short experiment.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Have each student interview an older relative about their life and present their findings in class.
- Show students how to make a family tree. Have each student create a family tree.

A Crooked Kind of Perfect

by Linda Urban

Annotation

Eleven-year-old Zoe dreams of being a famous pianist and giving a recital at Carnegie Hall. Instead, her dad buys her a Perfectone D-60 and she must alter her dreams to include the sounds of an organ, not a piano. Her organ teacher recognizes her budding talent and recommends her for the “Perfectone Perform-O-Rama” where she will play Neil Diamond’s “Forever in Blue Jeans.” Instead of letting this twist of fate get her down, Zoe forges ahead with the help of her unique family members and her classmate Wheeler. Readers will delight in this refreshing, hope-filled story as resilient and resourceful Zoe rises to the challenge. (Grades 4-6) (AR 3.9)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.lindaurbanbooks.com/>

Realia

Items: Recording of “Forever in Blue Jeans,” Roll of toilet paper, Toe socks, Tiara, Birthday cake

Statement: Have you ever seen a birthday cake with a piano on the top? Find out why Zoe called this cake, “A crooked kind of perfect.”

Food

Biscotti, éclairs, Tater Tots, Vernors ginger ale, Maple tarts

Challenging Words

amnesia	(p. 84 HB)	metronome	(p. 60 HB)
condiment	(p. 186 HB)	ovation	(p. 149 HB)
controller	(p. 6 HB)	percussion	(p. 82 HB)
dialogue	(p. 109 HB)	prodigy	(p. 4 HB)
firkin	(p. 87 HB)	smitten	(p. 103 HB)
gazebo	(p. 112 HB)	upgrade	(p. 140 HB)
ledger	(p. 117 HB)		

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- “Did he understand that the lunchroom is a jungle, where sixth-grade beasts stalk the weak and the dorky?” (p. 12 HB)

Similes

- “Unfolding a revolutionary paper keyboard would be like picking a scab in a pool of sharks – the scent of blood would cause a frenzy.” (p. 12 HB)
- “Marty’s a whiz at getting us back home. He says it’s fun, like doing a crossword puzzle.” (p. 28 HB)
- “Which is why he is rubbing my shoulders and saying ‘Float like a butterfly!’ while I play ‘Monkey Waltz’ on the Perfectone D-60.” (p. 26 HB)
- “‘Sting like a bee!’ yells Dad.” (p. 26 HB)

- “Miss Person puts her glass of ginger ale to her forehead, like she’s trying to soothe a headache.” (p. 81 HB)
- “There is no one else here on the M–80 platform. Just me and Dade and Mr. Upgrade. It’s almost peaceful here, like we’re on our own little Perfectone island, surrounded by a sea of sharks.” (p. 141 HB)
- “And then I tell him what was really cool. I tell him about Mona and how when she plays you feel like your whole body is filled up with music – like singing.” (p. 171 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “When Mrs. Trimble introduced my mom and Mom started talking about being a controller and fiscal responsibility and keeping your ducks in a row, most of the kids looked really bored.” (p. 7 HB)
- “And then one night, just as I am about to walk onstage, he would hand me a velvet box and in it would be a diamond tiara and I would put it on and he would weep for joy.” (p. 20 HB)
- “I was going to bare my soul to my dear best friend Emma Dent and, through tragedy, we would forge an unbreakable sisterly bond.” (p. 29 HB)
- “Especially the Lemon Melvins. Top drawer.” (p. 73 HB)
- “This is called making an entrance.” (p. 151 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Lead a class discussion on Zoe’s dad, focusing on his fears. Have students explain their reactions to the father’s actions.
- Have students share their insights into the relationship of Hugh and Wheeler with Zoe’s dad. How do these relationships affect Zoe’s connection to her dad?

Fine Arts:

- Have students begin researching Vladimir Horowitz by listening to a movement from one of his concerts. Lead a class discussion on his style and choices of music. Expand the discussion by having the students determine who attends his concerts and how he makes a living. Students may visit his Internet site at <http://www.vladimirhorowitzmusic.com/> for further information.
- Share with students information on Carnegie Hall beginning with the Internet site at <http://www.carnegiehall.org/SiteCode/Intro.aspx>. Explore further teacher and student ideas on the “Explore & Learn” link. Students may research topics such as the architecture and history of the building and/or the types of performers featured there and their qualifications.
- Begin a discussion by having the class listen to theme music from old television shows (e.g., *I Love Lucy*, *Leave It to Beaver*, *Happy Days*) by decade. Have students compare/contrast the music selections from each decade. Ask students to identify and compare the genres, instruments, and lyrics featured in each decade’s selections. Discuss the similarities and differences identified by the students. Expand this discussion by having students develop a graphic organizer that includes political/economic factors for each decade.

Mathematics:

- Take students to the library media center to research the state controller career and other mathematics-related fields. Have students complete a five slide computer-based presentation for the class on their career.
- Have students estimate how long it would take each of their families to use 432 rolls of toilet paper. Ask students if their calculations are close to or equal to Mrs. Elias’ estimate. (See page 14.)
- Review various measurements with class. Ask students to define the firkin measurement and to locate other unfamiliar units of measurement.

Defiance

by Valerie Hobbs

Annotation

Who would have thought that a broken-down old cow named Blossom would help eleven-year-old Toby find the meaning of life? While at the summer rental cabin, Toby finds a new lump in his side. His cancer is recurring, but he definitely wants to keep his worried parents from finding out. This decision is reinforced when he befriends an elderly, once famous poet, named Pearl who stubbornly refuses to leave her home to live with her daughters. The mix-matched pair share a love of Blossom and a deepening understanding of each other. This poignant, heartwarming story gives new insights into the power of cross-generational friendships. (Grades 4-7) (AR 4)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.valeriehobbs.com/>

Realia

Items: Teapot, Old-fashioned teacup, Bicycle helmet

Statement: Toby is longing for freedom: freedom from the pain of his cancer treatments, freedom from his mother's stifling worry over his health, freedom to do everything other boys his age do. But on his third day of vacation, once he discovers the lump in his side, his freedom is already in danger. It is then that he discovers Blossom the cow, and Blossom leads him to the most unusual and important friendship of his life. What could a sick boy and a 94-year-old, almost-blind, fiercely independent poet possibly have in common? Read how Toby and Pearl show their defiance for life's unfairness as they form a true friendship, with determination, loyalty, and Blossom as their common bond.

Food

Tomatoes, Cilantro, Crepes, Tea

Challenging Words

cattails	(p. 13 HB)	reincarnation	(p. 78 HB)
cawed	(p. 41 HB)	respiratory	(p. 19 HB)
cilantro	(p. 80 HB)	ruts	(p. 15 HB)
crepe	(p. 9 HB)	scoffed	(p. 61 HB)
cud	(p. 66 HB)	somber	(p. 10 HB)
dappled	(p. 6 HB)	stance	(p. 18 HB)
dome	(p. 109 HB)	standoff	(p. 101 HB)
furrows	(p. 96 HB)	tattered	(p. 49 HB)
incredulously	(p. 32 HB)	udder	(p. 3 HB)
lowed	(p. 61 HB)		

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- "They stopped for a rest, listening to the orchestra of night creatures, scurrying, chewing." (p. 112 HB)

Similes

- “Once, when she’d been yelling at him just like this, a bubble of laughter had started up in his belly. Because her eyebrows looked exactly like two fighting caterpillars.” (p. 7 HB)
- “His mother tipped in the crepe batter so that it covered the bottom of the pan like a thin sheet of plastic.” (p. 9 HB)
- “Tomatoes, corn with its silky hair still on, lettuce, purple cabbage, green beans strung on a line like Christmas lights.” (p. 16 HB)
- “Then he lifted out his telescope, wrapped like a baby in a blanket.” (p. 19 HB)
- “His mother got in like she was stepping into a bathtub with her flowered bathing suit on. Her straw hat looked like a flying saucer.” (p. 20 HB)
- “Get some sun. The two of you are pale as fish.” (p. 20 HB)
- “A bee, humming like a tiny machine, flew several loops around his head and flew off again.” (p. 49 HB)
- “Lies were piling up like the wood stacked against the fireplace.” (p. 73 HB)
- “When he adjusted the focus, the stars came to meet him, shimmering like ice crystals in a black sea, swarms and clusters of stars, too many ever to count.” (p. 74 HB)
- “Her words rained down, striking his head like little bombs.” (p. 76 HB)
- “With Toby’s help, Pearl struggled to her feet. ‘I’m stiff as old shoe leather,’ she said.” (p. 111 HB)
- “The accordion wheezed and screeched, but over it all his mother’s cello soared free like an eagle over a chicken yard.” (p. 115 HB)
- “Toby listened with ears he never knew he had, saw things as if he had super night vision.” (p. 113 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “Toby did what she said, trying to savor the words, whatever that meant.” (p. 43 HB)
- “Pearl’s old face was sad and peaceful all at the same time. He let the words pour out of him and onto her.” (p. 82 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Hold a discussion about why the title *Defiance* fits this book. Ask students to come up with other titles the author may have given the book and why their suggestions would or would not have been as appropriate.
- Ask students how they feel about Toby’s decision to deceive his parents and stop treatment. Do they agree or disagree with this decision?
- Have students discuss Pearl’s action of rescuing Blossom from an abusive owner and the ethics involved in the decision. Refer students to the exchange between Pearl and Toby when Toby says she is a cattle rustler, but Pearl tells him that sometimes you have to do what’s right. Elicit responses to this exchange from the students.

