



TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 3-5

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Bunnicula

Deborah Howe

READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Bunnivula

Deborah Howe

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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
Introductory Information and Activities	3
Nine Chapters	10
Chapters contain: Vocabulary Words and Activities, Discussion Questions and Activities, Predictions, Supplementary Activities	
Postreading Questions and Activities.....	29
Supplementary Activities.....	29
Assessment.....	32

Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Brainstorming, comparing
and contrasting, evaluating,
analyzing details

Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing,
cause/effect, inference,
problem solving and decision
making

Writing

Journal, cartoon, ad, form
poem, make-believe menu,
narrative, diary

Vocabulary

Antonyms/synonyms, words
in context, word maps, root
words

Listening/Speaking

Participation in discussion,
story theater, reader's
theater, word pantomime

Literary Elements

Character, setting, plot,
theme, fantasy, mood, point
of view

Summary

The Monroe family went to a Dracula movie where they found a black and white rabbit in a shoe box. Bunnacula looked like an ordinary bunny but strange things began to happen.

About the Author

James Howe was born August 2, 1946 in Oneida, New York. He has worked as a social worker, actor, and writer since his graduation from Boston University, BFA and Hunter College, MA. He has written many books and plays for children. *Bunnacula* was produced as a movie for television.

Mr. Howe states, "I don't believe I was born to write...But the creative itch *has* been with me for as long as I can remember. And it has always been strong enough that it demanded to be scratched...I have always written. When I was seven, I wrote a play based on the popular 'Blondie' comic strip entitled 'Dagwood's Awful Day.' This was performed by myself and other neighborhood thespians on a front porch one hot summer day...And I wrote short stories and self-published newspapers, my favorite being a newsletter for an organization I founded when I was nine called the Vampire Legion."

Mr. Howe and his second wife, Betsy, live in Manhattan, New York. Deborah Smith Howe, co-author of *Bunnacula*, died in 1969.

Introductory Information and Activities

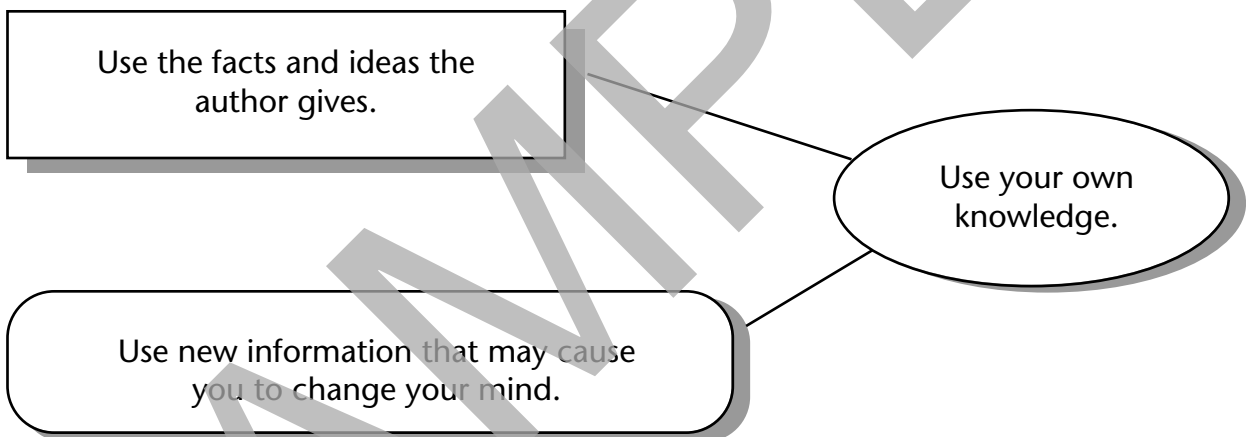
Previewing the Book:

1. Look at the cover of the book. What characters do you think will be in the story? What clues to the story are in the title, *Bunnacula: A Rabbit-Tale of Mystery*? The teacher will read the Editor's Note to the class. What important information did you learn about this book? Who is the narrator? (*a dog, Harold X*)
2. Would a dog as the narrator of this story see the action in a different way than humans?
3. With a dog as a narrator of the story, why can we say this is not a **realistic** story? What is a **fantasy**? How is fantasy different from realistic stories? Use the T-diagram to help the class make the comparison.

