

We All Fall Down



By

Eric Walters

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

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Table of Contents

Suggestions and Expectations	3
List of Skills	4
Synopsis / Author Biography	5
Student Checklist	6
Reproducible Student Booklet	7
Answer Key	76

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 curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on one or two chapters of *We All Fall Down* and is comprised of five of the following 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 New York City and the destruction of the World Trade Center, family and friendship, parental priorities, personal growth, accepting responsibilities, violence and terrorism, courage and self-sacrifice.

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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 a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Chart
9. Complete a KWS Chart
10. Create a friendly letter.

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

Today is September 10, 2001... and tomorrow Will, a grade nine student, will be spending the day at his father's office. As a school assignment, all the students in his class will be going to their parents' workplaces, but Will isn't looking forward to it – he'd rather sleep in and do nothing with his friends. His father doesn't even have an exciting job like his best friend James's dad, who is a fireman. Will's dad works for an international trading company and has to wake up early every morning to commute to his office on the eighty-fifth floor of the south building of the World Trade Center in Manhattan. Will hardly ever sees his father because of the hours he puts in at the office; he doubts that his dad will bother to make time for him even when they are supposed to be spending the day together.

In this dramatic novel by best-selling author Eric Walters, Will discovers a new side to his father during an event that continues to affect the world. As Will's teacher says, tomorrow “might be an experience that changes your entire life.” [The Publisher]

Author Biography

Eric Walters

Eric Walters is one of Canada's best-known and most prolific writers of fiction for children and young adults. His books have won over 120 awards, including 13 separate children's choice awards, and have been translated into 13 languages. He lives in Guelph, Ontario, and is the founder of the Creation of Hope, a charity that provides care for orphans in the Mbooni district of Kenya. In 2014 Eric was named a Member of the Order of Canada “for his contributions as an author of literature for children and young adults whose stories help young readers grapple with complex social issues.” [The Publisher]



Learn more by visiting: <http://www.ericwalters.net>

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Student Checklist

Student Name _____

Assignment	Grade/Level	Comments

We All Fall Down



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Name:

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Chapter 1



Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *We All Fall Down* is Will, a grade nine student who is not looking forward to spending the day at his father's workplace. 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 interesting **protagonist**, one that you found very hard to forget?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

predictable	amenity	sanitary	pandemic
extremity	immune	eliminate	potential

1. Do you think the Red Wings will _____ the Rangers from the playoffs?
2. It appears that ants are _____ to attacks from that particular insect.
3. My brothers did not keep the house in a very _____ condition when our parents were away.
4. The movie's plot was very _____.
5. The _____ decimated the population of Europe.
6. I think Marjorie has the _____ to become an accomplished gymnast.
7. Canada's most southern _____ is farther north than some parts of California.
8. The walk-in closet was my favorite _____ in our apartment.

Questions



1. What is the **setting** of the story at the beginning of Chapter One?

2. What was your impression of Mrs. Phelps as a teacher? Would you like to have her as a history teacher?

3. Do you think the author's portrayal of the characters in this chapter are realistic for grade nine students? Why or why not?

4. How was the plague of 1855 spread?

5. (Spoiler Alert) Considering that the novel is about the destruction of the World Trade Center, why do you think the author included a discussion of plagues and natural disasters in the opening chapter?

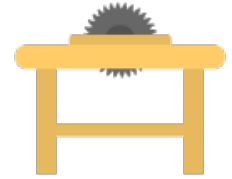
6. Why wasn't Will thrilled about spending the day at his dad's workplace?

Language Activities



A. Anagrams

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word **WAS** can also form the word **SAW**. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:



a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in the first chapter of **We All Fall Down**.

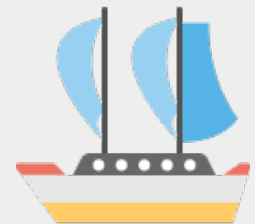
Word	Anagram	Clue
sleep		Removes the rind.
seats		A real plus.
poem		Glum gus.
finger		Edge.
ages		Oh, wise one.
lungs		Suspended.
disease		A great holiday spot.

Now find two additional words from the first chapter which have interesting anagrams to see if you can stump a classmate.

