



TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

The Battle of Jericho

Sharon M. Draper

READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

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Sharon M. Draper

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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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Summary | 3 |
| About the Author..... | 3 |
| Characters | 4 |
| Initiating Activities..... | 5 |
| Vocabulary Activities..... | 5 |
| Nine Sections | 6 |
| Each section contains: Summary, Vocabulary, Discussion Questions, and Supplementary Activities | |
| Post-reading Discussion Questions | 23 |
| Post-reading Extension Activities | 26 |
| Assessment..... | 27 |
| Scoring Rubric..... | 36 |

Skills and Strategies

Critical Thinking

Interpreting, compare/contrast, forming opinions, research, predictions, brainstorming, inferences

Comprehension

Cause/effect, classifying, details, generalizing, main idea, summarizing

Writing

Journal, report, memorial article, alternate ending, critical review, poem, story ideas, review questions, police statement

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, oral report, dramatization, audio version of novel

Vocabulary

Parts of speech, context clues, prefixes, word maps, definitions

Literary Elements

Character analysis, figurative language, symbolism, point of view, mood, theme, foreshadowing, plot development, setting

Across the Curriculum

Social Studies—multicultural celebrations, Cincinnati, Ohio; Psychology—peer pressure, status symbols; Art—sketch, bulletin board design; Math—graphing; Health/Safety—precautions for driving during inclement weather, CPR, bruising, gun safety; Current Events—hazing cases; Literature—*November Blues*

Genre: young-adult fiction

Setting: present-day Cincinnati, Ohio

Point of View: third person

Themes: coming of age, peer pressure, personal responsibility, family values, courage, empathy, gender equality

Conflict: person vs. self, person vs. society, person vs. person

Style: narrative

Date of First Publication: 2003

Summary

High-school junior Jericho Prescott would give anything to join the prestigious Warriors of Distinction, a club which consists of certain carefully chosen students from Douglass High. The club is not school-sanctioned, yet its members are the most popular students in school. Jericho and his cousin Josh have been selected as two of the elite 15 pledges this year, and their friend Dana tricks the Warriors of Distinction into allowing her to pledge, as well. Jericho develops a relationship with Arielle, a girl he likes, and the two grow closer as the hazing Jericho and the other pledges undergo becomes increasingly humiliating and dangerous. The final initiation activity, called the “Leap of Faith,” claims Josh’s life. Afterward, Jericho must deal with the pain of losing his cousin.

About the Author

Sharon M. Draper was born in Cleveland, Ohio. Draper’s father was the son of a slave, and though she never met her grandfather, her family’s history has influenced much of her writing. Draper earned her B.A. from Pepperdine University in California and her M.A. from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. She also holds two honorary doctorate degrees. She and her husband, Larry, have four children and live in Cincinnati, Ohio with their golden retriever, Honey. Draper taught both middle and high school for over 30 years and now writes full-time.

In 1997, Draper was named Ohio Teacher of the Year and went on to become the National Teacher of the Year. Among her other distinctions, Draper was elected to the Board of Directors of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and is very involved with the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association. She has traveled internationally, sharing her passion for excellence in teaching and the importance of quality education.

Draper’s other writings include the Hazelwood High trilogy—*Tears of a Tiger* (winner of the Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe Award for New Talent and an ALA Best Book for Young Adults), *Forged By Fire* (winner of the Coretta Scott King Award, Parents’ Choice Gold Award, and an ALA Best Book for Young Adults), and *Darkness Before Dawn*—as well as *Romiette and Julio* and *Double Dutch*. Draper wrote *Copper Sun* (winner of the Coretta Scott King Award) in honor of her grandfather, conducting extensive research and making several visits to different countries in Africa. She has also written books for teachers, books of poetry, and the “Ziggy” series for children.

Characters

Jericho Prescott: high-school junior; excels at playing the trumpet and wants to join the Warriors of Distinction; thoughtful; self-conscious about his weight

Josh Prescott: high-school junior; Jericho's cousin; also wants to join the Warriors of Distinction; exuberant and outgoing; wants his father to be proud of him

Kofi Freeman: high-school junior; Jericho and Josh's close friend; also wants to join the Warriors of Distinction; feels unloved by his parents

Dana Wolfe: high-school junior; Kofi's girlfriend; tricks the senior Warriors of Distinction into letting her pledge; strong and defiant; believes girls can do anything boys can

Arielle Gresham: high-school junior; Jericho's first girlfriend; friendly and popular

November: high-school junior; Josh's girlfriend; friendly and caring; involved in many charities

Eric Bell: high-school junior; handicapped by a swimming accident; intelligent; sensitive to how he is treated as a disabled person

Eddie Mahoney: high-school senior; Warrior of Distinction who loathes Dana; angry; has an alcoholic father

Rick Sharp: high-school senior; leader of the Warriors of Distinction

Michael Madison: high-school senior; leader of the Warriors of Distinction

Mr. Culligan: chemistry teacher at Douglass High; faculty sponsor of the Warriors of Distinction

Mr. Boston: English teacher at Douglass High; concerned about students pledging to be Warriors of Distinction

Mr. Tambori: music teacher at Douglass High; urges Jericho to think about his future

Brock Prescott: Josh's father; former Warrior of Distinction

Marlene Prescott: Josh's mother

Cedric Prescott: Jericho's father; police officer; was never asked by Warriors of Distinction to pledge

Geneva Prescott: Jericho's stepmother; loves Jericho but is tough on him at times

