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Grades 4-6

READY, STEADY, READ!



Sports Stories for Boys Who Are Reluctant Readers

Novel Studies by Jack Turner



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Sports Stories for Boys

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INTRODUCTION

We frequently hear boys say that they don't like to read because books are boring and they cannot find books with topics that interest them. Most boys are interested in sports of various kinds, and these novels have been chosen with the objective of changing their minds.

The units consists of short novel studies on a variety of novels about different sports. The novels tend to be short and are easy to read. They have been chosen specifically for the reason that if a boy can read novels that hold his interest quickly and easily he will begin to overcome his dislike of reading.

The unit includes fifteen short novel studies. Each novel study contains a brief synopsis of the story, comprehension questions that relate to the content of the novel, questions that ask the student to contribute their own ideas and opinions, creative writing, research, elements of a novel and art. There is also a series of activity cards that can be used with any novels about sports.

Also included are suggestions for using the unit, a rubric for evaluation, record sheets for students and the teacher, an answer key and a list of authors of sports stories. The novels in this unit are intended for students in Grades 4 to 6, but could also be used with older students who have difficulty reading.

SUGGESTION FOR USING THE UNIT

The unit can be used in a variety of ways. Students can read the novel independently, with a partner or in groups. The teacher can read portions of the novel aloud, while students follow the story in their own copies. This is a good way to introduce the novel to the class or group.

It is often helpful to have students with severe reading difficulties read with a teacher's aide, a parent volunteer or a peer tutor. 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.

You may wish the students to work in groups and assign one of the novels and use the work, plus activity cards, for each group. Alternatively the students can choose one of the novels and read independently.

A reading journal can be kept as the students read the novel. This allows them to comment and ask questions as they read. It also gives the teacher the opportunity to ask the students questions about the plot, characters or their feelings about the novel.

Understanding the Novel

Answer the following questions in complete sentences. Refer to the novel to make sure you have included all the information.

1. Why did Lee want to play on a hockey team?
2. Why did Lee expect his parents to object to him playing hockey?
3. Coach Eastman sets out his goals for the team during the season. What are these goals?
4. How does Lee feel about the drills in the first practices? When do his feelings change?
5. How does Lee feel before his first game? What is the game result and how does Lee feel afterwards?
6. Ryan Thunderchild, although a very good hockey player, is only playing house league hockey, when he might have been playing with an A team. What reason does Bart give for this? What is the response of the other boys?
7. The team wins the next game. What is the reason for this success?
8. After the success of their seven to two win what does Mr. Hartford want the coach to do? What is the reaction of the coaches to this idea?
9. Explain why Ryan is unhappy at school in Winnipeg?
10. Ashok's experience when moving to a new school was different from Ryan's experience. How was it different?
11. Lee's equipment was old and had belonged to his father, but it was in good condition. Why was this?
12. Why do Lee, Scott and Ashok decide to send Ryan a secret Christmas present? What do they send as a gift and how do they prevent Ryan from knowing who sent the gift?
13. Mr. Hartford and Coach Jenkins disagree about the way the team played. Why did they argue?
14. Describe Lee's gift from his grandfather. Why was it given to him?

Thinking About What you Have Read

(This section asks for your ideas and opinions and there are no correct or incorrect answers. However, you must justify your responses to each question.)

1. The author includes old newspaper clippings and letter from Lee's famous uncles as part of the story. What did you think of this device?
Why do you think this was done by the author?
Do you think it added or detracted from the plot?
2. Ryan Thunderbird appears very unfriendly at the beginning of the novel. But his character changes as the story progresses.
How does the character change?
Why do you think the author included a character like Ryan in the novel?
3. Mr. Hartford took over the team, ignoring the original goals set out by Coach Eastman.
Why do you think he acted in this way?
What do you think Coach Eastman could have done to maintain the original goals that were set out?
Should the parents of the team members have intervened? What could they have done? Why do you think they did not intervene?
4. Ms Rivers has written an entertaining novel, but there is a message for her readers in the story: something to think about as they read.
What does she want her readers to consider as they read?
Do you agree with what she is telling you? Why or why not?
5. Sportsmanship is an important part of participating in all sports.
What is meant by sportsmanship?
Consider the characters in the novel and create a chart to show those who display the values of good sportsmanship and those who do not.

Creative Writing

1. Pretend you are Julian Pryce and are keeping a journal.
Make three entries in the journal: one after your first practice with the Warriors, one when you learn Paul is in hospital and one when Julian and Paul realize they are both needed on the team.
Your entries should tell what happened and how you felt about these events.
2. The novel tells how Julian felt about the events that took place.
Choose one event and tell it from the point of view of another character.
Example: Julian's entry into the classroom from Paul's point of view.
One of the games from Coach Boyd's point of view.

Research

1. Paul is allergic to peanuts.
Use the resources available to you and research the topic of allergies.
Make a chart showing the various kinds of things that cause allergies, their symptoms and treatment.

Elements of the Novel

1. Authors use various literary devices in their novels.
One of these is *foreshadowing*. This is a device that gives hints about things that will happen later in the novel.
Give example of foreshadowing in *Hot Shot*.
2. The title of the novel gives the reader a clue about the content of the novel.
Do you think this is a good title for the novel.
Who does the term Hot Shot refer to in the book?
Why do you think that?

Art

1. Choose one event from the novel and create a colored picture to illustrate it.
You may use pencil crayons, pastels or paint to color the picture.

Creative Writing 7

Create a conversation between two or three characters from your novel.

Your characters can discuss an event that took place in the novel or any other topic you wish to write about.

Write the conversation using quotation marks and check the punctuation carefully.

Creative Writing 8

Make a list of TEN questions that you would like to ask one of the characters in your novel.

Answer these questions as you think the character would answer.

Integrated Activities 2

Choose any sport that you enjoy and explain it to someone who is watching it for the first time.

Include information on the rules, the equipment used, the objective of the game, the method of scoring and the history of the game.

Integrated Activities 3

Take a survey of the students in your class to show the sports that they play.

You may include sports that are played at school if you wish.

Include the students who do not participate in a sport.

Create a graph to show your results.