



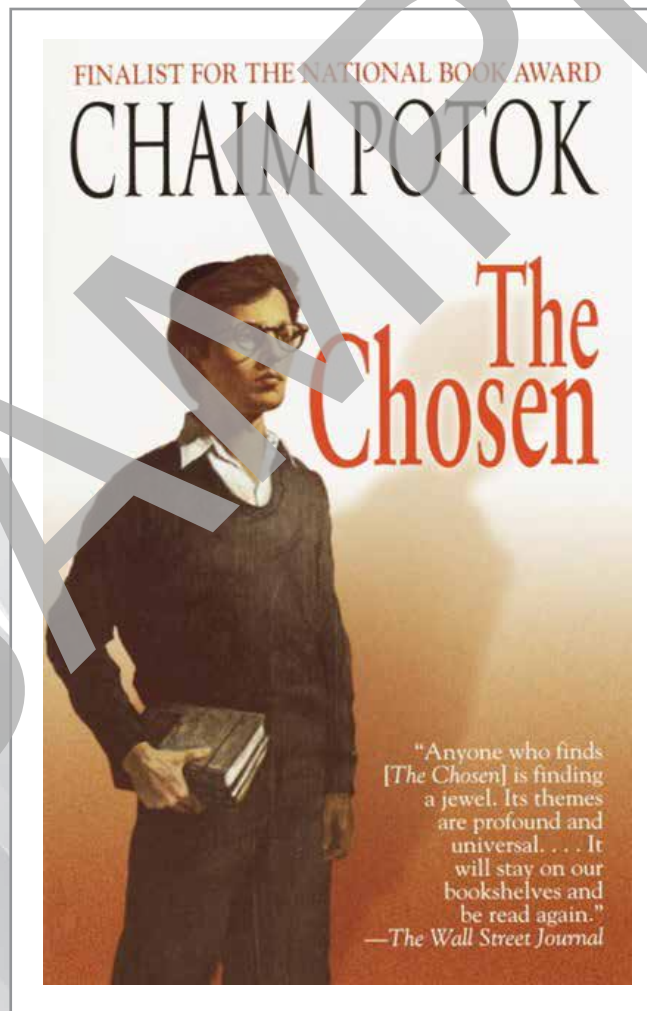
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 9-12

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

The Chosen

Chaim Potok



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

The Chosen

Chaim Potok

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 978-1-50203-682-7

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

Plot Summary	3
Using the Novel in the Classroom	5
Background on the Novelist	5
Initiating Activities	6
Anticipation Guide, Viewing, Log, Verbal Scales, Brainstorming, Role Play, Geography, Discussion Topics and Questions, Background Information, Prediction, Writing, Vocabulary, Evidence Gathering, Book Hook	
Vocabulary, Discussion Questions, Writing Ideas, Activities	
Chapter 1	11
Chapter 2	14
Chapter 3	16
Chapter 4	18
Chapters 5–6	20
Chapter 7	23
Chapter 8	25
Chapters 9–11	28
Chapters 12–13	30
Chapters 14–15	33
Chapters 16–18	36
Post-reading Extension Activities	39
Discussion Questions, Further Reading and Viewing, Writing, Listening/Speaking, Drama, Language Study, Art, Music, Research, Culinary, Current Events	

Plot Summary

Book One

The narrator, Reuven Malter, tells us that his story is set in the Williamsburg section of New York during the 1940's. Reuven, a 15-year-old yeshiva student, first meets Danny, a Hasidic Jew, when the two play against each other in a competitive softball game that turns ugly. When Danny hits the ball into Reuven's face, smashing his glasses, Reuven's coach, Mr. Galanter rushes him to the hospital where he undergoes surgery to remove glass from his eye.

Reuven's father, a compassionate, intense academic who is in poor health, hurries to his bedside. He acknowledges that there is a possibility that Reuven could lose the sight in one eye if scar tissue forms over the pupil—but grows angry with Reuven when Reuven says that Danny's action seemed deliberate. In the hospital, Reuven befriends Tony Savo, a prizefighter whose eye has been injured in a fight, and Billy, a young boy who was blinded in an auto accident that killed his mother. Reuven and the others listen excitedly to the radio on D-Day as the invasion of Europe is announced.

