



TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

The Boggeart

Susan Cooper

READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

The Boggart

Susan Cooper

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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Skills and Strategies

Comprehension

Predicting, comparison/
contrast

Literary Elements

Story elements,
characterization, simile,
alliteration

Listening/Speaking

Discussion

Thinking

Visualization, research

Writing

Description, similes,
poetry, creative

Vocabulary

Synonyms, antonyms,
word mapping

Summary

Robert Volnik, artistic director of a small theater in Toronto, inherits a remote Scottish castle. Included with the furnishings of the castle is the Boggart, an ancient spirit that has been playing tricks on the inhabitants of Castle Keep for generations. While visiting the castle, Emily Volnik, Robert's daughter, accidentally packs the Boggart in the rolltop desk that will be shipped to the Volnik home in Toronto. Upon its arrival in Toronto, the Boggart experiences new taste delights and electronic marvels while getting Emily and Jessup Volnik into trouble with their parents. Although delighted with his new friends, the Boggart wants to return home to Scotland. Computer whiz Jessup and his friend Barry use modern technology, while the Boggart uses his ancient magic, and they collectively figure out a way to help the Boggart.

Some suggested topics of study: Scotland, castles, boggarts and other ancient spirits, theater, computer games, environmental issues, etc.

About the Author

Susan Cooper was born May 23, 1935, in Burnham, Buckinghamshire, England. She obtained an M.A. degree in 1956 from Somerville College, Oxford, where she majored in English. Cooper was a reporter and feature writer for the *Sunday Times* in London, England from 1956-1963. She came to the United States in 1963 to be with her new husband, Nicholas Grant, an M.I.T. professor. At this time, Cooper started to write fantasy stories for children. *Over Sea, Under Stone* was published by Jonathan Cape in 1965. She feels that fantasy "goes beyond realism, requiring complete intellectual surrender" on the part of the reader. In later years Cooper has branched out to the stage and screen, writing scenes for stage plays, screenplays, and teleplays.

Introductory Activities and Information

Note:

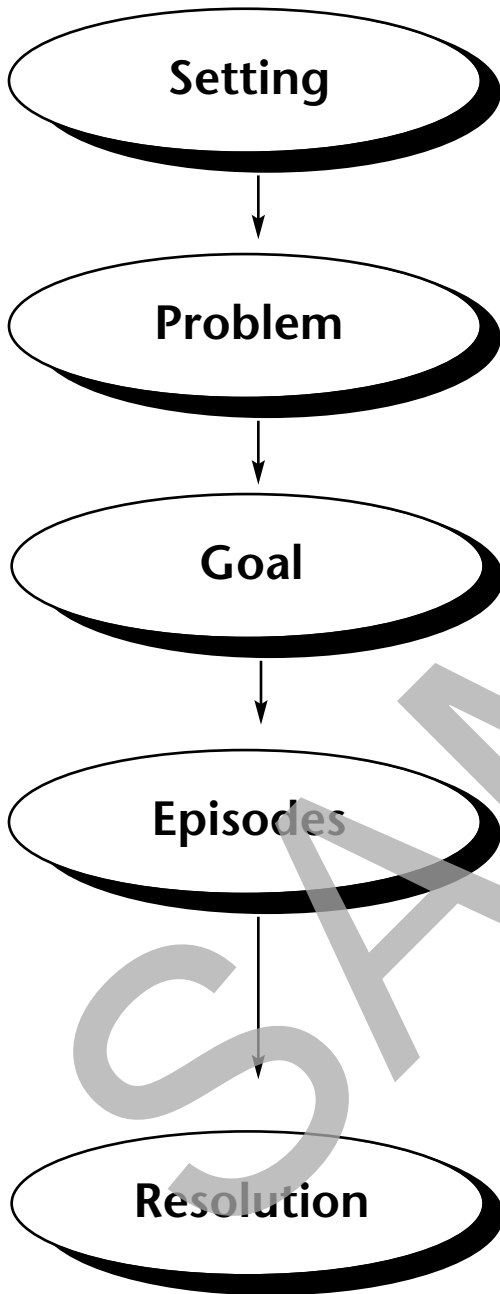
It is not intended that everything presented in this guide be done. Please be selective, and use discretion when choosing the activities you will do with the unit. The choices that are made should be appropriate for your use and your group of students. A wide range of activities has been provided so that individuals as well as groups may benefit.

Initiating Activity

Make a collection of pictures, posters, travel brochures, library books, computer games, etc. that have to do with castles, Scotland, ancient spirits, the theater, and environmental issues. Place the material in the room so that the students have easy access to it. Have some pictures and posters of Scotland on display. Invite some guest speakers and/or camera club members to share their information and materials with the students.

Ask if anyone has ever been to Scotland or knows anything about it. Look at the material on display, listen to guest speakers, and look at slides and videos.

Story Map



Characters _____

Time and Place _____

Problem _____

Goal _____

Beginning → Development → Outcome

Resolution _____

Chapter One: Pages 1-13

The story opens in Scotland, near the island of Castle Keep. The MacDevon has come from the castle to purchase a few things at the local store. He has left his dog, Fergus, at the castle, but has brought along the Boggart, an ancient spirit that loves to play tricks on people. Tommy Cameron helps his mother at the store, and the Boggart delights in playing tricks on the boy. When back at the castle, the MacDevon shares his porridge with Fergus and then settles down in his chair to sleep. It is there that the Boggart finds his friend in the morning. The howls of Fergus tell the Boggart that the MacDevon is dead.

