

Freak The Mighty



By

Rodman Philbrick

A Novel Study
by Joel Michel Reed

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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 three chapters of *Freak The Mighty* 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 growing up, perseverance when facing difficult circumstances, families and family relationships, putting right to a wrong.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homonyms
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. Identify *anagrams*
13. Identify/create *similes*

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.

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

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

That's what Max thought. All his life he'd been called stupid. Dumb. Slow. It didn't help that his body seemed to be growing faster than his mind. It didn't help that people were afraid of him. So Max learned how to be alone. At least until Freak came along.

Freak was weird, too. He had a little body – and a really big brain. Together Max and freak were unstoppable. Together, they were Freak the Mighty. (The Publisher)

A complete synopsis and other helpful reviews can be found on the following website:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freak_the_mighty

Author Biography

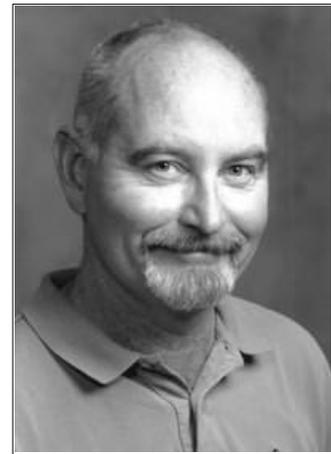
Rodman Philbrick

Rodman Philbrick grew up on the coast of New Hampshire and has been writing novels since the age of sixteen. For a number of years he published mystery and suspense novels for adults. Two of his detective novels were nominated for the Shamus Award. 'Brothers & Sinners' finally won the Shamus outright in 1993.

In that same year his debut young adult novel 'Freak the Mighty' won numerous awards and was eventually made into the feature film 'The Mighty', starring Sharon Stone and James Gandolfini. 'Freak The Mighty' has become a standard reading selection in thousands of classrooms worldwide, and now has nearly three million copies in print.

Philbrick's young adult novel 'The Young Man And The Sea' draws upon his youthful experiences as a boat builder, and his vivid memories of growing up in a small town on the coast of New England. In 2010 his novel 'The Mostly True Adventures of Homer P.Figg', set at the time of the Civil War, won a Newbery Honor. His new novel, 'Zane and The Hurricane, A story of Katrina' was published in March 2014.

Philbrick continues to write thrillers for adults. His latest, 'Measure of Darkness', is available in paperback, ebook, and kindle editions from Mira Books.



Courtesy of the following website: <http://www.rodmanphilbrick.com/info.html>

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Name:

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Chapters 1-3



Before you read the chapter:

Briefly predict what you believe the plot-line of *Freak The Mighty* will be about.



Vocabulary:

Write the definitions for each the following words found in Chapters 1-3. Once you have completed your definitions, check a dictionary to see if your answers are correct.

Unvanquished	
Invention	
Glimpse	
Persuaded	
Observation	
Evidence	
Consequence	

Questions



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

2. Which of the following three narratives is used in our novel, *Freak The Mighty*?
Give reasons for your choice.

First Person

Second Person

Third Person

3. What's your first impression of our novel, *Freak The Mighty*?

4. Use three adjectives to describe both Max and Freak.

Max			
Freak			

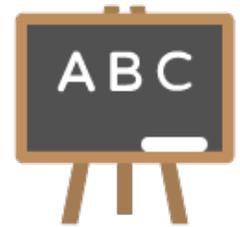
5. What is an *Ornithopter*?

6. Why did Max call Freak's mother 'The Fair Gwen of Air?'

Language Activities



A. Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. The following is an example of alliteration: "... **g**rouching, **g**rouching, **g**rumbling, **g**ripping about something or other."



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 robot.	
The sound of fireworks.	
A topic of your own choosing.	

B. Copy out any three sentences from these chapters and then underline the **nouns** and circle the **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 3 chapters of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6