

# Ruby Holler



By

Sharon Creech

A Novel Study  
by Nat Reed

# Ruby Holler

By Sharon Creech



## 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](http://novelstudies.org).

Copyright © 2016 Nat Reed  
Revisions Completed in 2025  
All rights reserved by author.  
Permission to copy for single classroom use only.  
Electronic distribution limited to single classroom use only.  
Not for public display.

# Ruby Holler

By Sharon Creech



## Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on several chapters of *Ruby Holler* and is comprised of 5 of the following 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 the importance of family, the dangers of stereotyping, abandonment, selflessness, love and generosity.

# Ruby Holler

By Sharon Creech

## 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. Complete a Story Pyramid
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

# Ruby Holler

By Sharon Creech



## Synopsis

"Trouble twins" Dallas and Florida are orphans who have given up believing there is such a thing as a loving home. Tiller and Sairy are an eccentric older couple who live in the beautiful, mysterious Ruby Holler, but they're restless for one more big adventure. When they invite the twins to join them on their journeys, they first must all stay together in the Holler, and the magic of the place takes over. Two pairs of lives grow closer and are changed forever. [Courtesy of The Publisher]

## Author Biography

Sharon Creech

I was born in South Euclid, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland, and grew up there with my noisy and rowdy family: my parents (Ann and Arvel), my sister (Sandy), and my three brothers (Dennis, Doug, and Tom).

For a fictional view of what it was like growing up in my family, see *Absolutely Normal Chaos*. Our house was not only full of us Creeches, but also full of friends and relatives. In the summer, we usually took a trip, all of us piled in a car and heading out to Wisconsin or Michigan or, once, to Idaho. We must have been a very noisy bunch, and I'm not sure how our parents put up with being cooped up with us in the car for those trips. The five-day trip out to Idaho when I was twelve had a powerful effect on me: what a huge and amazing country! I had no idea then that thirty-some years later, I would recreate that trip in a book called *Walk Two Moons*.

I am married to Lyle Rigg, and we live in Maine. We have two grown children, Rob and Karin, and being with my family is what I enjoy most.



(Courtesy of Sharon's website - <http://www.sharoncreech.com/meet-sharon-creech>)



# Ruby Holler



*By Sharon Creech*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Ruby Holler

By Sharon Creech  
Chapters 1-5



## Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. There are actually two main characters in this novel, twins Dallas and Florida, who have been causing trouble at the Boxton Creek Home for Children ever since they were dropped off on the Home's porch when they were babies. 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**?




## Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

inevitable	encounter	tentative	gesture
queasy	ramshackled	inclined	putrid

1. The queen made an \_\_\_\_\_ gesture with her hand when the maid entered.
2. The roller coaster ride made us all feel a little \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Rachel took a \_\_\_\_\_ step toward the stage and then changed her mind.
4. Morgan and his family lived in a \_\_\_\_\_ old house on the edge of town.
5. A \_\_\_\_\_ odor emanated from the garbage can.
6. It seemed \_\_\_\_\_ that she would one day run away from home.
7. I would be \_\_\_\_\_ to vote for him if he wasn't such a big liar.
8. My first \_\_\_\_\_ with Marjorie was at the county fair.

# Questions



1. What is the **setting** of the story at the beginning of this novel?


2. Dallas and Florida lived in the town of \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Describe the personalities of the two main characters, Dallas and Florida.

Dallas	
Florida	

4. Mr. and Mrs. Trepid haven't enjoyed much success in getting Florida and Dallas to obey the rules. If you were the manager of the Home, what different strategy might you have tried to make the twins more obedient? (You may wish to brainstorm ideas with a classmate before answering.)


5. Describe the plan that the twins dreamed up to escape the Home. Do you think this was a realistic plan? Why or why not?


6. How is Chapter 3 different than Chapters 1, 2, 4 and 5?


7. What did the twins stash under the floorboards? Why?


8. What strategy did Dallas use to help pass the time when he was sent to the cellar?


9. Florida's favorite word seems to be \_\_\_\_\_.

10. Think of three adjectives which would describe Mr. Trepid (appearance/personality).

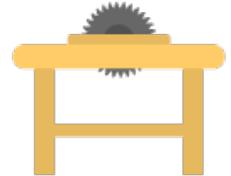
1.		2.		3.	
----	--	----	--	----	--

## 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 five chapters of *Ruby Holler*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
stool		Implements.
earned		Drew closer.
arms		Male sheep.
spider		Groups of lions.
sent		Aerie.
plate		Flower segment.
agreed		A car transmission is ____.

## B. A Poem About a Cellar.

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 entitled *The Cellar in my Home*, was written by the humorous poet, Atrocious Halitosis.

*When I was a lad about nine or ten,  
There was a cellar downstairs that they put me in.  
It was dark and damp and running with mice,  
You see when I was bad, I paid the price.*



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: ABAB, 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 five chapters 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.** A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter Two is: ... *Mr. and Mrs. Trepid were middle aged, cranky and tired, and growing stiff and cold as winter-bound trees.*



What is being compared in this example?

--	--

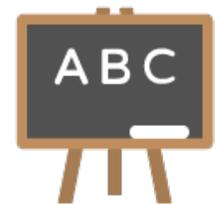
Invent your own **similes** comparing the following items with something from your own imagination:

a) a maple leaf in autumn


b) a police siren


c) your choice


**D.** Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here is an example from Chapter Two: ... *no stinking stupid running.*



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

A grandfather frog	
A violent storm	
Your choice.	

## 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. Caviar Words

The author of this novel is noted for her use of elegant, tasteful words. Someone once stated that some words have the sound of **caviar** (rich and elegant) and others are more 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

## G. My 02¢ About Chapters 1-5.

<b>What I Liked Best:</b>

<b>I Didn't Like The Part:</b>

<b>I Didn't Like It Because:</b>

## 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 five chapters of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.



1	2
3	4
5	6