

The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle



By

Avi (Edward Irving Wortis)

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

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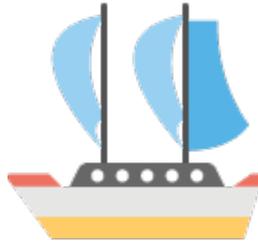


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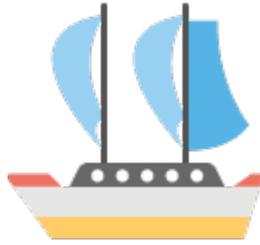
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About the author: Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit novelstudies.org.

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Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two chapters of *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* 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 justice and fairness, personal growth, making choices, race and society, the importance of family and friends, perseverance, selflessness, loyalty, independence.

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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 *singular/plural*
8. Identify *anagrams*
9. Listing compound words
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identification of root words
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.
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

Thirteen-year-old Charlotte Doyle is excited to return home to Rhode Island from her school in England during the summer of 1832.

But when the two families she was supposed to travel with mysteriously cancel their trips, Charlotte finds herself the lone passenger on a long sea voyage with a cruel captain and a mutinous crew. Worse yet, soon after stepping aboard the ship, she becomes enmeshed in a conflict between them! What begins as an eagerly anticipated ocean crossing turns into a harrowing journey, where Charlotte gains a villainous enemy . . . and is put on trial for murder! [The Publisher - Scholastic]

A complete synopsis and other helpful reviews can be found online at such sites as the following: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_True_Confessions_of_Charlotte_Doyle

Author Biography

Avi (Edward Irving Wortis)

I was born in New York City, along with a twin sister. I am five minutes older than Emily. It was Emily, for reasons no one knows – she certainly doesn't – who called me Avi. It stuck. It's the only name I use now.

When I went to high school I wanted to be a designer of airplanes. But flunking out of the science high school brought me to a small private school that provided some of the attention I needed. I got it when an English teacher insisted I get some help with my writing.

I did get help, and that help led me to think that I might become a writer. I made up my mind to focus on this when I was 17 and a senior in high school.

I began by writing plays, and wrote a lot of bad ones. It was only when my eldest son, Shaun, was born, that I took to writing for kids. Since then, I've never written anything else. My first book was published in 1970. I've published over 30 books since.

For some 25 years I worked as a librarian, first at the New York Public Library, then at Trenton State College. My life has always been with, around, and for books.



(Courtesy of the publisher Scholastic – www.scholastic.com)

The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle



By Avi (Edward Irving Wortis)

Name: _____

The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle

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Chapters 1-2



Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of our novel is thirteen-year-old Charlotte Doyle, a spoiled little rich girl about to set out on the adventure of a lifetime. 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.

exotic	ferocious	reticule	gesticulate
succumb	resolve	vermin	prevail

1. Charlotte carefully placed the dagger in her _____, making sure that no one was watching her movements.
2. There wasn't one person watching the struggle who thought Marsha would _____ against her larger opponent.
3. How long did it take your grandfather to _____ to his illness?
4. We brought back from Florida a rare and _____ plant for our garden.
5. As the watchman saw the truck approaching, he began to _____ frantically.
6. “I _____ never to take my duties lightly,” John promised.
7. Who would have thought that a dog named *Nipper* would be so _____?
8. The ship was infested with all sort of disgusting _____.

What's that he said?

The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle is filled with terms that are unfamiliar to readers of the 21st century – especially for those of us who have never been on an old sailing ship. Match each of the terms in the left hand column with its correct meaning on the right. You may wish to consult the novel's Appendix in your pursuit of the correct answers.



A	shilling		1	The name given to scrollwork, engravings, and carvings done in bone or ivory.
B	spar		2	The part of a ship providing accommodations for passengers with the cheapest tickets.
C	scrimshaw		3	A short dagger.
D	gangplank		4	The system of ropes, cables, or chains employed to support a ship's masts.
E	dirk		5	The part of a ship's upper deck near the stern, traditionally reserved for officers.
F	bowsprit		6	A former British coin worth 12 pence
G	steerage		7	A pole extending forward from a ship's bow.
H	bulkhead		8	A dividing wall or barrier between compartments in a ship.
I	quarterdeck		9	A thick, strong pole such as is used for a mast or yard on a ship.
J	rigging		10	Used as a ramp to board or disembark from a ship or boat.

