



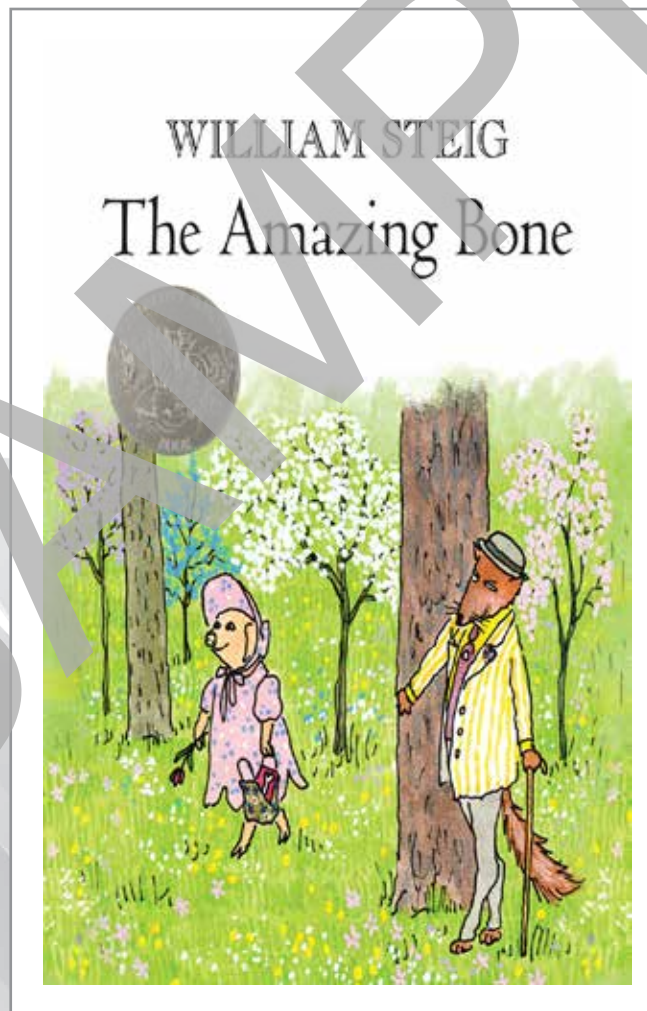
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES K-3

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

The Amazing Bone

William Steig



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

The Amazing Bone

William Steig

TEACHER GUIDE

NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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Summary

Pearl is a pig with human traits. Dawdling along on the way home from school one day, she finds a bone that is truly amazing, for it can talk! The bone joins Pearl, and they enjoy the scenery, scare off robbers, and escape from a wily fox. Returning to Pearl's home, the bone is given a valued place on the mantelpiece, and provides conversation and music for the family.

About the Author

William Steig was born November 14, 1907, in New York City, New York, becoming a member of a family in which every member was engaged in some area of the arts. He attended City College, New York City, and the National Academy of Design.

Of his varied career as cartoonist, illustrator, and author, Steig has said, "In 1930 my work began appearing in *The New Yorker*. I published my first children's book in 1968, embarking on a new and very different career. I came into this second profession in the seventh decade of my life, not knowing what to expect. To start a book, I am most often propelled by a visual image or an idea. I just ramble around and discover for myself what will happen next."

All of his writings are self-illustrated, and many have won awards and honors. *The Amazing Bone* is a Caldecott Honor Book, as well as an American Library Association Notable Book.

Initiating Activities

You may choose to do one of the following activities before reading the story, and the other after the story has been read. However, they are appropriate at any time.

1. **Bones:** Decorate the room with bones. Have them hanging from fixtures, etc. (Any bones that will be used for this purpose, or any other in which the bones will be kept, should be thoroughly cleaned and dried. To do this, boil the bones in water for an hour or two, so that all tissues may be removed. Tweezers help to remove tissues from small crevices. To clean long, narrow holes in bones, tear a piece of paper toweling to a convenient size, twist one end to form a point, and draw the paper back and forth through the hole. Be sure that you have been thorough, or the bones will become moldy in damp weather. Do not store bones in a sealed or airtight container or bag.)

After the children gather in a group, ask them why they think that the bones are being used for room decorations. Is anyone able to identify any of the bones, such as a leg bone, a soup bone, a chicken bone, etc.?

2. **Amazing:** Put the word *amazing* on a banner, and hang it in the area where the children will gather. Ask for definitions of the word, and record those given by the children. (*Amazing: Causing amazement; greatly surprising; wonderful; causing astonishment.*)

Has anyone ever seen, heard, or read about something that was/is amazing? Tell us about it.

