



TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 9-12

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Copper Sun

Sharon M. Draper

READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Copper Sun

Sharon M. Draper

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 978-1-50203-697-1

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
Characters	4
Background Information	4
Initiating Activities.....	5
Ten Sections	6
Each section contains: Summary, Vocabulary, Discussion Questions, and Supplementary Activities	
Post-reading Discussion Questions	23
Post-reading Extension Activities	26
Assessment.....	27
Scoring Rubric.....	34
Glossary.....	35

Skills and Strategies

Comprehension

Summarizing, predictions,
cause/effect, compare/contrast,
evaluation, recalling details

Literary Elements

Figurative language, theme,
point of view, character analysis,
genre, symbolism, setting,
story map

Critical Thinking

Decision making, analysis,
questioning, brainstorming,
inferences

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, dramatic reading,
character interview, mock trial

Vocabulary

Target words, definitions,
application

Writing

Journal entry, obituary, acrostic,
letter, epilogue, autobiography,
essay, haiku

Across the Curriculum

History—slavery, slave ships,
indentured servitude;
Geography—Cape Coast Castle,
Middle Passage, Sullivan’s Island,
Charles Town, Fort Mose;
Culture—African, colonial;
English—grammar,
inconsistencies; Science—
copperhead; Art—illustration,
movie poster, mural, collage

Genre: historical fiction

Setting: 1738; Ziavi, a small village in Africa; Cape Coast Castle, a holding center for slaves on the African coast; Derbyshire Farms, a rice plantation in Charles Town, South Carolina Colony; Fort Mose, a refuge for runaway slaves in Florida

Point of View: third-person omniscient

Themes: survival, freedom, hope, strength of the human spirit, loss, trust, memories

Conflict: person vs. person, person vs. self, person vs. nature, person vs. society

Tone: optimistic, determined

Date of First Publication: 2006

Summary

Amari, a young African girl, is engaged to the love of her life. One day, as her tribe welcomes several pale-skinned newcomers to their village, tragedy strikes. Amari's entire family is killed, and she is taken to a land she has never seen before. Surviving the horror of slave ships during the Middle Passage, she is sold in Charles Town, South Carolina, to Mr. Percival Derby. Although she has lost everything, including her freedom, Amari finds solace in the friends she makes, especially Polly, an indentured servant who is about Amari's age. At last Amari and Polly are given a chance to run away to freedom. They take with them Tidbit, the son of a slave woman who serves as Mr. Derby's cook. After surviving many obstacles, and with the help of some kind strangers, the trio finally reaches Florida and freedom.

About the Author

Sharon M. Draper was born in Cleveland, Ohio. Draper's father was the son of a slave, and though she never met her grandfather, her family's history has influenced much of her writing. Draper earned her B.A. from Pepperdine University in California and her M.A. from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. She also holds two honorary doctorate degrees. She and her husband, Larry, have four children and live in Cincinnati, Ohio with their golden retriever, Honey. Draper taught both middle and high school for over 30 years and now writes full-time.

In 1997, Draper was named Ohio Teacher of the Year and went on to become the National Teacher of the Year. Among her other distinctions, Draper was elected to the Board of Directors of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and is very involved with the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association. She has traveled internationally sharing her passion for excellence in teaching and the importance of quality education.

Draper's other writings include the Hazelwood High trilogy—*Tears of a Tiger* (winner of the Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe Award for New Talent and an ALA Best Book for Young Adults), *Forged By Fire* (winner of the Coretta Scott King Award, Parents' Choice Gold Award, and an ALA Best Book for Young Adults), and *Darkness Before Dawn*—as well as *Romiette and Julio* and *Double Dutch*. Draper wrote *Copper Sun* (winner of the Coretta Scott King Award) in honor of her grandfather, conducting extensive research and making several visits to different countries in Africa. She has also written books for teachers, books of poetry, and the "Ziggy" series for children.

Characters

Amari: a 15-year-old African girl; is captured from her village and sold into slavery; struggles to survive the slave ship, Derbyshire Farms, and the escape route; Her slave name is Myna.

Besa: once betrothed to Amari; loses all hope after being sold into slavery; rejects Amari and the memories she evokes when they meet again

Polly: a white indentured servant at Derbyshire Farms; about Amari's age; teaches and befriends Amari

Mr. Derby: a cruel slaveowner; master of Derbyshire Farms

Mrs. Derby: Mr. Derby's kind wife; in love with Noah; gives birth to Noah's child

Clay Derby: Mr. Derby's 16-year-old son who receives Amari as a birthday gift from his father; Although sadistic and calculating when dealing with the slaves, he cares about Amari to some extent.

Teenie: a slave at Derbyshire Farms; works as the Derbys' cook; takes care of Polly and Amari

Tidbit: Teenie's four-year-old son; escapes with Amari and Polly

Afi: an African woman who befriends Amari and helps her survive on the slave ship

Bill: a redheaded sailor who is kind to Amari; rescues her from being raped whenever he can and teaches her some English

Noah: a slave at Derbyshire Farms; in love with Mrs. Derby; Mr. Derby kills him after Mrs. Derby gives birth to Noah's child.

Dr. Hoskins: the Derbys' family doctor; horrified at Mr. Derby's actions; aids in Amari, Polly, and Tidbit's escape from Derbyshire Farms

Cato: an elderly slave at Derbyshire Farms; gives Amari and Polly advice and directions to Fort Mose

Nathan: a boy who hides Amari, Polly, and Tidbit during their journey

Fiona: a woman who helps Amari, Polly, and Tidbit during their journey

Inez: a runaway slave living at Fort Mose in Florida; helps and feeds Amari, Polly, and Tidbit when they arrive at Fort Mose

Background Information

The following information will help students understand the novel's historical background.

