

# Scat



By

Carl Hiaasen

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 86 page curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two or three chapters of **Scat** and is comprised of these 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** and **topics** which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include conservation and the environment, endangered species (i.e. the Florida panther), the importance of friends and family, perseverance and personal growth, courage.

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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 *anagrams*
7. Identify *personification*
8. Use of singular / plural nouns
9. Listing compound words
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identification of root words
13. Identify/create *similes*
14. Identification of a *cliffhanger*

### 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. Identify the climax of the novel
4. Five W's Chart

### Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Protagonists/antagonists
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Comparing two Characters

### Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Write a letter to a friend
4. Complete an Observation Chart
5. Conduct an interview
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete a KWS Chart

### Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Design an Information Card

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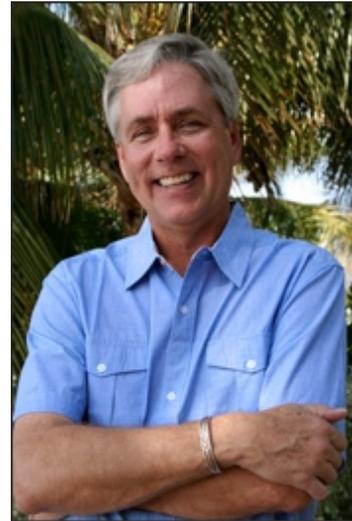
## Synopsis

The most terrifying teacher in school is missing in the Everglades, and it's up to Nick and Marta to find her. But first they'll have to reckon with a junior arsonist, a wannabe Texas oilman, and a ticked-off Florida panther. It's all about to hit the fan, and when it does, these kids better scat. [Courtesy of the publisher]

## Author Biography

### Carl Hiaasen

Carl Hiaasen was born and raised in Florida, where he still lives with his family. A graduate of the University of Florida, he wrote for *The Miami Herald* as an investigative reporter. For his journalism and commentary, Hiaasen has received numerous honors. In the early 1980s, he began writing novels with his good friend and a distinguished journalist, the late William D. Montalbano. Together they produced three mystery thrillers -- ***Powder Burn***, ***Trap Line*** and ***A Death in China*** -- which borrowed heavily from their own reporting experiences. ***Tourist Season***, published in 1986, was Hiaasen's first solo novel. Since then, Hiaasen has published ***Skin Tight***, ***Native Tongue*** and eight national bestsellers -- ***Strip Tease***, ***Stormy Weather***, ***Lucky You***, ***Sick Puppy***, ***Basket Case***, ***Skinny Dip***, ***Nature Girl*** and, most recently, ***Star Island***. Hiaasen made his children's book debut with ***Hoot*** (2002), which was awarded a Newbery Honor and spent more than two years on the New York Times bestseller lists. For young readers he went on to write ***Flush*** (2005), ***Scat*** (2009) and ***Chomp*** (2012). The film version of ***Hoot*** was released in 2006.





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

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## Chapters 1-2



### Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of *Scat* is Nick Waters, a student of Truman School, deep in the heart of Florida. 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**?




### Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

regurgitate	cultivate	exceptional	hilarious
exotic	disruptive	impassive	endowment

1. The audience found Jimmy Fallon's opening monologue to be quite \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Little Janie could be very \_\_\_\_\_ in public places.
3. Both cows and wolves will often \_\_\_\_\_ their food.
4. Kelly was very \_\_\_\_\_ throughout the principal's lecture.
5. We purchased an \_\_\_\_\_ macaw at the fair.
6. Leonard has an \_\_\_\_\_ ability at the game of chess.
7. The wealthy widow left a large \_\_\_\_\_ to Truman School.
8. It is most difficult to \_\_\_\_\_ an interest in something you find boring.

# Questions



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


2. Match each name with the proper description:

1	Marta Gonzalez		A	Neat, cautious, mild-spoken.
2	Nick		B	Punctual, thorough, hard-working.
3	Mrs. Starch		C	Boycotting Smithers Chevy!
4	Graham		D	A zit-picker.
5	Smoke (Duane Scrod Jr.)		E	Had nightmares about Mrs. Starch.
6	Dr. Dressler		F	Thought Mrs. Starch would crush him/her like a bug.
7	Duane Scrod Sr.		G	Eager to please.

3. Chapter One contains an example of **foreshadowing** (a hint about a future event): *...they had no clue that within forty-eight hours they would each be questioned by sheriff's deputies....* Why do you think the author provided a clue such as this for the readers?


4. Describe your impression of Mrs. Starch. What was your reaction when Mrs. \ Starch assigned Smoke an essay on pimples? If you were Smoke's parent would you have done anything about this assignment? Why or why not?


