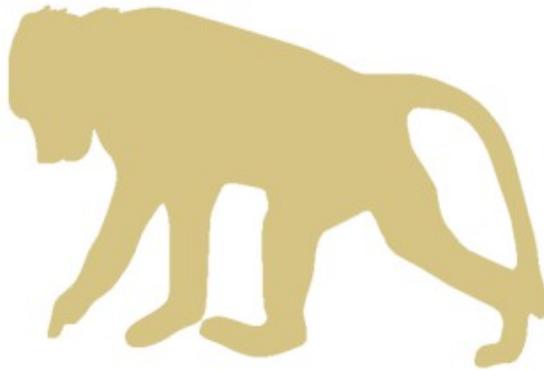


The Twits



By

Roald Dahl

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

The Twits

By Roald Dahl



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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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The Twits

By Roald Dahl



Suggestions and Expectations

This 71 page curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on 2 - 4 chapters of *The Twits* 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 which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include **animal rights, conservation, injustice, love and hate, and cruelty/bullying.**

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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*

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.

Character Activities

1. Compare 2 characters
2. Relating personal experiences

Creative and Critical Thinking

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

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel

The Twits

By *Roald Dahl*



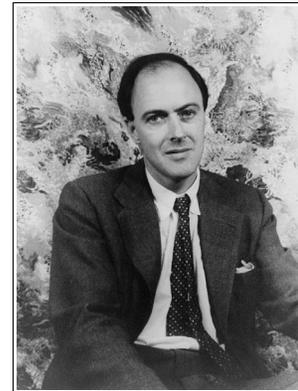
Synopsis

Mr. and Mrs. Twit are the smelliest, nastiest, ugliest people in the world. They hate everything – except playing mean jokes on each other, catching innocent birds to put in their Bird Pies, and making their caged monkeys, the Muggle-Wumps, stand on their heads all day. But the Muggle-Wumps have had enough. They don't just want out, they want revenge. [Summary courtesy of the Publisher]

Author Biography

Roald Dahl

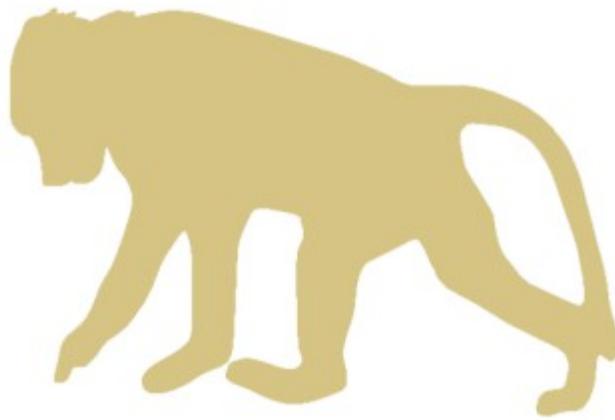
Few authors of children's books have been as prolific or successful as **Roald Dahl** (1916-1990). His novels have been read and enjoyed by countless children the world over and include such classics as ***Charlie and the Chocolate Factory***, ***Danny the Champion of the World***, ***James and the Giant Peach*** and ***Matilda***. Shortly before his death, the top five selling children's books in Great Britain were all authored by Dahl.



Born to Norwegian immigrants, Roald Dahl hailed from Llandaff, Wales. Despite losing his father when he was only four, Roald claimed to have had a most happy and eventful childhood. Although not a particularly good student, Roald did excel at athletics.

Dahl was married to the famous actress, **Patricia Neal**, for many years and they had five children together. The couple were, however, divorced after thirty years of marriage. Roald began his writing career as a short story writer, and didn't pen his first children's novel until 1961 – ***James and Giant Peach***. This was followed by several bestsellers. Roald Dahl passed away in 1990 at the age of 74.

