



TEACHER'S PET PUBLICATIONS

LITPLAN TEACHER PACK™

for

Scorpions

based on the book by
Walter Dean Myers

Written by
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A FEW NOTES ABOUT THE AUTHOR WALTER DEAN MYERS

MYERS, WALTER DEAN , 1937- Born Walter Milton Myers, in Martinsburg, West Virginia, his mother died when he was three. He was then adopted and raised by Florence and Herbert Dean. The Deans moved to Harlem shortly after. In *Something About the Author*, Volume 71, Myers said he "lived in an exciting corner of the renowned Black capital and in an exciting era. The people I met there, the things I did, have left a permanent impression on me."

Myers began reading at age four, and started writing when he was ten. Since his parents did not consider writing as a career possibility, he was not encouraged to write. He enlisted in the U. S. Army when he was seventeen, and served for three years. During that time he continued to read and write for pleasure. He attended City College of the City University of New York, and received a B. A. degree from Empire State College in 1984.

Winning a writing contest sponsored by the Council on Interracial Books for Children in the late 1960's changed his life. The winning entry, a picture book titled *Where Did the Day Go?*, was published in 1969. Myers continued writing after that. Most of his books center on Black teens growing up in an urban environment. In addition, Myers has written science fiction, non-fiction, mysteries, and adventure stories.

Awards include the ALA notable book citation in 1975 for *Fast Sam, Cool Clyde, and Stuff*, 1978 for *It Ain't All For Nothin'*, 1979 for *The Young Landlords*, and 1988 for *Me, Mop, and the Moondance Kid* and *Scorpions*. He also received several ALA Best Books for Young Adults citations, including 1988 for *Scorpions* and *Fallen Angels*. He received the Coretta Scott King Award for fiction in 1980 for *The Young Landlords*, in 1985 for *Motown and Didi*, and 1988 for *Fallen Angels*. *Scorpions* was a Newbery Honor Book in 1989. His most recent book, *Slam!*, has won the Coretta Scott King Award, and was named the ALA Best Book for Young Adults . Myers continues to live and write from his home in New Jersey.

Published Works

Where Does the Day Go? 1969
The Dragon Takes a Wife, 1972
The Dancers, 1972.
Fly, Jimmy, Fly!, 1974
Fast Sam, Cool Clyde, and Stuff, 1975
Brainstorm, 1977
Mojo and the Russians, 1977
Victory for Jamie, 1977
It Ain't All for Nothin', 1978
The Young Landlords, 1979
The Golden Serpent, 1980
The Black Pearl and the Ghost, 1980
Hoops, 1981
The Legend of Tarik, 1981
Won't Know Till I Get There, 1982

The Nicholas Factor, 1983
Tales of a Dead King, 1983
Motown and Didi: A Love Story, 1984
The Outside Shot, 1984
Sweet Illusions, 1986
Crystal, 1987
Scorpions, 1988
Me, Mop, and the Moondance Kid, 1988
Fallen Angels, 1988
The Mouse Rap, 1990
Somewhere in the Darkness, 1992
Mop, Moondance, and the Nagasaki Knights, 1992
The Righteous Revenge of Artemis Bonner, 1992
Slam! 1996

INTRODUCTION

This unit has been designed to develop students' reading, writing, thinking, listening and speaking skills through exercises and activities related to *Scorpions* by Walter Dean Myers. It includes twenty lessons, supported by extra resource materials.

The **introductory lesson** introduces students to one main theme of the novel, obstacles presented by living in an inner-city environment, through a bulletin board activity. Following the introductory activity, students are given an explanation of how the activity relates to the book they are about to read.

The **reading assignments** are approximately thirty 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 8 to 10 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. 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 approximately 8 to 10 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 gives students dictionary definitions of the words and has them match the words to the correct definitions based on the words' contextual usage. Students should then have an 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 separate 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**. 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** 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 express a personal **opinion**: students will complete written and illustrated journal entries to respond to each chapter. The second assignment is to **persuade**: students will write a letter to Jamal to persuade him to get rid of the gun. The third assignment is to inform: students will write a report about a topic related to the themes or setting of the novel.

The **nonfiction reading assignment** for this unit will be done in conjunction with Writing Assignment #3. Students are required to read a piece of nonfiction related in some way to *Scorpions*. 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 **unit resource 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 PLAN ADAPTATIONS

Block Schedule

Depending on the length of your class periods, and the frequency with which the class meets, you may wish to choose one of the following options:

- N Complete two of the daily lessons in one class period.
- N Have students complete all reading and writing activities in class.
- N Assign all reading to be completed out of class, and concentrate on the worksheets and discussions in class.
- N Assign the projects from Daily Lesson Fifteen at the beginning of the unit, and allow time each day for students to work on them.
- N Use some of the Unit and Vocabulary Resource activities during every class.

Gifted & Talented / Advanced Classes

- N Emphasize the projects and the extra discussion questions.
- N Have students complete all of the writing activities.
- N Assign the reading to be completed out of class and focus on the discussions in class.
- N Encourage students to develop their own questions.

ESL / ELD

- N Assign a partner to help the student read the text aloud.
- N Tape record the text and have the student listen and follow along in the text.
- N Give the student the study guide worksheets to use as they read.
- N Provide pictures and demonstrations to explain difficult vocabulary words and concepts.