Fine Arts:

- Remind students that Toby’s mother is a professional cellist. Have students listen to a CD of cellists Yo Yo Ma or Pablo Casals and discuss the students’ reactions to the performance and music.

Language Arts:

- Ask students to think of a different ending to this story and write a completely different epilogue.
- Share with students the writing on Pearl’s door, *Whoever Steals My Freedom Takes My Life*, and discuss why this saying is very meaningful for both main characters. Have students write a

persuasive essay in the form of a letter either from Toby to his parents or Pearl to her daughters, explaining how he or she feels about personal freedom and having more control over his or her actions.

- Have students discuss the importance of Blossom in the story. What role did she play in Toby's life? Why do the students think the author chose a cow? Would another animal have been just as effective? Ask the students to choose a scene in the story and rewrite it using another kind of farm animal, such as a goat, pig, or hen.
- Remind students that one of the poems mentioned in the book is Robert Frost's *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*. Read the poem together and analyze why its idea of making choices is relevant to the lives of almost all of the characters in the book, including Toby's mother and father, Blossom the cow, and even Popeye.

Science:

- Invite a cancer survivor to speak to the students; if possible, choose one who has undergone chemotherapy or, alternatively, a doctor or nurse who deals with oncology.
- Remind students that Pearl is suffering from macular degeneration. Have students conduct research on the Internet about this condition and how it affects eyesight.
- Read a passage from the book in which Toby calls Mars the Warrior Planet. Have students research aspects of the planet including the origin of its name.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Remind students that according to Pearl, Blossom had been an Indian raja's pet in another life. Have students locate India on a map. Then have them research the importance of cows in Indian culture and the traditions regarding this animal.

Additional Internet sites for discussion questions:

http://www2.asPCA.org/site/PageServer?pagename=edu_bookclub_defiance

<http://www.lesliepreddy.com/yhba/08-09/Intermediate/Defiance-Lemen.pdf>

Emmy and the Incredible Shrinking Rat

by Lynne Jonell

Annotation

Her family inherits a fortune and Emmy Addison's life turns upside down. Her once loving parents now travel to faraway places and leave Emmy with a devious and controlling nanny, Miss Barmy. If this isn't bad enough, Emmy is bitten by the classroom rat and quickly realizes that she can understand what the rat is saying. Emmy's classmate Joe soon finds out that a second bite shrinks you into the size of an action figure. The rat, Emmy, and Joe learn that Miss Barmy has been mixing animal essences in an effort to control the Addisons' lives. This all adds up to a remarkably funny caper that will have readers eagerly racing through the pages to the satisfactory ending. (Grades 3-6) (AR 4.7)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.lynnejonell.com/>

Realia

Item: Rubber rat

Statement: Does the rat shrink or does the rat cause people to shrink? Find out the answer to this intriguing question when you read *Emmy and the Incredible Shrinking Rat*.

Food

Apple, Box of raisins, Potato rolls, Peanut-butter cups, Cookies

Challenging Words

bristles	(p. 47 HB)	passionately	(p. 64 HB)
calibrated	(p. 164 HB)	persistent	(p. 68 HB)
demented	(p. 49 HB)	precarious	(p. 299 HB)
derisive	(p. 242 HB)	reincarnated	(p. 67 HB)
disdainful	(p. 96 HB)	scrawny	(p. 30 HB)
emphatic	(p. 85 HB)	sniveling	(p. 65 HB)
incredulous	(p. 69 HB)	sooty	(p. 28 HB)
interference	(p. 64 HB)	trajectory	(p. 163 HB)
juggernaut	(p. 21 HB)	transparently	(p. 46 HB)
olfactory	(p. 205 HB)	wrinkled	(p. 30 HB)

Figurative Language

Similes

- “And when that kid who sits across from you, the soccer star, the freckled one with hair that looks like a haystack—” (p. 5 HB)
- “Throw firecrackers under his chair? Hang from the ceiling and make like a monkey?” (p. 8 HB)

- “The nanny had soft dark hair and green eyes, rimmed with gold like a cat’s. Her lipstick was a slick pink, and when she smiled she showed a glimpse of perfectly even teeth, like a row of white chisels.” (p. 9 HB)
- “It does look a little like a castle, Emmy admitted.” (p. 19 HB)
- “In an instant he was running, scampering, rolling through the wide grassy schoolyard like a small gray juggernaut.” (p. 21 HB)
- “Emmy walked quickly down the narrow alley, her footsteps echoing off the walls that rose on either side of her like a canyon of sooty brick.” (p. 28 HB)
- “He was soft-looking, rather like a dumpling dressed in old clothes, and his face was wrinkled.” (p. 30 HB)
- “The puppy whimpered, and Emmy drifted like smoke deep into the shadowed entryway.” (p. 33 HB)
- “Emmy could see the dark pores on the end of his beaky nose and short hairs like bristles poking out from his nostrils.” (pp. 46-47 HB)
- “‘And would that matter to her? It would not,’ said Mrs Brecksniff, puffing out her neck until she looked like a stuffed frog.” (p. 55 HB)
- “Mrs. Brecksniff made a noise that sounded like an irritated buffalo.” (p. 63 HB)
- “Joe shuddered, looking like Tom Thumb in a soccer jersey, and shut his eyes.” (p. 102 HB)
- “Emmy felt cold. It was like watching a cobra rising, getting ready to strike.” (p. 121 HB)
- “‘Joe, what can we give her?’ Emmy whispered, her heart pulsing like a bird’s in her throat.” (p. 209 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “‘Here it’s Miss Barmy’s afternoon off and I don’t even know the proper time to come and get you, and now I see you dillydallying across the street without so much as a by-your-leave.’” (p. 53 HB)
- “Your parents paid good money for those classes.” (p. 54 HB)
- “‘Over my dead body,’ Maggie said cheerfully.” (p. 58 HB)
- “‘Leading—yourself as a prime example—to drab, ordinary children.’” (p. 70 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Initiate a discussion of the ethical decisions that Emmy makes throughout the story. Have students discuss her decision not to take the blood of Endear Mouse to help change her parents. (See page 238.) How does the character and purpose of Endear Mouse contribute to the tension in the story? How would the students respond in a similar situation?

Fine Arts:

- Remind students that Emmy was involved in a number of afterschool activities, including ballet. Share selections from a ballet (e.g., *Swan Lake* or *The Nutcracker*) with class. Discuss with students the commitment and dedication needed in the world of ballet. Expand the discussion by showing students how sports athletes (i.e., football teams) use ballet to improve their physical abilities.

Foreign Languages:

- Discuss with students the origins of and similarities in some of the world languages. Remind students that Rodentese is a language that the author created. Divide class into small groups and have them create a brief dictionary of words that they think would be in this make-believe language.

- Have students brainstorm French words that are commonly used in the United States. Have students add these words to their world languages dictionary.

Language Arts:

- Share with students examples of similes found in the book. (See examples above.) Ask students to create ten original similes and share with class.
- Review with students the Pied Piper story. Discuss with students how the author incorporated this story into *Emmy and the Incredible Shrinking Rat*. (See pages 262 and 263.)

Physical Education:

- Discuss the game of soccer and review the rules with class. Organize the class into teams to play a game of soccer.
- Remind students that the rats played a game called pawball. Have students design the pawball field, giving the dimensions and shape of it. Ask students to create the rules of the game and to define a “red card” and its purpose in the game. (See page 222.)