Rory and Todd Prescott: Jericho's stepbrothers; 9 and 11 years old, respectively

Cleveland, Luis, Ram, and Rudy: other students pledging to be Warriors of Distinction

The Beginning of the End: January 28–Thursday, December 4—Evening

High-school junior Jericho Prescott and his friends are undergoing initiation rites for the Warriors of Distinction, an elite group well-known by Jericho and everyone at Douglass High. As Jericho wonders how he ended up in his present situation, the story flashes back to the day Jericho, his cousin Josh, and his friend Kofi were first approached by the Warriors of Distinction. After attending a preliminary meeting, Jericho goes home and contemplates the potential advantages of joining the prestigious group.

| Vocabulary |
|--------------|
| frigid |
| desolate |
| inhaled |
| functions |
| potential |
| unison |
| sponsor |
| competitions |
| rehearsals |
| juvenile |
| depressing |
| traditions |
| discriminate |

Discussion Questions

1. How is the novel's first chapter different than the other chapters? What does the reader learn from the first chapter, and why is this knowledge important? (*The novel's first chapter is written completely in italics. It is the only chapter that is out of chronological order from the rest of the novel. From the first chapter, the reader is able to determine how brutal and extreme the senior Warriors of Distinction are and also what is required of their pledges. The reader finds out that Jericho and his friends are pledging to be in the Warriors of Distinction, which is important because it provides the central focus for the rest of the novel.*)
2. Describe Jericho's friends. How do they differ from Jericho? (*Josh Prescott, Jericho's cousin, is tall with light-colored hair. The two cousins have grown up together and are very close. Kofi Freeman is tall and thin, with wire-rimmed glasses and a skin problem. While Jericho is slightly introverted, self-conscious [mostly about his weight], and a good musician, Josh is outspoken, confident, and good at sports. Kofi is good with computers and a bit quiet, but still fun-loving.*)
3. Why do the boys want to be Warriors of Distinction? If the Warriors are not a school club, how do they have so much influence at Douglass High? (*Warriors of Distinction wear silk or leather jackets to represent how "cool" they are. The prettiest girls date Warriors of Distinction, and the group is known for throwing the best parties. The Warriors allegedly have keys to the faculty lounge, student store, and supply room. They also supposedly are able to change students' grades and have access to final exam answers. It is rumored that certain adults who once were Warriors of Distinction get their traffic tickets dismissed, receive lower loan rates, and get other perks in the community. The Warriors of Distinction gain their power through community service and participation in school events. They distribute apples to the teachers on Teacher Appreciation Day, help out with Homecoming, and show parents around at Open House. They are also favored by adults who used to be Warriors of Distinction, like Douglass High's principal.*)
4. What does the conversation with Mr. Tambori show about Jericho? What does Mr. Tambori mean when he tells Jericho to "dream beyond where [he] can see" (p. 19)? (*Jericho's intellectual maturity becomes apparent when he expresses to Mr. Tambori that he is not ready to decide his entire future. Mr. Tambori's recommendation is meant to encourage Jericho to dream big and not feel limited in what he can do.*)
5. Why do the boys feel uncomfortable after mentioning the Warriors' meeting to Eric Bell? What might Eric be thinking? (*Josh initially brings up the meeting boastfully, as he is proud he, Jericho, and Kofi were invited. However, he immediately realizes that since Eric was not invited, the conversation may be making him feel bad. Everyone is suddenly painfully aware of the reason Eric was probably not invited. Answers will vary, but most students will realize that Eric feels that he is at an unfair disadvantage because of his disability, which often becomes a social barrier.*)

6. What is the relationship between each character (Jericho, Josh, Kofi, and Eddie) and his father? *(Jericho has lived with his dad and stepmother for about five years. His dad is always encouraging Jericho to do things that will enhance his college application, showing his concern for Jericho's future. Josh's dad is a lawyer and a former Warrior of Distinction. When Josh gets asked to pledge, he thinks he may finally be doing something to make his dad proud of him, revealing that Josh feels a sense of inadequacy. Kofi's parents never give him a curfew, and Kofi feels that they do not care about him. He avoids questions about his parents and makes jokes to cover up his true feelings. Eddie's father is an alcoholic, which embarrasses and angers Eddie.)*
7. Describe Jericho's conflicting feelings about Geneva. What does his description of Geneva's "muddy-looking house" say about Jericho? *(Jericho cannot get used to Geneva's "dullness," thinks she has no decorating style, and feels there is a tense barrier between them at times. However, he appreciates that Geneva makes sure he has spending money, cooks great food, and lets him call his mother in Alaska when he needs to talk to her. Jericho also loves Geneva's two sons as if they were his own younger brothers. Answers will vary, but readers may infer that since Jericho considers his home life a bit dull, he will seek excitement elsewhere [i.e., with the Warriors of Distinction].)*
8. **Prediction:** How will Eric Bell be important to the story?

Supplementary Activities

1. Figurative Language: Begin a list of similes you find in the novel, and add to the list as you read. Examples: "That Rice Krispies-colored hair you got does make you kinda look like a lamp on top..." (p. 5); "I'd rather look like a pencil than a bowl of oatmeal..." (p. 17).
2. Literary Analysis: Use the Colors with Meaning chart on page 32 of this guide to analyze the author's use of color words in the novel.
3. Art: Draw a picture of Jericho's room, showing at least two walls. Use the descriptions Jericho provides to give an accurate representation.

Word Map

Definition

Synonym

Antonym

Pronunciation

Part of Speech

Sentence

Thought Bubble

Directions: In the graphic below, write what Dana may have been thinking after Tuesday night's initiation activities.

