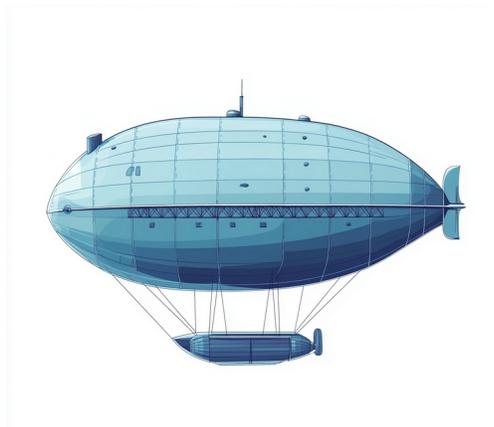


Airborn



By

Kenneth Oppel

A Novel Study
by Joel Michel Reed

Airborn

By Kenneth Oppel



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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, two, or three chapters of *Airborn* and is comprised of five of the following activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language Activities
- Extension Activities

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.**

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking. Students will also be expected to provide clear answers to questions and well-constructed explanations. It is critical as well that students be able to relate events and the feelings of characters to their own lives and experiences and describe their own interpretation of a particular passage.

A strength of the unit is that students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A **portfolio cover** is included (p.7) so that students may organize their work and keep it all in one place. A **Student Checklist** is also included (p.6) so that a record of completed work may be recorded.

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include fantasy adventures with unusual characters facing difficult circumstances, mortality, (dysfunctional) families, friendships, jealousy, relationships, and putting right to a wrong.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Identifying synonyms
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. Identifying antonyms
13. Identify/create *similes*
14. Identify *anagrams*

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 *cliffhangers*
4. Complete Five W's Chart

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Relating personal experiences

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Write a description of personal feelings
6. Write a book review
7. Complete an Observation Sheet
8. Identification activities

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Create an Information Card
4. Design a cover for the novel
5. Create a comic strip

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Synopsis

Matt Cruse is the cabin boy of the Aurora, the 900-foot luxury airship he has called home for the past two years. While crossing the Pacificus, he fearlessly rescues the unconscious pilot of a crippled hot air balloon. Before he dies, the balloonist tells Matt about the fantastic, impossible creatures he has seen flying through the clouds. Matt dismisses the story as the ravings of a dying man, but when Kate de Vries arrives on the Aurora a year later, determined to prove the story true, Matt finds himself caught up in her quest. Then one night over the middle of the ocean, deadly air pirates board the Aurora. Far from any hope of rescue, Kate and Matt are flung into adventures beyond all imagining ... (The Publisher – Harper Trophy Canada)

A complete synopsis and other helpful reviews can be found on the following website:
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Airborn> (Wikipedia summary may contain spoilers)

