

# Out of My Mind



By

Sharon M. Draper

A Novel Study  
by Nat Reed

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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 *Out of My Mind* and is comprised of five 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 disabilities, cerebral palsy, family and friendship, belonging and understanding, peer pressure & 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
12. Identify *onomatopoeia*

### 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

Eleven-year-old Melody has a photographic memory. Her head is like a video camera that is always recording. Always. And there's no delete button. She's the smartest kid in her whole school – but NO ONE knows it. Most people – her teachers and doctors included – don't think she's capable of learning and up until recently her school days consisted of listening to the same preschool-level alphabet lessons again and again and again. If only she could speak up, if only she could tell people what she thinks and knows . . . but she can't because Melody can't talk. She can't walk. She can't write. Being stuck in her head is making Melody go out of her mind – that is, until she discovers something that will allow her to speak for the first time ever. At last Melody has a voice . . . but not everyone around her is ready to hear it. [The Publisher]

## Author Biography

Sharon M. Draper

Sharon M./ Draper is a two-time Coretta Scott King Award-winning author, most recently for ***Copper Sun***, and previously for ***Forged by Fire***. She's also the recipient of the 2012 Jeremiah Ludington Award, which recognizes lifetime achievement in children's literature, as well as the Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe Author Award for New Talent for ***Tears of a Tiger*** and Coretta Scott King Author Honors for ***The Battle of Jericho*** and ***November Blues***. Her other books include ***Just Another Hero***, ***Romiette and Julio***, ***Darkness Before Dawn***, and ***Double Dutch***. She lives in Cincinnati, Ohio, where she taught high school English for 25 years. For more information, visit her online at [sharondraper.com](http://sharondraper.com) [Courtesy of the publisher]





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*By Sharon M. Draper*

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

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## Chapters 1-3



### Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *Out of My Mind* is eleven-year-old Melody who is about to embark on a tumultuous few months that will change her life forever. 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.

iridescent	cathedral	camcorder	contentment
frustrate	permanent	digestive	hospitalized

1. The prince and princess were married in a large \_\_\_\_\_ in London.
2. Eating all of that candy at once is sure to upset your \_\_\_\_\_ system.
3. Several children had already been \_\_\_\_\_ with lead poisoning.
4. An \_\_\_\_\_ oil slick glistened on the surface of the water.
5. My dad never seems to remember to bring his \_\_\_\_\_ to family events.
6. Catherine had a wide smile of \_\_\_\_\_ on her face during the movie.
7. We are hoping that this will be the \_\_\_\_\_ home for that foster child.
8. You could see that the difficult math problem was beginning to \_\_\_\_\_ Jill.

# Questions



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


2. After reading Chapters One to Three, what three **adjectives** do you think would be good choices to describe Melody's personality?

1	2.	3.
---	----	----

3. Why is the last paragraph in Chapter One so astonishing?


4. Investigate: About two people in every 1000 have **cerebral palsy**. One such person is Melody. Using resources found in your school library or on the Internet, research three interesting facts about this disorder and list them below.

1.	
2.	
3.	

5. Melody lists two of her *positives* as her smile and her deep dimples. From what you know of Melody after reading the first three chapters, what else would you list as a strength?


6. Melody's favorite song was \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.

7. It would be difficult for most parents to have a child with cerebral palsy. How would you describe Melody's parents' ability to cope with her disability? (Be sure to back-up your response with proof from the story.)


8. What were Melody's *tornado explosions*?


## 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 *Out of My Mind*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
words		An ancient weapon.
face		A small restaurant.
lemons		Another fruit.
nuts		Amaze.
point		A piebald horse.
time		Thing; article.
breath		Someone in a tub.

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. Even Shakespeare liked to write Quatrain Poems.

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 famous quatrain was written by the great writer, William Shakespeare, and is taken from *Sonnet 18*.

*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.*



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, 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 three chapters of our novel.

