

There's a Boy In The Girls' Bathroom



By

Louis Sachar

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 85 page curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on a few chapters of *There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom* and is comprised of four 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 and **topics** which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include importance of friends and family, bullying, awkwardness, not fitting in, the need for love and belonging, counselling, perseverance and personal growth, overcoming difficulty.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying / creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *anagrams*
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 a *cliffhanger*

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
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. Complete a KWS Chart

Art Activities

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

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Synopsis

That's Bradley Chalkers for you. He's the oldest kid in the fifth grade. He tells enormous lies. He picks fights with the girls, and the teachers say he has "serious behavior problems". No one likes him – except Carla, the new school counselor. She thinks Bradley is sensitive and generous, and she even enjoys his far-fetched stories. Carla knows that Bradley could change, if only he weren't afraid to try.

But when you feel like the most hated kid in the whole school, believing in yourself can be the hardest thing in the world... (Courtesy of the publisher)

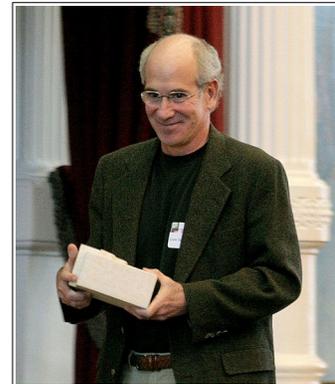
Author Biography

Louis Sachar

I was born in East Meadow, New York on March 20, 1954 and lived there until third grade. When I was nine years old, we moved to Tustin California. At that time, there were orange groves all around, and the local kids would often divide up into teams and have orange fights.

I enjoyed school and was a good student, but it wasn't until high school that I really became an avid reader. After high school, I attended Antioch College in Ohio. My father died during my first semester, and I returned to California to be near my mother. I returned to college, this time to the University of California where I majored in Economics.

When I graduated in 1976 I decided to try to write a children's book, which eventually became *Sideways Stories From Wayside School*. It took me about nine months to write the book. I wrote in the evenings. I decided to go to law school. *Sideways Stories from Wayside School* was accepted by a publisher during my first week at Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco. I finished law school, graduating in 1980, but it wasn't until 1989 that my books began selling well enough that I was finally able to stop practising law and devote myself fully to writing. (Courtesy of Wikipedia)



There's a Boy In The Girls' Bathroom



By Louis Sachar

Name: _____

There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom

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Chapters 1 - 3



Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of *There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom* is Bradley Chalkers, *the oldest kid in the fifth grade. He tells enormous lies. He picks fights with girls, and the teachers say he has “serious behavior problems.”* 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 especially interesting **protagonist**?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

distorted	counselor	ivory	ceramic	strewn
appointment	protested	criminal	tolerate	asserted

1. “I will not _____ such rude behavior,” the principal shouted.
2. The _____ was able to get into the bank through an air duct.
3. The _____ kitten sat upon the mantle collecting dust.
4. The savage wind caused everyone's face to be _____ in the class picture.
5. Catarina finally _____ her rights and was admitted into the club.
6. “The school has just hired a new _____,” said Mrs. Ebbel.
7. Elephants are killed because poachers value their _____ tusks.
8. “I have an _____ with the doctor,” Jessie stated stubbornly.
9. The picketers _____ outside the car factory for a couple of weeks.
10. Neely's toys were _____ all over the playroom floor.

Questions



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

2. The new kid, Jeff Fishkin, had just moved into the area from _____.

3. It quickly becomes evident that no one likes to sit anywhere near Bradley. Why do you think this is the case?

b. How do you think Bradley’s parents might have felt about the way that Mrs. Ebbel’s responded to the two students who informed Jeff that no one liked to sit near Bradley?

4. Why did Jeff give Bradley a dollar?

5. According to Bradley, why did he feel he had to be mean to Jeff?

6. How does Bradley reveal his vivid imagination in Chapter Three?

7. What upsetting news did his mother give him? Why do you think this upset Bradley so much?

8. Bradley's father worked for the _____ department.

9. Write a brief description of your impression of Bradley's mother and father. Make one suggestion as to how either of his parents might improve their parenting skills. (You may wish to discuss this question with a friend before answering.)

A Character Study

We meet a number of interesting characters in the first three chapters, although none is more fascinating than Bradley, the novel's protagonist. Do you think there is any way that Bradley can be reached by someone like Jeff so that he has at least one friend in his school? How do you think someone might make friends with Bradley?