When Danny visits Reuven in the hospital, he gets a chilly reception at first, but soon Reuven is looking forward to Danny's visits. Both are avid readers and brilliant students. Danny tells Reuven that he has no choice but to become a rabbi since the congregants of his father, the venerated Reb Saunders, expect Danny to take his father's place—otherwise he would become a psychologist. Reuven, in turn, explains that he plans to become a rabbi.

Book Two

Reuven introduces his new friend to his father and is shocked to discover that the two already know each other. Unknown to Reb Saunders, Danny has been frequenting the public library where he met Reuven's father, who has been recommending books to him for a few months. Mr. Savo loses his eye and Billy has surgery that fails to return his sight, but Reuven's eye heals successfully. Reuven's father explains the history of the Hasidim and says that Danny is a brilliant, lonely boy who needs a friend like Reuven.

Danny announces that his father wants to meet Reuven. In the synagogue, Reb Saunders asks Danny about his eye operation. Later Reb Saunders publicly quizzes Danny on the Torah—a weekly ritual—and Reuven passes muster by pointing out an error the rabbi has deliberately made. Danny's father learns about his trips to the library and asks Reuven what Danny has been reading. Reuven explains why his father suggests books for Danny—but omits mention of the fact that Danny is reading up on Jewish history, studying German, and planning to read Freud in the original language.

Initiating Activities

Choose one or more of the following activities to help students connect their background knowledge and personal experience with the novel they are about to read:

1. Anticipation Guide

Students discuss their opinions of statements which tap themes they will meet in the story. (See the *Novel Units Student Packet* for this title for a reproducible Anticipation Guide.)

1 2 3 4 5 6
agree *strongly*
strongly *disagree*

Sample statements:

- a. It isn't easy to be a friend.
- b. Health is a gift you shouldn't take for granted.
- c. You shouldn't keep secrets from your parents.
- d. If a person apologizes for hurting you, you should listen and forgive him or her.
- e. No one knows he is fortunate until he becomes unfortunate.
- f. People aren't always what they seem to be.

2. Viewing

Have students watch the Landau Productions version of *The Chosen* with Robbie Benson, Maximilian Schell, Rod Steiger and Barry Miller (available from Novel Units).

For background information, show students a film such as *The Jewish Tradition*, a 46-minute VHS video from filmstrip, produced by the World Religions Curriculum Development Center, available through distributors such as Zenger Media. This film considers such aspects of historical and contemporary Jewish life as the contrasts among orthodox, conservative, and reform Judaism; holidays; anti-semitism; and the Israeli state—all topics touched on in *The Chosen*.

Also, in *Judaism: The Chosen People* (52 minutes, Time/Life) Elie Wiesel defines the essence of what makes a person Jewish.

The Author's Craft: Imagery

Imagery is the use of sensory details—sounds, scents, tastes, textures, and especially sights. Potok has a gift for evoking the physical details in particular settings. List sensory details from this chapter that strike you and help you picture what Potok is describing.

Writing Activity

Describe a time—real or imagined—when you were taken to the hospital. (What was your problem? How were you treated? Did you meet other patients?)

Chapter 3 Pages 55–72

Vocabulary

bridgeheads 55	phylacteries 57	correspondent 58	invasion 58
expectantly 59	docile 59	deflated 60	vacantly 61
silhouetted 61	accentuated 62	sculptured 62	fanatic 63
melodramatic 67	blatt 68	kiddushin 68	Maimonidean 69
mechanically 69	photographic 69	psychoanalysis 69	monocles 70
fervently 71			

Vocabulary Activity

Give students these three options for small-group work:

- Create a crossword puzzle with the vocabulary words (using a piece of puzzle-making software, if you wish).
- Create "Jeopardy"-like statements for each word (e.g., "In Judaism, black leather cubes with leather straps containing a piece of parchment." Have classmates compete to come up first with the correct question. ("What are *phylacteries*?")
- Create a picture puzzle for each word. On one side of a card goes a drawing or cutout that represents the word. The player tries to guess the word (printed on the other side).