Word	Anagram	Clue

Good to Know ~ The Black Death

The Black Death arrived in Europe by sea in October 1347 when 12 Genoese trading ships docked at the Sicilian port of Messina after a long journey through the Black Sea. The people who gathered on the docks to greet the ships were met with a horrifying surprise: Most of the sailors aboard the ships were dead, and those who were still alive were gravely ill. They were overcome with fever, unable to keep food down and delirious from pain. Strangest of all, they were covered in mysterious black boils that oozed blood and pus and gave their illness its name: the "Black Death." (Wikipedia)



B. Quatrain Poems About Working With Your Folks.

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 was written by the famous poet, Atrocious Halitosis. It is called, ***A Tough Way to Spend the Day.***

*Going to work with your dad or mom,
Don't sound like a picnic, don't sound like fun.
By noon you'll be wishing you were back at school,
Working with your folks is just way too cruel.*



Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A - A - B - B**. Other rhyming schemes include: ABCA, AAAA, AABA, ABBA, ABBB, 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 chapter 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: _____

C. Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here's one such example: from Chapter One: ... *everybody had fallen into predictable patterns*.



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

A thoughtful teacher.	
An explosion.	
Your choice.	

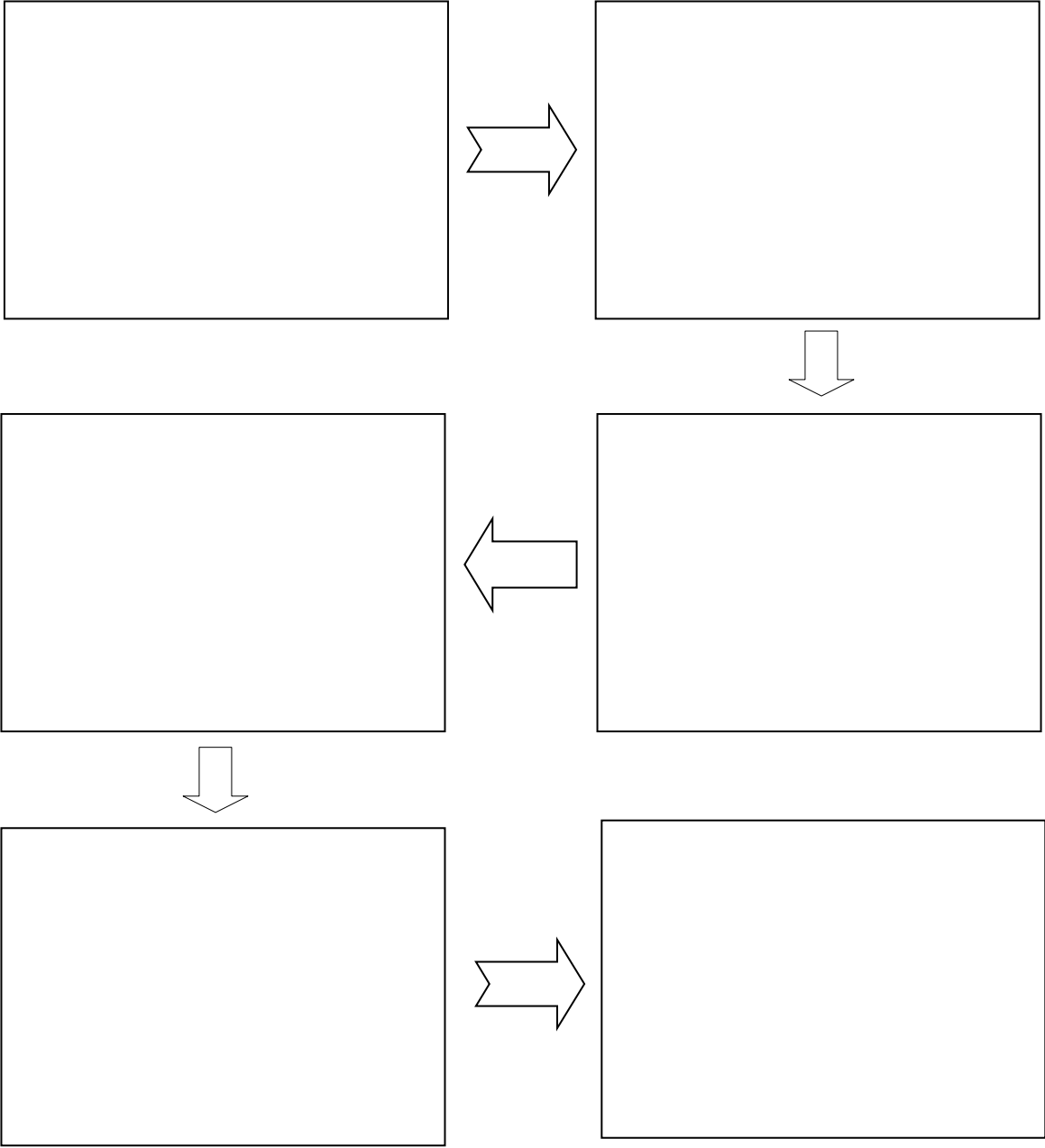
D. What's in a Nursery Rhyme?