Science:

- Discuss with students the concept of aromatherapy and its uses. Have students connect this type of therapy with “atmostherapy” used in the book. Have students identify the similarities and/or differences of each.
- Collaborate with the library media specialist to have students research genetic mutations. (See page 191.) Students can locate answers to the following questions: 1) Why do scientists study genetic mutations? 2) What causes a genetic mutation? and 3) How have genetic mutations contributed to today’s world?
- Take students to the library media center to research science-related careers. Ask students to determine what a “rodentologist” would study and why. (See page 189.)
- Discuss with students the origins of and health-related issues concerning viruses. Give background information on several examples. Refer students to the “snoozer” virus and have students define it and create an antidote for it. (See pages 202 and 215.)

The Fabled Fourth Graders of Aesop Elementary School

by Candace Fleming

Annotation

The rambunctious fourth grade class gets a new teacher – Mr. Jupiter. From that day forward, school becomes an exciting and unpredictable place. Mr. Jupiter charms everyone and even Miss Paige Turner, the school librarian, gets a crush on him. Each chapter ends with a well-known moral and readers will agree with one of them – you can't judge a book by its cover! (Grades 3-5) (AR 3.9)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.candacefleming.com/>

Realia

Item: Copy of *Aesop Fables*

Statement: How is this book of fables going to help the new teacher work with the naughty 4th grade class no one else wanted to teach? Read *The Fabled Fourth Graders of Aesop Elementary School* to find out.

Food

Jelly beans, Spinach salad with tofu, Spearmint breath mints, Sandwich cookies, Cheese sticks, Raisins, Carrot sticks

Challenging Words

arabesque	(p. 37 HB)	infraction	(p. 57 HB)
buoyancy	(p. 148 HB)	ingenious	(p. 106 HB)
condone	(p. 70 HB)	inspiration	(p. 150 HB)
conscientious	(p. 31 HB)	inverted	(p. 153 HB)
contagious	(p. 146 HB)	maniacally	(p. 103 HB)
digress	(p. 86 HB)	obnoxious	(p. 9 HB)
disembodied	(p. 45 HB)	precocious	(p. 1 HB)
elusive	(p.16 HB)	sauntered	(p. 76 HB)
furtively	(p. 60 HB)	tranquility	(p. 55 HB)
gnawed	(p. 43 HB)	versatile	(p. 113 HB)

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- “The second graders tickled the audience’s funny bone with a humorous skit called ‘Roly-poly Pumpkin.’” (p. 39 HB)
- “Waves of humiliation were washing over her. She was drowning in them.” (p. 58 HB)

Similes

- “She felt like a scoop of vanilla ice cream on a hot summer’s day – all sweet and drippy.” (p. 19 HB)

- “The boys pumped their fists victoriously and barked like dogs.” (p. 69 HB)
- “Known for a teasing tongue as sharp as Miss Turner’s stiletto heels, Tarantula stood six feet tall and had fists as big as Ham.” (p. 72 HB)
- “She erupts like a volcano,’ said Missy.” (p. 98 HB)
- “His knees were shaking and his throat felt dry as chalk dust.” (p. 153 HB)
- “I shot through the water like a silver arrow.” (p. 155 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “Not for all the tea in China,’ shuddered Mrs. Chen.” (p. 1 HB)
- “Break a leg,’ said Mr. Jupiter.” (p. 39 HB)
- “Backstage, the fourth graders watched nervously as the first graders brought down the house with their song ‘I’m a Little Acorn.’” (p. 39 HB)
- “Quick as a wink, straws were stuck back into milk cartons.” (p. 64 HB)
- “You know what they say in Bora-Bora,’ replied Mr. Jupiter. ‘*Tapiti maita vau,* or ‘Three times is a charm.’” (p. 164 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Reread the chapter: Please Don’t Tease Ashley Z. Explain how the moral “one good turn deserves another” is a good lesson in dealing with bullies.
- Select fables that illustrate the character education traits (e.g., self control, kindness, honesty, fairness, integrity, caring, courage, forgiveness, citizenship, respect, responsibility, and perseverance). Students will create a short skit on one of these traits and perform it on the morning news.

Fine Arts:

- Select a fable to read to the class. Have the students create a cartoon depicting the fable.

Language Arts:

- Have students select a moral lesson and write a contemporary fable.
- Organize the class into groups to play charades using fables. Students select a favorite moral from any fable and pantomime it for the group.
- Read several fables to the class. Using a graphic organizer, have students compare a variety of fables, identifying common elements of fables.
- Have students compare and contrast the fables in the book with the original fables.
- Visit the library media center and have the library media specialist give a lesson on the Dewey Decimal Classification System. Students will play a Dewey Decimal game after the lesson. Visit these sites to locate games.
http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/02/lp261-02.shtml
<http://www.ccsd.edu/bardonia/LearningGames/LibrarySkills/>
<http://users.ece.utexas.edu/~valmstrum/s2s/utopia/library4/src/library4.html>
- Encourage students to participate in Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest or hold a classroom contest. (See <http://www.poetryoutloud.org>.)
- Read to the class the poem “Casey at the Bat” and use the poem to discuss similes. Refer to the following lesson plan for teaching this poem:
<http://www.lessonplanspage.com/LACaseyAtBat5.htm>

Science/Health:

- Have the students use the food pyramid to create a poster or television commercial to promote eating healthy.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Have students reread the book in order to identify on a map all the cities/countries in which Mr. Jupiter lived.
- Collaborate with the library media specialist to have students research the history of fables.
- Have students research and answer the PTO World Geography Contest questions found on pp. 122-123.

Additional Internet sites:

Aesop's Fables Online Collection: www.aesopfables.com

Literature.org: The Online Literature Library: www.literature.org/authors/aesop/fables

University of Massachusetts Amherst: Aesop's Fables: www.umass.edu/aesop

Found

by Margaret Peterson Haddix

Annotation

Six words in a letter change the lives of thirteen-year-old Jonah and his friend Chip – “You are one of the missing.” Both boys know they are adopted, but Jonah has never given it much thought until he and Chip start receiving mysterious letters. The boys and Jonah’s sister, Katherine, are plunged into a mystery involving a smuggling operation, the FBI, and an airplane that appears out of nowhere. After enjoying this page-turner, readers will eagerly look forward to the next book in this new series. (Grades 4-8) (AR 5)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.haddixbooks.com/home.html>

Realia

Items: Small airplane, FBI badge, and/or a letter with “YOU ARE ONE OF THE MISSING”

Statement: Jonah has always known that he was adopted and he’s never thought it was a big deal until he received a mysterious letter saying, “You are one of the missing.” Read *Found* to find out if Jonah and Chip discover why the FBI is involved in their adoption?

Food

Cincinnati chili, New Orleans jambalaya, Mexican tamales, New England clam chowder

Challenging Words

apprehension	p. 42 HB	inexplicably	p. 74 HB
bizarre	p. 175 HB	insinuations	p. 2 HB
bland	p. 71 HB	intriguing	p. 114 HB
clairvoyant	p. 5 HB	paranoia	p. 171 HB
clichés	p. 116 HB	paranoid	p. 76 HB
generic	p. 146 HB	protocol	p. 164 HB
genetics	p. 53 HB	substantial	p. 68 HB
hallucinations	p. 169 HB	tachyons	p. 173 HB
hyperventilating	p. 125 HB	taunted	p. 27 HB
impede	p. 51 HB	testimonial	p. 75 HB

Figurative Language

Similes

- “*‘Beware! They’re coming back to get you,’* Jonah recited tonelessly. It took no effort to remember; he’d stared at the words for so long the night before that it seemed like they were imprinted on his eyeballs.” (p. 58 HB)
- “Jonah hoped that no one could tell that he felt like he was walking around in a bubble.” (p. 59 HB)
- “He was usually the calmest person in the family, mild-mannered, like a Clark Kent without secrets.” (p. 82 HB)

- “Katherine turned her head – maybe it would just look as if she'd heard an unusual birdcall and was trying to listen more closely.” (p. 248 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “It seemed like a no-brainer to Jonah.” (p. 24 HB)
- “Let me get this straight’ was the phrase that she always used with Jonah and Katherine when she thought they were stretching the truth a bit.” (p. 80 HB)
- “‘Okay,’ Jonah said quickly, because he could tell she was about to launch into the miracle story (*the call out of the blue . . . the week before Christmas . . . everything we ever wanted . . .*). (p. 48 HB)
- “‘Maybe that’s connected too,’ he said slowly. ‘My dad says they got a really sweet deal for this house.’” (p. 39 HB)
- “‘Look,’ she said. ‘It makes them mental, every time you bring up the adoption, or your birth parents, or anything like that. They start pussyfooting around and being so careful, like, ‘Now, Jonah . . .’ She’d dropped her voice an octave, in a pretty decent imitation of Dad.” (p. 51 HB)
- “‘Very funny, Jeremy,’ Mr. Vincent said in a tone that didn’t sound amused. ‘Let’s stay within the realm of reality, shall we?’” (p. 60 HB)
- “When he’d climbed up the stairs to the first level of Chip’s house, he could hear a TV siren blaring from the family room. A woman—presumably Chip’s mom—said unhappily, ‘You always have to watch the blood-and-guts shows.’” (p. 115 HB)
- “Queen Jackson was telling Nila Holcomb, ‘That boy is just bad news.’” (p. 135 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Have students discuss whether they think it is the parent who gave birth to you or the parent who takes care of you that is the “real” parent.
- Have someone who is adopted talk to the class and talk about their feelings about their adoption and whether they have or plan on looking for their birth parents.
- Discuss whether the students think adopted children should be told that they are adopted or not.