Using Predictions in the Novel Unit Approach

We all make predictions as we read—little guesses about what will happen next, how the conflict will be resolved, which details given by the author will be important to the plot, which details will help to fill in our sense of a character. Students should be encouraged to predict, to make sensible guesses. As students work on predictions, these discussion questions can be used to guide them: What are some of the ways to predict? What is the process of a sophisticated reader’s thinking and predicting? What clues does an author give us to help us in making our predictions? Why are some predictions more likely than others?

A predicting chart is for students to record their predictions. As each subsequent chapter is discussed, you can review and correct previous predictions. This procedure serves to focus on predictions and to review the stories.



Predictions:

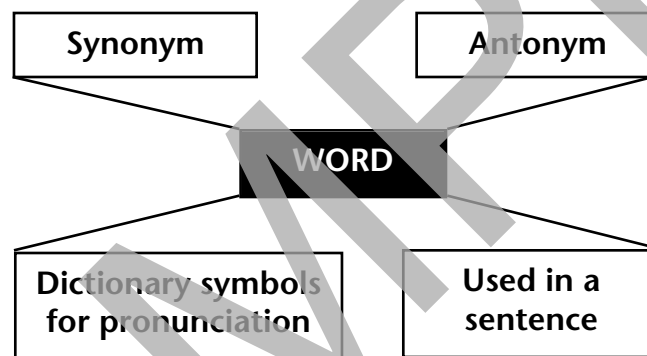
Chapter One: "The Arrival"—Pages 3-17

Vocabulary:

admonition 3	digress 4	pelting 4	staked 4
reverie 4	circumstances 6	tranquil 6	decipher 8
mongrel 8	obscure 9	dialect 9	bereaved 9
dazed 9	moseyed 9	hysteria 10	repulsive 10
stash 11	preference 11	clenched 12	unison 12
lamely 14	traumatized 15	plaintively 16	sarcastically 16
finality 17			

Vocabulary Activity:

In cooperative groups, using the model below, develop word maps for the words. The words maps will be posted around the classroom.



Discussion Questions and Activities.

1. How does Harold feel about his family? (*Page 7, He likes them especially because they treat everyone, including animals, with great respect for their intelligence.*)
2. What is unusual about the discovery of the new pet rabbit? (*Toby finds it in a movie theater seat. The rabbit has a paper with strange words tied to his neck.*)
3. What kind of relationship do Harold and Chester have? (*Chester is a cat and Harold, the narrator, is a dog. They are friends who talk and communicate.*)
4. Harold is a most unusual dog. Is he somebody you would like to have as a friend? When you read, you get an impression of what a character is like from what he says and does, and what other characters say about him. Begin to fill in an attribute web for Harold and add to it as you read the story. (See page 11 of this guide.)

	Cat	Dog
Body:		
Food:		
Senses:		
Enemies:		
Lifetime:		
Noises:		
Behavior:		
Family Life:		
As Pets:		

- Literary Analysis—Point of View: Narration of the story is by a character who uses the pronoun “I” in referring to himself. This story is told by Harold in the first person. Rewrite this chapter using the first person with Mrs. Monroe telling the story. What are some of the things that Harold knows that Mrs. Monroe does not? Watch this as you rewrite the story.