<p><b>The Quatrain Poem</b></p> <p>Now create your own Quatrain Poem. Your poem must follow the format of a quatrain poem described above (and must rhyme).</p> <p><b>Title:</b> _____</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
--

**C.** A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter One is: *Words have always swirled around me like snowflakes...*



What is being compared in this example?

--	--

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

a) the squeak of a rusty screen door

--

b) the sound of a grasshopper

--

c) your choice

--

**D. Personification** is giving human qualities to something that is not human. Here's an example from Chapter Two: *Songs floated through me and stayed.*

Describe how songs are personified in this example.


Create your own example of personification.

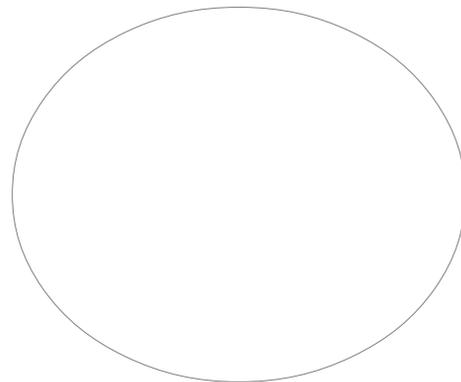

As you continue to read through the novel be on the lookout for other examples of this literary device. If you should find one, come back to this question and enter it below.


## E. 5 Ws and an H.

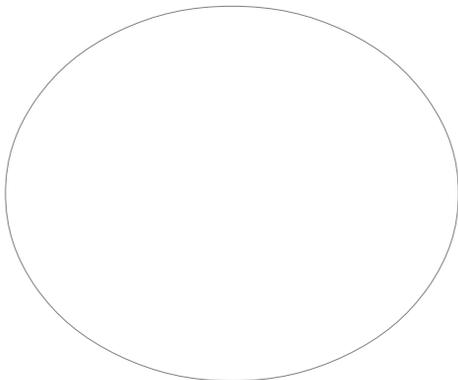
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



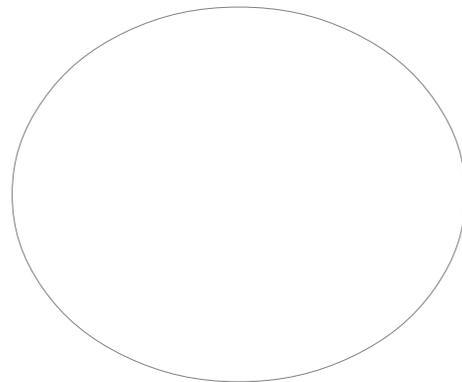
***WHO?***



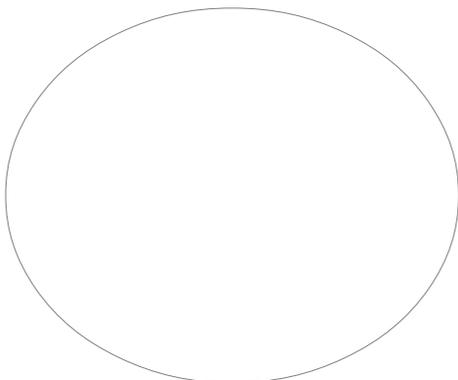
***WHAT?***



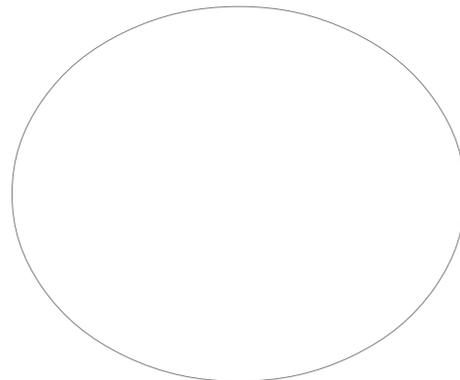
***WHEN?***



***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 storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first chapter of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.



1	2
3	4
5	6