

Maniac Magee

Grades 4-6

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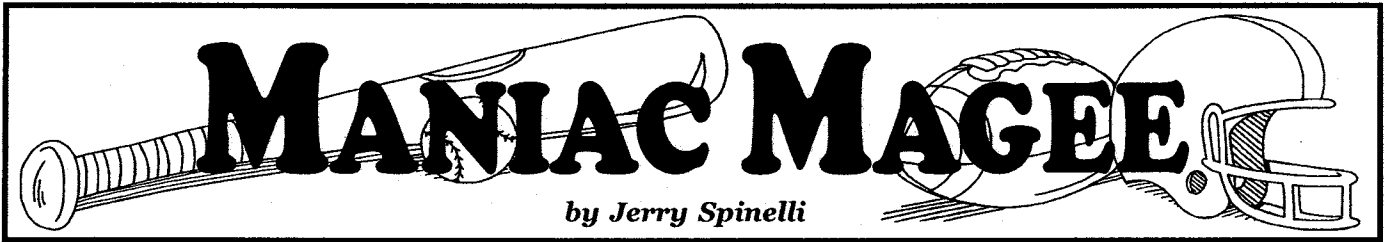
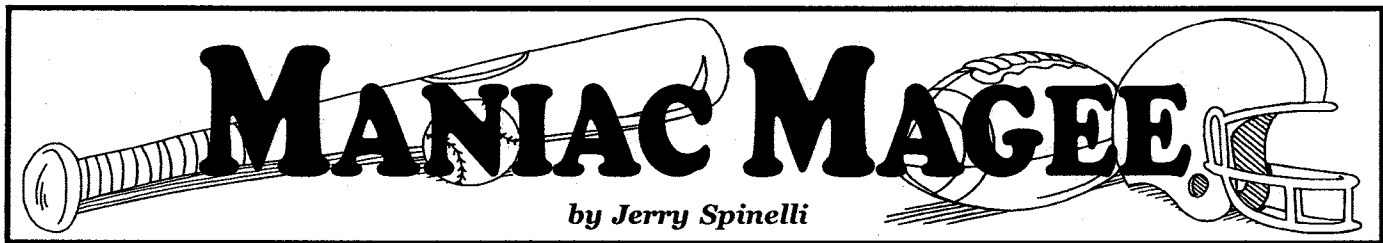


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Expectations

The students will:

- implement major strategies used during the reading process.
- practice and reinforce a variety of language skills.
- develop a love for reading.
- improve and develop their creativity.
- will have their work assessed through the use of a novel as a teaching tool.

Story Summary

Maniac Magee was born in Bridgeport. His parents were killed when the trolley on which they rode crashed into the Schuylkill River. He went to live with his Aunt Dot and Uncle Dan. When he could no longer stand living there, he ran away and became a homeless person at the age of eleven. A legend named Maniac (born Jeffrey Lionel Magee) began as he ran back 200 miles to the town of Two Mills which is right across the Schuylkill River from Bridgeport. Maniac earned his name through his extraordinary running speed, his abrupt unexpected appearances and his talent both in catching footballs and hitting baseballs.

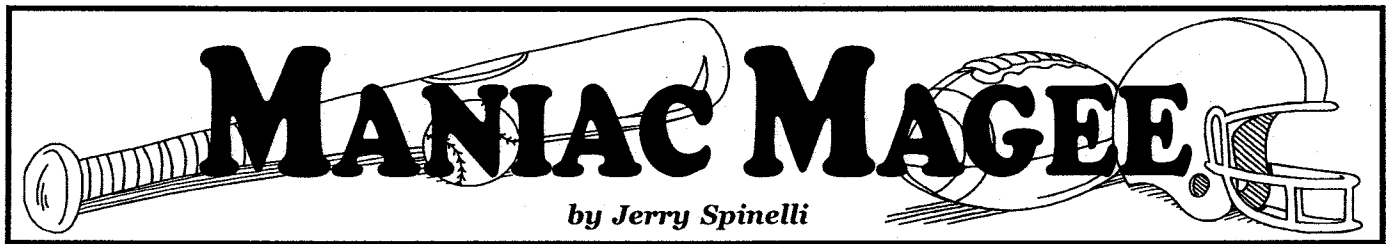
The first person to actually stop and talk to Maniac was Amanda Beale. She lived in the East End, a black neighborhood. Other people along the way were: James "Hands" Down, a football player, Arnold Jones, a Finsterwallies candidate, the Pickwells, a large family, John McNab, a Little League pitcher and Mars Bar, the baddest kid in town.

