

Teacher Guide

Grades 3–4

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever

Barbara Robinson

NOVEL UNITS[®]

NEW WAYS TO TEACH READING,
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THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER

by
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Teacher Guide

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Note

The Harper Trophy Paperback edition of the book was used to prepare this guide. The page references may differ in other editions.

Please note: Please assess the appropriateness of this book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading and discussing it with your class.

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Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Brainstorming, classifying
and categorizing, evaluating,
comparing and contrasting

Literary Elements

Character, setting, plot,
character relationships, tone

Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing,
cause/effect, inference

Vocabulary

Synonyms/antonyms,
multiple meaning words,
analogies

Writing

Dialogue, letters, newspaper
article, short play, narrative

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, drama,
monologue, radio play

3. To “take the name of the Lord in _____” (*vain*) means to curse.
4. Colds and chicken pox are _____ (*contagious*), but allergies and heat rash are not.
5. He bought a plastic statue of Liberty as a _____ (*souvenir*) of his trip to New York.

Discussion Questions:

1. How did the Herdmans burn down the toolhouse? (*Leroy Herdman was playing with a chemistry set which he stole from the hardware store.*) Why did everyone say the fire was a “blessing in disguise”? (*The teacher has never liked the run-down toolhouse anyway.*)
2. What happened right before and after the picture on p. 6? (*Claude brought in a cat, which scratched kids and wrecked the classroom; after the cat had eaten the goldfish and pet mice, Claude took the cat home and the rest of the class had resigned.*)
3. Why wouldn't the Herdmans ever keep back stairs? (*Teachers were intimidated by the family; teachers didn't want two Herdmans in the class at the same time.*)
4. What is your impression of Imogene? (Begin an attribute web; see the activity sheet on page 9.) (*Like the other Herdmans she didn't learn in school; caused fights, told secrets like kids' weight or the fact that they had bad mice.*)
5. What can you tell about the narrator (the person telling the story)? How does she treat Imogene? How would you treat Imogene if you were in her class? (*The narrator avoids Imogene, doesn't flaunt her intelligence, and considers herself a medium kid.*)
6. How did Imogene upset Albert? (*She told everyone his weight and told him that she had seen the school nurse mark down that he would have to go to “fat-camp.”*) What do you think the teacher would have done if she had found out what Imogene was saying? What would you do if you heard a kid in your class tease another kid about his weight?

Chapter 2
pp. 15-24

Vocabulary: pageant 15 privet 16 coordinator 17
 pot-luck 17 script 17 standard 17
 casting 17 parable 17 sentiment 21
 slouching 22 superintendent 22

Circle one of the two choices.

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| 1. A pageant is a type of | show | book | (show) |
| 2. A privet is a type of | animal | hedge | (hedge) |
| 3. A coordinator is able to | organize | advertise | (organize) |
| 4. A pot-luck is a | game | dinner | (dinner) |
| 5. A script contains | caricatures | lines | (lines) |
| 6. A parable is a | joke | story | (story) |

Using the model below, develop a word map for "slouching."