Good to Know

Mrs. Ebbel asks Jeff if he has ever visited the **White House**. Every year 10 – 25 million people visit the home of the President of the United States. A tour takes about 45 minutes and is sometimes booked with the help of an elected representative.



B. Choose ten words from these chapters with two or more **syllables**. Indicate the syllables by drawing a line between each syllable. **Example:** good / bye.

C. A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. We find an example of this in Chapter Three: “Bradley opened the front door to his house, then made a face. It smelled like fish.” In this example the smell of the house is compared to fish. Invent your own **similes** comparing the following items with something from your imagination:

a) the sound of a basketball bouncing across the gym floor

b) the sound of waves splashing up on the beach

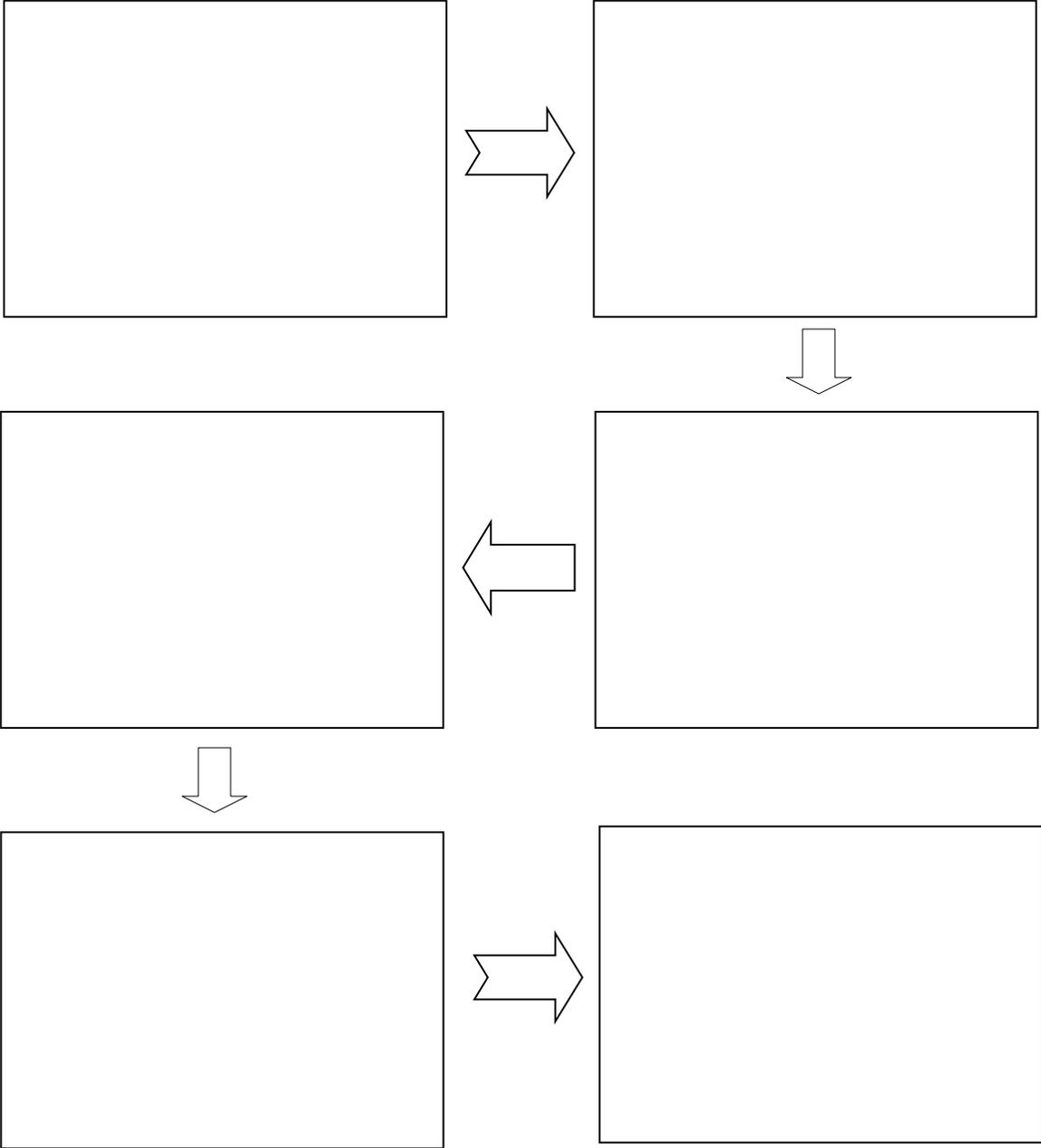
c) your own example

Bonus.

