

Theodore Boone - Kid Lawyer -



By

John Grisham

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer

By John Grisham



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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

This 74 page curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two chapters of **Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer** and is comprised of these 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 criminal law; friendship; courage; self-acceptance; family and family responsibilities; social issues (homelessness, illegal immigrants).

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms & antonyms
3. Identifying / creating *metaphors*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Listing compound words
7. Identifying / creating *similes*
8. Identifying/creating *personification*
9. Use of singular / plural nouns
10. Using content clues: *analogies*
11. Identifying parts of speech
12. Determining alphabetical order
13. Identification of root words
14. Identifying / creating *alliteration*
15. Identifying *anagrams*
16. Identifying *sarcasm*

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a 5 W's Chart
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Identify *cliffhanger*
4. Identify the climax of a novel
5. Write a synopsis
6. Predict an outcome
7. Complete a Sequence Chart
8. Identify *foreshadowing*

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Compare two characters
3. Understand key concepts
4. Relating personal experiences
5. Casting for a movie version

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper article
3. Write a letter to a friend
4. Complete an Observation Chart
5. Conduct an interview
6. Create a journal entry
7. Write a Book Review
8. Create *Found Poetry*

Art Activities

1. Design a cover for the novel
2. Create a Storyboard.

Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer

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Synopsis

A perfect murder, A faceless witness, A lone courtroom champion knows the whole truth ... and he's only thirteen years old. Meet Theodore Boone.

In the small city of Strattenburg, there are many lawyers, and though he's only thirteen years old, Theo Boone thinks he's one of them. Theo knows every judge, policeman, court clerk—and a lot about the law. He dreams of being a great trial lawyer, of a life in the courtroom.

But Theo finds himself in court much sooner than expected. Because he knows so much—maybe too much—he is suddenly dragged into the middle of a sensational murder trial. A cold-blooded killer is about to go free, and only Theo knows the truth.

The stakes are high, but Theo won't stop until justice is served.

Brimming with the intrigue and suspense that made John Grisham a #1 international bestseller and the undisputed master of the legal thriller, *Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer* will keep readers guessing and pages turning. (The Publisher)

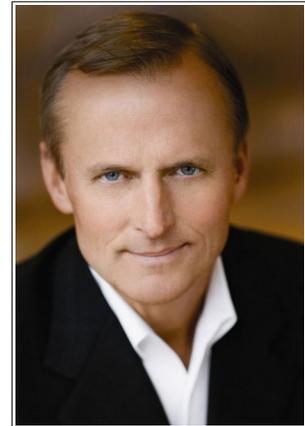
Author Biography

John Grisham

Born on February 8, 1955 in Jonesboro, Arkansas, to a construction worker and a homemaker, John Grisham as a child dreamed of being a professional baseball player. Realizing he didn't have the right stuff for a pro career, he shifted gears and majored in accounting at Mississippi State University. After graduating from law school at Ole Miss in 1981, he went on to practice law for nearly a decade in Southaven, specializing in criminal defence.

His first adult novel, *A Time to Kill*, was written in 1987. Initially it was rejected by many publishers. That might have put an end to Grisham's hobby, however, he had already begun his next book, and it would quickly turn that hobby into a new full-time career—and spark one of publishing's greatest success stories. Since then he has written several best selling novels.

Grisham lives with his wife Renee and their two children. The family splits their time between their Victorian home in Mississippi and a plantation near Charlottesville, VA. When he's not writing, Grisham devotes time to charitable causes, including most recently his Rebuild The Coast Fund, which raised 8.8 million dollars for Gulf Coast relief in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. (Courtesy of: <http://www.jgrisham.com/bio>)



Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer



By John Grisham

Name: _____

Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer

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Chapter 1-2



Before you read the chapter:

Every good novel needs an interesting **protagonist** (the novel's main character). In Chapter One we meet the main character of the novel and begin to get to know him. Why is it usually a good idea for an author to create a protagonist with whom the reader identifies and likes?