Chapter Six: “Harold Helps Out”—Pages 62-77

Vocabulary:

emanated 62	pendant 63	strewn 63	renders 65
immobile 65	involuntarily 65	aroma 65	feline 66
verbalized 70	jumble 72	reign 72	stake 72
inert 73	determination 75	unceremoniously 75	pathetic 75
immerse 76	emits 76		

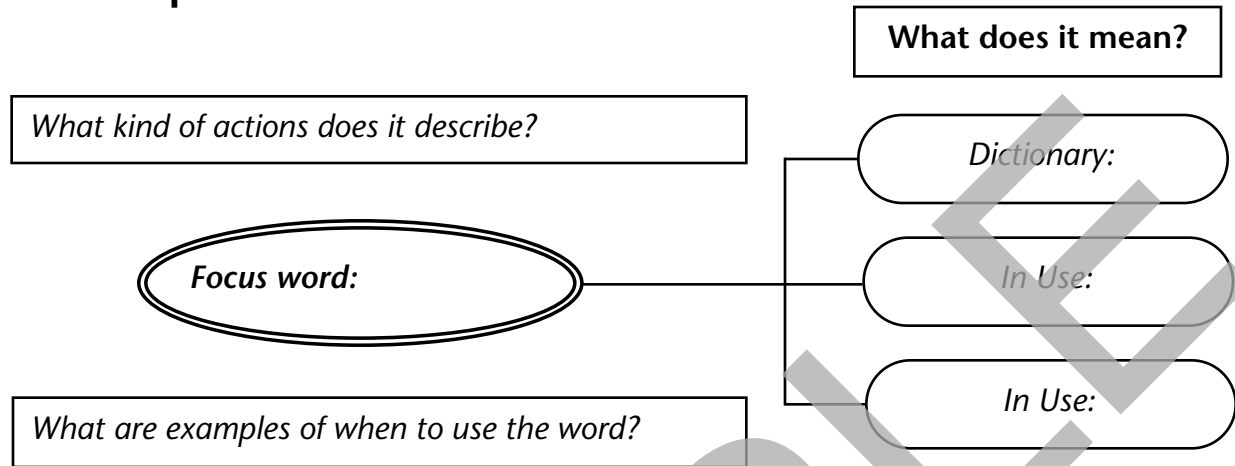
Vocabulary Activity:

Find the base or root word of each vocabulary word. In cooperative groups make word maps using the models on the next page. Members of the cooperative group should sign their maps. The word maps should be posted on the bulletin board so that all members of the class may study them.

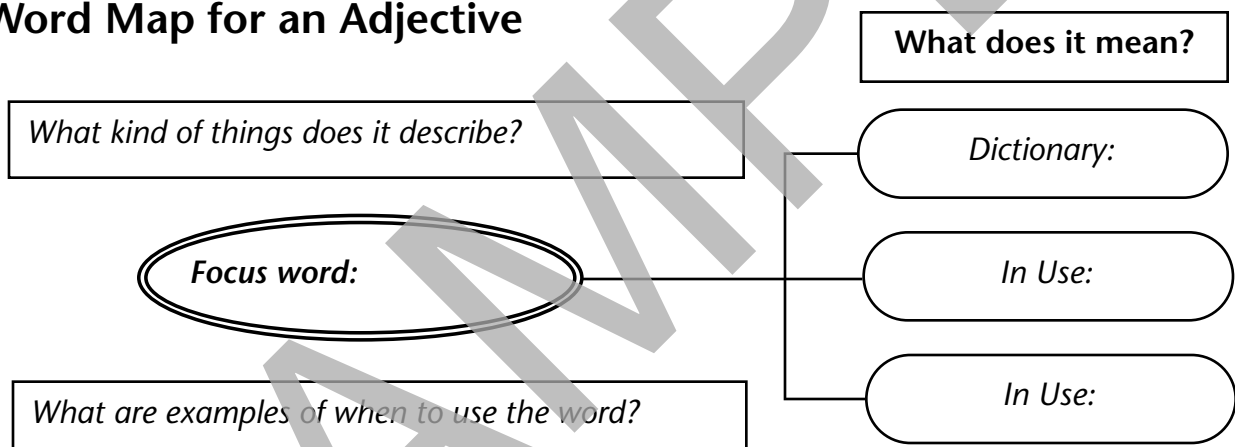
Discussion Questions and Activities:

- Why do we usually use garlic? (*for cooking*)

Word Map for a Verb



Word Map for an Adjective



Word Map for a Noun