Health/Physical Education:

- Research with class the rules and history of basketball, using the Internet and a video projector. Have class play a game of basketball.

Language Arts:

- Initiate a discussion with the class about genres, focusing on science fiction. Have students define the genres and name at least one title for each one.
- Have library media specialist present a book talk to the class featuring other science fiction titles.
- Read *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L’Engle. Have students compare and contrast this story with *Found*.

Mathematics:

- Have students research the speed of light and also the distance between Earth and Mars. Then have students calculate how long it would take to get from the Earth to Mars traveling at the speed of light.

Science:

- Take students to the library media center to research theoretical physics and tachyons. Initiate a discussion on what effect something traveling faster than the speed of light would have on aging, time, and space, etc.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Some cities mentioned in the story include the following: Winnetka, Illinois; Ann Arbor, Michigan; and Liston, Ohio. Have students locate the cities on a map and research information about them.

Highway Cats

by Janet Taylor Lisle

Annotation

The driver steps out of a pickup truck and shoves a cardboard box filled with three frightened kittens into the bushes. So begins this contemporary fantasy about the survival of three kittens that miraculously make it across I-95. They soon encounter a group of feral cats and learn about the mayor's plans to destroy the cats' woodland home. The three kittens and the older cats band together to save their homeland woods. This satisfying tale moves quickly to the climatic showdown involving the developer's bulldozers. (Grades 4-7) (AR 4.8)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.janettaylorlisle.com/>

Realia

Items: Stuffed toy cats (including a Siamese), a Toy bulldozer, and/or Empty boxes and containers

Statement: One day bulldozers show up to build a road through the cat's woods. How did the cats stop the road from being built? Join the adventures by reading the *Highway Cats*.

Food

Jelly doughnuts, Yogurt, Egg rolls

Challenging Words

apparition	(p. 97 HB)	miraculous	(p. 52 HB)
catapulted	(p. 78 HB)	pathetic	(p. 15 HB)
demolition	(p. 47 HB)	phenomenon	(p. 85 HB)
freeloaders	(p. 40 HB)	radiance	(p. 57 HB)
gloated	(p. 11 HB)	sapphire	(p. 77 HB)
lumbered	(p. 73 HB)	scrubland	(p. 2 HB)
malodorous	(p. 19 HB)	shrivel	(p. 23 HB)
metallic	(p. 69 HB)		

Figurative Language

Similes

- "A faint silvery blue sparkle surrounded them, drifting up off their coats like early-morning mist over a pond. (p. 37 HB)
- "Their small miraculous lives had come and gone like rays of sun on a rainy day." (p.52 HB)
- "Mounded together, their heads nestled on each others' backs and their paws curled beneath, they looked to Shredder like a silvery patch of forest floor, the kind of enchanted place a woodland makes when left alone, undisturbed." (pp. 70-71 HB)
- "Silence broke like a long, peaceful sigh over the woods." (p. 75 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- "To rescue them, I suppose. What a harebrained idea." (p. 54 HB)
- "The kits' luck finally ran out," Shredder had to agree." (p. 55 HB)

- “So well did they make themselves invisible (this time even the kits were quiet as mice) that not a whisker or a tail was seen between the gravestones, and the men went away looking mystified and uneasy.” (p. 79 HB)
- “‘They’re frauds,’ Murray growled. ‘Anyone with half a brain could see it. Something fishy’s going on, mark my words. I wouldn’t trust them.’” (p. 64 HB)
- “A script had been written that could not be unwritten. The stage had been set.” (p. 67 HB)
- “‘Why you double-crossing road rat!’ Murray exclaimed.” (p. 101 HB)
- “‘FARLEY. They’ll know you’re a mover and a shaker.’” (p. 118 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Invite a representative from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) organization to discuss ways that students can be proactive in supporting kindness to animals. Visit the SPCA Internet site for more information: <http://www.spca.com/>.
- Discuss with students the concepts of self-esteem and self-concept and how our perception of ourselves influences how we act. Relate this discussion to Khalia and why she wears containers over her head.
- Initiate a discussion on the importance of critical events and how they influence our lives. Relate this discussion to the lives of the cats and have students retell how each of the cats arrived in the woods.

Language Arts:

- Reread sections of *Highway Cats* that pertain to the cemetery and the ghosts that the workmen thought haunted it. Have the students write their own newspaper account about the ghosts in the cemetery.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Hang a highway road map on the bulletin board and discuss the main highways that connect states in this country. Organize the class into small groups and assign each group one of the major interstates (e.g., I95, I75). Have student research the interstate road system in the United States and complete a short multimedia report on their group’s highway.

Igraine the Brave

by Cornelia Funke

Annotation

Igraine thought it boring that her parents are the greatest magicians between Whispering Woods and Giant's Hills. Her brother, Albert, wants to be a magician, but Igraine would rather win one of the King's tournaments and become a famous knight. All of Igraine's skills and bravery are put to the test in this rollicking, magical adventure filled with evil-plotting Osmund, singing books of magic, a talking cat, and a red-headed giant. (Grades 4-6) (AR 5.6)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.corneliafunke.de/en/>

Realia

Item: Small plastic pig

Statement: What would you do if your parents magically changed themselves into pigs by mistake? Read *Igraine the Brave* to find out if Igraine can change her parents back and save her castle home.

Food

Dyed blue eggs and Biscuits

Challenging Words

acquitting	(p. 123 HB)	deflect	(p. 125 HB)
armory	(p. 13 HB)	derision	(p. 125 HB)
battlements	(p. 41 HB)	impertinent	(p. 44 HB)
castellan	(p. 19 HB)	incredulously	(p. 99 HB)
catapults	(p. 58 HB)	monotonous	(p. 125 HB)
chivalry	(p. 47 HB)	omen	(p. 1 HB)
conjure	(p.10 HB)	parried	(p. 88 HB)
crenellations	(p. 125 HB)	pilgrimage	(p. 20 HB)
decipher	(p. 34 HB)	rapacious	(p. 162 HB)
decrepit	(p. 101 HB)	siege	(p. 101 HB)

Figurative Language

Similes

- "Even his helmet was as prickly as a sweet chestnut husk." (p. 43 HB)
- "For the second time Igraine clambered up the mane as nimbly as a squirrel." (p. 108 HB)
- "Terrified, the men raised their shields, but the arrows buzzed around them like giant dragonflies all aflame and attacked the archers from behind." (p. 127 HB)
- "The books were still humming, a deep and angry note, and now it sounded like bumblebees buzzing in two-part harmony." (p. 198 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- "Igraine's heart was in her mouth as she countered his first attack." (p. 88 HB)
- "It was child's play in her feather-light suit of armor." (p. 108 HB)
- "'Please! Don't be so pigheaded!'" (p. 110 HB)

- “My brother has a very soft heart when it comes to glowworms and mice.” (p. 113 HB)
- “And your brother is acquitting himself bravely, but it’s high time we got our own magic powers back so that we can put an end to all this tail-curling nonsense.” (p. 123 HB)
- “So they have. Busy, busy little bees,’ commented Albert, looking bored.” (p. 127 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Collaborate with the library media specialist to have students research the Knight’s Code of chivalry. Organize the class into small groups and have each group write your own Code of Chivalry for 2009.

Fine Arts:

- Show students examples of coat of arms. Use the Internet sites below to expand students understanding of the many different symbols and meanings incorporated in them.
<http://www.imaginon.org/fun/whippingboy/createacoatofarms.asp>
http://www.vam.ac.uk/vastatic/microsites/british_galleries/designa/coat_of_arms/coat_of_arms.html. Then have students design their own coat of arms.
- Have students research musical instruments used during the medieval time. Play examples of the music and have students compare it to the music played today.

