



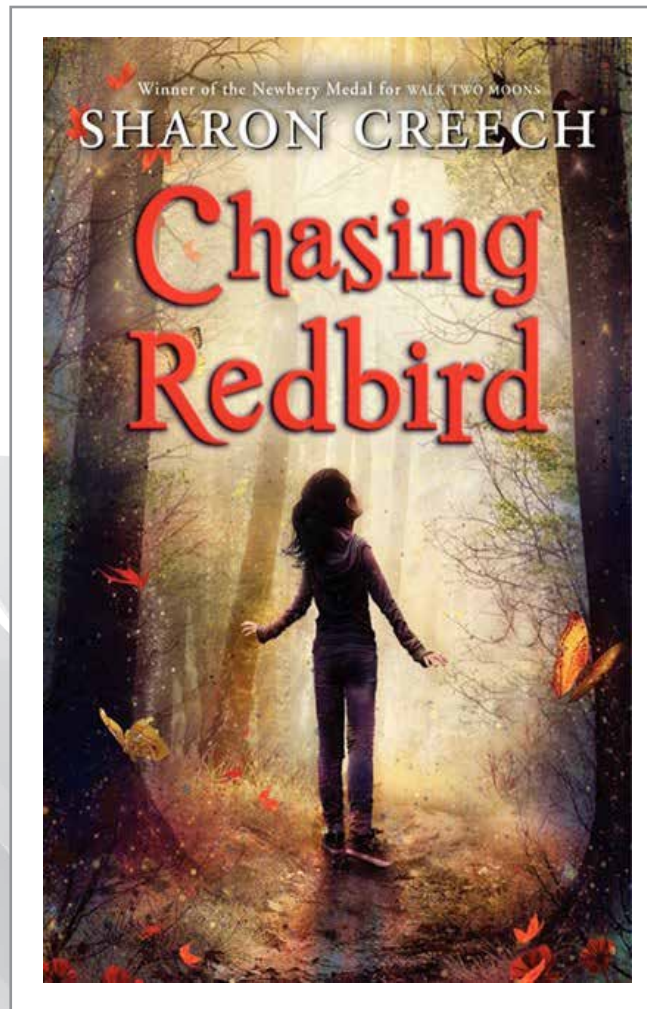
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Chasing Redbird

Sharon Creech



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Chasing Redbird

Sharon Creech

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

Writing

Character journal, personal, creative, article, poetry, letter, sequel, persuasive composition

Vocabulary

Charades, word maps, synonyms, antonyms, definitions, parts of speech, context clues

Literary Elements

Character analysis, setting, plot, figurative language, symbolism

Listening/Speaking

Dramatizing, interviewing, storytelling, discussion, oral reports, birdcalls, music

Thinking

Identifying attributes, research, compare/contrast, pros/cons, brainstorming, problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking

Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing, foreshadowing, cause and effect, inference, story mapping, anticipating

Across the Curriculum

Social Studies—maps and research; Science—botany, animal research; Math—graphing; Art—drawing, collage, book jacket, advertisements; Health

Summary

Chasing Redbird tells the story of Zinny Taylor, a 13-year-old girl who lives on a small farm with a big family in Kentucky. Zinny sets out to be noticed and find her place in the world. After the sudden death of her Aunt Jessie, Zinny begins to clear an old, overgrown trail as a summer project. She encounters many hardships along the trail such as dealing with her grief, being chased by a bear up a tree, and meeting two boys looking for trouble. Gradually, Zinny begins to understand herself, her family "secret," and her true feelings for Jake Boone. She comes to terms with her grief and her feelings of guilt over the deaths of her aunt and her young cousin, Rose.

About the Author

Sharon Creech, a Newbery Medal winner, has written highly-acclaimed books such as *Walk Two Moons*, *Absolutely Normal Chaos*, *Pleasing the Ghost*, *Chasing Redbird*, and *The Wanderer*. She spends her summers with her grown children at Lake Chautauqua, New York. For the other nine months of the year, Sharon Creech lives in Surrey, England.