Now find three additional challenging words from these chapters which sailors of 1832 would be quite familiar with, and beside each write a brief definition.

Word	Definition

Questions



1. What is the **setting** of the story at the beginning of Chapter One? Remember setting includes both time and place.

2. Although Mr. Grummage only appears in the first couple of chapters of our novel he has an important influence on the course of events for Charlotte. What is your impression of Mr. Grummage's character? Support your answer with details.

3. What unexpected complication made Charlotte very reluctant to board the Seahawk?

4. **An Eye For Detail.** The *Seahawk* was known as a _____, a two-_____ ship weighing about _____ tons. It was _____ feet from stern to bow and was probably built in the late _____ century.

5. Describe Charlotte's quarters on the Seahawk.

6. What disturbing warning did Barlow give to Charlotte? Describe her response to this warning.

7. What were Zachariah's responsibilities aboard the Seahawk? What was your impression of him?

8. Why do you think Charlotte was rude to Zachariah when he tried to befriend her? Do you think this was wise? Why or why not?

9. What did Zachariah give Charlotte? What did she do with this surprising gift?

10. From what you have learned of Charlotte so far in the novel, think of one character trait she possesses which you would consider a strength and one character trait that you would consider a weakness. Support your choices with examples from the story.

Strength	
Weakness	

Good to Know ~ The Second Mate

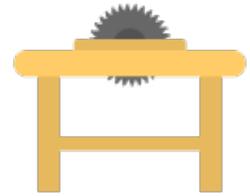
In Chapter Two we meet the second officer (or second mate) of the Seahawk – **Mr. Keetch**. On most 21st Century ships, the second mate is in charge of navigation and is the next licensed position above third officer and below chief officer as third-in-command - after the captain and first/chief mate. The second mate typically stands the navigation watch from noon to 4:00 p.m., and again from midnight to 4 a.m. at night.

Language Activity



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.

Word	Anagram	Clue
intend		To position a line of text further from the margin.
search		One who pursues.
smock		Teases.
indeed		Refused to admit.
stern		Leases.
table		Sound of a sheep.
speak		Mountain tops.

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

Word	Anagram	Clue

B. 5 Ws and an H.

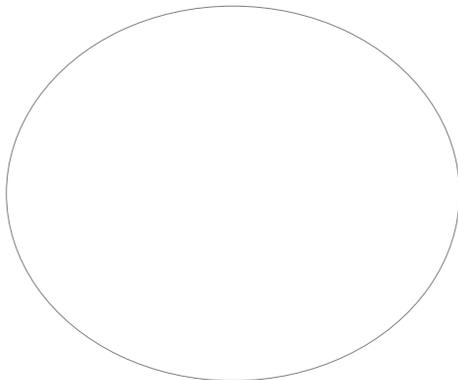
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



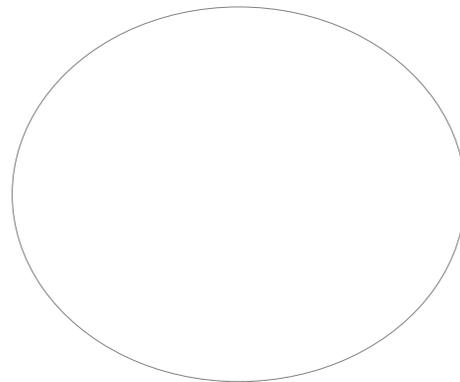
WHO?



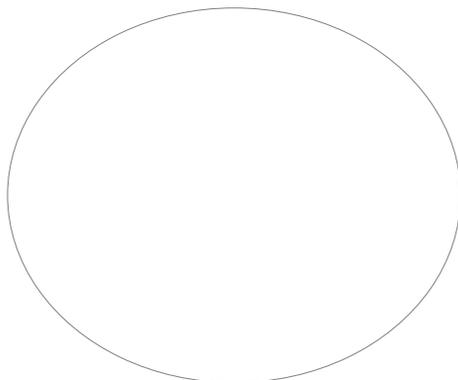
WHAT?



