

Rules



By

Cynthia Lord

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

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two chapters of **Rules** and is comprised of the following different 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 family and friendship, peer pressure, abilities and disabilities, loyalty, 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. 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. Identify *cliffhangers*
5. Identify the climax of the novel.
6. Complete a Story Pyramid

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

Twelve-year-old Catherine just wants a normal life. Which is near impossible when you have a brother with autism and a family that revolves around his disability. She's spent years trying to teach David the rules from "a peach is not a funny-looking apple" to "keep your pants on in public" - in order to head off David's embarrassing behaviors.

But the summer Catherine meets Jason, a surprising, new sort-of friend, and Kristi, the potential next-door friend she's always wished for; it's her own shocking behavior that turns everything upside down and forces her to ask: What is normal? [The Publisher]

A complete synopsis and other helpful reviews can be found online at such sites as the following: <http://www.bookrags.com/studyguide-rules/#gsc.tab=0>

Author Biography

Cynthia Lord

Cynthia Lord's life as a writer began at age four with a song collaboration with her sister. Lord says that she was a day dreamer and very shy. Her favorite books when she was very young included *Fantastic Mr. Fox* and *Winnie-the-Pooh*. In college Lord had some short stories published, and even won a contest with one. After college Lord got married and became a teacher. As her children grew up, she returned to writing fiction. Cynthia Lord lives in an old house with her husband, John, and her children, Julia and Gregory. Gregory has autism. David in the book, *Rules*, was inspired by her son, Gregory.



Adapted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cynthia_Lord

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Name: _____

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Chapters 1-2

(Follow the rules - Don't run down the clinic hallway)



Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *Rules* is twelve-year-old Catherine who is about to embark on a summer she will never forget. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read. What do you think makes for an especially interesting **protagonist**?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

advisory	crude	realtor	conversation
autism	complicated	fidget	occupational

1. Ralph was always interrupting our _____ by making silly noises.
2. I never expected that the puzzle would be so _____.
3. I expect my role in the mayor's office will be of an _____ nature.
4. My mother works as a _____ for a large and successful company.
5. The movie wasn't even half over when I noticed that David was beginning to _____.
6. Experts believe that _____ presents itself during the first three years of a person's life.
7. I think that she will benefit from the help of an _____ therapist.
8. My aunt did not appreciate Charlie's _____ sense of humor.

Questions



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

2. Why do you think that the video store is David's favorite place?

3. Catherine says, *sometimes I can change how I feel about something by drawing it*. Why do you think this the case with Catherine?

4. What did Catherine find exciting about having new neighbors moving in next door?

5. How do you think Catherine's parents could have been more understanding when it came to Catherine's responsibilities regarding her brother?

6. What did Catherine do in the waiting room that upset Jason? Why do you think this upset him?

7. How do you think Jason feels about his therapist? Why does he feel this way?

8. Why does Catherine use rules to help her brother?

9. Catherine's role as the guardian of her little brother is not an easy one. What would be three character attributes that Catherine would value in being able to fulfill her responsibilities? The first attribute has been given.

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

10. Catherine endures a very humiliating experience in Chapter Two. The actor, Pierce Brosnan, once said, *Oh, humiliation is poisonous. It's one of the deepest pains of being human.* Why do you think humiliation is such a difficult experience for most people?

Good to Know ~ Autism

Kids with autism often can't make connections that other kids make easily. For example, when people smile, you know they feel happy or friendly; when people look mad, you can tell by their face or their voice. But many kids who have autism spectrum disorders have trouble understanding what emotions look like and what another person is thinking. They might act in a way that seems unusual, and it can be hard to understand why they're doing it. - From this helpful website: www.kidshealth.org

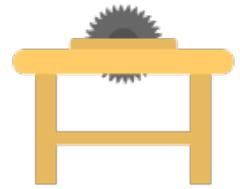


Language Activities



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 two chapters of **Rules**.

Word	Anagram	Clue
rules		Fishermen love these.
stare		Sob.
board		Wide.
fingers		Edges.
smile		Fruits.
peach		Inexpensive.
throw		Value.

Now find three additional words from the first two chapters which have interesting anagrams to see if you can stump a classmate.

Word	Anagram	Clue

B. Even Shakespeare liked to write Quatrain Poems.

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 famous quatrain was written by the great writer, William Shakespeare, and is taken from *Sonnet 18*.

*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.*



Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A - B - A - B**. Other rhyming schemes include: AABB, AAAA, AABA, ABBA, ABBA, 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 two chapters of our novel.

The Quatrain Poem

Now create your own Quatrain Poem on a subject of your choice. Your poem must follow the format of a quatrain poem described above (and must rhyme).

