



TEACHER'S PET PUBLICATIONS

LITPLAN TEACHER PACK™

for

The Devil's Arithmetic

based on the book by
Jane Yolen

Written by
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ISBN 978-1-60249-152-6

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A FEW NOTES ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jane Yolen

YOLEN, Jane (1939-). Jane Yolen grew up in New York City , the daughter of two writers. She attended Smith College and received her master's degree in education from the University of Massachusetts. She has taught children's literature at Smith and is the wife of Professor David W. Stemple. They have three grown children- all of whom have done books with her - and a brand new grandchild. The distinguished author of more than 170 books, Jane Yolen is a person of many talents. When she is not writing, she composes songs, travels, teaches, and is a professional storyteller on stage.

All of Yolen's stories and poems are somehow rooted in her sense of family and self. The 1983 Caldecott Honor Book, *The Emperor and the Kite*, was based on Yolen's relationship with her late father who was an international kite-flying champion. Her 1988 Caldecott Medal winner, *Owl Moon*, was inspired by her husband's interest in birding. Jewish Book Award and Association of Jewish Libraries Award winner, *The Devil's Arithmetic*, is a unique time-travel story of the Holocaust. When asked what got her interested in the subject she said, "Both sides of my family came over at the beginning of this century and we had no family left in either the Ukraine or Latvia during World War II. I am interested in the Holocaust as a Jew and as a citizen of the world." Other award winning books include: *The Girl Who Loved the Wind*, *Piggins*, *The Seeing Stick*, and *Commander Toad in Space*.

Throughout her writing career she has remained true to her primary source of inspiration- folk culture. Folklore is the "perfect second skin," writes Yolen, "From under its hide, we can see all the shimmering, shadowy uncertainties of the world. It is the universal human language, a language that children instinctively feel in their hearts." Perhaps the best explanation for her outstanding accomplishments come from Yolen herself: "I don't care whether the story is real or fantastical. I tell the story that needs told."

Yolen's versatility has led her to be called America's Hans Christian Anderson and the Aesop of the 20th century. This gifted and natural storyteller's books have been translated into twelve languages.

INTRODUCTION - *Devil's Arithmetic*

This unit has been designed to develop students' reading, writing, thinking, and language skills through exercises and activities related to *The Devil's Arithmetic* by Jane Yolen. It includes twenty lessons, supported by extra resource materials.

The **introductory lesson** introduces students to background information about places, people, and events mentioned throughout this novel. It also doubles as the first writing assignment for the unit. Following the introductory activity, students are given an explanation of how the activity relates to the book they are about to read. Following the transition, students are given the materials they will be using during the unit.

The **reading assignments** are approximately twenty -five pages each; some are a little shorter while others are a little longer. Students have approximately 15 minutes of Pre-reading work to do prior to each reading assignment. This Pre-reading work involves reviewing the study questions for the assignment and doing some vocabulary work for 10 or more vocabulary words they will encounter in their reading.

The **study guide questions** are fact-based questions; students can find the answers to these questions right in the text. These questions come in two formats: short answer or multiple choice. The best use of these materials is probably to use the short answer version of the questions as study guides for students (since answers will be more complete), and to use the multiple choice version for occasional quizzes. If your school has the appropriate machinery, it might be a good idea to make transparencies of your answer keys for the overhead projector.

The **vocabulary work** is intended to enrich students' vocabularies as well as to aid in the students' understanding of the book. Prior to each reading assignment, students will complete a two-part worksheet for the vocabulary words in the upcoming reading assignment. Part I focuses on students' use of general knowledge and contextual clues by giving the sentence in which the word appears in the text. Students are then to write down what they think the words mean based on the words' usage. Part II nails down the definitions of the words by giving students dictionary definitions of the words and having students match the words to the correct definitions based on the words' contextual usage. Students should then have a thorough understanding of the words when they meet them in the text.

After each reading assignment, students will go back and formulate answers for the study guide questions. Discussion of these questions serves as a **review** of the most important events and ideas presented in the reading assignments.

After students complete extra discussion questions, there is a **vocabulary review** lesson which pulls together all of the fragmented vocabulary lists for the reading assignments and gives students a review of all of the words they have studied.

Following the reading of the book, two lessons are devoted to the **extra discussion questions/writing assignments/activities**. These questions focus on interpretation, critical analysis and personal response, employing a variety of thinking skills and adding to the students' understanding of the novel. These questions are done as a **group activity**. Using the information they have acquired so far through individual work and class discussions, students get together to further examine the text and to brainstorm ideas relating to the themes of the novel.

