The Invention of Hugo Cabret

By

Brian Selznick

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

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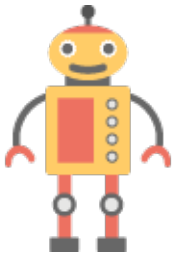

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About the author: Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit novelstudies.org.

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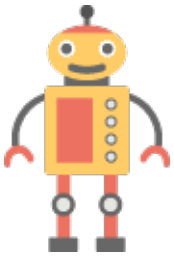

Suggestions and Expectations

This 85 page curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two chapters of ***The Invention of Hugo Cabret*** and is comprised of five 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 Paris, train stations, 1930's, clocks and timepieces, honesty, courage, automatons/robots, early movies.

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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 *foreshadowing*.
7. Identify *personification*.
8. Use of singular/plural nouns
9. Listing compound words
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identification of root words
13. Identify/create *similes*
14. Identification of *cliffhangers*.

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 the climax of the novel.
4. Five W's Chart

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Protagonists and antagonists
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Comparing two Characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Write a letter to a friend
4. Complete an Observation Chart
5. Conduct an interview
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Create a KWS Chart

Art Activities

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

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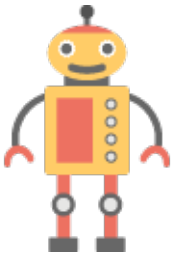

Synopsis

Orphan, clock keeper, and thief, Hugo lives in the walls of a busy Paris train station, where his survival depends on secrets and anonymity. But when his world suddenly interlocks with an eccentric, bookish girl and a bitter old man who runs a toy booth in the station, Hugo's undercover life, and his most precious secret, are put in jeopardy. A cryptic drawing, a treasured notebook, a stolen key, a mechanical man, and a hidden message from Hugo's dead father form the backbone of this intricate, tender, and spellbinding mystery. [The publisher]

Author Biography

Brian Selznick

Hello there. My name is Brian Selznick and I'm the author and illustrator of ***The Invention of Hugo Cabret***. I was born in 1966 in New Jersey. I have a sister who is a teacher, a brother who is a brain surgeon. I studied at The Rhode Island School of Design and after I graduated from college I worked at *Eeyore's Books for Children* in New York City. I learned all about children's books from my boss Steve Geck who is now an editor of children's books at *Greenwillow*.

My first book, ***The Houdini Box***, which I both wrote and illustrated, was published in 1991 while I was still working at the bookstore. Since then, I have illustrated many books for children, including ***Frindle*** by Andrew Clements, ***The Doll People*** by Ann Martin & Laura Godwin, ***Amelia and Eleanor Go for a Ride*** by Pam Muñoz Ryan & ***The Dinosaurs of Waterhouse Hawkins*** by Barbara Kerley, which received a 2001 Caldecott Honor.

I have also written a few other books myself, including ***The Boy of a Thousand Faces***, but ***The Invention of Hugo Cabret*** is by far the longest and most involved book I've ever worked on. I live in Brooklyn, New York, and San Diego, California.
http://www.theinventionofhugocabret.com/about_brian_bio.htm

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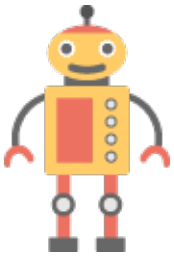

Student Checklist

Student Name _____

Assignment	Grade / Level	Comments

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Name: _____

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PART I – Chapters 1 - 2

Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or "good guy". The protagonist of ***The Invention of Hugo Cabret*** is the very likeable boy, Hugo Cabret, who lives in a Paris railway station. 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 intriguing protagonist?

Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

agitated	reluctant	diligent	contents
illuminate	accumulate	accidentally	abandon

1. Jeremy was most _____ to take the narrow path up the side of the cliff.
2. "Please do not _____ me and my baby," the young woman cried out pitifully.
3. The mayor suggested that we begin to _____ food and water.
4. Chester became very _____ when anyone went to close to the bonfire.
5. No one guessed that the _____ of the satchel contained diamonds.
6. Captain Jasper was most _____ in his military responsibilities.
7. The kindergarten students _____ let the gerbil escape from its cage.
8. It took more than forty candles to properly _____ the cave.

Questions

1. Write a brief **synopsis** of the events portrayed in the pictures at the beginning of Chapter One.

2. What clue is there in the first series of pictures that tell the reader that the **setting** of the novel is in the city of Paris, France.

3. What two people did Hugo see in the toy booth? Why was one of them agitated?

4. Describe the pictures that the old man found in Hugo's notebook

5. Describe how Hugo reacted when the old man took his notebook.

6. Describe the **atmosphere** of the pictures at the beginning of Chapter Two.

7. What had been the original purpose of the secret apartments where Hugo lived?

8. What was Hugo's job in the station?

9. **Foreshadowing** is a literary device where the author provides a hint as to what will happen later in the story. How might the description of Hugo seeing the Station inspector's office and jail cell be an example of foreshadowing.