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Vocabulary:

Beside each word in Column A write the correct synonym or definition from Column B.

| | COLUMN A | CORRECT MEANING | | COLUMN B |
|-----|----------------|-----------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| 1. | convince | | a. | peculiar; odd |
| 2. | evidence | | b. | bring a formal accusation against |
| 3. | majestic | | c. | an officer of the court |
| 4. | eccentric | | d. | take for granted |
| 5. | custody | | e. | abstain from an impulse |
| 6. | bailiff | | f. | lofty dignity |
| 7. | impartial | | g. | boring |
| 8. | presume | | h. | assure |
| 9. | refrain | | i. | unprejudiced |
| 10. | tedious | | j. | incidental |
| 11. | circumstantial | | k. | proof |
| 12. | indicted | | l. | guardianship |

Questions



1. Describe the **setting** as Chapter One begins.

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2. Think of four appropriate words to describe the personality of Theodore Boone.

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3. Explain why you think Theo is so interested in the activities of the courtroom.

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4. Describe the trauma that April Finnemore was going through in Chapter One.

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b. What advice did Theo give her?

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5. What request did Theo make to Judge Gantry? What was the answer?

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6. Why wasn't Madame Monique not the typical teacher at Theo's middle school?

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7. Theodore Boone lived for the big _____.
8. Give two examples which demonstrate the **thoroughness** of Theo's presentation to the rest of his class regarding the courtroom and courtroom procedures.

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9. As Chapter Two concludes, the author runs through a number of the key students in Theo's class. Which student seems the most interesting to you - and why?

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Language Activities



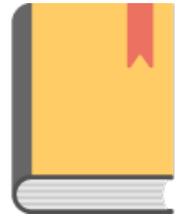
A. A **quintet** is a five-line verse that tells a story. The quintet has a syllable pattern and can bring an exciting scene to life. (It doesn't have to rhyme.)

| | |
|--|---|
| Line 1 - tells when , 3 syllables Line 2 - tells where , 5 syllables Line 3 - tells what , 7 syllables Line 4 - describes activity , 9 syllables Line 5 - contains a thought , 3 syllables. | Now create a quintet poem using ideas from recent events in this novel. |
|--|---|

TITLE: _____

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B. In Chapter Two the author uses what is probably an example of **sarcasm**: *During classes, they were "gender-separated", according to a new policy adopted by **the smart people** in charge of educating the children in town.*



Look up the meaning of **sarcasm**. Why might this sentence be an example of this literary device?

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Using your imagination create an example of *sarcasm*.

