

Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher



By

Bruce Coville

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

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Table of Contents

Suggestions and Expectations	3
List of Skills	4
Synopsis / Author Biography	5
Student Checklist	6
Reproducible Student Booklet	7
Answer Key	67

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 *Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher* and is comprised 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 dragons, courage and tolerance, sacrifice, friendship, personal growth.

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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
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

Jeremy Thatcher knows a thing or two about raising animals – after all, his dad is a veterinarian.

But after he leaves Mr. Elives' magic shop with a strange marbled egg, it soon becomes clear that this is one pet he wasn't prepared for! How is he supposed to keep a flame-breathing dragon with razor-sharp teeth and an out-of-control appetite in his bedroom?

But if the playful baby dragon is ever to grow up and become a magnificent beast of myth and legend, it needs Jeremy. And though he doesn't know it yet, Jeremy needs a dragon. [Courtesy of the publisher]

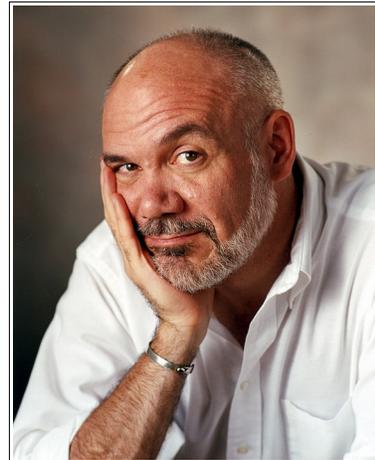
Author Biography

Bruce Coville

Bruce Coville was born in Syracuse, NY on May 16, 1950 (where he still lives). As a young boy he loved to read (Nancy Drew, The Hardy Boys and *The Voyages of Dr. Doolittle*). When he was 19 he married Katherine Dietz who lived right around the corner. They had three children together. Along the way Bruce had a number of different jobs including gravedigger and elementary school teacher. Bruce and Katherine have written a number of books together including *The World's Worst Fairy Godmother*.

Check out his website at www.brucecoville.com

[Bio adapted from Bruce's website]



Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher



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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 *Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher* is Jeremy, an animal lover who lives in the small town of Blodgett's Crossing. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you've seen. Who would you say is your *most favorite* character ever? What made you select this character?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

injustice	humiliation	deliciously	kaleidoscope
admonishing	specimen	sympathy	pursuer

1. After his run-in with his annoying neighbor, Jeremy felt _____ cranky.
2. When hit on the nose with the swing, a _____ of colors exploded in his head.
3. Chelsea felt a grievous sense of _____ while listening to the maid's sad story.
4. It took Hansel and Gretel more than an hour to lose their _____ in the forest.
5. The scientist removed the _____ from under the microscope's lens.
6. His mother gave him an _____ look, but didn't say a word.
7. Kelvin was filled with _____ when his younger brother broke his bike.
8. Karen felt such a sense of _____ that she began to weep uncontrollably.

Questions



1. Describe the **setting** of the story at the beginning of Chapter One.

2. Please describe your impression of Mr. Kravitz in this chapter and the evidence upon which you based this first impression.

3. What did Jeremy consider unjust in Chapter One? Do you think Jeremy has a legitimate point? Why or why not?

4. What did you consider to be the oddest thing about Mr. Elives' shop?

5. The name of Jeremy's hometown was _____.

6. Mr. Elives warns Jeremy, "And for Ishtar's sake, be careful." Using resources in your school library or on the Internet research who **Ishtar** is and record two interesting facts about her below.

1.	
2.	

7. How do you think Jeremy's collection of pets will serve him well as a *dragon hatcher*?

8. Summarize the written instructions given to Jeremy from Mr. Elives.

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 five chapters of *Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
smiles		Green, sour fruits.
resist		Sibling.
start		Small pastries.
words		An ancient weapon.
done		A central or connecting point.
ears		Scorch or burn.
hear		A mammal.

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

B. A Quatrain Poem Celebrates Dragons.

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 four lines of the famous poem, *Dragons*, written by the famous poet, Atrocious Halitosis.

*Dragons is delicious,
When you cook them in a pot.
They're tasty and nutritious,
Whether cold or piping hot.*



Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A - B - A - 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 (like *magicians* or *injustice*).

The Quatrain Poem

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

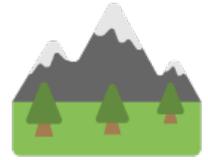
Title: _____

Bonus Question.

In the above poem why do you think the poet used the word *is* instead of *are* in the first line (*Dragons is delicious*)?

C. Cliffhanger

Chapter Two contains an important literary device 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 2? Why do you think the author ended the chapter this way?



D. Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human. The following is an example taken from Chapter Two: *The bounding dog greeted him with an explosion of enthusiasm...*



