

Hank Zipzer: Niagara Falls, or Does It?



By

Henry Winkler & Lin Oliver

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

Hank Zipzer

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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 curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two chapters of *Hank Zipzer: Niagara Falls, or Does It?* and is comprised of five of the following different activities:

1. Before You Read
2. Vocabulary Building
3. Comprehension Questions
4. 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 learning differences, creativity, coping with bullies, accepting responsibilities and 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 *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *personification*.
7. Identify *anagrams*
8. Listing compound words
9. Identifying parts of speech
10. Identify/create *similes*
11. Identification of root words

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. Complete Five W's Chart
4. Identify *cliffhangers*
5. Identify the climax of the novel.
6. Complete a Story Pyramid

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist/antagonist
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Compare characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Create a poem
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Chart
9. Complete a KWS Chart
10. Create a friendly letter.

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

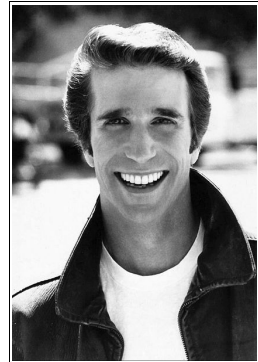
Hank Zipzer: He's smart. He's creative. He's funny. His pencils are sharp. His binders are bound. He wants to do well in school – he really does. He tries not to be lazy. Like his parents claim he is. So why is he always getting into trouble?
[Courtesy of the publisher]

Hank Zipzer is the kid next door. Humor, magic, a school bully, a pet dachshund named Cheerio, and a pet iguana that slurps soup at dinner add up to a fun novel with something for everyone. - School Library Journal

Author Biography

Henry Winkler

Henry Winkler is an actor, producer, and director, and he speaks publically all over the world. In addition he has a star on Hollywood Boulevard... and the jacket he wore as the Fonz hangs in the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, DC, But when you ask him what he is proudest of, he would say, "Writing the Hank Zipzer books with my partner, Lin Oliver." He lives in Los Angeles with his wife and three children.



Lin Oliver

Lin Oliver is a writer and producer of movies, books and television series for children and families. She has written more than 25 books for children. She lives in Los Angeles with her husband and three sons. [Courtesy of the publisher]

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Student Checklist

Student Name _____

Assignment	Grade / Level	Comments

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Name: _____

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Chapters 1-2



Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *Hank Zipzer* is, of course, Hank, a fourth grader who can't seem to do anything to please his teacher, Ms. Adolf, or Principal Love. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you've seen. What do you think makes for an especially interesting **protagonist**?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

flexible	determined	protractor	attitude
absorb	concentrate	composition	lanyard

1. Hank had to complete a five paragraph _____ by Friday.
2. Do you think that the sponge will be able to _____ all that water?
3. “I don't like your surly _____, Melissa,” Ms. Adolf shouted angrily.
4. I have never seen so many keys attached to one's _____ before.
5. Louise was _____ to complete the ten kilometer run within an hour.
6. You will need a _____ in order to complete that math problem successfully.
7. I really think you can come up with the correct answer if you _____.
8. In order to be an accomplished gymnast you have to be quite _____.

Questions



1. What is the **setting** of the story for much of the first two chapters?

2. Describe the crisis that Hank experienced in the opening paragraphs of Chapter One.

3. Think of one appropriate adjective to describe each of the following characters:

Hank Zipzer		Nick McKelty	
Frankie Townsend		Principal Love	
Ms. Adolf		Frankie's mom	

4. Other than Ms. Adolf, the other grade four teacher's name was Mr. _____.

5. The essay topic assigned by Ms. Adolf was _____.

6. Neither Principal Love or Ms. Adolf seem like educators many students would like to have in their school. If given a choice, however, which would you least like to have as a principal or teacher, Principal Love or Ms. Adolf? Why?

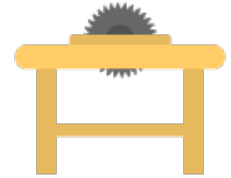
7. Why did Hank find the composition assigned by Ms. Adolf to be so daunting? If you were Hank, what might you have done to make sure that you finished the assignment by Monday morning?

Language Activities



A. Anagrams

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word **WAS** can also form the word **SAW**. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:



a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in the first two chapters of *Hank Zipzer*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
rules		Attracts.
grade		Became extremely angry.
smile		Muddy ooze.
times		Things.
words		An ancient weapon.
drawer		Prize.
shred		Bunches of sheep or cows.

Now find two additional words from the first two chapters which have interesting anagrams to see if you can stump a classmate.

Word	Anagram	Clue

Good to Know ~ Niagara Falls

Niagara Falls is one of the natural wonders of the world, and one of the most popular tourist attractions in North America. Did you know the following about this famous Falls?

- ~ Niagara Falls is located on the border of Ontario, Canada and New York state.
- ~ Niagara Falls is actually 3 falls, Horseshoe Falls, the American Falls & the Bridal Veil Falls.
- ~ The 3 waterfalls combine to produce the highest flow rate of any waterfall on earth.
- ~ It is illegal (and not very smart) to go over the Niagara Falls.
- ~ A number of people have tried it anyway, some survived, some were injured or killed.
- ~ The first tightrope walker to cross the Niagara Falls did so in 1859.

B. A Quatrain Poem About Niagara Falls.

The **quatrain** is a popular form of rhymed verse. It is a poem of four lines, is usually light and can be humorous. The following quatrain is the first verse of a poem written by Rachelle S and can be found on the *Poetry Soup* website.

Niagara Falls
a perfect place
full of life
full of grace.



Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A - B - C - B**. Other rhyming schemes include: AABB, AAAA, AABA, ABBA, ABBB, and AAAB.

Your task is to write your own quatrain poem. You may choose a rhyming scheme that fits with your own personal creation. The theme should have something to do with the themes established in the first two chapters of our novel.

The Quatrain Poem

Now create your own Quatrain Poem. Your poem must follow the format of a quatrain poem described above (and must rhyme).

Title: _____

C. Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** - a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here's one such example: from Chapter Two: ... backwards ... blindfolded ... and butt naked.



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

The sound of a waterfall.	
The flight of a bumble bee.	
Your choice.	

D. A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter One is: ... *and a mole on his cheek that looked like the Statue of Liberty without the torch.* ~ What is being compared in this example?

--	--

Invent your own **similes** comparing the following items with something from your own imagination:

a) the antics of a pair of dolphins

b) a crack of thunder

c) your choice

E. 5 Ws and an H.

Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



WHO?



WHAT?



WHEN?



WHERE?



WHY?



HOW?

F. Caviar Words

The author of this novel is noted for his use of elegant, tasteful words. Someone once stated that some words have the sound of **caviar** (rich and elegant) and others are more common (**peanut butter** words). With a colleague come up with 6 examples of each type of word. You may use any chapter of the novel to find these words.



Caviar Words	Peanut Butter Words

G. My 02¢ About Chapters 1-2.

What I Liked Best:

I Didn't Like The Part:

I Didn't Like It Because:

Extension Activity



Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A story-board can tell the story of only one scene - or the entire novel. Complete the story-board below illustrating the events described in the first two chapters of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.



1	2
3	4
5	6