Do you know of some books that have amazing things in them? Recommend some that you have read to others in the group. (Start a list, post it, and allow the children to add to it as additional books are thought of or read.)

Introduce the Story

Show the children the cover of the book. Ask someone to read the title to the group. Make some predictions as to what the story might be about. Record the predictions, so they may be checked as the story is read.

Procedure

This book may be read one section at a time, using DRTA, Directed Reading Thinking Approach. This technique involves reading a section and predicting what will happen next, making good guesses based on what has already occurred in the story. The story is continued, and the predictions verified. (See pages 6-7 of this guide.)

The Discussion Questions and Activities at the end of each section, as well as the Supplementary Activities, are provided so that you may make selections from them that will be suitable for use by the children in your group.

For the vocabulary words, you may wish to have the children show knowledge of the words before reading by writing a simple definition in their own words of what they think the words might mean. After reading, ask the children to verify or to check the meaning of each.

Vocabulary Word Definitions

Astonish: To fill with sudden wonder or surprise; amaze.

Boulder: Any large rock worn and rounded by weather and water.

Brilliant: Shining brightly; sparkling; very able; keenly intelligent.

Chilling: Coldness; checking enthusiasm; unfriendly manner; deadening.

Crocodile: Large, lizardlike reptile of tropical streams having a long, narrow head with massive jaws.

Cruller: A kind of doughnut made of sweetened dough twisted in strips and fried in deep fat.

Dagger: A short weapon with a sharp point used for stabbing.

Dawdle: To waste time; to loiter.

Disgust: A sickening distaste or dislike; deep aversion; repugnance.

Duped: To have been easily tricked or fooled.

Pages 1-7 (From "It was a brilliant day..." to " 'I didn't make the world.' ")

Vocabulary

brilliant (1)
gawking (3)

dawdled (1)
gaffers (3)

pumpernickel (2)

crullers (2)

Discussion Questions and Activities

1. Who is Pearl? What can you tell about her from these first pages of the book? Start an attribute web for Pearl. Add to it as more words are thought of that help to describe Pearl. (See pages 8-10 of this guide.)
2. What are some of the things that Pearl observed grownups doing as she walked home from school? (*Page 1, Sweeping the street, selling flowers, riding a bicycle; page 2, bakers taking bread from oven and powdering crullers; page 3, pitching horseshoes*)
3. What are some things that you might observe adults doing as you go home from school? Make a list. Are any of the activities similar to the ones that Pearl observed? Discuss.
4. As Pearl sat in the forest, she could almost feel herself changing into something. What was it? (*page 5, a flower*) What does she say as she sits there? (*Page 5, "I love everything."*) What reply does Pearl hear? (*Page 6, "So do I."*)
5. What languages does the bone speak? (*Page 6, The bone can speak in any language.*) What language(s) do you speak? If anyone in the group can speak a language other than the one commonly used, ask if some words could be shared with the group. If interest in other languages is high, pursue this with the resources that you have available (children in your class or school, high school/college students, senior citizens, etc.).
6. When Pearl asks the bone how it came to be able to make so many sounds, it replies, "I don't know. I didn't make the world" (page 7). Do you think that is a good reply? Why or why not? If you were the bone in the story, what would be your reply to Pearl?
7. Start a story map. Many stories have the same parts: a setting, a problem, characters, a goal, and a series of events that lead to an ending or resolution of the problem. These elements may be placed on a story map. Just as a road map leads a driver from one place to another, a story map leads a reader from one point to another. (See page 11 of this guide.)

Pages 8-13 (From " 'May I take...' " to "The bone, too.")

Vocabulary

rheumatism (8)
daggers (10)

flabbergast (9)
chilling (10)

trilling (9)
surrendered (11)

boulder (10)
hiss (13)

14. Amazing Bone Math: Begin and end with the same number! Make up one of your own.

The numerals used will depend upon the abilities of the children. The following are examples only.

10
-5

+3

-4

+6

12
+3

-7

-5

+9

15. Figure It Out: Listen to the clues. Find out the order in which the bone will sing the songs to Pearl.

These are the songs: "I've Been Working On The Railroad," "Clementine," "Are You Sleeping," "The More We Get Together," "She'll Be Comin' Round The Mountain."

The bone will sing "I've Been Working On The Railroad" first.

It will sing a song about a mountain after the song about the railroad, and right before the song about a girl named Clementine.

The song about getting together is not the last song it will sing.

What song will the bone sing last/fifth?