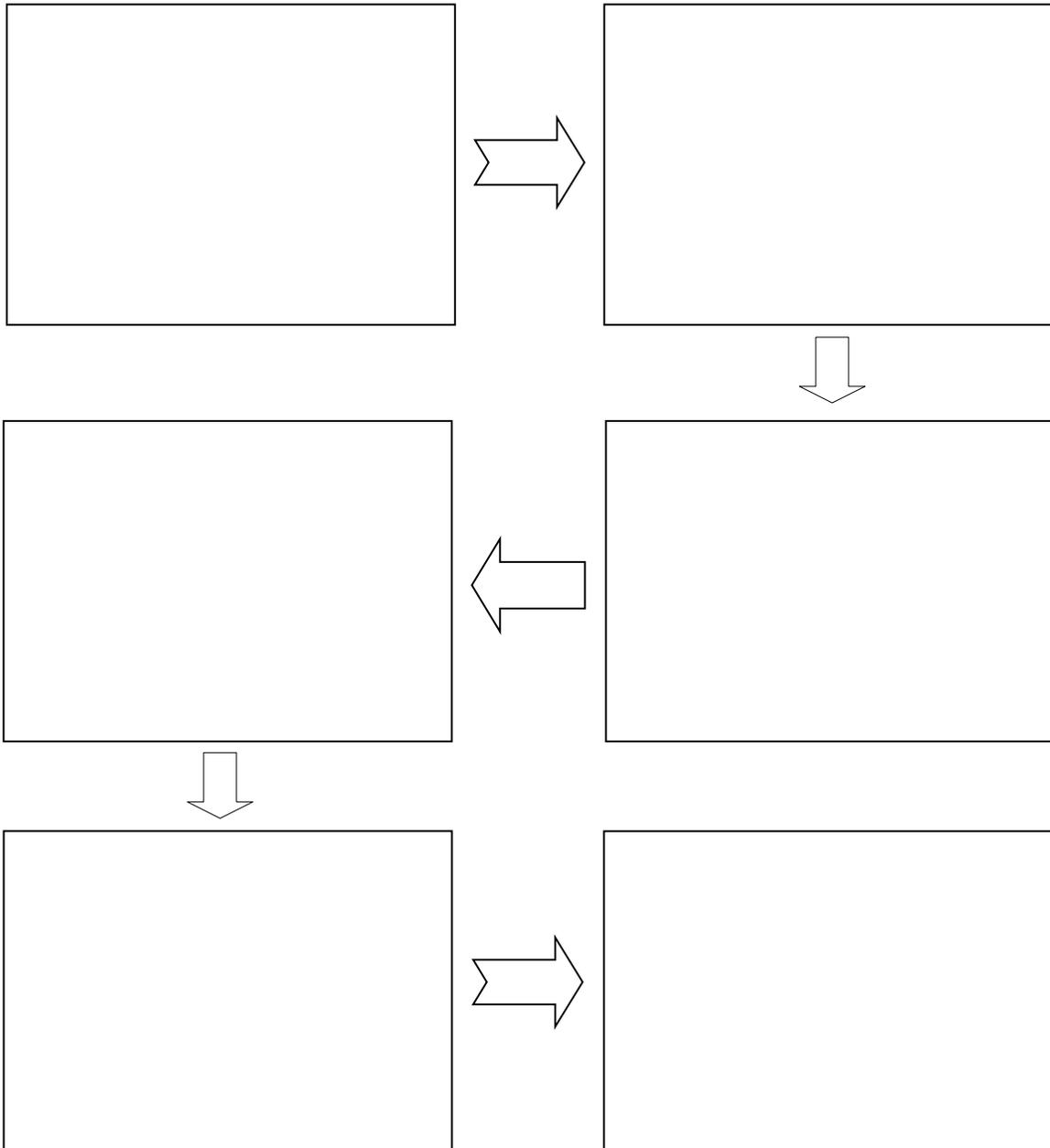
Describe how enthusiasm is personified in this example.

Create your own example of personification.

As you continue to read through the novel be on the lookout for other examples of this literary device. If you should find one, come back to this question and enter it below.

E. Sequence Chart

Choose what you consider to be the six most important events in these chapters. 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.



F. 5 Ws and an H.

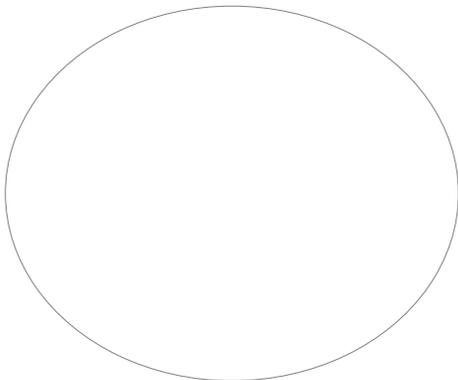
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



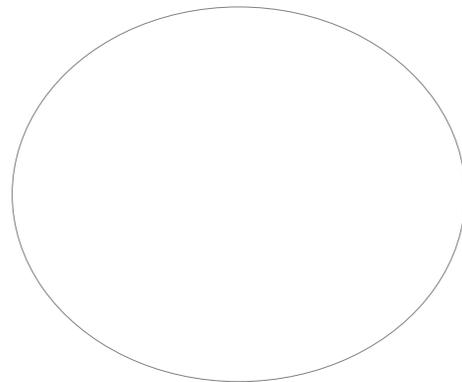
WHO?



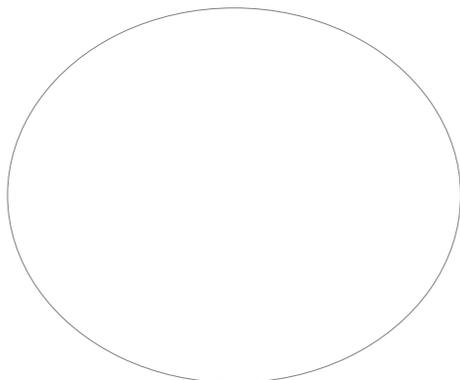
WHAT?



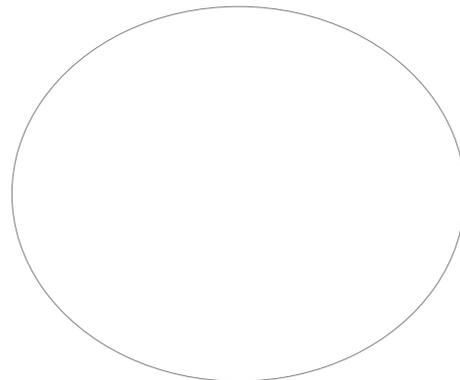
WHEN?



WHERE?



WHY?



HOW?

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