Keep your eyes open for another example of a **simile**. When you find one come back to this question and enter it on the lines below.

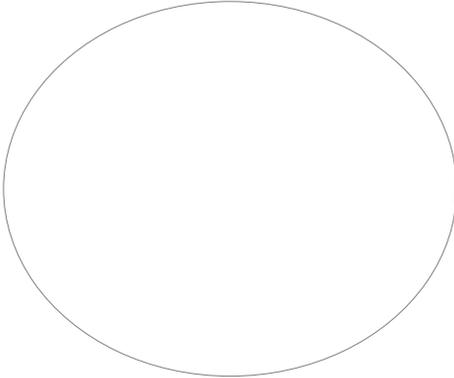
D. Sequence Chart

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.

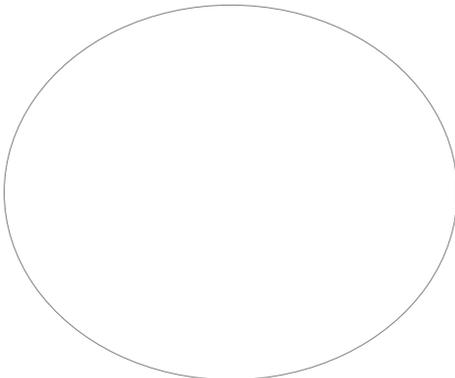


E. 5 Ws and an H.

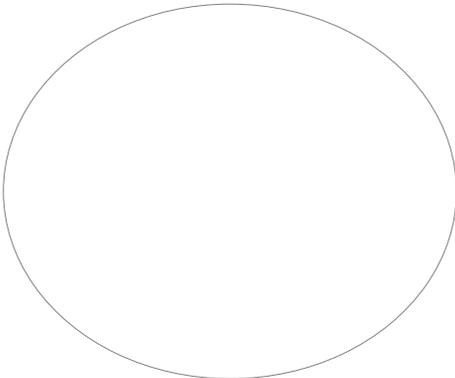
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



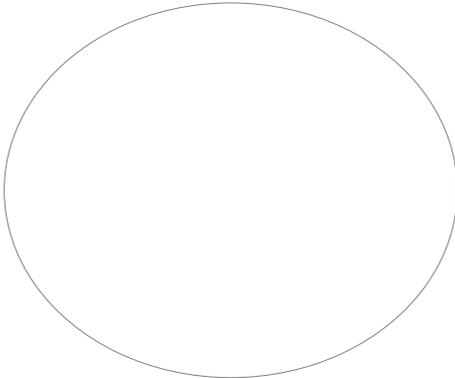
WHO?



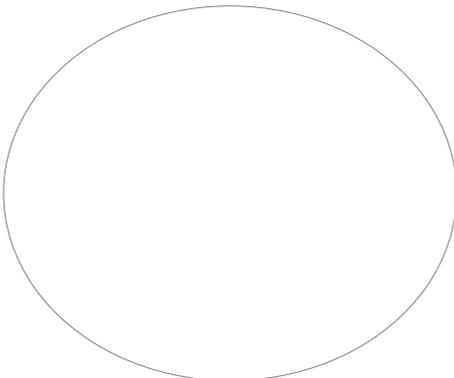
WHAT?



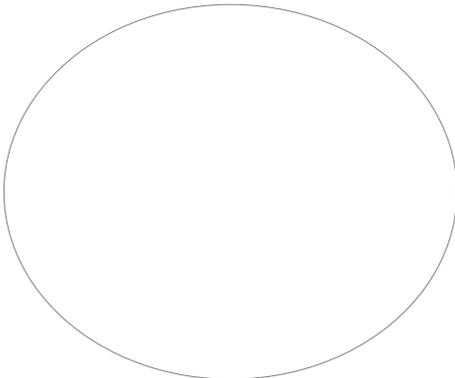
WHEN?



WHERE?



WHY?



HOW?

Extension Activity



Storyboard

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



Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first few chapters of *There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom*. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6