

Beezus and Ramona



By

Beverly Cleary

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

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About the author: Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit novelstudies.org

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Suggestions and Expectations

This 55 page curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on a chapter of *Beezus and Ramona* and is comprised of these different sections:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language and Extension Activities

A **portfolio cover** (p.7) as well as a **Checklist** (p.6) are included so that students may track of their completed work.

Every activity need not be completed by all students.

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include family and family relationships; sibling rivalry; imagination; steam shovels; the importance of friendship.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying/creating *onomatopoeia*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Listing compound words
7. Identifying / creating similes
8. Use of singular / plural nouns
9. Identifying/creating *personification*
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identification of root words
13. Identifying / creating *alliteration*
14. Identifying anagrams.

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a 5 W's Chart
2. Identify the climax of a novel
3. Identify *cliffhanger*
4. Write a synopsis
5. Predict an outcome
6. Complete a Sequence Chart

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Compare two characters
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Establishing *point of view*

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Complete an Observation Chart
3. Write a letter to a friend
4. Conduct an interview
5. Write about personal feelings
6. Write a Book Review

Art Activities

1. Design a cover for the novel
2. Create a Storyboard.

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Synopsis

Anyone who has endured having a badly behaved younger brother or sister will quickly identify with nine-year-old Beezus, whose four-year-old sister, Ramona, is a constant source of exasperation.

Beezus felt that the biggest trouble with four-year-old Ramona was that she was just plain exasperating. If Ramona drank lemonade through a straw, she blew into the straw as hard as she could to see what would happen. If she played with her finger paints in the front yard, she wiped her hands on the neighbors' cat. That was the exasperating sort of thing Ramona did. And then there was the way she behaved about her favorite book . . . [The Publisher]

Author Biography

Beverly Cleary

Beverly Cleary was born in McMinnville, Oregon and spent the first years of her life on a farm near the town of Yamhill. Even at an early age Beverly loved books, and although the town had no library, her mother had books sent to the family from the library in Yamhill for her young daughter. When the family moved to Portland, Beverly found herself in the school's low reading circle, an experience which gave Beverly a life-long empathy for the problem of struggling readers. Encouraged by the local librarian, where she was a constant visitor, Beverly decided that she would one day like to write the books she longed to read but was unable to find in the library - funny stories about her neighborhood and the sort of children she knew. This ambition led to the creation years later of the beloved characters Ramona Quimby, Henry Huggins, Ellen Tebbits. Her first book, *Henry Huggins*, was published in 1950. The book *Beezus and Ramona* was written five years later, in 1955, and introduced the Quimby sisters to the world. Beverly Cleary has won many awards for her writing including the American Library Association's 1975 Laura Ingalls Wilder Award and the University of Southern Mississippi's 1982 Silver Medallion. Beverly Cleary was named a "Living Legend" by the Library of Congress.



Beezus and Ramona



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Name: _____

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Chapter 1



Before you read the chapter:

You may or may not have a younger brother or sister, but what do you think would be one advantage and one disadvantage to having one five years younger than you?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence. [Be careful, some words may be appropriate for more than one sentence - try to pick the best fit.]

exasperating	divert	cunning	daunted	complicated
inhale	contented	expectantly	flourish	obligingly

1. Marsha did not seem to be the least bit _____ with the difficult task.
2. All of the kids tried to _____ the teacher's attention so that Michael could sneak out.
3. He always completed his signature with an artistic _____.
4. Jasmine seemed to be _____ whatever the circumstances.
5. Working with such a sloppy person as Brandon was quite _____.
6. The police officer waited _____ while my dad looked for his license.
7. "I don't mind lending you the bus fare until payday," my boss said _____.
8. One would expect a thief to be very _____ in order to deceive people.
9. I'm afraid the instructions were much too _____ for us to understand.
10. When Sammy slapped me on the back I found it difficult to _____ for a minute.

Questions



1. What are the ages of the two main characters?

Beezus	
Ramona	

2. The **setting** of a story includes not only where but when the story takes place. What is the setting of the story in Chapter One?

3. *Every good story involves one or many **crisis**.* Describe a specific **crisis** faced by the Beezus in this chapter. Describe how she handled this crisis.

4. How would you describe Ramona's personality?

5. Why did the girls make their first trip to the library?

6. At one point Beezus states, "That was one of the most exasperating things about Ramona. She never seemed to understand what she was not supposed to do." Why do you think this was the case?

7. What reason did Ramona give for writing her name in the book?

8. Chapter One introduces us to the two main characters of the novel. In the chart below compare **Beezus** and **Ramona**. You may use physical similarities/differences as well as those relating to their personalities.

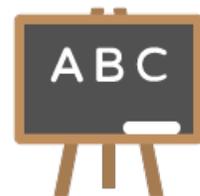
Criteria	Beezus	Ramona
1		
2		
3		

9. When they returned the book to Miss Evans, the librarian, Beezus says to her, "If she [Ramona] spoils the book she shouldn't get to keep it. Now every time she finds a book she likes she will . . ." (Hinting that every time Ramona likes a library book she will probably write in the book so she can keep it.) What clever decision did Miss Evans make to solve this problem?

Language Activities



A. The author seems to enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same consonant sound at the beginning of several words in close succession. An example from Chapter One is: **Big Steve the Stream Shovel.** Using your imagination, create your own examples of **alliteration** from the following topics. Each example must contain a minimum of three words.