5. Describe how Smoke responded to the pimple essay he was assigned.


6. Why do you think Dr. Dressler turned down Mrs. Starch's offer to contact Smoke's father?


7. Where was Nick's dad?


8. Why had Duane Scrod Sr. spent time in jail?


9. Dr. Dressler admits that Mrs. Starch is punctual, thorough, hardworking and her students do well on the PSAT and SAT tests. Yet most people would concede that there is more than this in making one a successful teacher. What other factors do you think would make for an excellent teacher?


10. Duane Scrod Sr.'s **macaw** is certainly a fascinating and talented pet. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet investigate this bird and record three intriguing facts about it below.



1.	
2.	
3.	

# Language Activities



## A. Exaggeration

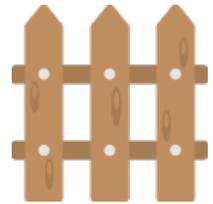
**Exaggeration** in a literary device defined as *a statement that represents something as better or worse than it really is*. We find several examples of exaggeration in these chapters. One possible example is in Chapter One: ... *she kept fifty-three snakes as pets, including a diamondback rattler.*



Think of an exaggerated way of describing the following

A skunk's odor.	
A hungry person's appetite.	
Your choice.	

**B. A simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. We find an example of this in Chapter 1: ... *her thin elbows were planted like fence posts...*



In this example what two things are being compared?

--	--

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

a) The sound of an alligator's jaws closing.


b) your own example


## C. A Quatrain Poem Celebrates The Cat.

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, **My Cat**, written by the famous poet, Atrocious Halitosis.

*You can call him a puma,  
A panther or cat.  
He don't come when you call him,  
He's way beyond that.*



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: 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 two chapters of our novel (like **teachers** or **zits**).

