

# Out of My Dreams



By  
Sharon M. Draper

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

Each chapter of the novel study focuses on five chapters of *Out of My Dreams* 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** (page 7) as well as a **Checklist** (page 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 heroism, disability and ability, cerebral palsy, the importance of friends and family, dealing with acclaim and disappointment, innovation, 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. Identification of onomatopoeia
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *anagrams*
7. Listing compound words
8. Identifying parts of speech
9. Identify *personification*
10. Identify *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. Create a synopsis
5. Identify the climax of the novel

### Character Activities

1. Determine perspectives
2. Identify the protagonist
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. Create a journal entry
9. Opinion writing
10. Create a friendly letter

### Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a movie poster
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip

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## Synopsis

When Melody saves an elderly back-in-the-day actress's life, the woman is so grateful - and impressed by Melody - that she nominates Melody to be a US spokesperson at an international symposium for kids with different abilities. To Melody's utter shock and delight, she and a friend of her choice are chosen to participate - and this year's symposium is in England!

Melody finally gets to fly on an airplane, and even the airline's somewhat clumsy handling of her wheelchair can't dampen her excitement to be in London. There, Melody meets kids from all over the world who are rallying for greater accessibility and more thoughtful planning on how to make the world more equal for every kid, no matter the unusual challenges they face. As Melody's time to speak approaches, she hopes she can find a way to make every word count and make an impact. [Courtesy of the Publisher]

## Author Biography

Sharon M. Draper

Sharon Mills Draper (born August 21, 1948), is an American children's writer, professional educator, and the 1997 National Teacher of the Year. She is a five-time winner of the Coretta Scott King Award for books about the young and adolescent African-American experience. She is known for her *Hazelwood* and *Jericho* series, *Copper Sun*, *Double Dutch*, and the series *Out of my Mind*, *Out of My Heart* and *Out of My Dreams*.





# Out of My Dreams



*By Sharon M. Draper*

Name:

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## Chapters 1-5



### Before you read this section:

The **protagonist** of *Out of My Dreams* is Melody Brooks, a grade seven girl with cerebral palsy. Why might creating a novel whose protagonist is not only nonverbal, but confined to a wheelchair be a real challenge for most authors. How might the author overcome these possible challenges?




### Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

iridescent	feisty	coherent	functional
dexterity	predictable	random	phenomenal

1. I love words, even though I've never said a \_\_\_\_\_ one in my life.
2. Her hands never shake or wobble and her \_\_\_\_\_ amazes me.
3. I could see her whispering as she pinched a \_\_\_\_\_ brown leaf.
4. Bubbles. The thin, \_\_\_\_\_ orbs my little sister loves to chase.
5. "You're doing a \_\_\_\_\_ job, Melody!"
6. Elvira is also a fully \_\_\_\_\_ supercomputer.
7. Blue jays are \_\_\_\_\_ and bossy and squawk-yell at each other.
8. The folks living on our street seem quite boring and very \_\_\_\_\_.



# Questions



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


2. The events described in Chapter One might be seen as quite melancholic. Why? What was it that really made Melody sad in Chapter Two?


3. Describe how Elvira changed Melody's life.


4. What was it about summer camp that made such a positive impression on Melody?


5. How would you describe Penny's personality? Do you think this might possibly be a difficult thing for Melody to deal with? Why or why not?


6. Describe how Chapter 4 ends with a cliffhanger.


7. Describe how circumstances conspired against Melody after she dialed 9-1-1.


## Language Activities



### A. Alliteration

Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Alliteration is usually seen as a series of words beginning with the same consonant (i.e. *Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers*). The following from this section also serves as an example: ... *Soaked, saturated, sodden, full of spurts and splashes.*



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

A snowy day.	
The antics of a blue jay.	
Your choice.	

## B. Onomatopoeia

**Onomatopoeia** is a literary device that consists of using words that imitate or represent sounds, noises or visual phenomena. We find an example of this in Chapter 5 when the author describes the sound of the washing machine as *chug-slosh, chug-slosh*.

Describe possible examples of onomatopoeia for the following:

A toast with champagne glasses	
Chewing gum	
An outboard motor	

## 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 this section of *Out of My Dreams*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
golden		Yearned; pined.
remote		Shooting star.
board		Wide.
nails		Killed.
chase		Soreness.
meals		Opposite of females.
time		A minute arachnid.