Introductory Activities

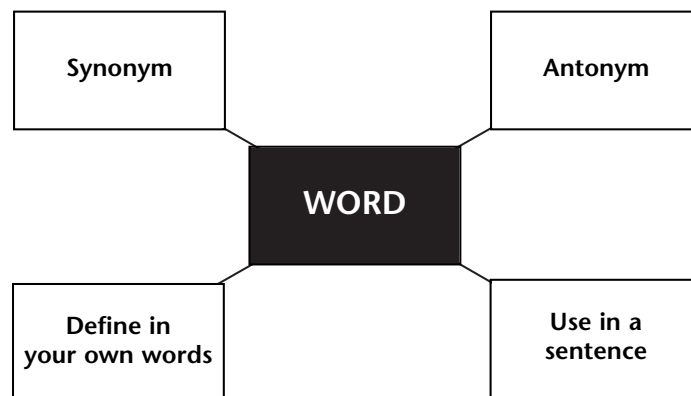
1. **Previewing the Book:** Have students look at the cover and answer the journalist's questions about what they see: Who? Where? What? When? and Why? Based on their answers, students predict what the book will be about.
2. **Predict:** Given the following clues, students should write a paragraph predicting what they think will happen in the story.
death romance camping grief guilt search for identity
3. **Character Journal:** List the main characters from *Chasing Redbird* and have students choose one. As they read the book, students write regular entries from that character's point of view. Journal entries should reflect on the events of the story. At various points in their reading, have students share their journals with classmates.
4. **Attribute Web:** Create an attribute web (see pages 8-9 of this guide) with students for each of the following ideas: secrets, independence, bravery, love, and stealing. Ask students to quickly tell what each word brings to mind. Encourage students to elaborate on particular ideas.
5. **Prediction Chart:** Have students set up a prediction chart (see pages 6-7 of this guide) to use as they read the book.

6. Anticipation Questions: Have students respond to each of the following statements with a “thumbs up” (I agree) or a “thumbs down” (I disagree) and discuss their responses.

- Children should always do what their parents say.
- Life is seldom full of happiness.
- Friends should not steal to gain acceptance.
- Teenagers often struggle to find their place in the world.
- People come to terms with the death of a loved one in different ways.
- Most people need to have a special place of their own.
- It is easy to trust others.
- The love of your family is the most important thing in life.
- Ghosts only exist in people’s minds.

Vocabulary Activities

1. Target Word Charades: Have students act out vocabulary words and have classmates guess the target word. Some suggested words for *Chasing Redbird*: relent (16), slurping (25), wedged (43), emerge (51), ajar (95), hovered (110), scowling (146), groping (198), swigging (205), fidgeted (236)
2. Target Word Maps: Have students complete word maps for vocabulary words of a certain part of speech. For example, adjectives from *Chasing Redbird* would include: clever (25), musty (28), bewildered (49), mournful (62), jiving (94), scathing (120), vaguest (177), insistent (211)



3. Sentences: Have students select five or six vocabulary words and use as many of the words as possible in one sentence.
4. Synonym Match: Have students select vocabulary words from a chapter and list one synonym for each vocabulary word on a small piece of paper. Students mix the pieces of paper and match each synonym to the appropriate vocabulary word.

Supplementary Activities

1. Drama: Ask student volunteers to act out the scene where Zinny encounters the bears. Other class members should research the best ways to avoid and escape a bear attack.
2. Poetry: Have students write two separate acrostic poems that describe Zinny and Jake. Directions: Write each character's name vertically on a sheet of paper. After each letter in the name, write a descriptive word or phrase describing the character.
3. Poetry: Instruct students to write a poem describing the scene where Zinny sees Aunt Jessie. The poems should reflect Zinny's feelings of comfort. Ask for volunteers to read their poems aloud to the class.

