

Roller Girl



By

Victoria Jamieson

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.

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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 one or two chapters of *Roller Girl* 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 the sport of roller derby, family and friendship, loyalty, personal growth, courage, accepting responsibilities, learning to accept life's difficulties and coming of age.

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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

My first graphic novel was published in 2015 by Dial Books for Young Readers. In 2016, **Roller Girl** was awarded a Newbery Honor Award, and has also become a New York Times bestseller. This book has certainly changed my life, and I'm so grateful and honored when I receive letters from readers telling me it's changed their lives, too.

Roller Girl follows the story of Astrid as she navigates the hard-hitting worlds of junior roller derby and middle school friendships. It's based on my own struggles fitting in in middle school - as well as the home I found while playing roller derby as an adult.
[Courtesy of the author]

Author Biography Victoria Jamieson

I grew up in Havertown, Pennsylvania, where I wrote and illustrated my first book in the third grade. **Super Cow!** was a smash hit both with critics (my teacher) and collectors (my parents).

When I was twelve years old, my family moved to Florida. My parents tried to get me and my two brothers excited about our move by buying us season passes to Disney World. I loved watching the animators at work on the Backstage Tour, and I decided I wanted to work for Disney when I grew up.

I attended the Rhode Island School of Design, but soon found myself drawn back towards illustration instead of animation. After graduation and a slew of ill-fated careers (including a portrait artist on a Carnival Cruise ship and a conductor of illegal tours through the Vatican Museums), I began working as a book designer with HarperCollins Children's Books in New York.

Many of my books are based on my real-life experiences. I played roller derby with the Rose City Rollers in Portland, Oregon - which is why I wrote **Roller Girl**. I also worked at the Bay Area Renaissance Festival in Florida when I was in high school, which is the basis for **All's Faire In Middle School**. And lastly, my older brother had two pet hamsters when we were kids, named George and Martha Washington - hence, G.W. In **The Great Pet Escape**.

I now live in Pennsylvania with my husband, young son, and a very grumpy cat named Sharon. (<http://www.victoriajamieson.com/about-me/>)



Roller Girl



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Name: _____

Roller Girl

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Prelude

The Graphic Novel

Before beginning this novel study unit it is important to go over some terms that are particular to the study of the graphic novel. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, define the following as they relate to a comic strip or graphic novel:

1	Speech Bubble (include what is meant by the <i>tail</i>)	
2	Thought Balloon	
3	Caption	
4	Panel	
5	Tier	
6	Gutter	

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Chapter 1



Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *Roller Girl* is Astrid, an outspoken, adventurous 12 year old girl who lives in Portland, Oregon. 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 interesting **protagonist**? (One that is difficult to forget.)



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

enlightenment	derby	illegal	fierce
culture	competitor	bleachers	bode

1. Doesn't he know it is _____ to drive on that side of the highway?
2. Let's all hope that the age of _____ arrives soon for those poor people.
3. Bobby Clarke was always a very _____ competitor.
4. The results from last night's game doesn't _____ well for the Yankees.
5. The Ojibway people have a very rich and ancient _____.
6. The stadium _____ were jammed.
7. Are you going to invite Mike to be a _____ in the dart tournament?
8. We are going to be in attendance at the local _____.

Questions



1. What is the **setting** of the story at the beginning of Chapter One?

2. Think of one thing you would enjoy about attending a roller derby and one thing you probably wouldn't enjoy that much.

Enjoy	
Not so much	

3. If you were a participant in a roller derby league, what would be your crazy name?

4. What does **ECE** stand for?

5. What is meant by *artistic license*?

6. What prompted Astrid to believe fate had determined that she become a roller girl?

7. What was the goal of the jammer and the blocker?

Jammer	
Blocker	

8. What event made Astrid believe that Rainbow Bite was a true champion?

9. Describe the different reactions that Astrid and Nicole had to the roller derby event they witnessed.

Language Activities



A. Roller Derby

Two roller derby teams are mentioned in this chapter, **The Oregon City Rollergirls** and **The Rose City Rollers** from Portland. The Rose City Rollers is actually a women's flat track roller derby league based in Portland, Oregon. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, research three pertinent facts about this league and record them below.

1.	
2.	
3.	

B. 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 chapter of *Roller Girl*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
strike		Three-wheeled vehicles.
dread		A bold act.
carnie		More sly.
skater		Move very fast.
weird		More broad.
rules		Attracts.
blonde		To take courage.

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

Word	Anagram	Clue

Good to Know ~ Portland, Oregon

The setting for this novel is the city of Portland, Oregon. Portland is the largest city in the state of Oregon with a population of approximately 647,000 people. It is a beautiful city set in the shadow of Mount Hood. It is known for its parks, bicycle paths and Washington Park, which hosts sites including the formal Japanese Garden as well as Oregon Zoo and its railway. If you ever get a chance – drop by Portland for a visit.



