



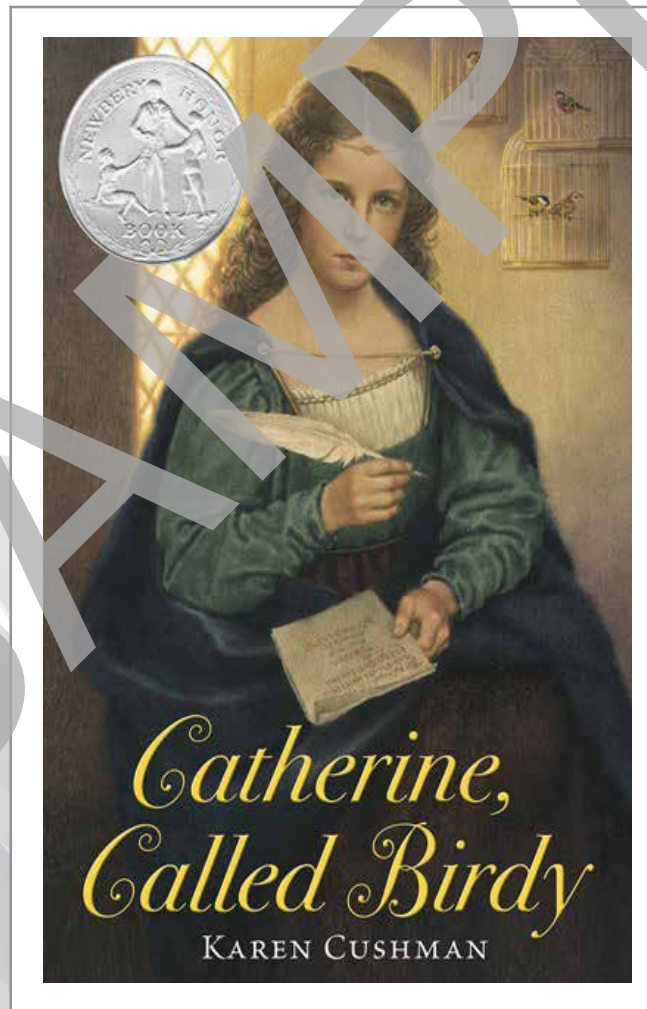
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Catherine, Called Birdy

Karen Cushman



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Catherine, Called Birdy

Karen Cushman

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!

ISBN 978-1-50203-667-4

Copyright infringement is a violation of Federal Law.

© 2020 by Novel Units, Inc., St. Louis, MO. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any way or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without prior written permission from Novel Units, Inc.

Reproduction of any part of this publication for an entire school or for a school system, by for-profit institutions and tutoring centers, or for commercial sale is strictly prohibited.

Novel Units is a registered trademark of Conn Education.

Printed in the United States of America.

To order, contact your
local school supply store, or:

Toll-Free Fax: 877.716.7272

Phone: 888.650.4224

3901 Union Blvd., Suite 155

St. Louis, MO 63115

sales@novelunits.com

novelunits.com

Table of Contents

Summary	3
About the Author.....	3
Introductory Activities and Information	3
Thirteen Chapters.....	9
Chapters contain: Chapter Summaries, Vocabulary Words and Activities, Discussion Questions, Post-reading Activities	
Conclusion	33
Supplementary Activities.....	33
Teacher Information	39
Bibliography	42
Audio-Visual Bibliography	42

Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Research, visualization

Comprehension

Predicting, comparison/
contrast

Writing

Journaling, opinion, poetry,
instructions, similes, sayings,
description, summary,
creative

Listening/Speaking

Drama, discussion

Literary Elements

Story elements,
characterization, simile

Vocabulary

Synonyms, antonyms, word
mapping

Summary of *Catherine, Called Birdy*

Fourteen-year-old Catherine, called Little Bird or Birdy, writes an account of her days for her brother, Edward, so that she may forgo spinning. Starting in September of 1290, Catherine tells of her life in the manor, and of her father's attempts to marry her to a wealthy suitor. After sending home several candidates, Catherine must face reality in the form of Shaggy Beard, the most revolting suitor of all. As Catherine tries to out-manuever her father and side-step Shaggy Beard, she comes to realize that she cannot escape her life. She is who she is, wherever she is. Will she make the best of her life that she can?

Some topics of interest: castles and manor homes, medieval England, English community life in 1290, etc.

About the Author

Karen Cushman was born in Chicago, Illinois. She received an M.A. degree in Human Behavior and one in Museum Studies. She is now the Assistant Director of the Museum Studies Department at John F. Kennedy University in the San Francisco Bay area. She and her husband have one daughter, and live in Oakland, California. *Catherine, Called Birdy* is the first book written by Karen Cushman.

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:

Collect books and posters from the library that have to do with medieval England, castles and manor houses, medieval art, knighthood, etc. (See page 212 of the book for the author's bibliography.) Have the books placed in the room so that they are easily accessible to the students. Place some posters temporarily on the bulletin board.

When ready to start the unit, read the *Author's Note* (pages 207-211) to the students, or have a volunteer do the reading. Go on to *Previewing the Book*.

Bulletin Board Idea:

Cover the bulletin board with plain background paper. As the story develops, have the students create an English village on the bulletin board.