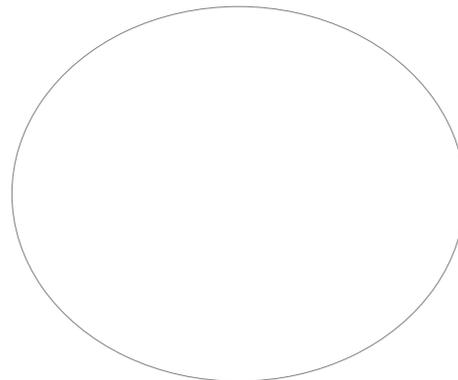
WHEN?



WHERE?



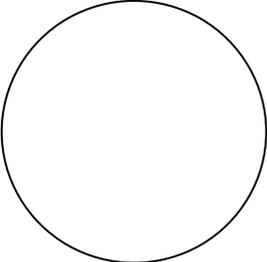
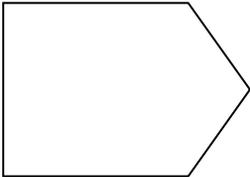
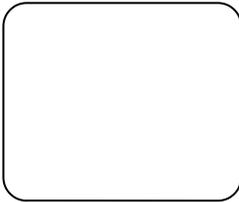
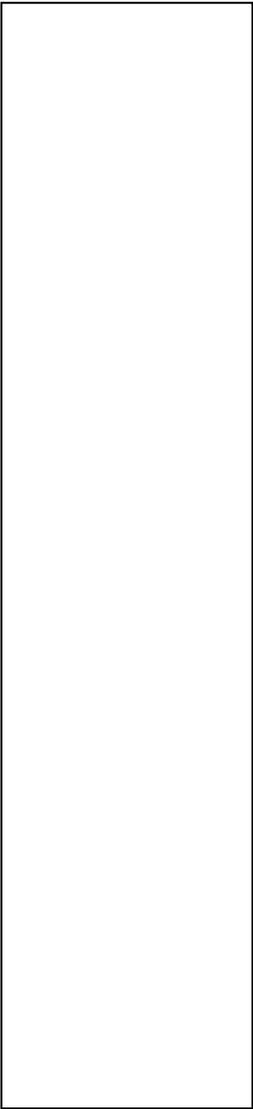
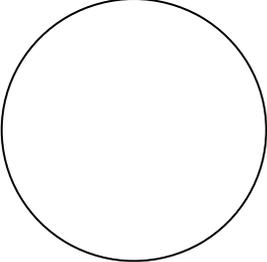
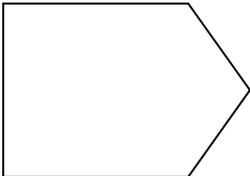
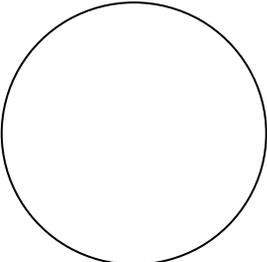
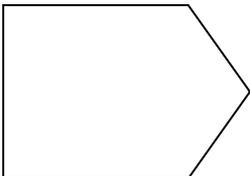
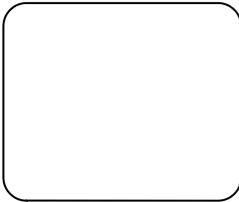
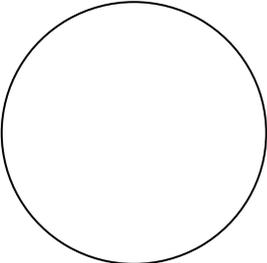
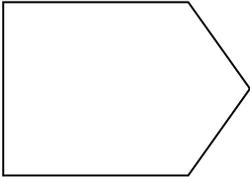
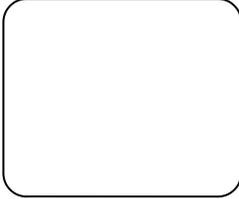
WHY?



HOW?

C. Perspectives.

Choose an event from this section that involved at least two characters. Now consider the same incident from different perspectives and compare them using the chart below.

VIEW POINTS	THOUGHTS/ FEELINGS	IMPACT	REFLECTIONS
			
			
			
			

Extension Activities



A. 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

B. A Poem Even Charlotte Would Enjoy

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 actually the start of a much longer poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *The Building of the Ship*.

*Build me straight, O worthy Master!
Stanch and strong, a goodly vessel,
That shall laugh at all disaster,
And with wave and whirlwind wrestle!*



The entire poem can be read at: poetrysoup.com

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 are: 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: _____
