

# Trash



By

Andy Mulligan

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 curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Most chapters of the novel study focus on three chapters of *Trash* and are comprised of the following activities:

1. Before You Read
2. Vocabulary Building
3. Comprehension Questions
4. Language and Extension Activities

A portfolio cover (page 7) as well as a Checklist (page 6) are included so that students may keep 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 poverty, homelessness, income disparity, injustice, corruption/greed, waste, friendship, courage, compassion; heroism, personal growth.

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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 *personification*.
7. Identify *anagrams*
8. Listing compound words
9. Identifying parts of speech
10. Identify/create *similes*
11. 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. Identify *cliffhangers*
5. Identify the climax of the novel.
6. Complete a Story Pyramid

### 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

### 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

In an unnamed Third World country, in the not-so-distant future, three “dumpsite boys” make a living picking through the mountains of garbage on the outskirts of a city.

One unlucky-lucky day, Raphael finds something very special and very mysterious. So mysterious that he decides to keep it, even when the city police offer a handsome reward for its return. That decision brings with it terrifying consequences, and soon the dumpsite boys must use all of their cunning and courage to stay ahead of their pursuers. It’s up to Raphael, Gardo, and Rat—boys who have no education, no parents, no homes, and no money—to solve the mystery and right a terrible wrong.

Andy Mulligan has written a powerful story about unthinkable poverty—and the kind of hope and determination that can transcend it. With twists and turns, unrelenting action, and deep, raw emotion, *Trash* is a heart-pounding, breath-holding novel. [Courtesy of the Publisher - David Fickling Books]

## Author Biography

*Andy Mulligan*

Andy Mulligan was brought up in the south of London. He worked as a theatre director for ten years before being made redundant in his early thirties. He then left the UK to help at an orphanage in India. He ended up travelling extensively in Asia and was later retrained as a teacher. He has taught English and drama in India, Brazil, the Philippines and the UK. He now divides his time between London and Manila. (Courtesy of [www.readingzone.com](http://www.readingzone.com))



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## Student Checklist

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

Assignment	Grade/Level	Comments

# Trash



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

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## PART 1. Chapters 1-3



### Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main characters of *Trash* is a 14-year-old Raphael Fernández who lives in Behala, an enormous garbage dump where he makes his living finding reusable refuse. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. Who would you say is your *most favorite* character ever? What made you select this person?




### Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

complicated	stuppa	occasional	pesos
zucchini	calculation	pallet	penknife

1. The workers loaded the \_\_\_\_\_ with layer after layer of large metal sheets.
2. Mrs. Hardy, our English teacher assigned us a very \_\_\_\_\_ math problem.
3. Jennifer used a \_\_\_\_\_ to open the back of her wristwatch.
4. After doing a \_\_\_\_\_ of the room’s area, we decided to go elsewhere.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ is a word for human muck.
6. Except for an \_\_\_\_\_ cough, the classroom was absolutely silent.
7. Raphael was overjoyed when he found an uneaten \_\_\_\_\_ in a plastic bag.
8. On a good day, Raphael would make 200 \_\_\_\_\_. On a bad day maybe fifty.



## Questions



1. Describe the **setting** of the story at the beginning of Chapter One.


2. What does Raphael compare the size of the Behala to?


3. List five of the items found in the dumpsite Raphael lists that can be sold.


4. How are the personalities of Raphael and Gardo different?


5. Describe what was in the small leather bag Raphael found.


6. Read once again the last three sentences in Chapter Two. What was there about the key that most intrigued Raphael?


7. What was the reason given by the police for the bag being so important?


8. How did Raphael's auntie almost ruin his plans? How did he talk his way out of trouble?


9. What were Raphael's motives for not turning the bag over to the police? What do you think this says about his personality/character?


10. At the end of Chapter 3, the boys wonder what Jose Angelico did. What do you think he did to get the police so interested in retrieving this bag?


## 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	friend - foe		6	serious - earnest	
2	complicated - intricate		7	foreigner - alien	
3	valuable - substandard		8	marsh - slough	
4	eight - ate		9	way - weigh	
5	trust - confide		10	dangerous - innocuous	

## B. Cliffhanger

Chapter 3 ends in a cliffhanger. (The author leaves the reader in suspense at the end of a chapter.) How might the concision to Chapter 3 qualify as a cliffhanger? Why do you think the author ended the chapter this way?




**C. Personification** is giving human qualities to something that is not human. The following is an example taken from Chapter One: ... *a dead tyre holds down the roof of your house*.



Describe how the tyre is personified in this example.


Create your own example of personification.


As you continue to read through the novel be on the lookout for other examples of this literary device. If you should find one, come back to this question and enter it below.


## D. A Quatrain Poem Celebrates Mysteries.

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 of the famous poem, ***Mystery Lover***, written by the renowned poet, Atrocious Halitosis.