Like many ancient nursery rhymes, *Ring Around the Rosie*, has a most interesting origin. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet investigate the origins of the nursery rhyme *Three Blind Mice* and record it below. (With your teacher's approval you may select another well-known nursery rhyme instead of *Three Blind Mice*.)

Nursery Rhyme: _____

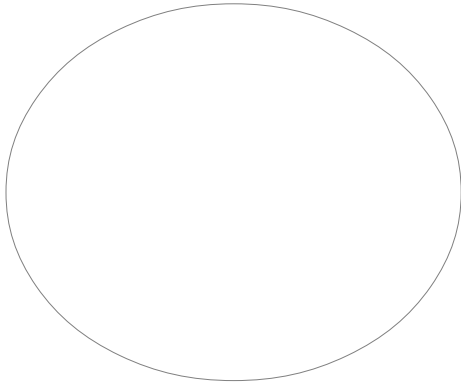
E. Sequence Chart

Choose what you consider to be the six most important events in this chapter. 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.

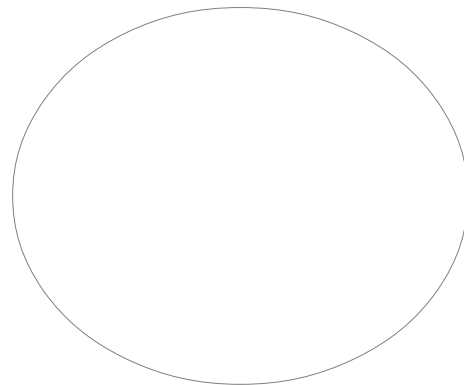


F. 5 Ws and an H.

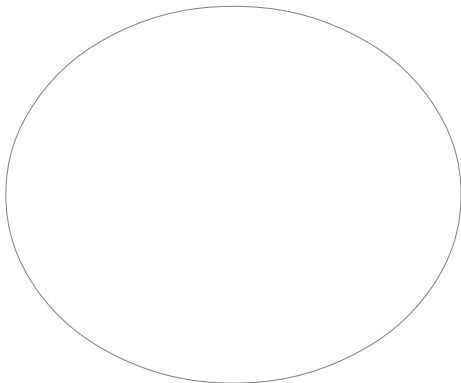
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



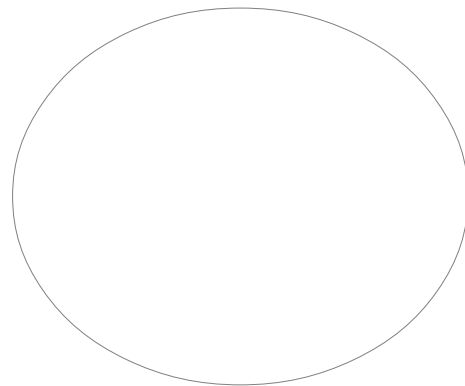
WHO?



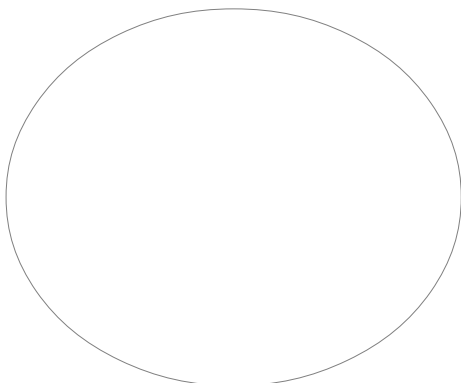
WHAT?



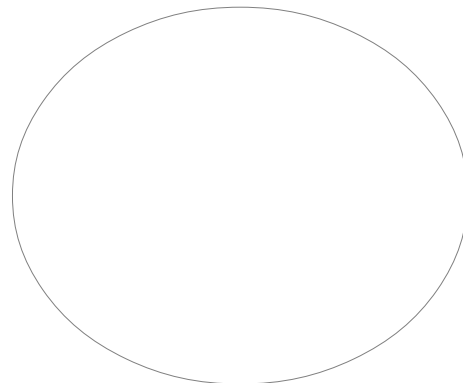
WHEN?



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 the first chapter of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.



1	2
3	4
5	6