Vocabulary

loch (1)	oarlocks (1)	clan (1)	dinghy (1)
ritual (1)	fruiterer (2)	fishmonger (2)	lichen (2)
reveling (2)	fecklessness (4)	lumbered (4)	provocatively (5)
escapades (6)	coracles (7)	perplexed (9)	contemplating (9)
ingenious (9)	shamefaced (10)	incredulous (10)	fastidious (10)
ululation (11)	keening (13)		

Vocabulary Activity

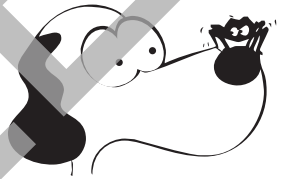
Put the vocabulary words in alphabetical order. Define one-half of the words.

Discussion Questions

1. Although the MacDevon has left his dog, Fergus, at the castle, what has he brought along on his shopping trip? (*Pages 2-3, The MacDevon has brought the Boggart along on his shopping trip.*) What is a Boggart? (*Page 3, A Boggart is an ancient mischievous thing that cannot die. This one lives with the MacDevon at Castle Keep.*) Have you ever read anything about a Boggart previously? If so, in what book or publication? Is there anything that you have ever read about that you think may be similar to a Boggart? Discuss and record sources mentioned in the discussion.
2. How does Tommy know that the Boggart has come to the store? (*Pages 3-4, An apple floats in the air, on its way to being consumed by the Boggart. The six bicycles out in front of the store are toppled over by the Boggart in retaliation for Tommy returning the apple to the MacDevon. Tommy hears the Boggart laugh at this.*) Do you think Tommy's mother is aware of the Boggart? Why or why not? How do you think Tommy feels about the Boggart? Discuss.
3. The Boggart lives by what law? (*Page 6, The Boggart lives by the law of the wild, which is "the survival of the fittest."*) What is meant by that law? Is that "law of the wild" still in effect? Discuss and include the intervention of men into the lives of wild things.
4. The Boggart, by his nature, feels warmth for no one. However, once, in ancient times, the Boggart had loved someone. Who was it? (*Pages 6-7, The Boggart had loved Duncan MacDevon, who was killed by an invading Norseman.*) After Duncan's death, what did the Boggart swear? (*Page 8, The Boggart swore that he would never allow himself to feel love for a human again.*) With the death of the present MacDevon, what does the Boggart realize? (*Page 11, The Boggart realizes that he feels the ache that he had sworn to never feel again.*) How do the Boggart and the dog each express their grief? How do people express grief? Discuss.

Supplementary Activities

1. Start a character attribute web for Tommy Cameron. Add to the web as the story continues. (**Characterization** is the way an author lets the reader know what the characters are like. In direct characterization, the author describes the character directly. In indirect characterization, the author provides clues about the character through thoughts, speech and actions.)
2. Start a special web for the Boggart, listing its likes and dislikes, special abilities, antics, characteristics, and anything else that is unique to the Boggart. Add to the web as the story continues.
3. Start a story map (page 7 of this guide).
4. To annoy Fergus, the Boggart turns himself into a hairy brown spider and dances on the dog's nose (page 5). Think of something else that the Boggart could become that would annoy the dog. Write two or three paragraphs to describe the transformation of the Boggart, the annoyance of the dog, and the outcome of the incident. Make an illustration to go with your work.
5. Starting with the first full paragraph on page 7 and ending in the middle of page 8, the burial of Duncan MacDevon is described. How does this description make you feel? What sounds impress you the most? Express your thoughts and feelings in prose or poetry, or by using the art media of your choice.
6. Will Tommy realize what has happened at Castle Keep? What will happen to the Boggart? What do you think might happen next? Make a prediction.



Chapter Two: Pages 14-26

This chapter takes place in Toronto, Canada, and involves the Volnik family, Robert and Maggie and their children Emily and Jessup. Robert learns that he has inherited a castle in Scotland from his great-uncle, Devon MacDevon.

Vocabulary

reproachfully (14)
harassed (19)
ominously (25)

colleagues (17)
plaintively (20)

conspirators (18)
eccentric (22)

consolation (19)
treacherous (24)

Vocabulary Activity

Use the vocabulary word that makes the most sense to complete the sentence.

1. The furniture was arranged in an _____ manner in the store. (*eccentric*)
2. The _____ hid behind the couch while making their plans. (*conspirators*)
3. "How can I find something that I cannot see?" he asked _____. (*plaintively*)

these changes? (Page 196, *The Boggart is happy and contented to be home.*) How do you feel about the Boggart as the story ends? Discuss.

Supplementary Activities

1. Make a list of ten “fun tricks,” like those the Boggart played on the puppy and boys, that the Boggart could try at the castle in the future. Explain how each trick is done.
2. Write the next chapter of the story.
3. Complete the attribute webs.
4. Complete the story map.

Conclusion

Read one or more of the following proverbs about HOME, or a proverb or poem of your choice on that subject, to the students. Discuss the Boggart’s attachment to his home, and his feelings of contentment as he returns there. Expand the discussion to include personal experiences about HOME.

- *Better at home than a mile away from it.* —Chinese
- *East or west, home is best.* —Dutch
- *Home is a pleasant word.* —Scottish
- *Home is where the heart is.* —American

Post-reading Activities

Do the Vocabulary Word Search Puzzle. Some other things to do:

1. Put the words in alphabetical order.
2. Number the words and:
 - Define every odd-numbered word.
 - Use every even-numbered word in a sentence.