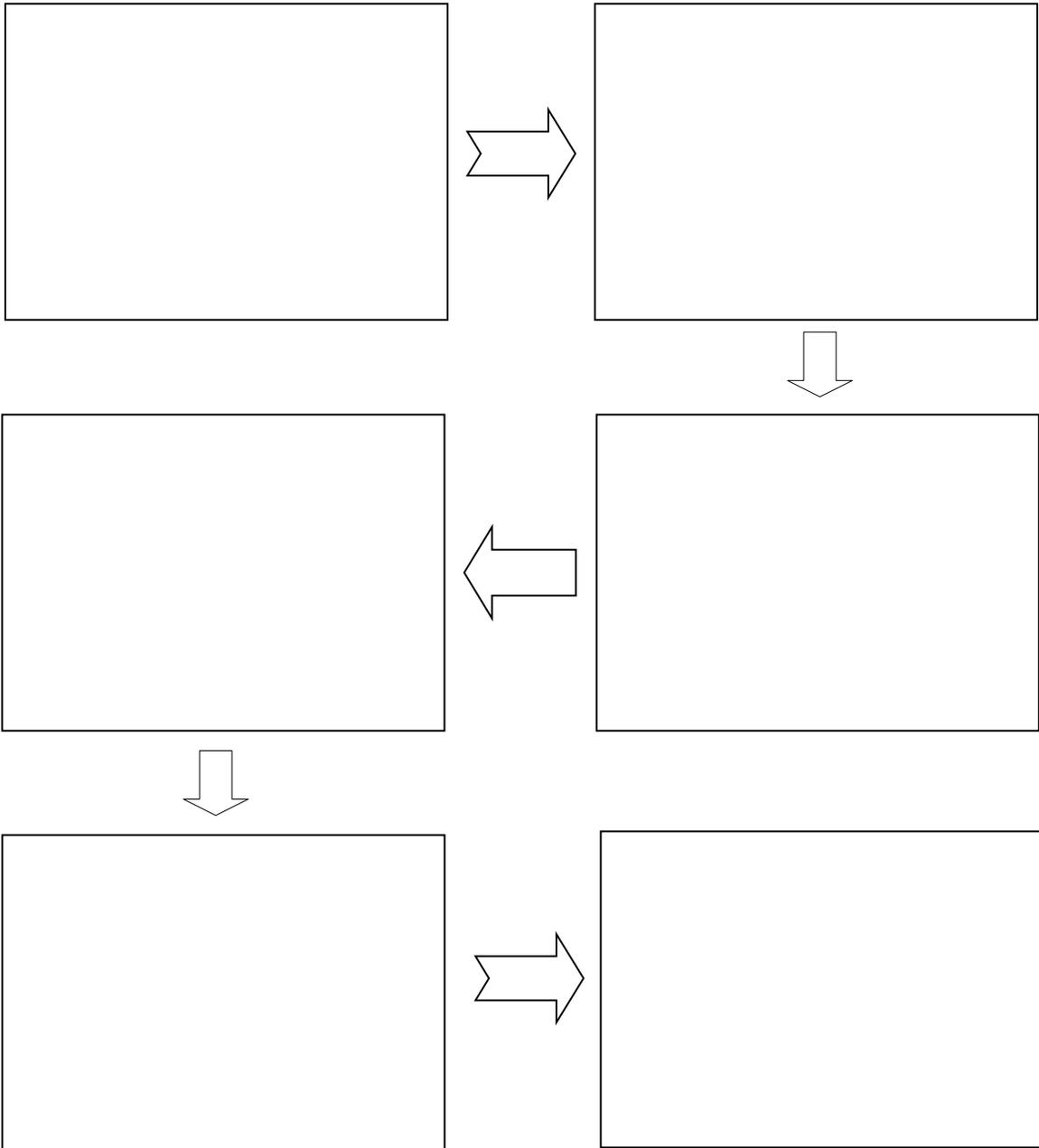
A robin's song -	
The roar of a cannon -	
A crack of lightning -	

B. Try to reassemble the word parts listed below into ten compound words found in this chapter. Be careful - one or two are quite tricky!!

writing	how	bull	heart	any
stand	side	card	self	dozer
with	sweet	some	under	way
hand	board	out	her	in

C. Sequence Chart

Choose what you consider to be the six most important events in this chapter. In each of the six boxes below list the six events that you have chosen, describing what happened and telling why you consider this to be an essential part of the story. Start with the top box on the left.



D. Cinquain Poems

A Cinquain poem has five lines and most often does not rhyme. Write two Cinquain poems describing two of the characters from *Beezus and Ramona* using what you know about them from this novel. With your teacher's permission you may wish to work with a classmate in the creation of these poems.

<p>Line 1 is one word. Line 2 is two words. Line 3 is three words. Line 4 is four words. Line five is one word.</p>	<p><i>Santa Saint Nick Long white beard Christmas Eve present-giver Jolly</i></p>
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Character 1 _____

Character 2 _____

Extension Activity



Storyboard

In the upcoming chapter Beezus and Ramona attend an art class where Beezus learns an important lesson about herself - and her little sister. In celebration of this event, you will have the opportunity to complete your own art project - A Storyboard. A story-board is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A storyboard can tell the story of only one scene - or the entire novel. [You may wish to postpone the completion of this assignment until you have read further in the novel.] Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events of your favorite scene from Chapter One. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.



1	2
3	4
5	6