

Stand Tall



By

Joan Bauer

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

Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two or three chapters of *Stand Tall* and is comprised of four distinct sections:

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 bullying, loyalty and friendship, dealing with feelings of inferiority, courage, persistence, divorce, and War.

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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. Listing compound words
8. Identifying parts of speech
9. Identify *personification*.
10. 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. Complete a Plot Outline for a Sequel
5. Identify the climax of the novel.

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 about 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

Tree is twelve-years-old and too tall – six foot three and a half inches and growing. He's never really been able to fit in at school or on the basketball team, and since his parents' divorce he doesn't even feel comfortable in his own home. Tree copes by helping people like his grandpa, a Vietnam vet who's just had part of a leg amputated, and Sophie, a new girl at school who is being teased by the popular kids. In helping his grandpa learn to walk again and in listening to Sophie's advice to be himself, Tree begins to heal and to stand tall. [Courtesy of the author's website]

Author Biography

Joan Bauer

Joan Bauer is the author of numerous books for young readers. She received a Newbery Honor Medal for *Hope Was Here*, and the *L.A. Times* Book Prize for *Rules of the Road*. The Christopher Award was given to both *Hope was Here* and *Close to Famous*, which also received the Schneider Family Book Award. Joan is the recipient of numerous state awards voted by readers. Bauer lives in Brooklyn, New York.



School Library Journal says, "When it comes to creating strong, independent, and funny characters, Bauer is in a class by herself."

Joan Bauer lives in Brooklyn, New York. Visit her at www.joanbauer.com. [Biography Courtesy of the publisher and amazon.com]

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Student Checklist

Student Name _____

Assignment	Grade / Level	Comments

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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 main character of *Stand Tall* is twelve-year old Tree, who is six foot three and a half and quite uncomfortable about being so tall. It is very important for the main character of a story to be appealing in some way, and be able to hold the reader's interest. What is one book (or movie) that you have read or seen which features an unforgettable protagonist? What was it about this character that made him/her so memorable?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

custodial	complicated	protruded	dysfunctional
diffuse	alienation	cogent	canister

1. It was hard not to feel a sense of _____ after being shunned by everyone.
2. It's nice you're learning such _____ ways of communicating at college.
3. Some of the tree's roots _____ from the ground.
4. “Who is your _____ parent?” Principal Skinner asked.
5. The spotlights catch the light and _____ it on to the stage below.
6. He reached into the _____ and pulled out a dog biscuit for Spot.
7. The whole situation was so _____ that no one could understand it.
8. That strange family is the most _____ I have ever encountered.

Questions



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

2. Why did Mrs. Pierce find Tree's home situation so complicated?

3. Describe what Tree did in the park to entertain people passing by. What is this procedure called?

4. Tree's real name is _____.

5. What did Tree mean when he said that Jeremy was *one of those emperor athletes*?

6. What do you think is meant by the statement, *Tallness is packed with great expectations*?

7. How had Tree's mother reinvented herself, career-wise?

8. Describe the attitudes of Tree and his two brothers toward their mother's computer discussion question?

9. *Divorce casts so many shadows.* Think of two examples of shadows that a divorce may cast.

1	
2	

10. Who were the two individuals in Tree's life that seemed to bring him comfort and security?

Language Activities



A. Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human. The following is an example from Chapter Two: *Divorce casts so many shadows.*

Describe how divorce is personified in this sentence.

Create your own example of personification.

B. Simile

A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter One is ... *the bark protects the tree's insides like skin protects people*. In this example, what is the bark's protection being compared to?



--

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

a) an acorn

b) the taste of a tart apple

C. Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here is such an example from Chapter One: *Tree always wondered what happened to him.*

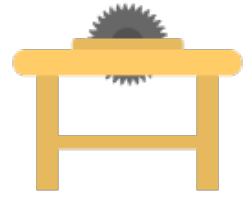


Using your imagination, create your own examples of **alliteration** from the following topics. Each example must contain a minimum of three words.

A door slamming.	
A full moon.	
Your choice.	

D. 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 two chapters of **Stand Tall**.

Word	Anagram	Clue
animal		A type of envelope.
panel		Method of transport.
roots		A part of the body.
shades		She ___ for home.
stairs		Stringed instruments.
screen		A container in which incense is burned.
smile		Green fruits.