*I loves a mystery, that's for sure,  
But I can't wait for the end.  
So I go right to the final page,  
So that I might comprehend.*



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, ABBA, 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 topics established in the first few chapters of our novel (like ***garbage*** or ***mysteries***).

### 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.** A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter One is:  
*The trash is soft, and our feet are hard as hooves.*

What is being compared in this example?

--	--

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

a) the smell of a garbage dump on a hot summer day


b) a police siren


## F. Who is going to help the poor old action word?

An **adverb** is a part of speech defined as *a modifier (or helper) of a verb* (usually an action word). Often an adverb will end in the letters **ly** (i.e. **slowly**). Our novel features a good many creative adverbs.

1. ... to the one who actually puts it in my hand.

→ In this sentence, which verb does **actually** modify? \_\_\_\_\_

2. The cop in charge spoke loudly.

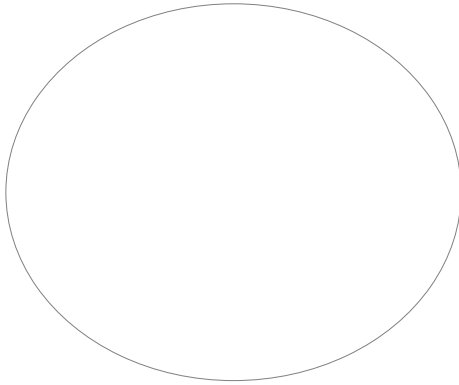
→ In this sentence, what verb does **loudly** modify? \_\_\_\_\_

3. He rubbed my ear gently, like I was a kid.

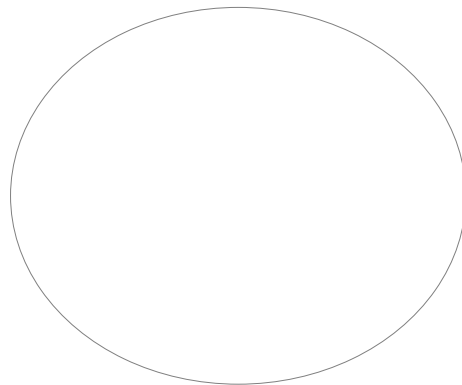
→ In this sentence the adverb \_\_\_\_\_ modifies the verb \_\_\_\_\_

## G. 5 Ws and an H.

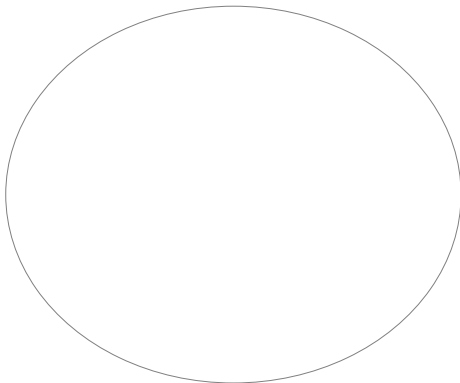
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



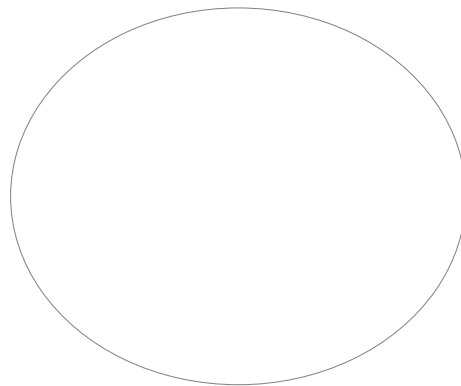
**WHO?**



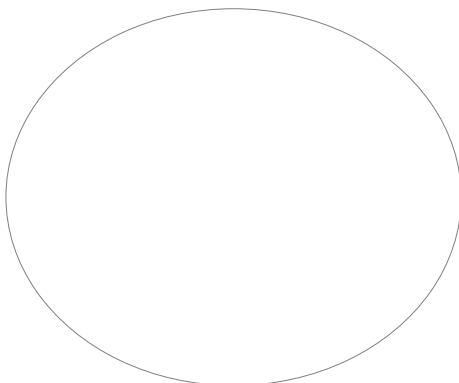
**WHAT?**



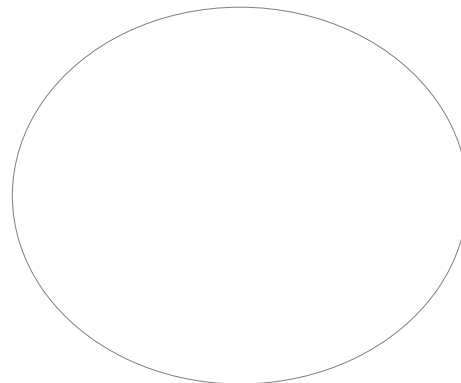
**WHEN?**



**WHERE?**



**WHY?**



**HOW?**

## Extension Activity



### Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A story-board can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel. Complete the story-board below illustrating the events described in this section our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6