UNIT OBJECTIVES *Scorpions*

1. Through reading *Scorpions*, students will analyze characters and their situations to better understand the themes of the novel.
2. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the text on four levels: factual, interpretive, critical, and personal.
3. Students will practice reading aloud and silently to improve their skills in each area.
4. Students will enrich their vocabularies and improve their understanding of the novel through the vocabulary lessons prepared for use in conjunction with it.
5. Students will answer questions to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the main events and characters in *Scorpions*.
6. Students will practice writing through a variety of writing assignments.
7. The writing assignments in this are geared to several purposes:
 - a. To check the students' reading comprehension
 - b. To make students think about the ideas presented by the novel
 - c. To make students put those ideas into perspective
 - d. To encourage critical and logical thinking
 - e. To provide the opportunity to practice good grammar and improve students' use of the English language.
8. Students will read aloud, report, and participate in large and small group discussions to improve their public speaking and personal interaction skills.

UNIT OUTLINE - *Scorpions*

1	2	3	4	5
Introduction PVR 1-3	??s 1-3 Writing Assignment 1 Journal Writing	PVR 4-5 Minilesson: Conflict	??s 4-5 PVR 6-7 Minilesson: Dialect	??s 6-7 PVR 8-9 Oral Reading Evaluation
6	7	8	9	10
??s 8-9 Minilesson: Figurative Language	Quiz 1-9 PVR 10-12	Writing Assignment 2 Persuade	??s 10-12 PVR 13-15	??s 13-15 PVR 16-17 Minilesson: Character Traits
11	12	13	14	15
??s 16-17 PVR 18-20 Writing Conferences	??s 18-20 Minilesson: Story Map	Writing Assignment 3 Inform	Extra Discussion ??s	Cooperative Group Projects
16	17	18	19	20
Library Work	Vocabulary Review	Unit Review	Test	Non-fiction Presentations

Key: P = Preview Study Questions V = Prereading Vocabulary Worksheet R = Read

READING ASSIGNMENT LOG - *Scorpions*

Date Assigned	Chapters Assigned	Completion Date
	1-3	
	4-5	
	6-7	
	8-9	
	10-12	
	13-15	
	16-17	
	18-20	

WRITING ASSIGNMENT LOG - *Scorpions*

Date Assigned	Assignment	Completion Date
	Writing Assignment 1	
	Writing Assignment 2	
	Writing Assignment 3 Non-fiction Assignment	
	Project	

LESSON ONE

Student Objectives

1. To preview the *Scorpions Unit*
2. To receive books and other related materials
3. To relate prior knowledge to the new material
4. To become familiar with the vocabulary for Chapters 1-3
5. To preview the study questions for Chapters 1-3

Activity #1

Ask students to share information they know about gangs, teen violence, or life in urban areas. Tell them the story they are going to read a story about a boy who lives in an urban area, and has dealings with a gang.

Activity #2

Distribute the materials students will use in this unit. Explain in detail how students are to use these materials.

Study Guides Students should preview the study guide questions before each reading assignment to get a feeling for what events and ideas are important in that section. After reading the section, students will (as a class or individually) answer the questions to review the important events and ideas from that section of the book. Students should keep the study guides as study materials for the unit test.

Reading Assignment Sheet You need to fill in the reading assignment sheet to let students know when their reading has to be completed. You can either write the assignment sheet on a side blackboard or bulletin board and leave it there for students to see each day, or you can duplicate copies for each student to have. In either case, you should advise students to become very familiar with the reading assignments so they know what is expected of them.

Unit Outline You may find it helpful to distribute copies of the Unit Outline to your students so they can keep track of upcoming lessons and assignments. You may also want to post a copy of the Unit Outline on a bulletin board and cross off each lesson as you complete it.

Extra Activities Center The Unit Resource portion of this unit contains suggestions for a library of related books and articles in your classroom as well as crossword and word search puzzles. Make an extra activities center in your room where you will keep these materials for students to use. Bring the books and articles in from the library and keep several copies of the puzzles on hand. Explain to students that these materials are available for students to use when they finish reading assignments or other class work early.

Books Each school has its own rules and regulations regarding student use of school books. Advise students of the procedures that are normal for your school.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 *Scorpions*
Journal Writing to Express a Personal Opinion

PROMPT

For this unit, you will be asked to keep a sketchbook- journal. This is a combination of sketches about and written responses to a story. You will be required to make an entry for each chapter in the novel.

First, decide on the format for your sketchbook-journal. Spend some time decorating your cover and setting up the book. Make sure to include the title of each chapter and the page numbers in you copy of the book. Also date each entry.

You can sketch memorable scenes from the chapters, paste in magazine pictures , or use computer clip art.. Even if you do not consider yourself a good artist, try to make some sketches. Use colors that remind you of the mood of the story. You may want to take photographs and put them in the sketchbook-journal.

The written entries should focus on your response to the literature, and should not merely be chapter summaries. They should include comments about your thoughts and feelings while reading, any questions you have, and predictions about the next chapter. Try to write at least one page for each entry. You, your class mates and your teacher will decide whether to share the journals or keep them private.

Here are some suggestions for the types of entries you may want to make.

Check Your Understanding

Explain how the story is making sense to you.
Give examples and note page numbers.
Establish the setting, mood, point of view, and character relationships.
Discuss the stated themes.

Make Inferences

Explain your thoughts about the feelings and motives of the characters.
Discuss the implied themes.

Make and Revise Predictions

At the end of each chapter, make a prediction about what you think will happen next. After you read, go back and check your predictions. Tell if you had to revise them, and why.

Ask Questions

Ask questions about scenes or events that are confusing.
Record the answers if you discuss the questions in class, or later find the answer in the novel.

Give Your Opinion

Give your opinion about the literary quality of the work.
Discuss the author's style, use of language, and use of literary devices. Tell why you do nor do not like the story. Tell how you feel while reading the chapters. Compare the book with others you have read.