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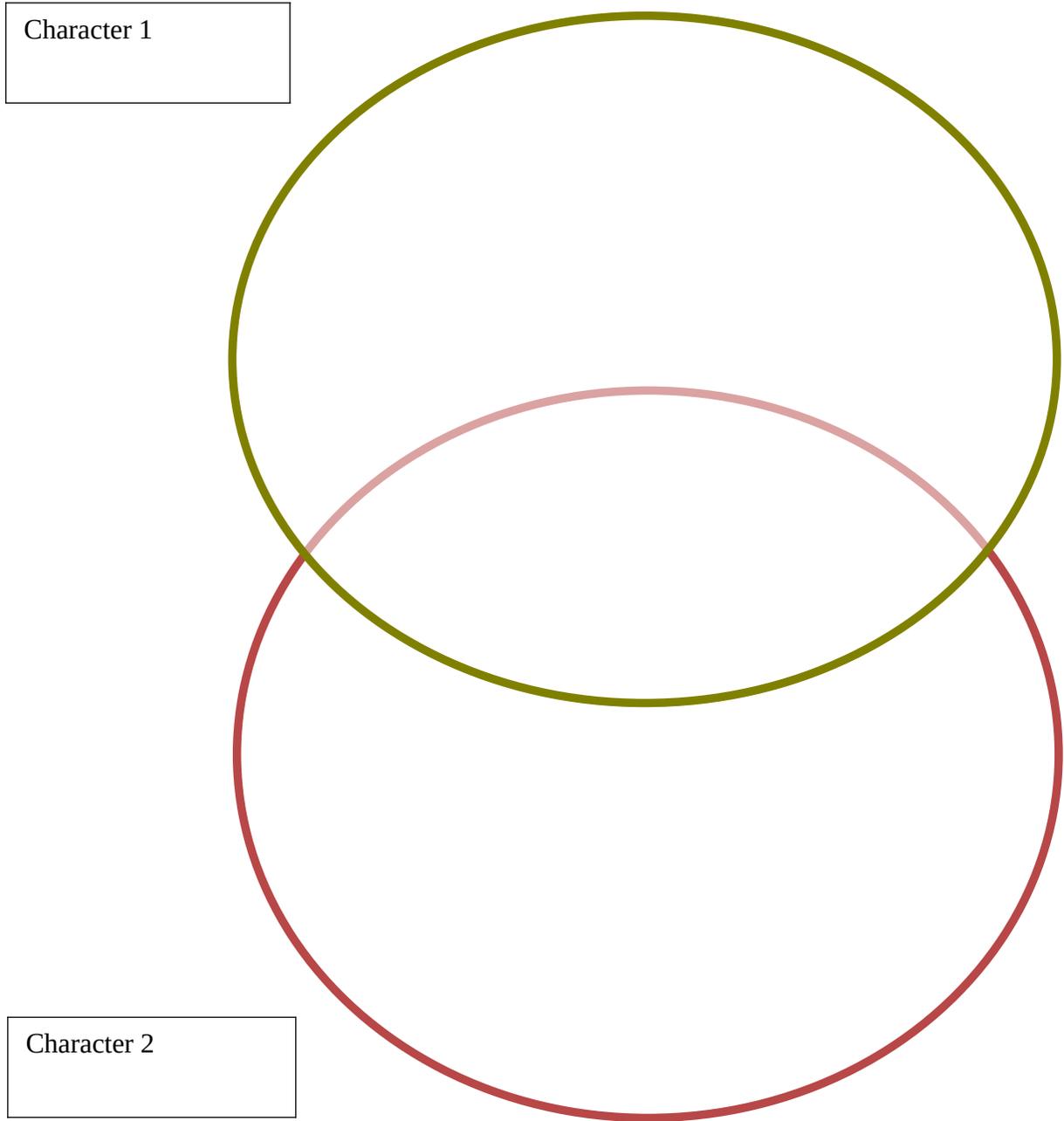
C. Accomplished Men and Women of the Courtroom

Many of the world's most famous people have been lawyers by profession (Gandhi, John Grisham, Robert Louis Stevenson, Barack Obama - to name a few). All of these people, however, achieved fame for accomplishments outside of the courtroom. Below is a list of lawyers who achieved fame because they were very good at their chosen profession. Choose one of these people and investigate (in your school library or on the Internet) their professional accomplishments. Write a short essay (at least one-half page in length) outlining his/her major accomplishments. [Note: With your teacher's approval you may choose a lawyer not on this list.]

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| F. Lee Bailey | Gladys Root |
| Gloria Allred | Johnnie Cochran |
| Clarence Darrow | Thurgood Marshall |
| Abraham Lincoln | Racehorse Haynes |

D. Comparing Theo's Parents

It is very evident that although Theo's parents share some similarities in their personalities and characters, they are very different in many ways as well. Using the **Venn Diagram** below come up with several things about each character - similarities and difference. Any characteristics which they share would be entered in the overlapping section of the diagram.



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?



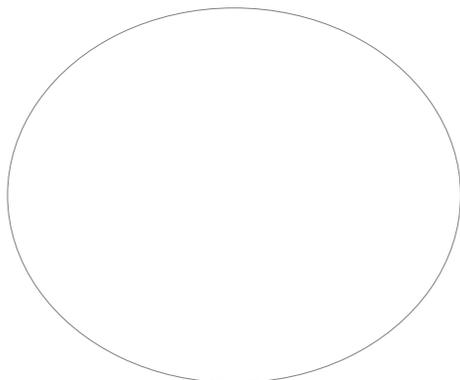
WHAT?



WHEN?



WHERE?



WHY?



HOW?