

When Friendship Followed Me Home



By

Paul Griffin

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.

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Suggestions and Expectations

Each chapter of the novel study focuses on several chapters of *When Friendship Followed Me Home* and is comprised of four distinct 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 bullying, personal growth, family, friendship, courage, persistence, illness, and the death of a loved-one.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying/creating *alliteration*
4. Identification of root words
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *anagrams*
7. Listing compound words
8. Identifying parts of speech
9. Identify *personification*.

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. Complete a Plot Outline for a Sequel
5. Identify the climax of the novel.

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

Ben Coffin knows from foster care that people can leave you without a good-bye. That's why he prefers to hide out in the Coney Island library with his sci-fi novels, until he rescues an abandoned dog from the alley next door. Scruffy little Flip introduces Ben to fellow book lover Halley—yes, like the comet. Some call her Rainbow Girl for her crazy-colored clothes, but for Ben it's her laugh, pure magic, the kind that makes you smile away the stormiest day. Rainbow Girl convinces “Sci-Fi Boy” to write a novel with her. What begins as a time-travel story ends up a mystery, one that has haunted Ben for as long as he can remember: If friendship is the greatest treasure of all, why can't it last forever? Paul Griffin's middle-grade debut will warm your heart as much as it breaks it with the story of two unforgettable kids at the crossroads of love and loss, helping each other find their way home. [Summary courtesy of the author's website]

Author Biography

Paul Griffin

After graduating Dartmouth College with a BA in Film Studies, I was well-prepared to find work as a butler and bartender, a cook and an EMT, a dog trainer, a driver. I washed dishes with Vin Diesel. I made movies and wrote short stories and plays, scripts and, yes, novels that more often than not featured the street mutts that had a habit of wiggling their way into whatever apartment I was living in at the time. I worked construction, loaded trucks, tutored and taught. The hardest and best work was the teaching. These days I work with organizations like *Literacy for Incarcerated Teens* and *Behind the Book*. Seeing young people learn how to tell their life stories in ways that might bring them a step closer to realizing their dreams - that's like finding treasure. I live with my family, human and canine, in New York City, which is chock-full of stories, not to mention characters. <https://www.paulgriffinstories.com/more-info>



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Student Checklist

Student Name _____

| Assignment | Grade / Level | Comments |
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When Friendship Followed Me Home



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Name: _____

When Friendship Followed Me Home

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Chapters 1-5



Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *When Friendship Followed Me Home* is Ben Coffin, whose world is changed forever when a scruffy little mutt follows him home one memorable day. It is very important for the main character of a story to be appealing in some way and be able to hold the reader's interest. What is one book you have read which features an unforgettable protagonist? What was it about this character that made him/her so memorable?

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Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

| | | | |
|-------------|----------|-------------|-------------|
| inalienable | caress | aggravation | spontaneous |
| synchronize | mediocre | enchanted | varmint |

1. The old magician's spell rendered the forest _____ from that day forward.
2. What kind of loathsome _____ would destroy one's garden like that?
3. Freedom of expression is every citizen's _____ right.
4. I would suggest that his effort was _____ at best.
5. We'll have to _____ our watches if we're going to pull this off.
6. The crowd's applause was so _____ that it caught the actors by surprise.
7. Her gentle _____ seemed to melt my fears away.
8. “Who needs the _____ of having her at the meeting?” the mayor shouted.

Questions





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

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2. What did you learn about Ben's personality from his encounter with Damon Rayburn?

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3. Chucky seems to be quite an interesting friend for Ben. Think of one thing which would be good about having a friend like Chucky and one thing which would not be so good.

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4. What evidence is there in these first few chapters indicating that Ben is quite smart.

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5. What was Rhonda's impression of Ben?

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6. How did Mrs. Lorentz feel about Ben? What evidence do you have for this? Why do you think she felt this way about him?

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7. What was Ben's mom planning for next year?

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8. Why would even the dumbest guy not mess with a diva?

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9. Describe the strategy Ben used to gain the dog's trust.

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10. What was Ben's mom trying to teach him when she said, "Hiking uphill is the best part of the trip?"

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11. Describe Ben's mom response when Ben asked if he could keep the dog. Was this surprising to you? Why or why not?

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Language Activities



A. Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human. The following is an example from Chapter Five: *My lungs were cool around dogs...*

Describe how Ben's lungs are personified in this sentence.

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| |

Create your own example of personification.

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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.

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B. Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here is such an example from Chapter Five: *She was sixty-seven years old.*

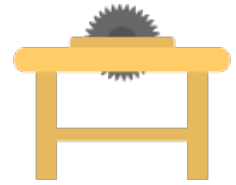


Using your imagination, create your own examples of **alliteration** from the following topics. Each example must contain a minimum of three words.