The Twits



By Roald Dahl

Name: _____

The Twits

By Roald Dahl



Chapters 1 -3

Hairy Faces – Mr. Twit – Dirty Beards



Before you read the chapters:

Every good story usually needs an interesting **antagonist** ("bad guy"). By the end of the coming chapters we meet a rather unappealing character who *fills the bill* in this regard. Think about some other books you have read which have featured an antagonist that you have really disliked. What characteristics do you think makes for an effective antagonist?

We don't often hear the words **twits**. With a colleague or two brainstorm five or six synonyms for this unusual word:

Do you think **The Twits** is an effective title for a novel? Why or why not?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

sprout	revolting	tufts	ordinary
minced	morsel	terrific	tonic

- Most people find it quite amusing to see _____ of hair sticking up from the principal's head.
- "I'm sure that if you take a sip of this _____ you will start to feel better immediately," the gypsy woman predicted.
- Aunt Shirley served _____ meat for dinner.
- One could see at a glance that Wayne Gretzky was no _____ hockey player.
- Once she started eating the cornbread, she continued until every _____ was gone.
- The children in the Kindergarten class were very excited to see the bean plant begin to _____.
- Shara has a _____ sense of humor.
- The behavior of the troll was so _____ that no one would go near him.

Questions



- What do you think would be one good thing about having a beard? What would be one bad thing?

- In the first chapter the author lists a number of questions he wonders about with regard to those who have beards. Think of at least one more question you might ask a bearded person about his facial hair.

3. The whole of Mr. Twit's face was covered with hair except his _____.
4. How did Mr. Twit think his beard made him look?

5. Now that Mr. Twit was sixty years old he was less of a twit than he was when he was younger. T or F
6. Describe the setting of the first three chapters.

7. What do you think the state of Mr. Twit's beard says about his personality?

8. Describe the effect that Mr. Twit's eating habits had on his beard?

9. What was one advantage to Mr. Twit's sloppy eating habits?

10. **Foreshadowing** is a literary device which gives the reader a hint of things to come in the novel. How do you think the last sentence of Chapter 3 (*Dirty Beards*) serves as an example of foreshadowing?

Language Activities



A. Beards, Beards Everywhere

Beards play an important role in the first chapters of our novel. The author states that perhaps men grow beards so that people won't know what they really look like. Whatever the reason for a person growing facial hair, it is estimated that approximately 50% of men in the United States have some sort of facial hair, while about 19% have beards. Did you know, too, that **there are at least 33 types of beards?**



Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, investigate the following types of beards and write a short description (or draw a sketch) of each:

Van Dyke:

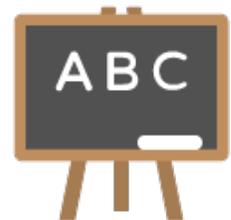
Muttonchops:

Goatee:

Which beard do you think is the most attractive? _____

B. Alliteration

The author seems to enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. An example from this section is “What am I trying to tell you...”