Language Arts:

- Discuss with students the origin of various sayings used today and how language changes over time. Refer students to the *Oxford English Dictionary* that provides all the meanings of words used over the centuries. Have students research the meanings and origins of the following medieval sayings: a baker’s dozen, field day, freelance, scot free, can’t hold a candle, middle of the road, rule of thumb, blackmail, and bonfire.
- Have students pretend that they are living during medieval times. Instruct the students that they may chose to be a knight, queen, king, farmer, etc. Students will then write a story about a typical day in their life.

Physical Education/Health:

- Conduct a medieval field day. Set up a variety of medieval sporting events such as horseshoes, bowling, archery, golf, skittles, etc. Board games such as chess, knucklebones, and backgammon may also be included. Refer to the following Internet sites for game ideas:
<http://www.middle-ages.org.uk/entertainment-middle-ages.htm>
<http://www.modaruniversity.org/Games.htm>

Social Studies:

- Share pictures and diagrams of castles with class. Have students research and design their own castles either working in small groups or individually. The book, *Castle* by David Macaulay, contains excellent diagrams. The following Internet sites can also be used:
<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/castles/enter.html>
<http://www.castles.org/>
- Collaborate with the library media specialist to research what everyday life was like during medieval times. Have students compare and contrast everyday life today with that of the medieval times. Suggested Internet sites include:
<http://www.imaginon.org/fun/whippingboy/medmod.asp?themeid=2&activityid=11>
<http://library.thinkquest.org/J002390/>
- Expand student research by having them study the foods eaten during medieval times. Have students plan a dinner menu and prepare one or two items. Also refer to *Medieval Feast* by Aliko and the following Internet site: <http://www.godecookery.com/allrec/allrec.htm>
- Have students research the history and use of gargoyles throughout the world, using photographs or drawings to display the locations of famous gargoyles on a world map.

The Lemonade War

By Jacqueline Davies

Annotation

The worst has happened – Evan’s younger sister is skipping a grade and they will both be in the same fourth grade class in the fall. In the past, brother and sister always got along well, but now a competitive rivalry begins with each of them trying to earn the most money over the summer. Lemonade wars and money-making schemes punctuate this heartwarming story filled with math problems and humor. (Grades 3-5) (AR 4.1)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.jacquelinedavies.net/>

Realia

Items: Big cooler, Lemonade mix, Cups, Wagon (Leave the fruit flies out!)

Statement: “I’m going to roll! Like the ice cream truck! I’m going to mix it all up in the big cooler and wagon it from street to street.” Read *The Lemonade Wars* to find out why Evan needed to mobilize his lemonade business.

Food

Lemonade, Potato chips, Pretzels

Challenging Words

allergic	(p. 126 PB)	miser	(p. 63 PB)
chintzy	(p. 34 PB)	pathetic	(p. 46 PB)
dissolution	(p. 11 PB)	pedestrians	(p. 31 PB)
emphasis	(p. 162 PB)	persistent	(p. 106 PB)
equation	(p. 33 PB)	pulverize	(p. 82 PB)
expectantly	(p. 30 PB)	residential	(p. 97 PB)
ferociously	(p. 36 PB)	rhododendron	(p. 93 PB)
franchise	(p. 114 PB)	riddance	(p. 32 PB)
humiliated	(p. 8 PB)	sneered	(p. 40 PB)
humungous	(p. 9 PB)	vendors	(p. 29 PB)

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- “He felt a tiny flame of anger shoot up and lick his face.” (p. 6 PB)
- “A thin spider web of sweat draped itself over his forehead, spreading into his hair.” (p. 7 PB)
- “The kid was a weasel. No two ways about it.” (p. 34 PB)

Similes

- “He was starting to feel words piling up inside him, crowding his lungs, forcing out all the air. It was like having a chestful of bats, beating their wings, fighting to get out.” (p. 4 PB)

- “Her insides felt runny, like a fried egg that hasn't cooked enough.” (p. 22 PB)
- “‘It's not that big a deal,’ said Jessie again, her voice stretched tight like a rubber band.” (p. 24 PB)
- “The words felt like disgusting spiders running out of his mouth.” (p. 61 PB)
- “Jessie's mind skittered like one of those long-legged birds on the beach.” (p. 109 PB)
- “At first Megan buried her head under a pillow, but then she poked her head out like a turtle and started to listen for real.” (p. 111 PB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “He started popping his elbow to put a little more juice on the ball.” (p. 7 PB)
- “Up in the humming cool of her office, Mrs. Treski read the letter through once. ‘Well,’ she said. ‘This is a curve ball.’” (p. 14 PB)
- “Evan was a straight shooter.” (p. 17 PB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Examine with students the reasons Scott Spencer drives Evan crazy. After a class discussion, have students sum up what they feel the characteristics of a good friend should be.
- Ask students if they have brothers and/or sisters. Have the students describe disagreements they might have had with them and how they compare to Evan's and Jessie's “war.”
- Ask students if the characters in this story are able to communicate with each other. Discuss how each of them misunderstands the motivations of the other. Ask students if they think that people ever understand what another person's reasoning truly is? Explain to students that everyone must try and “walk in the other person's shoes.”

Fine Arts:

- Discuss what kind of advertisements the students admire. Have students create advertisements for a lemonade sale they might have.

Language Arts:

- Ask students why they feel reading *Charlotte's Web* helped Jessie when she was having problems. What books might they pick that would help them in a time of stress?

Mathematics:

- Have students describe the difference in math skills between Jessie and Evan. Discuss why math is a valuable tool, using examples from everyday life.
- Have students create a small business of their own and figure out the profit margin they could expect. This activity could incorporate word problems, as well as facts and graphs.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Discuss capitalism and consumerism as it relates to this book. Have students list the countries that have societies based on these concepts.

Me and the Pumpkin Queen

by Marlane Kennedy

Annotation

11-year-old Mildred's dad is a veterinarian and they live near Circleville where Ohio's pumpkin festival is held each year. Mildred misses her deceased mom who had been Pumpkin Queen years earlier, and now Mildred is determined to grow a giant winning pumpkin. Mildred smoothly narrates the story describing her comfortable bond with her dad, her prickly relationship with her aunt, and her obsession with pumpkin growing. Along the way, she graphically describes helping with the birth of a calf and mentions other trials involved in growing up. This no nonsense, easy read will draw readers into the satisfying story. (Grades 4-7) (AR 4.8)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.marlanekennedy.com/>

Realia

Items: Pumpkin seeds, Fertilizer, Seedling plant

Statement: Do you have a green thumb? Do you think you can grow an award winning pumpkin that weighs over 1,000 pounds? Find out if Mildred will be crowned queen at the Circleville Pumpkin Show by reading *Me and the Pumpkin Queen* by Marlane Kennedy.

Food

Pumpkin pie

Challenging Words

boutique	(p. 22 HB)	gelded	(p. 47 HB)
chute	(p. 69 HB)	germination	(p. 51 HB)
compost	(p. 36 HB)	incredulous	(p. 72 HB)
contradictory	(p. 122 HB)	legendary	(p. 11 HB)
cull	(p. 101 HB)	mortified	(p. 24 HB)
destined	(p. 61 HB)	pollination	(p. 86 HB)
ecstatic	(p. 53 HB)	scrumptious	(p. 76 HB)
embroidered	(p. 24 HB)	stigma	(p. 89 HB)
exasperation	(p. 38 HB)	stamen	(p. 89 HB)
fertilize	(p. 66 HB)	tendrils	(p. 11 HB)

Figurative Language

Similes

- "I can't help but be stiff as a board" (p. 57 HB)
- "My favorite is the knight because it looks like a horse's head." (p. 37 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- "But she means well, and we love her despite her meddling ways." (p. 4 HB)
- "And speak of the devil, she is now interrupting my Saturday morning, the screen door of Daddy's office banging behind her." (p. 4 HB)

- “I am mortified, but comply like the good trouper I am simply because pitching a fit would call even more attention to myself.” (p. 24 HB)
- “Yes, and that was the icing on the cake. From then on my mother and yours got along famously.” (p. 85 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Have students find examples of perseverance, initiative, and responsibility displayed by each character. For example, Mildred demonstrates perseverance when she plants the pumpkin seeds year after year. Aunt Arlene demonstrates perseverance when she insists Mildred go on the trip with her grandparents.

Fine Arts:

- Have students create a pumpkin patch using various materials (e.g. clay, polymer clay, paper maché).
- Have students convert pumpkins into literary characters either for their pumpkin patch or other projects.

Language Arts:

- Retell parts of the story from a different character’s point of view (e.g., Grover’s thoughts when he realizes Mildred is serious about raising pumpkins or Jacob’s angst when Wilbur knocks over the seedlings).
- Have students write an essay, similar to Mildred’s paper on Howard Dill, about a person whom they admire and who inspires them. Have students share their essays and, using a graphic organizer, compare and contrast the significant people.