Title: _____

C. Exaggeration

Exaggeration in a literary device defined as *a statement that represents something as better or worse than it really is*. We find an example of this in Chapter One: *Dad's always late*. (Surely he must have been on time for something in his life.)

Think of an exaggerated way of describing the following:

A wailing bagpipe	
Croak of a toad.	
An awkward swan dive.	
A mosquito's sting.	

D. Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human. Here's an example from Chapter Two: *Mom's question hangs in the air*.

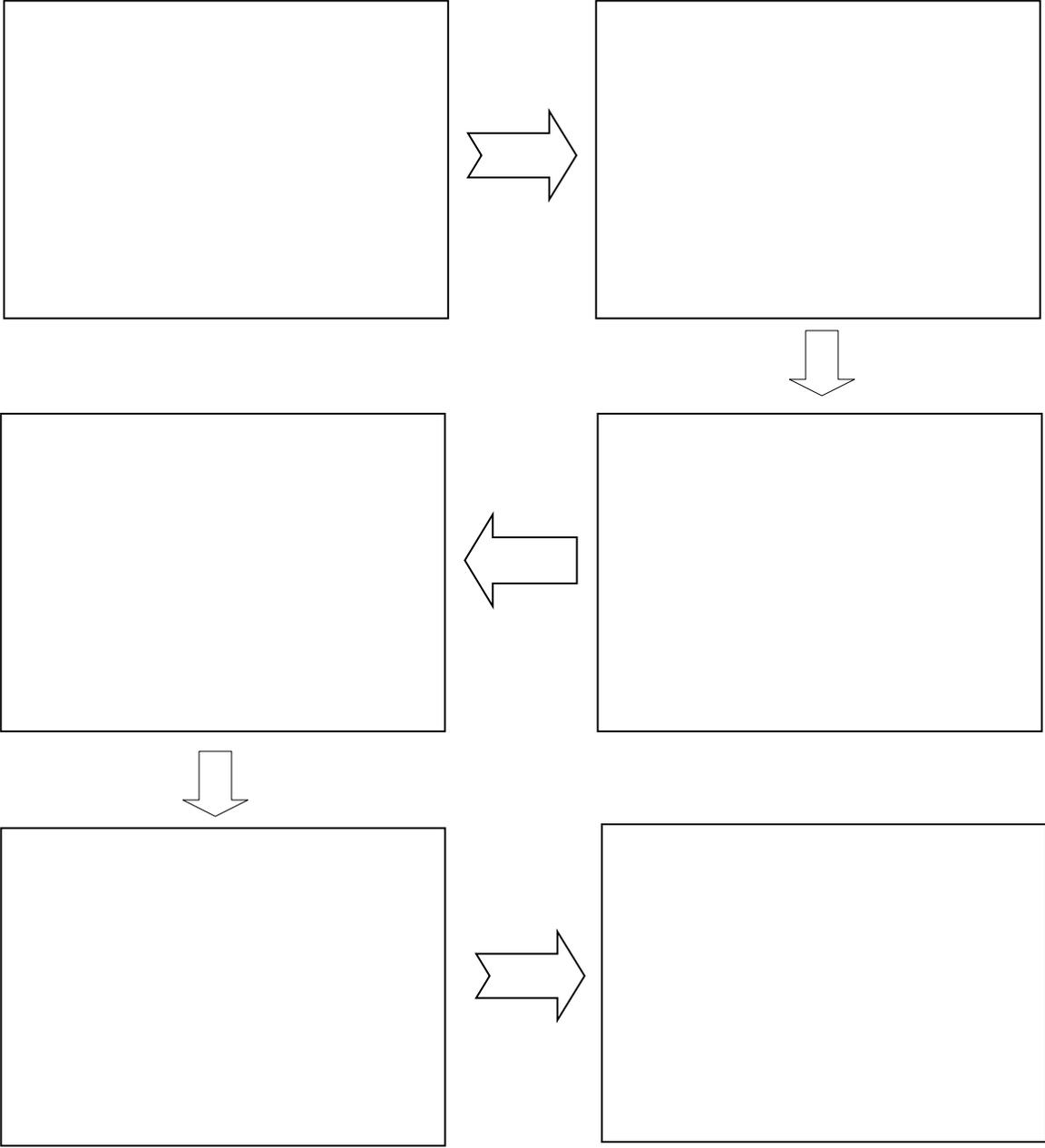
Describe how Mom's question is personified in this example.

Create your own example of personification.

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.

E. Sequence Chart

Choose what you consider to be the six most important events in these chapters. 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



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



1	2
3	4
5	6