## D. The Good Old Indispensable Adverb!

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. *Before Elvira, which sits on a specially made shelf...*

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

2. *I have this unspoken love affair with words, maybe because I can't actually speak them.*

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

3. *I can usually sense a color in just about everything.*

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

## E. Write a Quintet.

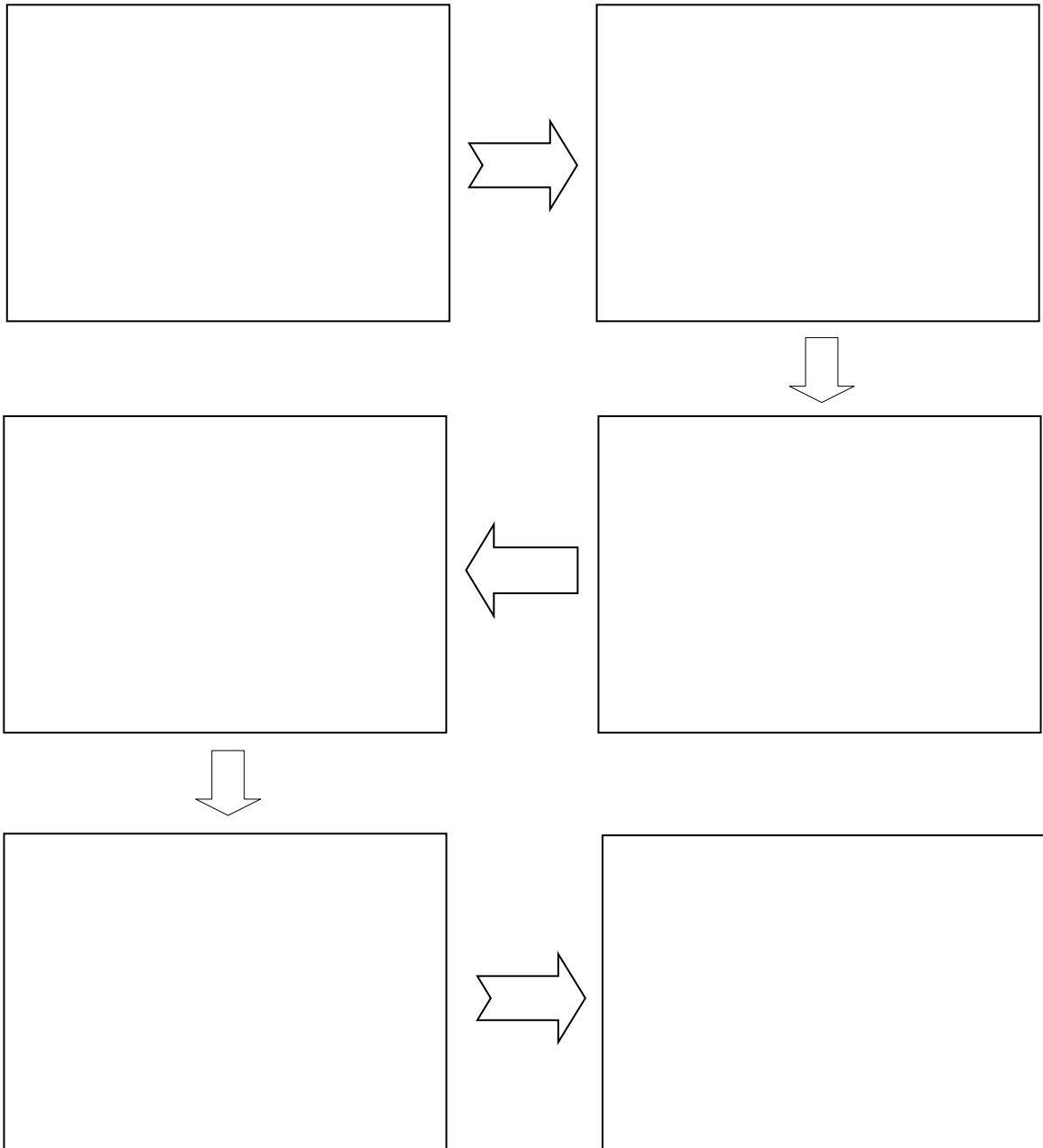
A **quintet** is a five-line verse that tells a story. The quintet has a syllable pattern and can bring an exciting scene to life. (It doesn't have to rhyme.)

Line 1 – tells <b>when</b> , 3 syllables Line 2 – tells <b>where</b> , 5 syllables Line 3 – tells <b>what</b> , 7 syllables Line 4 – describes <b>activity</b> , 9 syllables Line 5 – contains a <b>thought</b> , 3 syllables.	Now create a quintet poem using ideas from recent events in <b><i>Out of My Dreams</i></b>
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TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_


## F. Sequence Chart

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



# Extension Activity



## A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words



Use the three boxes to describe and illustrate the beginning, middle and end of this section.

Beginning Picture:	Beginning:
Middle Picture:	Middle:
Concluding Picture:	Concluding: