

# One Crazy Summer



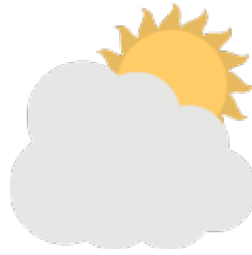
By

Rita Williams-Garcia

A Novel Study  
by Nat Reed

# One Crazy Summer

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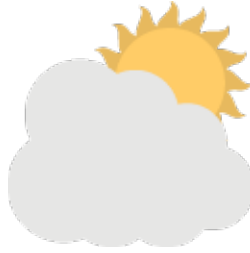
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**About the author:** Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit [novelstudies.org](http://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 three chapters of *One Crazy Summer* and is comprised of the following 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 race relations in the United States in the late 1960s, black pride, racial prejudice, friendship, family relations.

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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

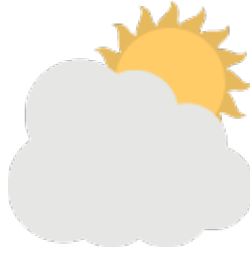
1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Create a poem
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Chart
9. Complete a KWS Chart
10. Create a friendly letter.

### 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

Set during one of the most tumultuous years in recent American history, ***One Crazy Summer*** is the heartbreaking, funny tale of three girls who travel to Oakland, California in 1968 in search of the mother who abandoned them. It's an unforgettable story told by a distinguished author of books for children and teens, Rita Williams-Garcia. [Summary courtesy of the publisher]

*A powerful and affecting story of sisterhood and motherhood.* - Monica Edinger, - *The New York Times*.

## Author Biography Rita Williams-Garcia

In addition to ***One Crazy Summer***, Rita Williams-Garcia is the author of six distinguished novels for young adults. She is the winner of a number of awards for her writing including a Coretta Scott King Honor Book, Newbery Honor Book and the Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction. Rita was born in Queens, New York in 1957. She now lives in Jamaica, New York and teaches at Vermont College of Fine Arts. (Courtesy of the publisher)



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## Student Checklist

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment	Grade / Level	Comments

# One Crazy Summer



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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# One Crazy Summer

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### Chapters 1-3

Cassius Clay Clouds to Secret Agent Mother



#### Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *One Crazy Summer* is eleven-year-old Delphine, who with her two younger sisters is about to embark on the journey of a lifetime. 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.

signature	announce	descent	immigrants
episode	appalled	unfurled	soothed

1. The girls became frightened when the airplane began its \_\_\_\_\_.
2. We had already seen that \_\_\_\_\_ of *Saved By the Bell*.
3. When the soldier \_\_\_\_\_ the flag, the people began to applaud.
4. When the thunderstorm began, my mother came into our bedroom and \_\_\_\_\_ my little sister.
5. “Just place your \_\_\_\_\_ on the form, Mrs. Jensen,” the clerk ordered roughly.
6. Kelsey was \_\_\_\_\_ at how messy the living room was.
7. When they began to \_\_\_\_\_ the winners, we snuck out of the auditorium.
8. Most of the people on our street are recent \_\_\_\_\_ to our country.



# Questions



1. What is the **setting** of the story for much of the second chapter?


2. What do you think the expression, *I kept on spinning straw* means in the following sentence: *As long as Vonetta kept her fear to one shriek and Fern kept hers to biting Miss Patty Cake, I kept on spinning straw, making everything all right?*


3. Why did the girls' father insist on them spending a month with their mother?


4. After reading the first three chapters think of two adjectives which would accurately describe the following characters:

CHARACTER	ADJECTIVE 1	ADJECTIVE 2
Delphine		
Vonetta		
Fern		
Big Ma		
Cecile		

5. Why did Delphine come to regret not sitting in the window seat of the airplane?


6. Why was it so important to Big Ma that the girls behave on their trip?


7. How was Cecile not the kind of mother the girls expected?


## 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 three chapters of *One Crazy Summer*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
sisters		Withstands.
shades		Runs fast.
trash		Adult male deers.
period		Not as smart.
spin		Small bites.
plane		Group; committee.
grown		Incorrect.

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

Word	Anagram	Clue

## B. The Quatrain Poem.

The **quatrain** is a popular form of rhymed verse. It is a poem of four lines, is usually light and often humorous. The following quatrain was written by the *Canadian poet, Campfire Sam*.

*Our plane trip to Oakland,  
Was a scarey old ride.  
It tossed and it shook us,  
From in to outside.*



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, ABBA, 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 chapter 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. Personification** is giving human qualities to something that is not human. The following is an example taken from Chapter Two: *The clouds had made peace with our Boeing 727.*

Describe how the clouds are 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.


**D.** 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: ... *the Golden Gate Bridge.*



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

A bumpy airplane ride.	
An old teddy bear.	
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?***

## 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 three chapters of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.



1	2
3	4
5	6