Amanda invites Maniac to her home to meet the rest of the family. When Mr. Beale realizes Maniac is homeless, he "adopts" him. Maniac loves his new home and the color of the East End. But everyone and everything did not love him back. When he read the tall yellow letters, "ISHBELLY GO HOME", Maniac left the East End. Rather than creating problems for the Beales, Maniac walked out of town.

His new home was the buffalo pen at Elmwood Park. Here he is befriended by Grayson, a park maintenance worker. Grayson invites Maniac to stay with him at Two Mills Y.M.C.A. Maniac, in turn, helps Grayson around the zoo, putting up fences, hauling stones and other jobs. This relationship blossoms and the two stay together for several months. Maniac teaches Grayson how to read while Grayson teaches Maniac baseball techniques and refinements. This happy home life ends with Grayson's abrupt death. Maniac is again homeless.

The McNab family take Maniac in. The legend of Maniac grows as he performs a number of heroic feats. Then one day he is issued the most perilous challenge of all: to go into the East End. The East End - West End, black and white situation did not bother Maniac. It was rather the racial tension and the trouble it might cause for everyone. The final strain was a birthday party at the McNabs and a game called "Rebel". In this game, the whites were in the pillbox and the blacks were outside. Rather than condone this situation, Maniac started to run. He ran back to the buffalo pen at the zoo.

Mars Bar visits Maniac and invites him to his home. Despite his pleading, Maniac remains firm in his decision to stay in the buffalo pen. The next visitor is Amanda Beale who insists Maniac go home with her. Her persistence wins, and Maniac leaves the zoo. He knew that finally someone was calling him home.



Tips For Teachers

At last... A teacher-friendly visual Language Arts approach to novel study. A novel study that is complete with answers, suggested responses, and related activities that are compatible with any curriculum.

The novel could be read in a variety of ways - the teacher may choose to read a chapter, have the children read to each other, or have them read silently.

Reading is an act of creation. It requires a translation of words into visual images. In each chapter, children are asked to interpret the text and to present information by drawing. The use of labels would enhance some drawings. This activity could be done individually or collaboratively. This creative and critical-thinking activity would make an attractive montage or bulletin-board display.

The chapter questions should be previewed and discussed before reading. Questions using "Do you think..." are open-ended and could be completed individually or in a small group setting.

The major strategies of reading are emphasized throughout the unit. Each chapter should have a title. That title would be the main idea of the section. Sequencing activities are prevalent in the unit. True/False questions require comprehension and interpretation of the text.

Extensive practise in language forms and conventions reinforce good punctuation and language usage. Students should respond to most questions in sentence form. Different activities highlight punctuation, spelling, grammar, language structures, and patterns.

Collaborative tasks require group work and group decision-making skills. The talking, listening, and discussing components of language are utilized. Some tasks could be to predict outcomes or to decide on particular features of an illustration.

CLOZE activities require children to select appropriate words to fit in a certain context. The author's choice could be found before or after this activity.

Synonyms, antonyms, and word definition activities aid in vocabulary development.

Favorite scenes or chapters could be developed into skits. These, in turn, could be further communicated in video performances. The videos are a normal evolution from the artist's interpretations of each chapter.

Assessment makes this novel study teacher-friendly. The answer key follows the same format as the student book. The learning outcomes are easily identifiable. Suggested answers are given for inference questions. Although it is important to assess children's work, the novel study is meant to be a teaching tool. It is extremely important to review the work and to discuss the answers. Assignments may be teacher evaluated, peer evaluated, or self evaluated.

The completed unit is a valuable reference for parent interviews. When all is said and done, the major objective of the novel study is to foster a love for reading.

MANIAC MAGEE

by Jerry Spinelli



Chapters 1 and 2 - Title: _____

Page 1

Illustrate the answers to these statements.

1. Maniac Magee was born here.

2. What happened to his parents.

3. What Maniac sang in the musical.

4. How far Maniac ran.

5. How many people claimed to have seen him that first day.

6. Maniac passing a stranger.





MANIAC MAGEE

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Chapters 1 and 2

Page 2

A) What was Maniac's real name?

B) Where did he go to live after his parents died?

C) Why do you think Maniac leaves his relatives?

D) Where did Maniac wind up?

E) Make up a skipping chant of six to eight lines. Try to have consecutive lines rhyme.

F) **Punctuate** the following.

1. little jeffrey was shipped off to his Nearest relatives aunt dot and uncle dan

2. as he passed them he said hi

3. they lived in holidaysburg in the western part of pennsylvania

4. two mills is right across the schuykill river from bridgeport

5. the song they sang was talk to the animals