Mathematics:

- Bring in different size pumpkins and weigh each one during class. Organize class into small groups and have them create word problems using the pumpkins. Have the small groups exchange the word problems to solve.

Science:

- Use a section of the playground to plant pumpkins, if possible. Otherwise grow them in appropriate containers in the classroom. Have students maintain a log of the pumpkins’ growth statistics.
- Organize the class into small groups. Give each group a type of seed to germinate and plant in appropriate containers. Have students maintain a log on the growth of their plants. Complete the project by having each group share their results with the class.
- Take students to the library media center to research plants. Each student will draw and label diagrams of plants assigned.

The Middle of Somewhere

by J.B. Cheaney

Annotation

It all started with a squirrel in the toilet that led to Veronica (Ronnie) Sparks and her hyperactive brother hitting the road with their grumpy grandfather, Pop. Pop is a wind prospector and travels across country in his slick, new RV. Traveling from Texas to Kansas searching for a good stiff breeze isn't exactly Ronnie's idea of a dream trip, but all goes well until Ronnie's brother mysteriously disappears into thin air. Readers will climb aboard and enjoy this windy, wild ride across the prairie. (Grades 4-7) (AR 5.4)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.jbcheaney.com/>

Realia

Items: United States road map and a Toy or picture of an RV

Statement: Ronnie's adventure begins with a squirrel in the toilet and her mother breaking her leg. Then grandfather (Pop) unexpectedly shows up at the house in his shiny new RV. Read how "always expect the unexpected" proves to be true as Pop, Gee, and Ronnie travel cross country to *The Middle of Somewhere*.

Food

Pancakes, Bacon and eggs, Hot dogs, Doughnuts, Pepsi, Corn dogs

Challenging Words

anxiety	(p. 174 HB)	impatience	(p. 180 HB)
assured	(p. 106 HB)	jangly	(p. 2 HB)
automatic	(p. 71 HB)	masterfully	(p. 17 HB)
berserk	(p. 3 HB)	prologue	(p. 11 HB)
cautionary	(p. 183 HB)	queasy	(p. 181 HB)
collapsed	(p. 174 HB)	ramifications	(p. 190 HB)
complaining	(p. 177 HB)	recuperating	(p. 7 HB)
equivalent	(p. 23 HB)	rummaging	(p. 146 HB)
hoisting	(p. 184 HB)	unbeknowst	(p. 12 HB)
hurled	(p. 2 HB)	underage	(p. 11 HB)

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- "It was a sight to melt the stoniest heart, but Pop's heart was granite; all he said was, 'If you want anything, get it now.'" (p. 89 HB)

Similes

- "And when I reached the kitchen door, it hurled itself at me: a reddish-gray ball of fur with a twirly tail and beady eyes and toothy mouth stretched wide like a little bear trap, landing right on my chest!" (p. 2 HB)

- “And while he sat on the tile floor catching his breath, his little heart pattering like a snare drum, he must have picked up the scent of water.” (p. 6 HB)
- “Hugging him was like throwing your arms round a stout tree.” (p. 8 HB)
- “Pop broke off in alarm when Gee flung himself back on the floor and laughed like a maniac.” (p. 21 HB)
- “The other kids took off like roaches when you turn the light on.” (p. 32 HB)
- “They walked down the path as sweet as a Hallmark card, and I had the place to myself for a while.” (p. 43 HB)
- “I had to admit, he felt a little like a teddy bear on a scary night – though squirmier than most.” (p. 80 HB)
- “I stepped closer and pushed aside the long hair on the dog’s neck, while he wiggled his butt like he was trying to corkscrew himself into the ground.” (p. 81 HB)
- “When Gee gets really, really upset, he either pitches a screaming fit or he shuts down like a Game Boy with a dead battery.” (p. 86 HB)
- “Suddenly, Gee screamed as though an alligator had crawled up from the lake and bit him on the leg.” (p. 116 HB)
- “I keeled over on the dinette seat and put a pillow over my head, feeling like a gerbil on a treadmill.” (p. 165 HB)
- Additional similes are on pages: 4, 18, 28, 31, 35, 41, 70, 87, 99, 106, 107, 126, 143, 146, 149, 151, 157, 166, 167, 175, 199, and 201.

Idioms and Expressions

- “POP: That’s it in a nutshell.” (27 HB)
- “Then he panicked, having set a personal best for not-looking-prior-to-leaping.” (p. 57 HB)
- “Okay. Good night, sleep tight, don’t let the bedbugs bite.” (p. 77 HB)
- “Pop was shaking his head even before Gee got to the ‘I want’ part. No way, José.” (p. 82 HB)
- “Still it was a weird feeling, and for the moment Howard seemed as tongue-tied as me.” (p. 125 HB)
- “Gee was the squeaky wheel who got the grease in the family.” (p. 212 HB)
- Additional idioms and expressions on pages: 9, 10, 16, 45, 74, 94, 137, and 206.

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Discuss with class the use of nicknames, including the origin and characteristics of usage (e.g., shortening of names, references to a person’s characteristics). Ask students when they think nicknames are appropriate or not. Have them give examples to substantiate their opinions.

Language Arts:

- Select several quotes from the beginning of the chapters in the book to read to the class. Ask the students about the purpose of these quotes. How do the quotes inform the reader and add to the story? Have the students write additional quotes for the chapters.

Physical Education/Health:

- Collaborate with the library media specialist on a research project concerning vitamins, minerals, and dietary supplements. Have the students identify each type of vitamin and mineral and its impact on the human body. Also have students identify the foods in which each of the vitamins and minerals may be found.
- Share with students a few of the world’s fishing competitions. In what locations are these competitions held and what are the prizes that can be won?

Science:

- Remind students that Pop was conducting experiments on wind power and that he had a history of working on scientific projects. Divide class into small groups and have them research the history and uses of wind power.
- Refer students to page 49 to discuss 'kid power' and the use of human energy to produce electricity. Is this or is this not a practical application?
- Reread to students selections from the story dealing with whirligigs. Why do people make whirligigs and what is their function? Have students design and construct their own whirligigs to display in school.
- Remind students that Gee went to the lake, played in the mud, and got leeches on his legs. Have students research the historic uses of leeches.

Social Studies/ Geography:

- Assign a research project to a small group of students on the history and use of the Amber Alert. Have the group present their findings to the class.
- Have students locate the towns on a map that Pop, Ronnie, and Gee visited. Have students research the history of Dodge City. Why is this town important in the history of the United States?

Night of the Howling Dogs

by Graham Salisbury

Annotation

Eighth-grader Dylan is the senior patrol leader of his Hilo, Hawaii, scout troop. He and the other boys are looking forward to camping on the coast in the shadow of a volcano until they hear that Louie, a tough, troubled kid, will be joining them on the trip. After a difficult hike to the campsite, an earthquake rocks the island and a tsunami swamps the area. Based on a true story, this haunting, unique novel creatively blends modern human conflicts with Hawaiian legends. (Grades 4-8) (AR 3.5)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.grahamsalisbury.com/>

Realia

Items: Binoculars, Canteen, Blue inflatable raft

Statement: Dylan thinks the biggest challenge on his scout camping trip will be the local bully; however, he faces spooky Hawaiian myths, a shark, and a disaster of unearthly proportions. Read *Night of the Howling Dogs* to follow Dylan's adventures.

Food

Water, Oranges, Bologna sandwich with mustard on white bread, Small bags of *Fritos*

Challenging Words

akau	(p. 97 HB)	paniolo	(p. 88 HB)
anticipation	(p. 1 HB)	pommels	(p. 89 HB)
concussions	(p. 108 HB)	precipice	(p. 26 HB)
driftwood	(p. 53 HB)	ravines	(p. 9 HB)
duckwalked	(p. 15 HB)	reluctant	(p. 97 HB)
fissures	(p. 50 HB)	repellent	(p. 67 HB)
haole	(p. 13 HB)	silhouetted	(p. 45 HB)
hydrated	(p. 71 HB)	smoldering	(p. 76 HB)
meandered	(p. 80 HB)	trailhead	(p. 17 HB)
outcropping	(p. 36 HB)	whimpered	(p. 10 HB)

Figurative Language

Similes

- "But when he was home he was on me like a four-star general." (p. 2 HB)
- "'So,' Casey said, his hair sprouting up like a pineapple top." (p. 3 HB)
- "'Wait till we hike out over all that lava. It'll eat your boots like a stump grinder." (p. 25 HB)
- "We sat, motionless, like lizards." (p. 29 HB)
- "Out in the sunlight it was so bright, it felt like somebody'd stabbed a spear into my eyes." (p. 48 HB)
- "We sat looking at the sea glittering like a field of jewels in the sun." (p. 72 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “Stand down, shrimp,’ I said. ‘I’ll carry it by myself.” (p. 4 HB)
- “Louie had come into the troop with a chip on his shoulder the size of Australia.” (p. 12 HB)
- “Hey, don’t shoot the messenger.” (p. 25 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Have students analyze the relationship between Dylan and Louie. How and why did it change?
- Initiate a discussion that will lead students to infer the causes of Louie’s actions and gruff demeanor. Ask students what made him act the way he did.