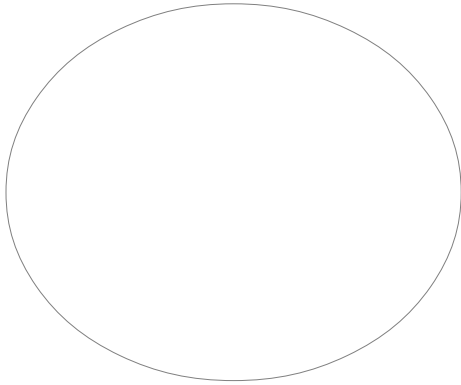
E. Cliffhanger

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 Two? Why do you think this is a popular literary device for many authors?

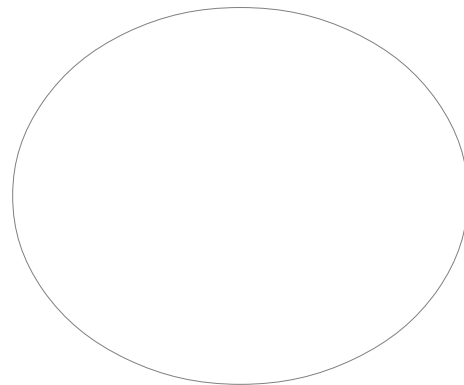


F. 5 Ws and an H.

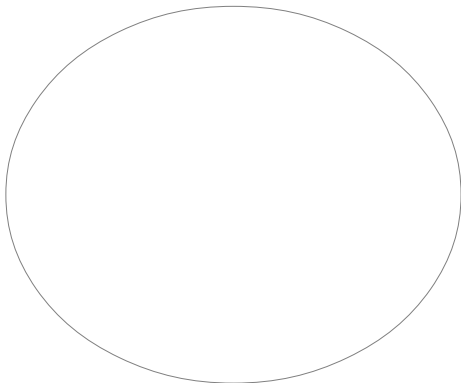
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



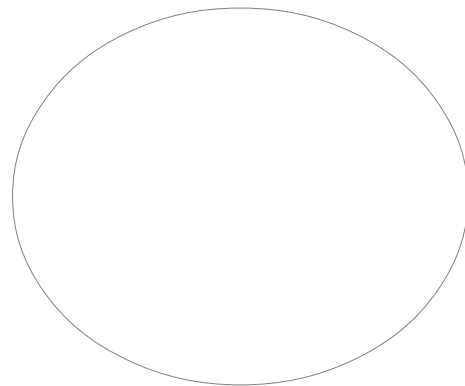
WHO?



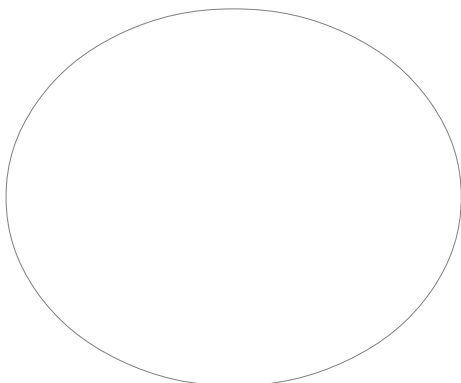
WHAT?



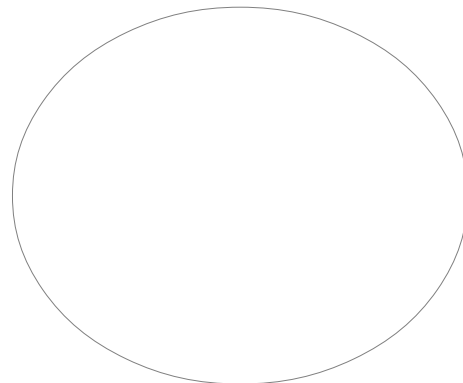
WHEN?



WHERE?



WHY?



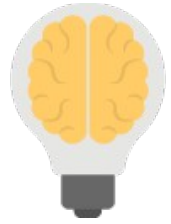
HOW?

G. An Acrostic Poem

There are many forms of poetry available to the aspiring poet other than the rhyming poem. An ACROSTIC poem is one example. In an acrostic poem the first letters of each line are aligned vertically to form a word. The word often is the subject of the poem. Here is an example written by the acclaimed poet, Atrocious Halitosis:

The Firefly

Freaky-looking
Itches me when I touch
Restless at night
Early or late
Fearless
Little
Yellowfly



The Acrostic Poem

Now create your own Acrostic Poem on a subject featured in this novel. Your poem must have at least four lines (and doesn't need to rhyme).

Title:

Extension Activity



A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words



Use the three boxes to describe and illustrate the beginning, middle and end of the first chapter.

Beginning Picture:	Beginning:
Middle Picture:	Middle:
Concluding Picture:	Concluding: