

Holes



By

Louis Sachar

A Novel Study
by Joel Michel Reed

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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 several chapters of *Holes* 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 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.**

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. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *anagrams*
7. Use of singular / plural nouns
8. Listing compound words
9. Identifying parts of speech
10. Determining alphabetical order
11. Identify *personification*
12. Identify/create *similes*

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.

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Relating personal experiences

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Write a description of personal feelings
6. Write a book review
7. Complete an Observation Sheet
8. 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

Stanley Yelnats is under a curse. A curse that began with his no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing great-great-grandfather and has since followed generations of Yelnatses. Now Stanley has been unjustly sent to a boys' detention center, Camp Green Lake, where the boys build character by spending all day, every day digging holes exactly five feet wide and five feet deep. There is no lake at Camp Green Lake. But there are an awful lot of holes.

But what could be buried under a dried-up lake? Stanley tries to dig up the truth in this tentative and darkly humorous tale of crime and punishment – and redemption.

A complete synopsis and other helpful reviews can be found on the following website:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holes_\(novel\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holes_(novel)) (Website may contain plot spoilers)

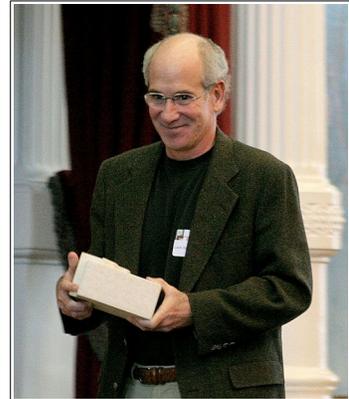
Author Biography

Louis Sachar

I was born in East Meadow, New York on March 20, 1954 and lived there until third grade. When I was nine years old, we moved to Tustin California. At that time, there were orange groves all around, and the local kids would often divide up into teams and have orange fights.

I enjoyed school and was a good student, but it wasn't until high school that I really became an avid reader. After high school, I attended Antioch College in Ohio. My father died during my first semester, and I returned to California to be near my mother. I returned to college, this time to the University of California at Berkeley where I majored in Economics.

When I graduated in 1976 I decided to try to write a children's book, which eventually became *Sideways Stories From Wayside School*. It took me about nine months to write the book. I wrote in the evenings. I decided to go to law school. *Sideways Stories from Wayside School* was accepted by a publisher during my first week at Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco. I finished law school, graduating in 1980, but it wasn't until 1989 that my books began selling well enough that I was finally able to stop practising law and devote myself fully to writing. (Biography courtesy of Wikipedia)



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Name: _____

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Chapter 1-4

Part One



Before you read the chapter:

Briefly predict what you think the plot of *Holes* will be about.



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

hammock	handcuffed	sneakers	eastern
emptiness	desolate	campers	relaxation

1. The only trees are two old oaks on the _____ edge of the "lake".
2. If you get bitten by a yellow-spotted lizard, you might as well go into the shade of the oak trees and lie in the _____.
3. Most _____ weren't given a choice. Camp Green Lake is a camp for bad boys.
4. Stanley was sitting about ten rows back, _____ to his armrest.
5. He looked out the window at the vast _____. He watched the rise and fall of a telephone wire. In his mind he could hear his father's gruff voice softly singing to him.
6. The apartment smelled the way it did because Stanley's father was trying to invent a way to recycle old _____.
7. The land was barren and _____. He could see a few rundown buildings and some tents. Farther away there was a cabin beneath two tall trees.
8. Mr. Sir told him he should wear one set to work in and one set for _____.

Questions



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

2. What was particular strange about the setting of *Camp Green Lake*?

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

First Person Second Person Third Person

4. What were the two options that the judge gave Stanley during his trial?

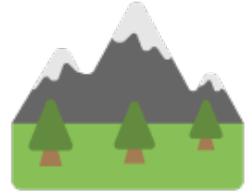
5. What did Stanley's teacher do that ended up humiliating him?

6. Who did the Yelnats family blame whenever something went wrong?

Language Activities

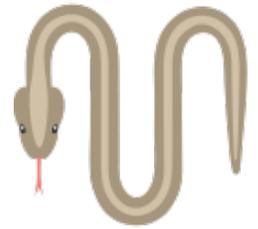


A. Chapter 4 contained an important literary devices called a **cliffhanger**. A cliffhanger usually occurs at the end of a chapter when the author leaves the reader in suspense. How is this true in Chapter 4? Why do you think the author ended the chapter this way?



B. Proceed With Caution!

In Chapter One we learn that there are a number of dangerous poisonous creatures living near *Camp Green Lake*, including rattlesnakes, scorpions, and the dreaded yellow-spotted lizard.



Using resources from your school library or the Internet, research another interesting poisonous animal. Your task is to list at least three fascinating facts about the creature you have chosen, as well as an appropriate picture or drawing.

1.
2.
3.

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 the first 4 chapters of *Holes*. You may wish to practice on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6