Language Arts:

- Have students come up with spooky campfire stories of their own and share them in a darkened classroom.
- Have students explore Hawaiian myths like Pele and the ghost shark, using more than one source.

Foreign Languages:

- Organize students into small groups and have them list and define the Hawaiian words used in the book. Students could create a digital dictionary of words from around the world read in numerous books throughout the year.
- Instruct students to analyze the native characters’ speech patterns. How do they differ from Dylan’s English?

Science:

- Collaborate with the library media specialist to have students research and find photographs of the different types of lava.
- Divide students into groups. Have them study and create visual projects about the plants and animals in Hawaii and the ecosystem of a tidepool.
- Remind students that Mauna Loa is 2282 ft. above sea level. Have students research the elevation of Florida and other assigned locations. Students could record their findings on a chart to print and post on the bulletin board.

Social Studies/ Geography:

- Have students research the true events surrounding the 1975 earthquake and tidal wave.
- Divide students into groups to prepare presentations on Hawaii, noting its unique geography and culture.

Punished

by David Lubar

Annotation

It all starts with Logan crashing into Professor Wordsworth in the library reference stacks. To punish Logan, the eccentric old man places a curse on him. Logan suddenly starts speaking in really awful puns and he cannot stop. According to the professor, there is only one way to break the curse – Logan must collect seven oxymorons, seven anagrams, and seven palindromes or the punishment will continue forever. This lighthearted tale filled with clever word play is an excellent read-aloud. (Grades 3-5) (AR 3.6)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.davidlubar.com/>

Realia

Items: Dusty big reference book, Rubber bands, Camera

Statement: Logan will never speak or listen to others the same way (and neither will you) after he is *Punished!*

Food

Pizza, Pot roast

Challenging Words

anagram	(p. 62 PB)	obvious	(p. 35 PB)
appropriate	(p. 32 PB)	onomatopoeia	(p. 58 PB)
automatically	(p. 32 PB)	oxymoron	(p. 34 PB)
civic	(p. 89 PB)	palindrome	(p. 78 PB)
collision	(p. 13 PB)	petal	(p. 68 PB)
contradictory	(p. 36 PB)	pun	(p. 29 PB)
doomed	(p. 30 PB)	redundancies	(p. 75 PB)
industry	(p. 27 PB)	serendipity	(p. 74 PB)
isolate	(p. 26 PB)	smirked	(p. 72 PB)
lumber	(p. 48 PB)	vanished	(p. 12 PB)

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- “As I thought about the man in the library, a shiver ran down my spine. And then it ran back up. And then it slipped into my stomach and gave it a hard kick with a pointy boot.” (p. 30 PB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “‘Slowpoke!’ he called.” (p. 12 PB)
- “He stared at me calmly, and then said, ‘You still have a few minutes. Maybe the answer is right under your nose.’” (p. 87 PB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Have students reenact the scene when Logan runs into the old man in the library. Students can brainstorm better reactions and apologies.

Language Arts:

- Organize class into groups. Have students think of words that can be spelled in more than one way (*e.g.*, won, one, or to, too, two). Instruct class to create a competitive game in which the groups can compete against each other by giving the words from each group's list.
- Instruct students to keep their own journal of anagrams, palindromes, and oxymorons they encounter in their own lives.
- Read aloud related books like *Mom and Dad Are Palindromes*, by Mark Shulman and Adam McCauley or *Palindromania!* by Jon Agee. Have students relate these books to *Punished!*

Library/Reference Skills:

- Have students locate the Dewey Decimal Classification number of their favorite thing, like Logan whose number is 796.357 (Baseball).

Science:

- Collaborate with the library media specialist to have the students study the human body, noting strengths and limitations. Have students write an essay on "What's so great about being human?"

The Puzzling World of Winston Breen

by Eric Berlin

Annotation

Winston Breen is always solving puzzles. Then one day, Winston and his sister find strange puzzle pieces in an antique box and an adventure begins. Soon Winston and his friends are hunting for a long-lost treasure. Helping them with the puzzle pieces are the town librarian, an ex-policeman, an attractive reporter, and two mysterious strangers. Puzzles abound in this fast-paced adventure that will keep readers guessing until the exciting finish. (Grades 3-5) (AR 4.2)

Realia

Items: Crossword, Sudoku, or Word Find puzzle book(s) and wooden sticks (e.g., tongue depressors) with letters written on them

Statement: Winston loves puzzles – any kind of puzzle! Winston’s puzzle-solving abilities are put to the test in this fast-paced treasure hunting adventure. It all starts when Winston’s sister finds four sticks with letters on them hidden in her birthday present, but where will it end? Join in the puzzle-solving fun by reading *The Puzzling World of Winston Breen*.

Food

Pizza, Mangoes, Peaches, Plums, Grapes

Challenging Words

accusations	(p. 56 HB)	potentially	(p. 65 HB)
bizarre	(p. 34 HB)	rickety	(p. 2 HB)
blossoming	(p. 49 HB)	ridiculous	(p. 46 HB)
considering	(p. 132 HB)	skepticism	(p. 135 HB)
conspiracy	(p. 63 HB)	squandered	(p. 60 HB)
disturbing	(p. 33 HB)	studious	(p. 4 HB)
furrowed	(p. 2 HB)	surrounded	(p. 177 HB)
hoisting	(p. 37 HB)	uncrumpled	(p. 21 HB)
masthead	(p. 178 HB)	wisebone	(p. 56 HB)
perplexing	(p. 2 HB)		

Figurative Language

Similes

- “And to see Marietta’s face, Glowacka had to angle his neck so drastically that he looked like a man considering the height of the mountain he was about to climb.” (p. 75 HB)
- “It’d be like watching a Great Dane fending off a bunch of poodles.” (p. 82 HB)
- “Saturday seemed as distant and unreachable as China.” (p. 83 HB)
- “He jumped off the table, and the joint of his right knee made a small popping sound like an air rifle.” (p. 98 HB)

- “Mal looked like a machine that was set on too high a speed. He was about to vibrate into a thousand pieces.” (p. 100 HB)
- “North waved his hands as if to magically avert disaster.” (p. 112 HB)
- “‘Yeah, yeah, sure I do. Hang on a second,’ he said, and he turned and ran like a little boy into his apartment, leaving his front door open, giving a view of a messy living room stuffed with furniture.” (p. 147 HB)
- “He extended the hand with the envelopes, which were fanned out like a deck of cards.” (p. 148 HB)
- “But wait a second. Say they had gotten to that street corner, and sitting right there was a large metal safe, as out of place as a herd of zebras.” (p. 172 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “But this was no time to speak up and demand a fifty-fifty split, not unless he wanted that dark look aimed back at him.” (p. 67 HB)
- “‘Who sets up this whole cockamamie production with puzzle pieces and treasure hunts and who knows what else over a ring?’” (p. 76 HB)
- “‘There’s no guarantee we’ll find the ring before the bank closes,’ said North.” (p. 79 HB)
- “‘He asked me to ride along on this little shindig today.’” (p. 90 HB)
- “Glowacka said, ‘Are we going to solve this puzzle or what? Snap out of it!’” (p. 121 HB)
- “Winston didn’t mean to poke fun at Marietta’s profound disappointment, but he couldn’t help grinning from ear to ear.” (p. 161 HB)
- “‘It’s nothing! It’s another dead end.’” (p. 99 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Language Arts:

- Have students write a short story about items found in a secret compartment. How do the items move the plot forward?
- Organize class into small groups and have them create word puzzles to be shared with the class. (Refer to pages 50 and 85 for ideas.)
- Review with class the definition of anaquote, using original ideas or examples from the book. Have students create original anaquotes to share with class.
- Share short, interesting news articles with class. Have students write a short news story that includes who, what, where, and when facts.

Mathematics:

- Review with class the math word problems featured in the book. (See page 140 for an example.) Divide class into small groups and have them write math word problems to share with the class.

Science:

- Refer students to page 49 and the listing of scientific vocabulary that Winston had to study. Have the students define the terms and decide on the subject Winston’s class is studying.

