

Bunnicula



By

Deborah & James Howe

A Novel Study
by Joel Michel Reed

Bunnicula

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Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on one or two chapters of *Bunnicula* and is comprised of five of the following different activities:

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

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

Many of the activities in this 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.**

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking. Students will also be expected to provide clear answers to questions and well-constructed explanations. It is critical as well that students be able to relate events and the feelings of characters to their own lives and experiences and describe their own interpretation of a particular passage.

A strength of the unit is that students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A **portfolio cover** is included (p.7) so that students may organize their work and keep it all in one place. A **Student Checklist** is also included (p.6) so that a record of completed work may be recorded.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homonyms
3. Identifying/creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identify *foreshadowing*.
6. Identify *personification*
7. Use of singular / plural nouns
8. Listing compound words
9. Identifying parts of speech
10. Identifying syllables
11. Identify/create *similes*
12. Identify anagrams

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Identify *cliffhangers*
4. Identify the climax of the novel.

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Compare two characters
3. Relating personal experiences

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a book review
3. Write about personal feelings
4. Participate in a talk show
5. Complete an Observation Sheet
6. Complete a KWS Chart

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip

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Synopsis

Bunnicula: A Rabbit-Tale of Mystery is a 1979 children's novel by Deborah and James Howe, the first in his ***Bunnicula*** series. Based on a 2007 online poll, the ***National Education Association*** named the book one of its "Teachers' Top 100 Books for Children." The series chronicles the adventures of the Monroe family and their pets, Harold the dog, Chester the cat, and Bunnicula the rabbit. The novels are narrated by Harold the family dog.

Before it's too late, Harold the dog and Chester the cat must find out the truth about the newest pet in the Monroe household – a suspicious-looking bunny with unusual habits ... and fangs! (Courtesy of Wikipedia and Simon and Schuster)

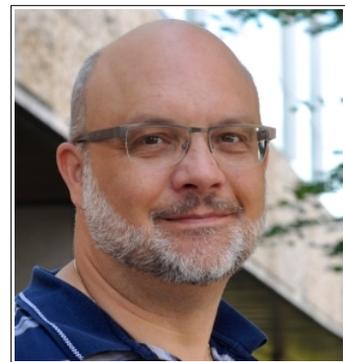
A complete synopsis and other helpful reviews can be found on the following website:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bunnicula:_A_Rabbit-Tale_of_Mystery

Author Biography

Deborah and James Howe

James Howe (born August 2, 1946) is the American author of over 80 popular books, including the ***Bunnicula*** series. **Deborah Howe** co-wrote ***Bunnicula*** with her husband James, but died shortly before the book was published. After her death, James continued writing the highly popular ***Bunnicula*** series.

In 2007, James Howe was the recipient of ***The E.B. White Read Aloud Award For Picture Books*** for his book ***Houndsley and Catina***, illustrated by Marie-Louise Gay, and published by Candlewick Press in Somerville, Massachusetts.



Biography courtesy of Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Howe

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Name: _____

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Chapter 1



Before you read the chapter:

Briefly predict what you think *Bunnicula* will be about.



Vocabulary:

Draw a straight line to connect the vocabulary word to its definition. Remember to use a straight edge (like a ruler).

1. Admonition
2. Impolite
3. Reverie
4. Tranquil
5. Decipher
6. Mongrel
7. Hysteria
8. Repulsive
9. Traumatized
10. Compromise

- A. A dog of no definable breed.
- B. To be calm, or free from disturbance.
- C. Not having or showing good manners.
- D. To translate into normal language.
- E. To be distasteful or disgusting.
- F. To give information or a stern warning.
- G. Accepting standards that are lower than desired.
- H. To be lost in one's own thoughts or daydreams.
- I. Uncontrollable emotion or excitement.
- J. Lasting shock as a result of an emotionally disturbing experience or physical injury.

Questions



1. Describe the setting of the story as Chapter One begins.

2. Circle the correct narrative that our novel follows, and the reason for your choice.

First Person Second Person Third Person

3. What strange object did Toby find on his seat in the movie theater?

4. Why did the family decide to name their new pet *Bunnacula*?

5. What name did Mrs. Monroe try to give to all of their new pets?

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6. List the occupations for both Mr. and Mrs. Monroe.

Mr. Monroe	
Mrs. Monroe	

Language Activities



A. Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here's an example of an alliteration: "... **g**rouching, **g**rouching, **g**rumbling about something or other."



Using your imagination, create your own examples of **alliteration** from the following topics. Each example must contain a minimum of three words.

The sounds of a haunted house.	
The sounds of a movie theater.	
One from your own imagination.	

B. A **simile** is a comparison using the words "like" or "as". The following is an example of a simile: "*My love is like a red, red rose.*"

What two things are being compared in this example?

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Invent two of your own **similes** comparing two different things using your own imagination:

a)

b)

C. PERSONIFICATION is giving human qualities to something that is not human. The following is an example of personification: "*The fire ran wild.*"

Why do you think personification is a popular literary device used by many authors?

Create your own example of personification.

D. Find at least two examples of each of the following five parts of speech from Chapter One, and list them in the appropriate section of the chart below.

Nouns	
Pronouns	
Adjectives	
Adverbs	
Verbs	

Extension Activity

Storyboard

A storyboard 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.



Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in Chapter One of *Bunnicula*. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6