

# The Boundless



By

Kenneth Oppel

A Novel Study  
by Joel Michel Reed

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**About the author:** Joel Reed has over 70 published novel studies and is the author of four novels. For information on his work and literature, please visit [www.reednovelstudies.com](http://www.reednovelstudies.com)

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## Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each section of the novel study focuses on two or three chapters of *The Boundless* and is comprised of five of the following activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language Activities
- Extension Activities

### Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities in this 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.**

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking. Students will also be expected to provide clear answers to questions and well-constructed explanations. It is critical as well that students be able to relate events and the feelings of characters to their own lives and experiences and describe their own interpretation of a particular passage.

A strength of the unit is that students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A **portfolio cover** is included (p.7) so that students may organize their work and keep it all in one place. A **Student Checklist** is also included (p.6) so that a record of completed work may be recorded.

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## List of Skills

### Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words / phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homonyms
3. Identifying / creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identify/create *similes*
6. Use of singular / plural nouns
7. Listing compound words
8. Identifying parts of speech
9. Identifying syllables
10. Identify *personification*

### 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. Story summary train.

### Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Character comparison
3. Relating personal experiences

### Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Write a personal biography
6. Write about personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Sheet
9. Complete a KWS Chart

### Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Lights, Camera, Action!
4. Design a cover for the novel
5. Create a comic strip
6. Train identification activity

# The Boundless

By Kenneth Opper



## Synopsis

Climb aboard The Boundless, the most magnificent train ever built. Magic and danger loom around every bend. And the hardest trick is staying alive. (The Publisher)

A complete synopsis and other helpful reviews can be found on the following website: <http://kennethoppel.ca/>

## Author Biography

Kenneth Opper

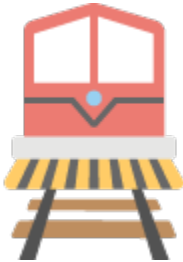
I was born in Port Alberni, a mill town on Vancouver Island, British Columbia but spent the bulk of my childhood in Victoria, B.C. and on the opposite coast, in Halifax, Nova Scotia...At around twelve I decided I wanted to be a writer (this came after deciding I wanted to be a scientist, and then an architect). I started out writing sci-fi epics (my Star Wars phase) then went on to swords and sorcery tales (my Dungeons and Dragons phase) and then, during the summer holiday when I was fourteen, started on a humorous story about a boy addicted to video games (written, of course, during my video game phase). It turned out to be quite a long story, really a short novel, and I rewrote it the next summer. We had a family friend who knew Roald Dahl - one of my favourite authors - and this friend offered to show Dahl my story. I was paralysed with excitement. I never heard back from Roald Dahl directly, but he read my story, and liked it enough to pass on to his own literary agent. I got a letter from them, saying they wanted to take me on, and try to sell my story. And they did.



More information can be found on the author's website: <http://kennethoppel.ca>

# The Boundless

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## Student Checklist

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

Assignment	Grade / Level	Comments

# The Boundless



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

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## Chapters 1-2



### Before you read the chapter:

Using resources from your school library or the Internet, research the longest train that exists in the world today and write a brief description of your findings in the space below.




### Vocabulary:

Draw a straight line to connect the vocabulary word to its definition. Remember to use a straight edge (like a ruler).

1. Precipice
2. Tentative
3. Clamber
4. Enthralled
5. Haughty
6. Upended
7. Dignitary
8. Baron
9. Irrelevant
10. Ricochet

- A. An awkward and laborious climb or movement.
- B. Arrogantly superior and disdainful.
- C. A person of important due to high rank or office.
- D. A very steep rock face or cliff.
- E. Not connect with or related to something.
- F. Capture the fascinated attention of someone.
- G. When a projectile rebounds off a surface.
- H. Done without confidence, hesitant.
- I. To set or turn something upside down.
- J. A member of the lowest order of British nobility.



# Questions



## Chapter 1 - 2

1. Describe the setting of the story as Chapter One begins.


2. What caused Will to begin his love for sketching?


3. Using resources from your school library or the Internet, write a brief report on the history of the Chinese people who gave their lives working on the Canadian Railway.


4. Do you believe Cornelius Van Horne was foolish to spend such a large amount of money on a ceremonial gold railway spike? Be sure to defend your answer.


5. Do you believe that Sasquatch really exist? Why or why not?


## Language Activity



**A. Foreshadowing** is a literary device used by authors to provide clues for the reader so they are able to predict what might occur *later* in the story. How might the following statement taken from Chapter One be considered an example of this literary device? "

*"Are you coming, William Everett?" Says Van Horne. "It would make a good story, don't you think? And it's always good to have a story of your own."*




**B. A simile** is a comparison using the words "like" or "as". The following is an example taken from Chapter One: *"A weedy-looking railway official approaches with a long, ornate velvet case. It seems to Will that every man in the crowd takes a small step toward it. Like a sigh of mountain wind, a collective gasp rises."*



What two things are being compared in this example?

--	--

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

a) A train traveling down the tracks.


b) An artist painting (or drawing) a picture.




## D. The Eight Parts of Speech

Find at least 2 examples of each of the eight parts of speech from these chapters and list them in the appropriate section of the chart below.



<b>Interjections</b>	
<b>Nouns</b>	
<b>Pronouns</b>	
<b>Conjunctions</b>	
<b>Prepositions</b>	
<b>Adjectives</b>	
<b>Adverbs</b>	
<b>Verbs</b>	