Social Studies:

- Discuss with students famous searches for “treasures” such as the *Titanic* or other archeological finds. Collaborate with the library media specialist to have students research historic finds and the career fields involved in those discoveries.

Additional Internet site:

http://www.winstonbreen.com/about_the_book.html

The Year of the Dog

by Grace Lin

Annotation

Grace's mom explains that the Year of the Dog is all about friends and family, as well as being a good year for finding yourself. That is exactly what Grace, an American girl of Taiwanese heritage, sets out to do. As the year unfolds, Grace makes friends with another Asian girl, Melody, and they enter the science fair together. They also share a crush on the same boy and enjoy the special food of their heritage. At the end of the year and the story, Grace has learned much about her family's culture and herself. Readers will be drawn into this heartwarming and informative story. (Grades 3-5) (AR4.2)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.gracelin.com/>

Realia

Items: Chinese bowl with chopsticks

Statement: Pacy is excited about the upcoming Chinese New Year. This year will be the Year of the Dog, and her mom and dad say it's a year to make friends, enjoy family, and, most of all, a year for thinking. But think about what? Well, maybe about what Pacy wants to do with her life! As Pacy races through a year that includes a new best friend, a book contest, a science fair project, and a school play, she finds that this Year of the Dog is indeed living up to its exciting promise. Read all about it in *The Year of the Dog*.

Food

Lychees, Chinese candy, *M&M's*, Almond cookies, *Twinkies*

Challenging Words

amethyst	(p. 113 PB)	optimal	(p. 63 PB)
bonnet	(p. 125 PB)	pansies	(p. 96 PB)
botanist	(p. 60 PB)	peony	(p. 56 PB)
chlorophyll	(p. 66 PB)	porridge	(p. 14 PB)
constellations	(p. 58 PB)	retort	(p. 15 PB)
dumplings	(p. 5 PB)	stethoscope	(p. 7 PB)
embroidered	(p. 45 PB)	substantiate	(p. 65 PB)
frantic	(p. 8 PB)	thistle	(p. 104 PB)
frantically	(p. 123 PB)	typhoon	(p. 97 PB)
lychees	(p. 41 PB)	vigorously	(p. 48 PB)

Figurative Language

Similes

- "There was a whole fried fish – crispy and brown, meat dumplings fried golden, vegetables shining with oil, steamed buns that looked like puffy clouds, shrimp in a milky sauce, and pork colored a brilliant ruby pink." (p. 5 PB)
- "But most of the time, Grandpa just sat there alone, like the last dumpling on a plate." (p. 7 PB)
- "He worked deep into the night, and he only stopped when the moon looked like a freshly peeled lychee in the sky." (p. 8 PB)

- “Soon Mom was shaking me awake. My eyelids felt as heavy as sacks of rice.” (p. 14 PB)
- “All the students had to wear their special uniform - a seaweed colored jumper, shirt and hat. It had to be clean and unwrinkled and as stiff as a piece of new cardboard.” (p. 15 PB)
- “I loved spaghetti, even though I always thought it was strange that they served it with an ice cream scoop. The spaghetti always looked like tennis balls on my plate.” (p. 20 PB)
- “He had brown-blond hair, the color of sand, and blue eyes like a rainy sky.” (p. 47 PB)
- “We saw the back of Teddy and Sophie’s heads, like two dandelions in the grass.” (p. 51 PB)
- “There were exotic flowers in the garden – red and yellow roses with their vivid petals spilling over each other, marigolds looking like bursts of orange sunshine, and brilliant violet pink petunias.” (p. 56 PB)
- “We all crowded together like a flock of excited crows.” (p. 69 PB)
- “Suddenly, the world went silent. Like a melting icicle, my dream of being Dorothy fell and shattered on the ground. I felt like a dirty puddle after the rain.” (p. 70 PB)
- “My mind was like an empty paper balloon.” (p. 74 PB)
- “They sat there like a line of birds on a telephone wire, gossiping and sharing tea.” (p. 80 PB)
- “On the night of the school play, the sky was as quiet as a feather falling.” (p. 81 PB)
- “The leaves on the trees were just starting to peek out, looking like small emerald ornaments hanging on the branches, and my shoes were coated with mud, as if they had been dipped in chocolate.” (pp. 86-87 PB)
- “After the book project was over, the days disappeared like dumplings on a plate.” (p. 94 PB)
- “I felt like a helpless fish frying in oil, with a red-hot heat burning my face and stinging my eyes. (p. 101 PB)
- “I was sad and lonely and homesick. I felt like a thistle in a rose garden.” (p. 104 PB)
- “I clung to her like a vine and she supported me like a tree.” (p. 105 PB)
- “Uncle Shin kept circling us as if he were a hunting tiger.” (p. 110 PB)
- “There were a lot of oranges. They kept jumping out of the crate, like rabbits trying to escape.” (p. 132 PB)

Curriculum Connections

(Note: The paperback edition of this book has an excellent Readers Guide with suggestions on using the book with students.)

Character Education:

- Reread both the chapter where Pacy feels that she could not play Dorothy in the play because she’s Chinese, and the chapter about the “Twinkie.” Have a class discussion concerning labeling, discrimination, and reverse-discrimination.
- Discuss with class how Pacy may have felt by being the only Asian student in school. Ask students how they would handle that situation, both from Pacy’s perspective and also that of the other students.

Fine Arts:

- Demonstrate how to make traditional Chinese crafts and allow students to make their own. Suggestions and instructions for lanterns and more are located on the following Internet site: (<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/chinesenewyear/lantern>).
- Contact the Chinese consulate or another community agency (e.g., Chinese-American church) to see if an artist who specializes in a traditional Chinese art form could come to the school and give the students a demonstration.
- Draw a dog the way Pacy does in the book and show to the class. Have students draw other animals using simple lines.

- Have students make a New Year banner using paint and brushes, adding symbols that pertain to their own experiences and circumstances.

Foreign Languages:

- Contact a high school Chinese-language teacher to come to the classroom and instruct the students on some basic words, such as those for members of the family. It could be expanded to learning how to write a word using Chinese symbols.
- Have students look up five words in Taiwanese, using Edutech's English-Taiwanese dictionary at [http://edutech.myweb.hinet.net/ynlin/T-\(E\)-H.htm](http://edutech.myweb.hinet.net/ynlin/T-(E)-H.htm). These could be added to a world language dictionary maintained throughout the year.

Language Arts:

- Have students collect one or two stories from their own families, write them in their own words, illustrate them, and then share them with the class. Make individual books, as Pacy did in *The Ugly Vegetables*, or collect all the stories in a class book.
- Have students write an opinion paper about which of Pacy's mom's stories each student liked best.
- Have students do a timeline of their past year, either month by month or by using holidays and special events as memory refreshers. They can write about events they all shared which were school-related, and then add personal events.
- Instruct students to conduct an author study of Grace Lin. Students should research her website and produce an illustrated biographical sketch. Read to class some of her other books and do a class bulletin board about the author and her body of work.
- Have students determine what animal represents the year they were born. Have them discuss the characteristics of that animal and then write a persuasive essay agreeing or disagreeing if there's a correlation between their own personality traits and the animal.

Refer to the Internet site for Chinese Zodiac at:

<http://www.c-c.org/chineseculture/zodiac/zodiac.html#Sign%20Background>.

Science:

- Discuss with students the chapters in which Pacy and Melody develop and present their science project. Hold a class discussion about whether the judge was justified in his assessment that the girls had not used the scientific method. Have students redo the experiment in class, using the scientific method.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Collaborate with the library media specialist to have students research cities in the United States with large Chinese populations. Include information on different activities that take place during the Chinese New Year in these cities.
- Expand the research project by having the students locate information on how other ethnic groups celebrate New Year in your community.
- Have students write about how their own family celebrates New Year or other holidays (including the birth of a new baby) and have them share their stories with the class. Put together a class book, maybe calling it *Celebrations!*
- Hold a Chinese New Year celebration in class. Invite a younger class as well as parents and grandparents to share the event, mirroring Pacy's holidays that were always multigenerational.

Additional Internet sites:

- http://www.gracelin.com/content.php?page=book_yearofdog&display=activities
- <http://www.wakegov.com/NR/rdonlyres/5A2B952E-B44D-4835-9BA9-6BF41D113045/0/YearoftheDog.pdf>
- <http://www.wakegov.com/NR/rdonlyres/5A2B952E-B44D-4835-9BA9-6BF41D113045/0/YearoftheDog.pdf>
- <http://k8talksbooks.blogspot.com/2008/01/year-of-dog-by-grace-lin.html>
- <http://www.readingtokids.org/Books/BookView.php?pag=3&bookID=00000547>