The group activity is followed by a **reports and discussion/activity** session in which the groups share their ideas about the book with the entire class; thus, the entire class gets exposed to many different ideas regarding the themes and events of the book.

There are three **writing assignments** in this unit, each with the purpose of informing, persuading, or having students express personal opinions. The first assignment is to inform: students write a composition about one of the background topics assigned in Lesson One. The second assignment gives students the opportunity to express personal opinion: students will keep a diary throughout the reading of the novel. The third assignment gives students the chance to persuade: students will pretend to be Hannah (Chaya) in the camp when the commandant comes and sees Reuven limping out of the camp hospital. Her objective is to convince Breuer not to choose Reuven.

The **nonfiction reading assignment** is tied in with Writing Assignment 1 and the introductory lesson. Students are required to read a piece of nonfiction related in some way to *The Devil's Arithmetic*. In this case, the topics are assigned in Lesson One. After reading their nonfiction pieces, students will fill out a worksheet on which they answer questions regarding facts, interpretation, criticism, and personal opinions. During one class period, students make **oral presentations** about the nonfiction pieces they have read. This not only exposes all students to a wealth of information, it also gives students the opportunity to practice **public speaking**.

The **review lesson** pulls together all of the aspects of the unit. The teacher is given four or five choices of activities or games to use which all serve the same basic function of reviewing all of the information presented in the unit.

The **unit test** comes in two formats: all multiple choice-matching-true/false or with a mixture of matching, short answer, and composition. As a convenience, two different tests for each format have been included.

There are additional **support materials** included with this unit. The **extra activities** section includes suggestions for an in-class library, crossword and word search puzzles related to the novel, and extra vocabulary worksheets. There is a list of **bulletin board ideas** which gives the teacher suggestions for bulletin boards to go along with this unit. In addition, there is a list of **extra class activities** the teacher could choose from to enhance the unit or as a substitution for an exercise the teacher might feel is inappropriate for his/her class. **Answer keys** are located directly after the **reproducible student materials** throughout the unit. The student materials may be reproduced for use in the teacher's classroom without infringement of copyrights. No other portion of this unit may be reproduced without the written consent of Teacher's Pet Publications, Inc.

UNIT OBJECTIVES - *The Devil's Arithmetic*

1. Through reading Jane Yolen's, *The Devil's Arithmetic*, students will gain appreciation for the importance of cultural and family traditions.
2. Students will acquire an understanding of the value of bearing witness.
3. Students will do background research to familiarize themselves with the Yiddish language and the plight of the Jews during the World War II era.
4. Students will be exposed to atrocities and horrors of the Holocaust.
5. Students will gain appreciation for and demonstrate proficiency in identifying and using figurative language.
6. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the text on four levels: factual, interpretive, critical and personal.
7. Students will be given the opportunity to practice reading aloud and silently to improve their skills in each area.
8. Students will define their own viewpoints on the aforementioned themes and answer questions to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the main events and characters in *The Devil's Arithmetic* as they relate to the author's theme development.
9. Students will enrich their vocabularies and improve their understanding of the novel through the vocabulary lessons prepared for use in conjunction with the novel.
10. The writing assignments in this unit are geared to several purposes:
 - a. To have students demonstrate their abilities to inform, to persuade, or to express their own personal ideas
Note: Students will demonstrate ability to write effectively to inform by developing and organizing facts to convey information. Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively to persuade by selecting and organizing relevant information, establishing an argumentative purpose, and by designing an appropriate strategy for an identified audience. Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively to express personal ideas by selecting a form and its appropriate elements.
 - b. To check the students' reading comprehension
 - c. To make students think about the ideas presented by the novel
 - d. To encourage logical thinking

READING ASSIGNMENT SHEET - *The Devil's Arithmetic*

Date Assigned	Reading Assignment	Completion Date
	Chapters 1-4	
	Chapters 5-7	
	Chapters 8-10	
	Chapters 11-13	
	Chapters 14-16	
	Chapters 17-Epilogue	