Discussion Questions

1. What does the nurse mean when she reminds the patients that this is a hospital, not Madison Square Garden (*p.* 55)? (*She is telling them to quiet down; boxing contests and other big events are held at Madison Square Garden.*) Why is everyone so excited about the war news? (*The Americans are finally invading Europe, liberating the French.*)

-
2. Who is Mickey? (*six-year-old patient who has lived in the hospital most of his life*) Why does he approach Mr. Savo? (*He wants Mr. Savo to play catch.*) What is the result? (*Mr. Savo plays catch but tires himself out.*) What does this show you about Mr. Savo? (*kind, puts himself at risk to keep a child happy*)
 3. Reuven and his classmates wonder why Mr. Galanter isn't a soldier. What do you suppose he is starting to say when he tells Billy, "I've got a bad..."? (*Maybe he has heart trouble.*) How is Mr. Galanter feeling? (*sorry that he can't participate in the war effort, maybe a little ashamed*)
 4. How does Danny act when he comes to see Reuven? (*apologetic, sad, interested in Danny's condition*) Are you surprised by his attitude—or by Reuven's? (*Reuven is angry but says he doesn't hate Danny.*) Why do you think Danny has come?
 5. What does Mr. Savo think of Danny? (*He doesn't trust religious fanatics—which he judges Danny to be.*) Why does he call him "the clopper"? (*p. 63*) (*Reuven has told him Danny is the one who hit him.*) Why do you suppose Reuven doesn't feel like talking about Danny to Mr. Savo? (*He is feeling a little guilty about acting so angry, turning Danny away.*)
 6. Why is Reuven's father angry with him (*p. 64*)? (*Reuven sent Danny away when Danny came to apologize.*) Do you think Mr. Malter is wrong to be angry? Do you agree that you should always forgive someone who apologizes?
 7. What promise does Reuven make to Billy's father? (*He will call Billy when Billy gets out of the hospital so Billy can see what Reuven looks like.*) Do you think Reuven will keep that promise?
 8. How does Reuven treat Danny the second time Danny comes to visit (*p. 66*)? (*Reuven apologizes for cutting him off before.*) Why do you think Danny returns? (*He wants to understand the ball game and his own anger.*) Why do you think Reuven is happy to see him?
 9. What do Reuven and Danny talk about? (*the ball game, their studies*) How are their career plans different? (*Danny says that he has no choice but to become a rabbi, but that he would rather be a psychologist; Reuven says he, too, may become a rabbi.*) How are their fathers different? (*Danny's father is a Hasidic rabbi; Reuven's father is a teacher who writes many articles.*) How are their interests and values similar? (*Both value learning, are high achievers.*) How does Danny explain why the game was so important to him? (*The way he got his father to let them play Reuven's team was to convince him that they had a religious duty to beat the team of "outsiders."*)
 10. **Prediction:** Will Reuven and Danny follow the career paths they are planning on? How will they continue their friendship after Reuven gets out of the hospital?

The Author's Craft: Characterization

Characterization is the way an author informs readers about what characters are like. *Direct characterization* is when the author describes the character. *Indirect characterization* is when the reader figures out what the character is like based on what the character thinks, says, or does—and what others say about him.

Which type(s) of characterization does Chaim Potok use to show you what Mr. Savo is like? What words and phrases would you use to describe him? (Have students fill in a chart like the one below. They should give page numbers and summarize passages to support their describing words.)

MR. SAVO				
Descriptors	Thoughts	Statements	Actions	What Others Say

Writing Activity

Describe a time when someone apologized for having hurt you. Describe the situation and explain why you forgave the person—or didn't.

Chapter 4 Pages 73–90

Vocabulary

ashen 73

mission 79

optical 88

frame 74

dynasty 81

indulgently 74

radically 83

Messiah 78

bibliography 85

Vocabulary Activity

For each vocabulary word, read the sentence in which the word is used. Have students guess what the word means, based on the context. They should explain how they arrived at their guess—then look up the definition.