10. There were _____ clocks in the station.

Language Activities

A. Next to each pair of words indicate whether each is an example of a Synonym (S). Antonym (A), or Homophone (H).

1	discover - conceal		6	cell - sell	
2	steal - steal		7	obsessed - uninterested	
3	impressive - inconsequential		8	commotion - brouhaha	
4	sumptuous - delicious		9	peeved - exasperated	
5	precious - disfavored		10	predictable - unforeseen	

B. The Eiffel Tower

One of the world's most famous landmarks is the Eiffel Tower in Paris. The Eiffel Tower was built in 1889 and remains the tallest building in Paris – the second tallest in France. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, investigate three additional facts about this famous landmark and record them below.

1	
2	
3	

C. Alliteration

The author seems to enjoy using **alliteration –** a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here's an example from Chapter 2: "... waiting for any **c**riminals **c**aught in the station."

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

The roar of a tiger	
The sound of a tornado	
From your imagination	

D. The Quatrain Poem.

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 is the first four lines from a poem called ***I Watch the Clock,*** written by the acclaimed poet, Atrocious Halitosis.

I go to work each day at eight,
I watch the clock 'til noon.
Then work the afternoon away,
My day can't end too soon.

Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A – B – C – 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 seven chapters of our novel.

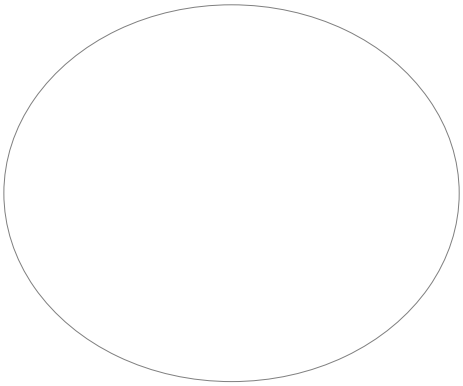
The Quatrain Poem

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

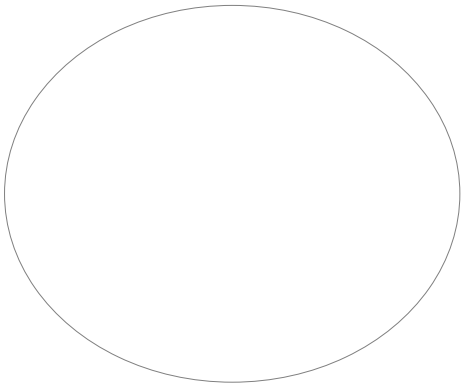
Title: _____

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?



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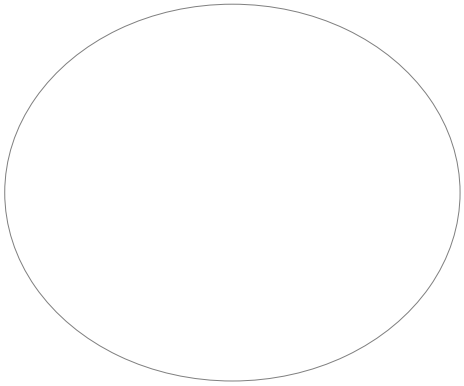

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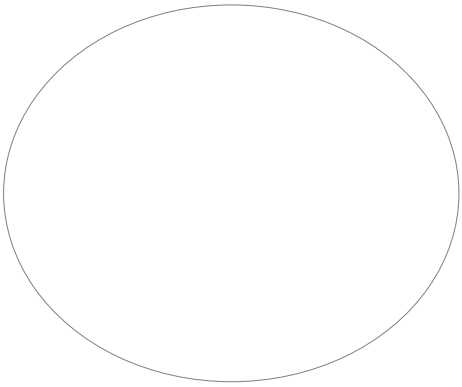

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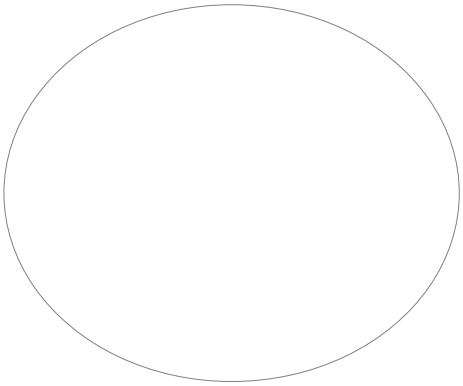
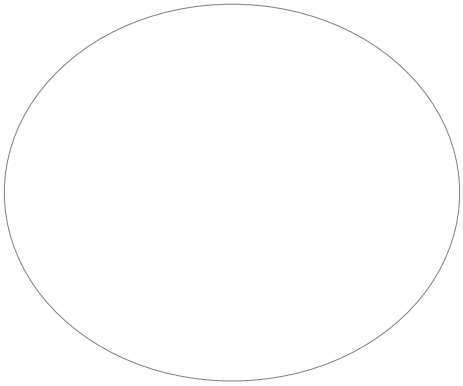


WHY?



HOW?

Extension Activities

Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A storyboard can tell the story of one scene - or the entire novel.

Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first two chapters of ***The Invention of Hugo Cabret***. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6