Author Biography

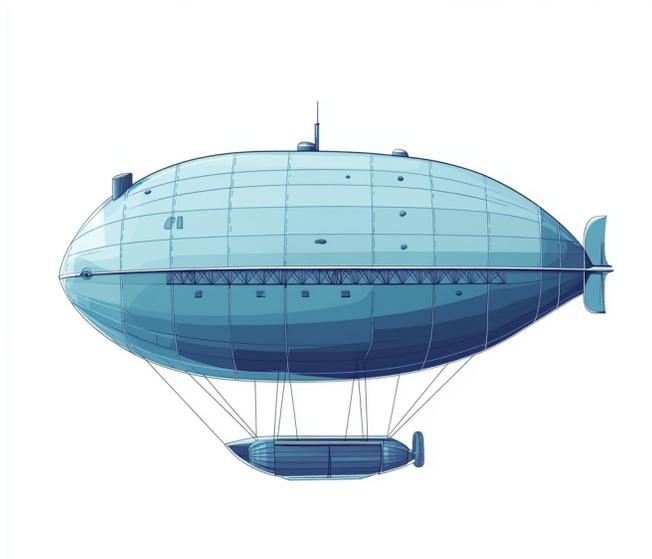
Kenneth Oppel

I was born in Port Alberni, a mill town on Vancouver Island, British Columbia but spent the bulk of my childhood in Victoria, B.C. and on the opposite coast, in Halifax, Nova Scotia...At around twelve I decided I wanted to be a writer (this came after deciding I wanted to be a scientist, and then an architect). I started out writing sci-fi epics (my Star Wars phase) then went on to swords and sorcery tales (my Dungeons and Dragons phase) and then, during the summer holiday when I was fourteen, started on a humorous story about a boy addicted to video games (written, of course, during my video game phase). It turned out to be quite a long story, really a short novel, and I rewrote it the next summer. We had a family friend who knew Roald Dahl - one of my favourite authors - and this friend offered to show Dahl my story. I was paralysed with excitement. I never heard back from Roald Dahl directly, but he read my story, and liked it enough to pass on to his own literary agent. I got a letter from them, saying they wanted to take me on, and try to sell my story. And they did.



Biography is courtesy of the author's website: <http://kennethoppel.ca>

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Chapter 1



Before you read the chapter:

The **antagonist** in most novels features a character who is recognized as the “bad guy” or the “villain”. What do you think makes for an especially interesting **antagonist**?



Vocabulary:

Draw a straight line to connect the vocabulary word to its definition. Remember to use a straight edge (like a ruler).

1. Constellation
2. Gondola
3. Confer
4. Flotsam
5. Propulsion
6. Mooring
7. Tethered
8. Undulating
9. Infirmary
10. Dispensary

- A. To tie with a rope or chain to restrict movement.
- B. The action of driving or pushing forward.
- C. A room where medicine is prepared/provided.
- D. An enclosed compartment of an airship.
- E. To move with a smooth wave-like motion.
- F. A group of stars forming a pattern.
- G. A place where a boat or ship is secured.
- H. A place in a large institution to care for the ill.
- I. Have discussions; exchange opinions.
- J. The wreckage of a ship or its cargo found floating on or washed up by the sea.

Questions



1. Describe the setting of our story as Chapter One begins.

2. Circle the correct narrative that our novel follows, and the reason for your choice.

First Person Second Person Third Person

3. Using resources from your school library or the Internet, identify the following terms.

Starboard	
Port	
Bow	
Stern	

4. What was the purpose of Benjamin Molloy's trip in the hot air balloon?

5. What did Benjamin Molloy mumble to Matt while on his deathbed?

b. What was Matt's response to Benjamin Molloy's strange mumblings?

Language Activities



A. A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter One is “*Suspended only on the davit's hook, the gondola swung out from underneath the blazing balloon, and just in time. Aflame, it seeped quickly downwards, cut lines trailing, undulating like a giant jellyfish intent on the ocean's bottom.*”



What two things are being compared in this example?

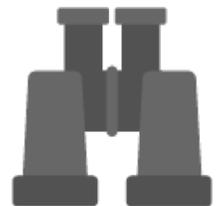
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Invent two of your own **similes** comparing two different people or objects with something from your own imagination:

1

2

B. Foreshadowing is a literary device used by authors to provide clues for the reader so that they are able to predict what might occur *later* in the story. How might the following statement taken from Chapter One be considered an example of this literary device: “*That night, on my watch, Benjamin Molloy's words sounded over and over in my head, and I wondered what it was he'd seen. Or thought he'd seen. Something winged in the sky, by the sounds of it. Beautiful creatures.*”



C. The Eight Parts of Speech

Find at least 2 examples of each of the eight parts of speech from these chapters and list them in the appropriate section of the chart below.



Interjections	
Nouns	
Pronouns	
Conjunctions	
Prepositions	
Adjectives	
Adverbs	
Verbs	

Extension Activity

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 chapter of *Airborn*. You may wish to practice your drawings before you begin.

1	2
3	4
5	6