

Teacher Guide

Grades 7–8

# Code Orange

Caroline B Cooney

NOVEL UNITS<sup>™</sup>



NEW WAYS TO TEACH READING,  
WRITING, & CRITICAL THINKING



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# CODE ORANGE

by  
Caroline B. Cooney

## Teacher Guide

Written by  
Linda Herman

### Note

The 2007 Laurel-Leaf paperback edition of the book, © 2005 by Caroline B. Cooney, was used to prepare this guide. The page references may differ in other editions. Novel ISBN: 978-0-385-73260-4

**Please note:** This novel deals with sensitive, mature issues. Parts may contain profanity, sexual references, and/or descriptions of violence. Please assess the appropriateness of this book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading and discussing it with them.

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## Skills and Strategies

### Comprehension

Creative thinking, identifying attributes, predicting, inferring, problem solving, supporting judgments, cause/effect

### Literary Elements

Characterization, story mapping, setting, conflict, theme, point of view, author's purpose, figurative language, realistic fiction

### Vocabulary

Definitions, synonyms, word maps, root words, sorting

### Listening/Speaking

Discussion, oral presentation, dramatizing

### Writing

Creative writing, personal narrative, poetry, journalism

### Critical Thinking

Brainstorming, research, compare/contrast, analysis, evaluation

### Across the Curriculum

Social Studies—history, time lines, government agencies, Edward Jenner, Typhoid Mary, biological warfare, terrorism, 9/11 attacks, patriotism; Science—infectious disease, viruses, bacteria; Health—scabs, vaccines, decontamination, suicide, stress; Math—graphs; Music—composition, selection; Art—design, illustration, models

## Chapters One–Two

Mitty needs a topic for his infectious disease report, not to mention an outline and notes. Slacking in advanced biology doesn't bother Mitty, except that ignoring this assignment could get him transferred out of the one class he shares with Olivia Clark. At his family's weekend house, Mitty discovers an old medical book containing an envelope of scabs from the 1902 Boston smallpox epidemic. Intrigued, he decides to research smallpox. Mitty's best friend, Derek, researches anthrax but is more interested in bioterrorism and solving the 2001 mystery surrounding Otilie Lundgren, who died of anthrax when she opened her mail. Fascinated by the story of Typhoid Mary, Olivia does advanced research on typhoid fever at Columbia University's medical school library.

### Vocabulary

biology  
infectious  
epidemics  
application  
bioterrorism  
anthrax  
immunization  
debris  
pinnacle  
dilute  
venue  
investigate  
virulent  
conceal  
exposure  
conspiracy  
preliminary  
eradicate  
scourge  
confluent

### Discussion Questions

1. Why does Mr. Lynch require books as reference sources in addition to the Internet? Do you agree with Mitty that books become outdated too quickly to be useful? (*Mr. Lynch requires students to research published works for historical purposes. Other reasons could include that publishers verify the credentials of authors, and experts in the field usually review books prior to publication. Up-to-date information can be located on the Internet; however, not all Web pages are reliable since anyone can claim knowledge in a field and post it online. Answers will vary.*)
2. Mitty believes the old biology books are meaningless because little was known about science in 1890. How might old books on smallpox be useful? (*Answers will vary. People with personal knowledge of smallpox from the books. Firsthand accounts provide insight into the science of the time and reveal the evolution of smallpox. Applying modern technology to century-old science could result in important discoveries or new theories.*)
3. Describe Mitty. Is he as lazy as he claims to be? (*Mitty is in an academic slump, yet his ability to rationalize indicates intelligence. Mitty has a good sense of humor and can be observant, but he is easily distracted. Mitty's interests include Olivia and Olivia. He loves parties and New York. His family is wealthy, and his parents expect Mitty to become a doctor. They think his lack of academic motivation is due to hormones and bad teachers. Answers will vary.*)
4. Why does the CDC have surveillance for smallpox, a disease that has been eradicated? (*Answers will vary, but students should note that the CDC wants to immediately respond to any reoccurrence, especially one caused by or related to terrorism.*)
5. Why do Mitty and Derek respond differently to Olivia? (*Answers will vary, but students should recognize that Mitty's and Derek's differences of opinion stem from their emotions. Mitty likes Olivia, so he thinks she looks pretty with the "little crease of concern" across her forehead" [p. 22]. Derek finds Olivia's mannerisms annoying, and he may be envious of Mitty's interest in her.*)
6. How does living in New York City influence the characters? (*The characters vividly remember the details of 9/11 and how they lived thereafter. They know the city isn't impervious to future attacks, yet they try not to dwell on thoughts of terrorism.*)

7. What is the author’s purpose for ending each chapter with an aside on variola major? Is this writing technique effective? (*The asides create suspense, making readers wonder whether Mitty will get sick. The asides also present scientific facts that might otherwise slow the story’s pace. Answers will vary.*)
8. **Prediction:** Has Mitty contracted smallpox?

### Supplementary Activities

1. **Character Analysis:** Begin the Character Worksheet on page 26 of this guide for Mitty. Add information as you read the novel.
2. **Literary Analysis:** Begin the Story Map on page 27 of this guide. Add to the map as you read.
3. **Critical Thinking:** Ask students to discuss good study habits. Brainstorm how study skills, or lack thereof, can affect a student’s performance. Then write an e-mail to Mitty passing along study tips you believe would help him.
4. **Science:** Complete the following activity to discover how quickly an infectious disease can spread through person-to-person contact.

#### How Quickly Diseases Can Spread

##### Ingredients

- 3 oz. plastic cup for each student
- 1 teaspoon of filtered white vinegar
- tap water
- red cabbage juice (boil cabbage in water; reserve about ½ teaspoon of liquid per student)
- eyedropper or spoon

**Teacher Directions:** Mix the vinegar with 3 ounces of water. Divide the solution between two cups—each represents an “infected” individual. Fill the remaining cups with 3 ounces of water; each represents a healthy individual. Give every student a cup. Students should not know who has the two “infected” cups, but the teacher should note this information.

Each student then exchanges liquids with a partner. Student A pours liquid into Student B’s cup. Student B pours half of the mixed solution back into Student A’s empty cup. Students then complete one more exchange with a different partner, noting the names and order of their partners.

Using an eyedropper or spoon, the teacher drops approximately ½ teaspoon of red cabbage juice into every cup. Solutions that turn blue are individuals who have not been infected. Solutions that turn pink are individuals who have been infected.

**Extensions:** Students can make graphs to chart the spread of infectious diseases. They can trace infections back to the original two sources by comparing lists of partner names.

## Word Map

**Directions:** Complete the word map by filling in information specific to the chosen vocabulary word.

Definition

Synonym

Antonym

Pronunciation

Part of Speech

Sentence

Vocabulary Word

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graph TD; A[Definition] --- B[Vocabulary Word]; C[Synonym] --- B; D[Antonym] --- B; E[Pronunciation] --- B; F[Part of Speech] --- B; G[Sentence] --- B;
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