Chapters 43-46, "The Cabin" to "The Chase"

Vocabulary

subtly (241)	defy (244)	unearthed (247)	afterthought (247)
clomped (248)	facilities (248)	assigned (249)	atone (249)
propping (250)	trampled (250)	chicory (251)	swirled (252)
hearth (255)	sappy (260)		

Discussion Questions

1. Why does Jake take the horse and race to Zinny's parents? (*He thinks Uncle Nate is dying and wants to get help.*)
2. How does Zinny occupy her time while Jake goes for help? (*She examines the contents in the cabin.*)
3. Why do you think Aunt Jessie and Uncle Nate wrote letters to Rose? (*Answers will vary.*)
4. What causes Zinny to remember the incident at the circus? (*She finds a medallion in the clutched hands of the two baby dolls.*)
5. How do you think Aunt Jessie felt when Zinny gave her her own medallion? (*Answers will vary.*)
6. Why does Zinny feel Aunt Jessie and Rose are in the cabin? (*She sees the mementos from Rose's life and remembers the happy times they had together.*)
7. How does Zinny explain why Aunt Jessie and Uncle Nate spent so much time chasing the dead? (*They were trying to keep the dead alive, to defy that darkness sweeping in and overtaking them.*)
8. How does Uncle Nate explain his passing out in the cabin? (*He tells them it is just a little spell.*)
9. Why doesn't Jake return with Zinny's parents? (*Jake had to go with the sheriff because he was caught with the stolen horse.*)

-
10. Why does Zinny consider her and Jake's stories regarding their adventures to be in a muddle? *(Their two stories take different points of view and are difficult to explain: Jake stole so he could get Zinny's attention by giving her presents. Zinny didn't tell anyone she knew about Jake's stealing. She also doesn't know how to explain the significance of the trail, the hand of God, her guilt over Aunt Jessie, baby Rose, and Uncle Nate.)*
 11. Why does the mayor of Chocton phone the newspaper to take pictures of him and Zinny? *(Answers will vary; Once he finds out his property is part of the historic Bybanks-Chocton Trail, he is interested in Zinny's story and the attention that comes with it.)*
 12. How do Zinny's parents react to the visitors to the Chocton Trail? *(They become frustrated because the visitors are infringing on their privacy.)*
 13. Do you think the punishment given to Zinny and Jake is justified? *(Answers will vary.)*
 14. Why do you think the mayor tells Zinny not to argue with him about her punishment? *(Answers will vary.)*
 15. Why does Zinny feel like the happiest person on the face of the earth? *(She accomplished clearing the trail and considers it to be a good thing.)*
 16. Does Zinny think that Uncle Nate is wrong in trying to chase his Redbird, Aunt Jessie? *(No, she likes the idea of chasing someone you love.)*
 17. Why does Zinny give all of her collections away? *(Answers will vary.)*
 18. Why does Zinny tell Jake not to tangle up her spaghetti? *(She doesn't want him to take May to the movies. She wants to go with him herself because she really likes him.)*
 19. Why does Zinny return to the cabin to look at the things that belonged to Aunt Jessie, Uncle Nate, and baby Rose? *(She needs to remember the times she had with them before Rose died. She is working through her grief.)*
 20. Why is Zinny going to teach Jake the boogie-woogie? *(Answers will vary.)*

Supplementary Activities

1. Social Studies/Mapping: Have students construct a relief map of salt or clay depicting the trail that Zinny cleared. The students may use plastic figures, cardboard models, or other materials to represent the landforms and structures found on the trail.
2. Creative Writing/Newspaper: Have students write a newspaper article about Zinny completing the trail. The story should include an appropriate headline.
3. Writing/Sequel: What will happen next in Zinny and Jake's relationship? Have students write the first chapter of a sequel to *Chasing Redbird* focusing on Jake and Zinny.
4. Discussion: As a class, discuss how Uncle Nate and Aunt Jessie's inability to accept Rose's death affected them. How would the story have been different if they had dealt with their grief in another way?