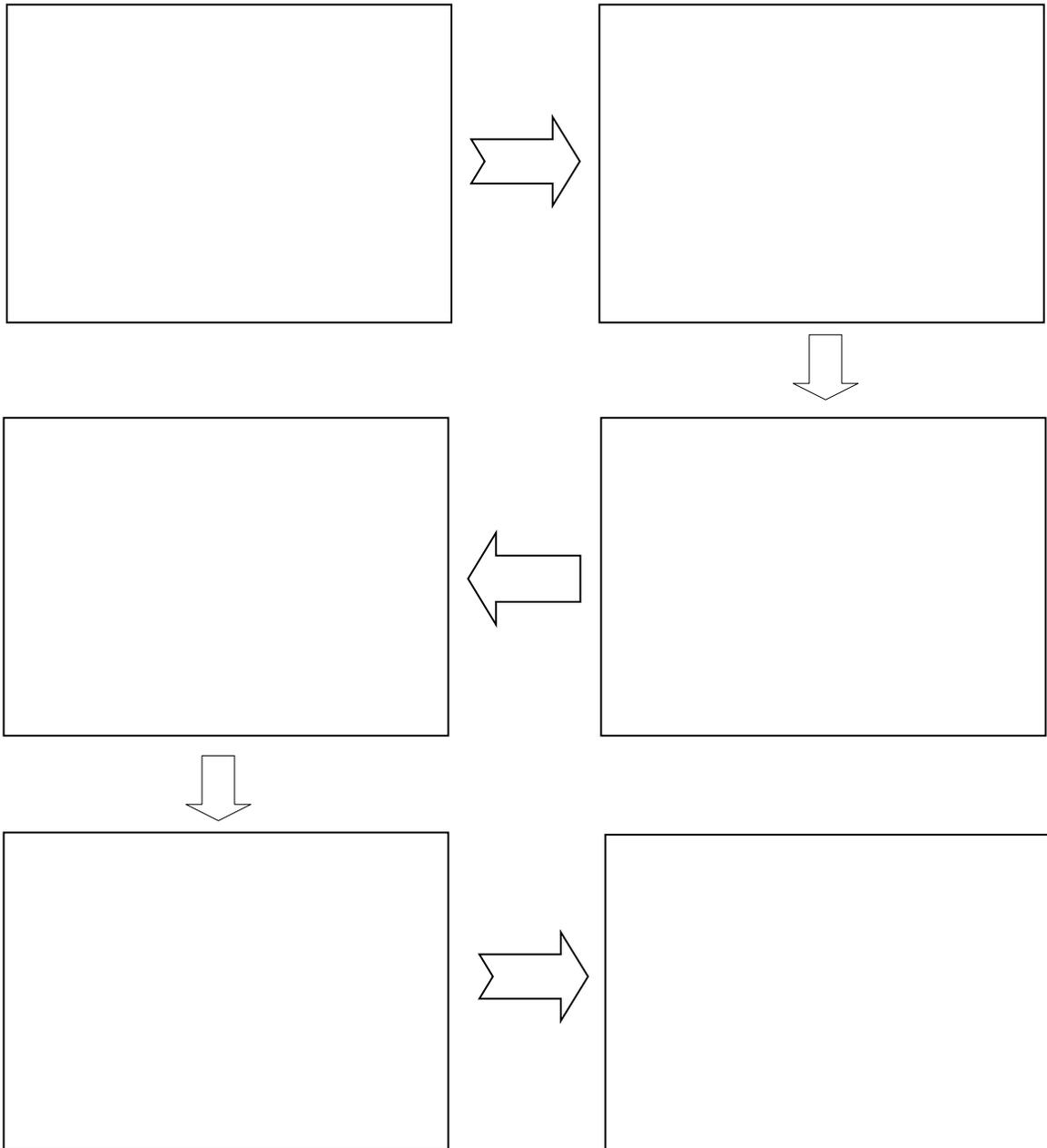


Using your imagination, create your own examples of **alliteration** from the following topics. Each example must contain a minimum of three words.

The squeal of a piglet	
The rising of the sun	
From your imagination	

C. 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.



D. Quintet

Unlike **quintuplet** (a set of five children born to the same mother at one birth), a **quintet** is a five-line verse that tells a story. The quintet has a syllable pattern and has the wonderful ability of bringing a visual image to life for the reader.

Here is the structure of the quintet:

A Creative Title

Line 1 – tells **when** ~ and has 3 syllables

Line 2 – tells **where** ~ and has 5 syllables

Line 3 – tells **what** ~ and has 7 syllables

Line 4 – describes **activity** ~ and has 9 syllables

Line 5 – contains a relevant **thought** ~ and has 3 syllables

An Example!

Here is an example of a Quintet take from the poem, *Jack and Jill*.

Jack and Jill

*Dinner time,
Up a hill they went,
To fetch a pail of water,
Then Jack and Jill tumbled down the hill,
Poor old Jack.*

Now try your hand at writing a quintet which contains some of the important details from this section of this novel.

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 only one scene – or the entire novel



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

1	2
3	4
5	6