Using Character Webs

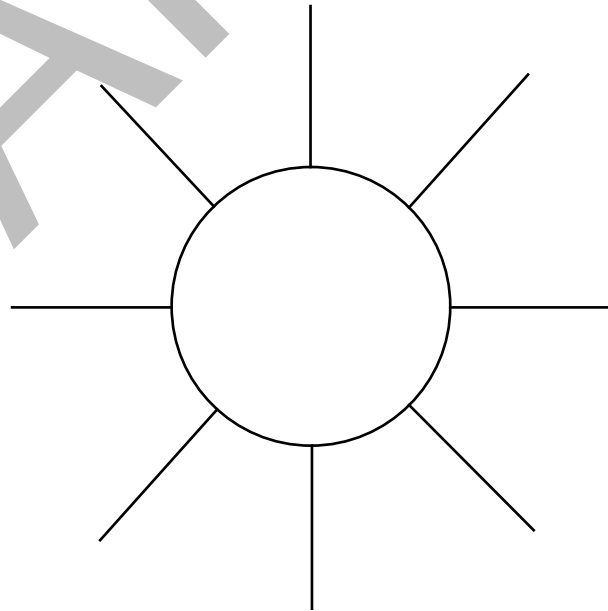
Attribute webs are simply a visual representation of a character from the novel. They provide a systematic way for students to organize and recap the information they have about a particular character. Attribute webs may be used after reading the novel to recapitulate information about a particular character, or completed gradually as information unfolds. They may be completed individually or as a group project.

One type of character attribute web uses these divisions:

- How a character acts and feels. (How does the character act? How do you think the character feels? How would you feel if this happened to you?)
- How a character looks. (Close your eyes and picture the character. Describe him/her to me.)
- Where a character lives. (Where and when does the character live?)
- How others feel about the character. (How does another specific character feel about our character?)

In group discussion about the characters described in student attribute webs, the teacher can ask for backup proof from the novel. Inferential thinking can be included in the discussion.

Attribute webs need not be confined to characters. They may also be used to organize information about a concept, object, or place.



Vocabulary:

fostering 44	devour 47	putrid 48	albeit 50
feigning 54	jest 56	suffice 57	vexed 57

Vocabulary Activity:

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

1. Her father was _____ by the way Catherine behaved. (*vexed*)
2. She was able to _____ an entire pie at one meal. (*devour*)
3. The woman enjoyed _____ illness to get attention from others. (*feigning*)
4. He overindulged at the party and had a _____ stomach the next morning. (*putrid*)
5. Although said in _____, his remark did not make others laugh. (*jest*)

Discussion Questions:

1. What does her mother reply when Catherine tells of her desire to be a song maker? (*Page 53, Catherine's mother tells her, "Don't stretch your legs longer than your stockings or your toes will stick out."*) What do you think Catherine's mother means by that statement? Discuss students' interpretations. See Post-reading Activities #1 and #2.
2. What are some of the foods that are served for Catherine's birthday feast? (*Pages 55-56, Some of the foods served for Catherine's feast include: glazed eggs, apple tarts, whole pigeons and snipes, peacock in raisin sauce, red and white jellies, pig stomach stuffed with eggs and spices, and potted beef with nutmeg.*) Do you think any of these foods would be served at the present time? Why or why not? Discuss food preferences, care and preparation in 1290 and at the present time. See Post-reading Activity #3.

Post-reading Activities:

1. Think of at least three additional expressions that might have been used by Catherine's mother in response to Catherine. Write out the expressions, and use one of them in a sentence. For example:

don't bite off more than you can chew	always look before you leap
don't get too big for your breeches	don't stick your neck out
don't put the cart before the horse	don't swap horses in midstream
take the bull by the horns	don't go on a wild goose chase
2. Catherine makes up a Saint Catherine song. It is on page 55. Add to the song or compose one of your own. Catherine's song is made up of rhyming couplets with a repeated refrain. (A couplet is a verse composed of two lines, the length of the lines depending on the writer, and most typically appearing in rhymed fashion. Couplets can be simple or sophisticated.) See the examples on the following page.

Catherine has a birthday this very day.
Catherine has a birthday; she wants to play.
Sing hey, nonny, nonny, hey!

She wants to play, and sing, and dance.
Catherine wants to have one more chance.
Sing hey, nonny, nonny, hey!

One more chance to prove to you
That she can have her cake and eat it, too.
Sing hey, nonny, nonny, hey!

3. What do you think might be served at a special dinner to celebrate someone's fourteenth birthday at the present time? Make out a special birthday dinner menu. Give the recipe for one item on the menu. Make an illustration to go with the recipe.
4. Will Catherine think of a Christmas song? What mischief will Catherine cause at Christmas? What do you think might happen next? Make a prediction.

"December"—Pages 59-77

Chapter Summary:

Catherine is excited about seeing her first hanging, until she finds out that the bandits to be hung are only twelve years old. Robert and Thomas arrive home for Christmas. Catherine manages to send another suitor packing, and the weather turns stormy and cold. The Christmas feast, enjoyed by villagers and nobles alike, is accompanied by games and mummers. Perkin is chosen Lord of Misrule, and he is Master of the Christmas Revels. Everyone, including Catherine, must obey Perkin until the revels end.

Vocabulary:

beslumbered 63	kirtles 64	deliverance 65	truss 65
quest 65	oppilated 69	anointed 74	

Vocabulary Activity:

Do the Vocabulary Review #1—Synonym or Antonym? found in the Supplementary Activities section of this guide.

Discussion Questions:

1. What happens on the first day of December to upset Catherine? (*Pages 59-60, Catherine and Gerd go to Wooton village to view a hanging. Catherine has not seen a hanging until now. She assumes that the bandits will be huge and hairy. The bandits to be hung are twelve-year-old boys.*) Do the other people, who are in the village to view the hanging, seem to be upset when seeing the bandits? (*page 60, no*) Why do you