C. A Roller Derby Quatrain Poem.

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 was written by the famous poet, Atrocious Halitosis. It is called, ***Dizzified***.

*The roller derby came to town.
It is a sight to see.
They're skating round and round the track,
It's dizzifying me!*



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, ABAB, 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.

<p>The Quatrain Poem</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>Title: _____</p> <table border="1"><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr></table>				

<p>Artistic License. Poets often use artistic license in their creations. How does the poet of the above poem use artistic license in this example?</p> <table border="1"><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td></tr></table>				

D. Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here are two such examples from the same sentence in Chapter One: We went in this huge building that looked like an airplane hanger.



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

A roller derby game.	
The roar of the crowd.	
Your choice.	

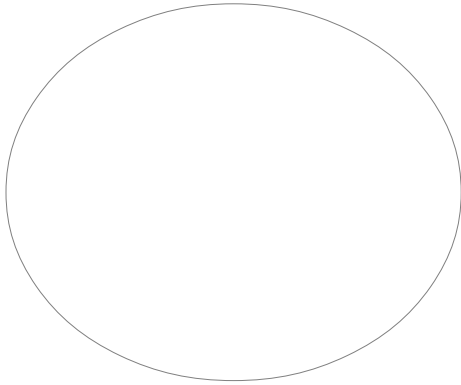
E. Chapter One contains an example of an important literary device called **foreshadowing**. Foreshadowing is defined as *a warning or indication of a future event*. How does the author end Chapter One with an example of this literary device? Why do you think the author might have ended the chapter in this way?



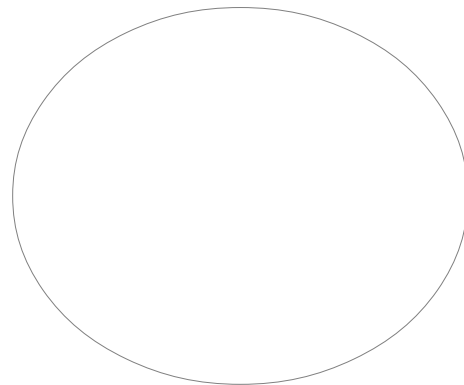
1. Incidence of foreshadowing:
2. Reason for including it at the end of this chapter:

F. 5 Ws and an H.

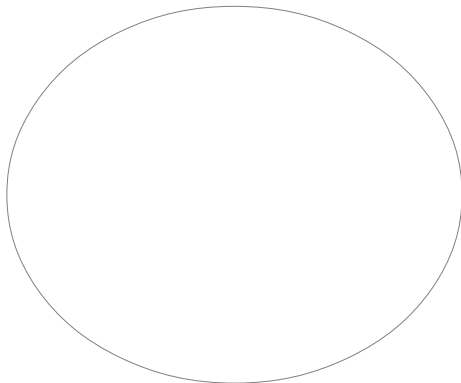
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



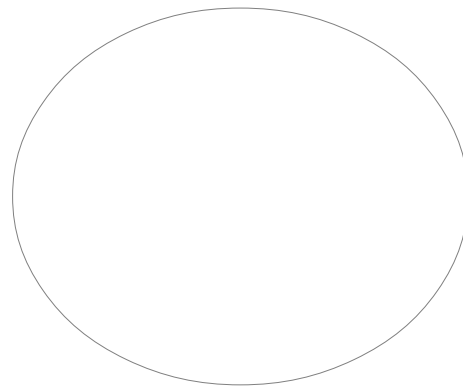
WHO?



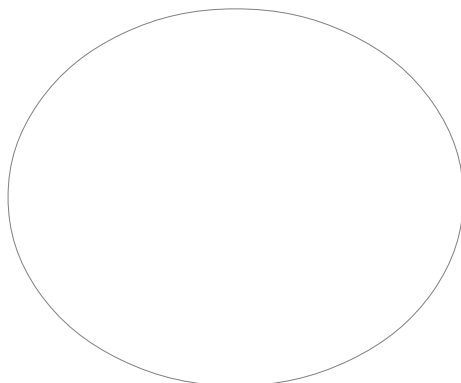
WHAT?



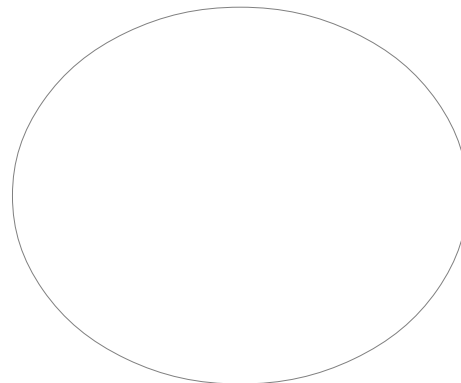
WHEN?



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



1	2
3	4
5	6