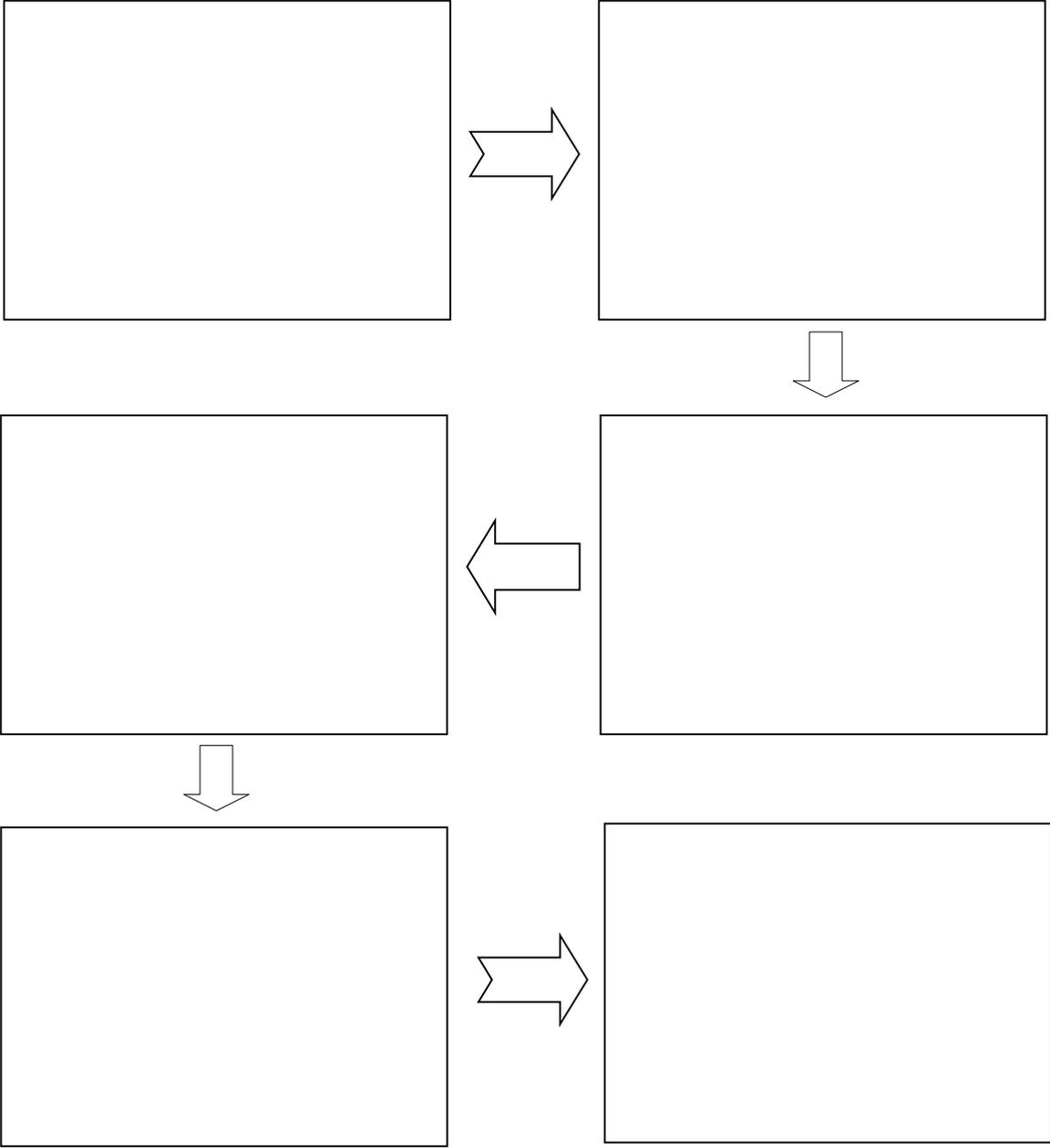
### The Quatrain Poem

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

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

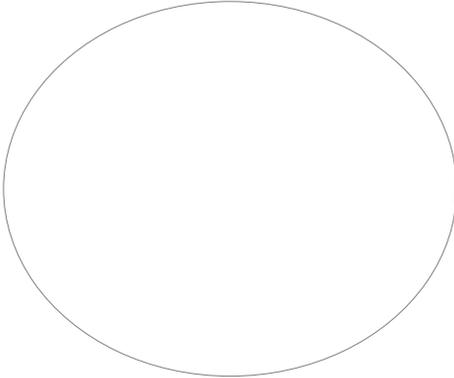

# D. Sequence Chart

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.

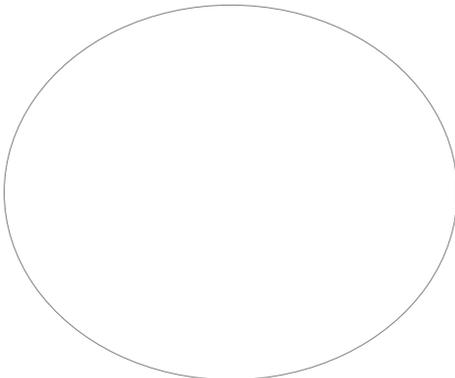


**E. 5 Ws and an H.**

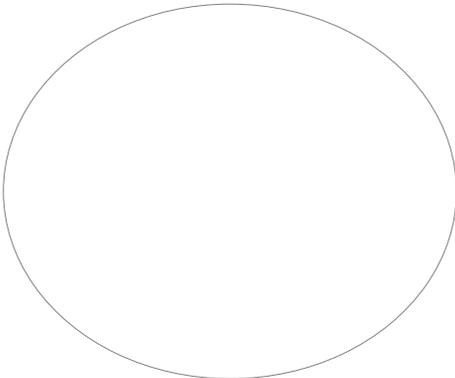
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



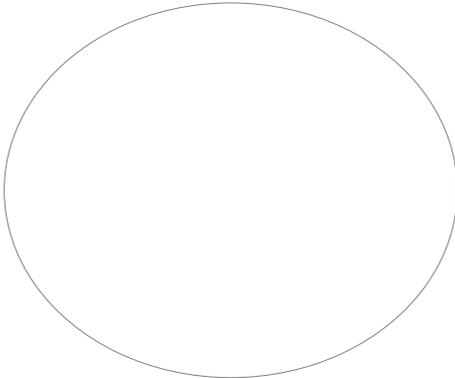
**WHO?**



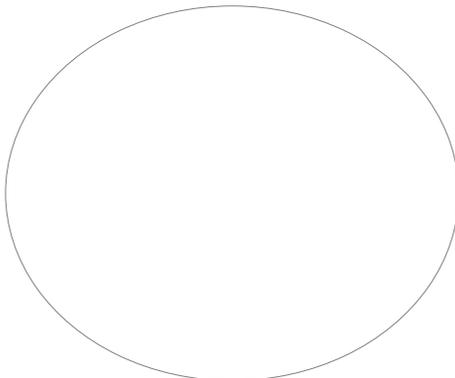
**WHAT?**



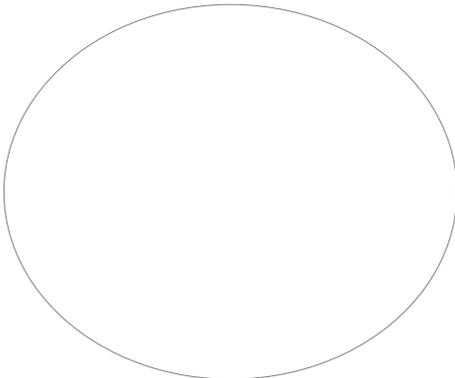
**WHEN?**



**WHERE?**



**WHY?**



**HOW?**

## Extension Activity



### Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A storyboard can tell the story of only one scene - or the entire novel.



Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first two chapters of *Scat*. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6