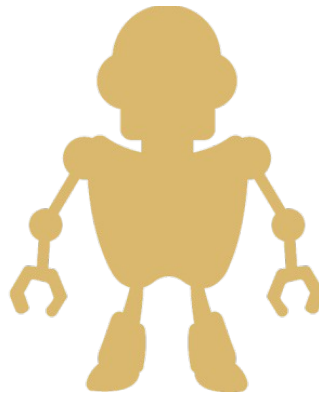


# The Invention of Hugo Cabret



By

Brian Selznick

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 85 page curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two chapters of *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* 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 Paris, train stations, 1930's, clocks and timepieces, honesty, courage, automatons/robots, early movies.

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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 *foreshadowing*.
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 *cliffhangers*.

### 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 and 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. Create a KWS Chart

### Art Activities

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

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## Synopsis

Orphan, clock keeper, and thief, Hugo lives in the walls of a busy Paris train station, where his survival depends on secrets and anonymity. But when his world suddenly interlocks with an eccentric, bookish girl and a bitter old man who runs a toy booth in the station, Hugo's undercover life, and his most precious secret, are put in jeopardy. A cryptic drawing, a treasured notebook, a stolen key, a mechanical man, and a hidden message from Hugo's dead father form the backbone of this intricate, tender, and spellbinding mystery. [Courtesy of the publisher]

## Author Biography

*Brian Selznick*

Hello there. My name is Brian Selznick and I'm the author and illustrator of ***The Invention of Hugo Cabret***. I was born in 1966 in New Jersey. I have a sister who is a teacher, a brother who is a brain surgeon. I studied at [The Rhode Island School of Design](#) and after I graduated from college I worked at *Eeyore's Books for Children* in New York City. I learned all about children's books from my boss Steve Geck who is now an editor of children's books at *Greenwillow*.



My first book, ***The Houdini Box***, which I both wrote and illustrated, was published in 1991 while I was still working at the bookstore. Since then, I have illustrated many books for children, including ***Frindle*** by Andrew Clements, ***The Doll People*** by Ann Martin & Laura Godwin, ***Amelia and Eleanor Go for a Ride*** by Pam Muñoz Ryan & ***The Dinosaurs of Waterhouse Hawkins*** by Barbara Kerley, which received a 2001 Caldecott Honor.

I have also written a few other books myself, including ***The Boy of a Thousand Faces***, but ***The Invention of Hugo Cabret*** is by far the longest and most involved book I've ever worked on. I live in Brooklyn, New York, and San Diego, California.

[http://www.theinventionofhugocabret.com/about\\_brian\\_bio.htm](http://www.theinventionofhugocabret.com/about_brian_bio.htm)

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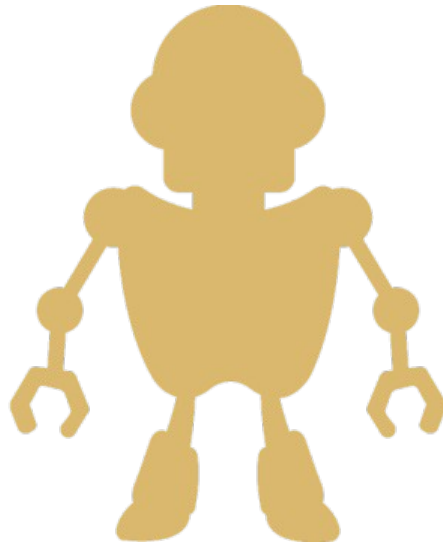


## Student Checklist

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

| Assignment | Grade / Level | Comments |
|------------|---------------|----------|
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|            |               |          |

# The Invention of Hugo Cabret



*By Brian Selznick*

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

# The Invention of Hugo Cabret

By Brian Selznick

## PART I - Chapters 1 - 2



### Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* is the very likeable boy, Hugo Cabret, who lives in a Paris railway station. 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 intriguing protagonist?

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |



### Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

|            |            |              |          |
|------------|------------|--------------|----------|
| agitated   | reluctant  | diligent     | contents |
| illuminate | accumulate | accidentally | abandon  |

1. Jeremy was most \_\_\_\_\_ to take the narrow path up the side of the cliff.
2. “Please do not \_\_\_\_\_ me and my baby,” the young woman cried out pitifully.
3. The mayor suggested that we begin to \_\_\_\_\_ food and water.
4. Chester became very \_\_\_\_\_ when anyone went to close to the bonfire.
5. No one guessed that the \_\_\_\_\_ of the satchel contained diamonds.
6. Captain Jasper was most \_\_\_\_\_ in his military responsibilities.
7. The kindergarten students \_\_\_\_\_ let the gerbil escape from its cage.
8. It took more than forty candles to properly \_\_\_\_\_ the cave.



# Questions



1. Write a brief **synopsis** of the events portrayed in the pictures at the beginning of Chapter One.

|  |
|--|
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|  |
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2. What clue is there in the first series of pictures that tell the reader that the **setting** of the novel is in the city of Paris, France.

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |
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|  |

3. What two people did Hugo see in the toy booth? Why was one of them agitated?

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |

4. Describe the pictures that the old man found in Hugo's notebook

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |
|  |

5. Describe how Hugo reacted when the old man took his notebook.

|  |
|--|
|  |
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|  |

6. Describe the **atmosphere** of the pictures at the beginning of Chapter Two.

|  |
|--|
|  |
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|  |

7. What had been the original purpose of the secret apartments where Hugo lived?

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |

8. What was Hugo’s job in the station?

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |

9. **Foreshadowing** is a literary device where the author provides a hint as to what will happen later in the story. How might the description of Hugo seeing the Station inspector’s office and jail cell be an example of foreshadowing.

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |
|  |

10. There were \_\_\_\_\_ clocks in the station.

### Language Activities



**A.** Next to each pair of words indicate whether each is an example of a Synonym (S), Antonym (A), or Homophone (H).

|   |                              |  |    |                          |  |
|---|------------------------------|--|----|--------------------------|--|
| 1 | discover - conceal           |  | 6  | cell - sell              |  |
| 2 | steal - steal                |  | 7  | obsessed - uninterested  |  |
| 3 | impressive - inconsequential |  | 8  | commotion - brouhaha     |  |
| 4 | sumptuous - delicious        |  | 9  | peevied - exasperated    |  |
| 5 | precious - disfavored        |  | 10 | predictable - unforeseen |  |

## B. The Eiffel Tower

One of the world's most famous landmarks is the Eiffel Tower in Paris. The Eiffel Tower was built in 1889 and remains the tallest building in Paris – the second tallest in France. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, investigate three additional facts about this famous landmark and record them below.



|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 |  |
| 2 |  |
| 3 |  |

## C. Alliteration

The author seems to enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here's an example from Chapter 2: "... waiting for any criminals caught in the station."



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

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| The roar of a tiger    |  |
| The sound of a tornado |  |
| From your imagination  |  |

## D. The 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 is the first four lines from a poem called ***I Watch the Clock***, written by the acclaimed poet, Atrocious Halitosis.

*I go to work each day at eight,  
I watch the clock 'til noon.  
Then work the afternoon away,  
My day can't end too soon.*



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, AB BB, 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 seven chapters of our novel.

### 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:** \_\_\_\_\_

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |

## 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 Activities



### Storyboard

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

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



|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 |