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| The sound of a dog. | |
| | |
| The beach. | |
| | |
| Your choice. | |
| | |

C. 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 five chapters of *When Friendship Followed Me Home*.

| Word | Anagram | Clue |
|---------|---------|----------------------------|
| breath | | Loves the tub. |
| resting | | Wasp. |
| snapped | | Attaches. |
| seven | | Couldn't possibly be odds. |
| closer | | Used as a disinfectant. |
| past | | Disturbance. |
| stack | | Pins. |

D. Cliffhanger

Chapter Three contains an important literary device called a **cliffhanger**. A cliffhanger usually occurs at the end of a chapter when the author leaves the reader in suspense. How is this true in Chapter Three? Why do you think the author ended the chapter this way?



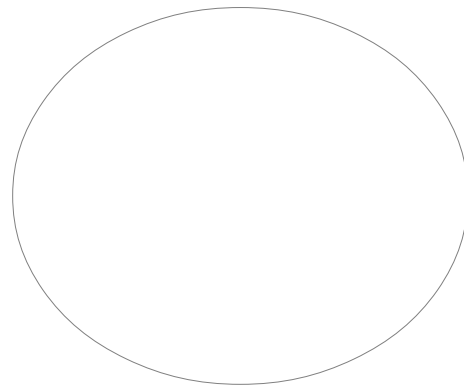
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E. 5 Ws and an H.

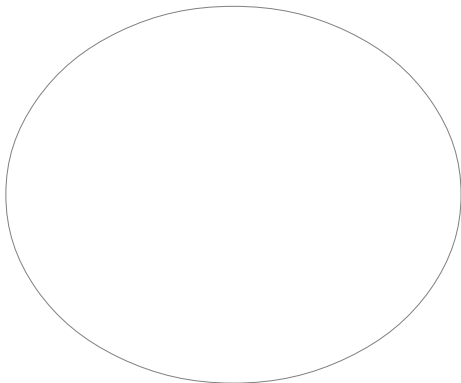
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



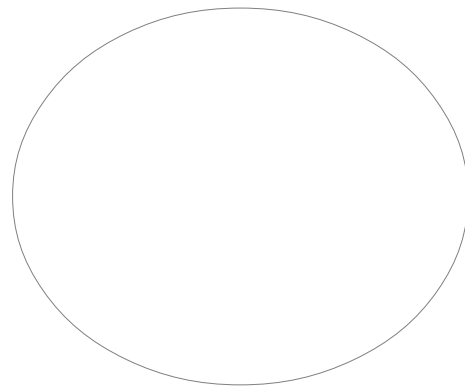
WHO?



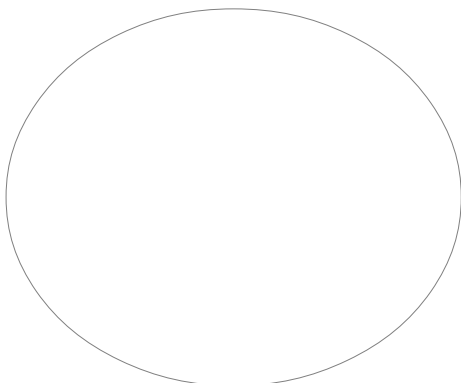
WHAT?



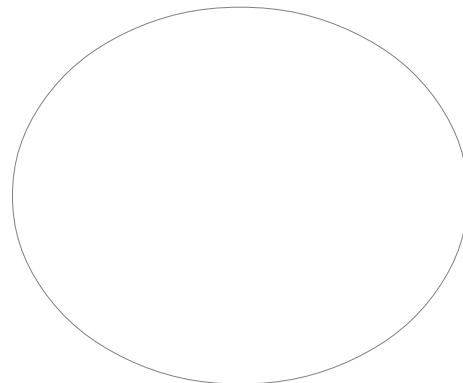
WHEN?



WHERE?



WHY?



HOW?

F. My 02¢ About Chapters 1-5.

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|--------------------|
| What I Liked Best: |
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|-------------------------|
| I Didn't Like The Part: |
| |
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|---------------------------|
| I Didn't Like It Because: |
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G. Caviar Words

The author of this novel is noted for his use of elegant, tasteful words. Someone once stated that some words have the sound of **caviar** (rich and elegant) and others are more are common (**peanut butter** words). With a colleague come up with 6 examples of each type of word. You may use any chapter of the novel to find these words.



| Caviar Words | Peanut Butter Words |
|--------------|---------------------|
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Extension Activity



A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words



Use the three boxes to describe and illustrate the beginning, middle and end of the first five chapters.

| | |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Beginning Picture: | Beginning: |
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| Middle Picture: | Middle: |
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| Concluding Picture: | Concluding: |
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