UNIT OUTLINE - *The Devil's Arithmetic*

1 Library Writing Assignment #1	2 Work Session Nonfiction Rdg Assignment	3 Introduction PVR Ch 1-4	4 Study? Ch. 1-4 Writing Assignment #2	5 PVR Ch. 5-7 Oral Rdg Evaluation
6 Study ? Ch. 5-7 PV Ch. 8-10	7 Read Ch. 8-10 (independently) Writing Conference	8 Study ? Ch. 8- 10 PVR Ch. 11-13	9 Study ? Ch. 11-13 Vocabulary Reinforcement	10 Figurative Language
11 PVR Ch. 14-16	12 Study? Ch.14-16 Writing Assignment #3	13 PVR Ch. 17- Epilogue	14 Study ? Ch. 17- Epilogue Dramatization	15 Speaker
16 Extra Discussion Questions/ Activities	17 Extra Discussion Questions/ Activities	18 Review	19 Vocabulary Review	20 Test

Key: P = Preview Study Questions V = Vocabulary Work R = Read

LESSON ONE

Objectives

1. To give students background information for *The Devil's Arithmetic*
2. To give students the opportunity to fulfill their nonfiction reading assignment that goes along with this unit
3. To give students practice using library resources
4. To prepare students for the introductory activity in Lesson Two.
5. To give students the opportunity to write to inform by developing and organizing facts to convey information.

Activity

Assign one of each of the following topics to each of your students. Distribute Writing Assignment #1. Discuss the directions in detail. Take your students to the library so they may work on the assignment. Students should fill out a "Nonfiction Assignment Sheet" for at least one of the sources they used, and students should submit these sheets with their compositions.

1. List the basic beliefs of the Jewish religion.
2. Define anti-Semitism.
3. What was the Holocaust?
4. List the Jewish holidays and how they are celebrated.
5. Discover what is meant by the term bear witness, especially in reference to the Holocaust.
6. Create a list of known Holocaust survivors that have gone on to 'bear witness' in a public or private way.
7. Write a short biography of Adolf Hitler.
8. Explain what a Nazi was.
9. Make a timeline of World War II.
10. Who were the Allies and name their leaders.
11. Name the Axis countries and their leaders.
12. What was a concentration camp?
13. Where were concentration camps located?
14. What was a Jewish ghetto?
15. Identify European countries' boundaries in 1943. Compare to present boundaries.
16. Discover what countries remained neutral during World War II and why.
17. Explain the significance of the Star of David symbol.
18. What is a synagogue and a rabbi?
19. What was Hitler's Final Solution?
20. Locate Poland on a map and list its surrounding European neighbors.
21. Locate the Bronx, New York City, and New Rochelle, New York.
22. Use a Yiddish dictionary to define the following: goy, goyish, shul, shmattes, shadchan, klezmer, blokova, malach ha-mavis, badchan, rendar, mishigaas, schnorrers, schnell, afikoman, dayenu, drek, musselman, zugangi, sonderkommando, shtetl, yarmulkes

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 - *The Devil's Arithmetic*

PROMPT

You are going to read about a modern twelve-year-old girl who time travels to a Polish village during the 1940's era to experience first-hand what her family has been through. It is realistic or historical fiction (the events in the novel *could* have taken place, but the characters and events are *fictional*). Before you read it, however, you should have some background information about some of the things mentioned in the story.

You have been assigned one topic about which you must find information. You are to read as much as you can about that topic and write a composition in which you relate what you have learned from your reading. Note that this is a *composition*, not just a sentence or two.

PREWRITING

You will go to the library. When you get there, use the library's resources to find information about your topic. Look for books, encyclopedias, articles in magazines- anything that will give you the information you require. Take a few notes as you read to help you remember important dates, names, places, or other details that will be important in your composition.

After you have gathered information and become well-read on the subject of your report, make a little outline, putting your facts in order.

DRAFTING

You will need an introductory paragraph in which you introduce your topic.

In the body of your composition, put the "meat" of your research- the facts you found- in paragraph form. Each paragraph should have a topic sentence (a sentence letting the reader know what the paragraph will be about) followed by an explanation, examples or details.

Write a concluding paragraph in which you summarize the information you found and conclude your report.

PROMPT

After you have finished a rough draft of your paper, revise it yourself until you are happy with your work. Then, ask a student who sits near you to tell you what he/she likes best about your work, and what things he/she thinks can be improved. Take another look at your composition, keeping in mind your critic's suggestions, and make the revisions you feel are necessary.

PROOFREADING

Do a final proofreading of your paper double-checking your grammar, spelling, organization, and the clarity of your ideas.