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SIX OF THE BEST FOR GRADES 4 - 6

Studies of Six Newbery Medal Winning Novels

Introduction

This unit was written to introduce students to novels that have won the Newbery Medal for Children's Books over the years.

The novels have been selected to provide a variety of authors, themes, writing styles and settings.

A list of characters and a synopsis is given for each novel. Student work consists of word study, comprehension, creative writing, research, art and drama activities. Also included are suggestions for using the unit, tracking sheets, a peer evaluation sheet for group work, a sheet for biographical research, a simple book review, a teacher's evaluation sheet and an answer key.

Suggestions for Using the Unit

The unit can be used in a variety of ways. The students can choose the novel they wish to read or it can be assigned by the teacher. Students can read independently, with a partner or in groups.

It is often helpful to have students with severe reading difficulties read with a teacher's aide, a parent volunteer or a peer tutor. Some novels are also available on a cassette tape and this may be used. Many students with reading difficulties have developed excellent listening skills and enjoy this activity. It is also good for their self esteem if they are able to work with their peers.

The activities can be individualized and modified by selecting the number of activities that each student is to complete. These can be indicated on the tracking sheet if necessary.

The activity sheets should be photocopied and given to each student. The activity sheets and written work can be stored in a binder or folder so that pages are not misplaced.

It is important that students keep their tracking sheets current.

Students who are reading or have completed the same novel enjoy discussing their own feelings and ideas regarding the novel. Time should be allowed for this.

PART I

A. Reading

Read Chapters 1 - 4.

B. Word Study

Words that name people, places or things are called *nouns*.

A *proper noun* is a word that names a specific person, place or thing:

Examples: Detroit, Professor Jones, Wednesday.

Proper nouns always begin with a capital letter.

1. Make a list of all the proper nouns that you can find in Chapters 1 - 4.

C. Thinking About What You Have Read.

Answer the following questions in complete sentences. Use the novel to help you find the correct answers.

1. At first the beagle will not come near Marty.
What does he do that makes the dog run to him?
2. Why were the Preston children not allowed to have pets?
3. Marty has a deep dislike of Judd. Why is this?
4. How does Marty feel about returning Shiloh to Judd? Why?
5. Marty decides to buy Shiloh from Judd.
How does he plan to earn the money?
6. Judd's hunting dogs are always hungry.
Why does he not feed the dogs adequately?

C. Think About What You Have Read

Read the questions carefully, then answer them in complete sentences.

1. What reasons does Mrs. Botts give for divorcing her husband?
2. Leigh gives up writing his story on *Ways to Catch a Lunch box Thief*. Why does he do this?
3. Why does Mr. Fridley stop Leigh from kicking the lunch bag down the hall?
4. What are Leigh's reactions to seeing the butterfly trees?
5. What are the popular topics being written about for the Young Writer's Yearbook?
6. Mr. Henshaw gives Leigh some advice about writing. What is this advice?

D. Activities

1. On your map, locate and label:
 - a) Albuquerque, New Mexico.
2. Leigh is fascinated by the monarch butterflies that he sees. Use any resources to research these interesting insects. Present your findings in a report. Draw a picture of a monarch butterfly to accompany your report.
3. Pretend you are writing a story or article for the Young Writer's Year Book. Remember the advice that Mr. Henshaw gave Leigh. Proofread your story or article.
4. Do you think that Leigh would make a good friend? Give reasons for your answer.