Slave trade: The Atlantic slave trade took place between Europe, Africa, and America from 1500 to 1900. Ships left Europe with goods for African markets. These goods were traded for Africans who had been kidnapped from their tribal homelands. The Africans were then marched to the coast and transported across the Atlantic Ocean to America. They were sold or traded for raw materials, which were then transported back to Europe. This was also known as the "triangular trade."

Middle Passage: The Middle Passage refers to the middle leg of the triangular trade. Africans were captured, transported to the coast, and kept waiting in cages in large forts called factories. They were then loaded onto crowded ships for transport across the Atlantic Ocean. Many died before they even reached the coast. The duration of the voyage varied between one and six months, depending on the weather. As many as four million Africans are estimated to have died while

Chapters 6–13

Amari, Afi, and the other slaves from Cape Coast Castle are loaded into rowboats and taken aboard a huge slave ship. The living conditions in the ship's hold are wretched, with slaves unable to eat, relieve themselves, or even move. During the voyage, the slave women are repeatedly raped, although Amari is occasionally saved from these nights of torture by a kind redheaded sailor named Bill. Several slaves die from hunger, disease, and suicide. The ship finally reaches Sullivan's Island, where the hold is unloaded and the slaves are prepared for sale.

Vocabulary

ferocity
lament
fetid
talisman
rueful
defilement
ominous
emaciated
bemoaning
boisterous
retaliation

Discussion Questions

1. Why does Afi advise Amari to forget her former life? Why does Afi think it is not only possible but important for Amari to survive? (*Afi advises Amari harshly for Amari's own good. Amari will most likely never see anyone she knew again. Amari and Besa's marriage is now impossible, and Afi knows this. Afi advises Amari to forget her old life so that she will not have to endure any more pain than absolutely necessary. To remember will do no good because the pain of slave life is, in and of itself, a massive burden to bear. Afi insists that Amari has a "power" about her and that Amari must live to pass on their stories to the unborn children and grandchildren of slaves.*)
2. Why do you think the mother and daughter leap into the ocean? Why do the sailors cast nets out to haul the escaped slaves in? (*Answers will vary, but the mother and daughter probably know they won't reach the shore and still prefer death by drowning or otherwise to a life of slavery. Theirs is an act of defiance and survival. The sailors knew that each slave lost was capital lost.*)
3. Describe the "ship of death" from Amari's point of view. Why do you think the slaves are transported in this way? (*Amari describes the ship as "a small city made of wood" [p. 42]. There is clutter and ruckus on deck as men run around shouting. Every free man carries a weapon. She describes the hold where she is taken as "the underworld." The hold is crowded with men stacked on top of one another in narrow rows of shelves. There is little headroom, there are meager rations of food and water, rats scuttle about, and the ship smells like sweat, vomit, and human waste. The slaves were transported this way to minimize costs to slave traders.*)
4. Why do the sailors make Amari and the other slaves dance for them? Why does Afi again have to reassure Amari that she must continue living? (*The soldiers make the slaves dance for them for their own amusement. The slave women, in particular, are evaluated by the men for sexual appeal. After Afi informs Amari that the sailors will come back to rape them that night, Amari panics and wishes she was dead. Afi must convince Amari once again that if they die, their captors win. Amari finds that she cannot convince herself to give up just yet.*)
5. What does Bill, the redheaded sailor, do for Amari? What hint is given in Chapter 8 that suggests Bill's kinder nature? How might Bill's actions benefit Amari? (*Bill first tells Amari to scream in order to fool others into thinking he is beating and raping her. Then he gives her fresh water and teaches her several words in English. In Chapter 8, it is noted that while Amari dances Bill is staring intently only at her face, not her body. He also refrains from groping the women, unlike the other sailors. This provides a hint that Bill is different from the others. Learning English gives Amari a great opportunity. The more English she knows, the better she can understand the conversations going on around her. Bill's actions benefit Amari greatly.*)

6. Why does Amari turn away from Besa when she sees him two different times on deck? (*Since the sailors have raped and abused her, Amari feels ashamed that “she [is] no longer the innocent girl [Besa] had once loved” [p. 56]. It also seems that thinking about the hope and future that Besa once represented to Amari is too painful for Amari to bear because she knows that life as she knew it is over.*)
7. What does Afi mean when she tells Amari, “Find beauty wherever you can, child. It will keep you alive” (p. 64)? (*Answers will vary. Afi means that although Amari will see much violence, inhumanity, and ugliness in her life as a slave, she must always remember the beauty in life. By reminding herself of life’s beauty, Amari can avoid falling prey to despair.*)
8. On Sullivan’s Island, why are the slaves fed well, given water to drink and bathe in, and tended to medically? What is the significance of the Ashanti man who speaks to the slaves? (*The slaves will be put up for sale soon, so the slave traders want them to look the best they can since buyers physically examine each slave they consider buying. The Ashanti man on Sullivan’s Island explains [in a language many of the slaves can understand] exactly where they are and where they will be going. He gives the slaves advice on how to act around whites and advises them to learn English. The information he gives the slaves is extremely valuable and might help the slaves survive once they are sold.*)
9. **Prediction:** What will happen at the slave auction? Will Amari and Afi be able to stay together?

Supplementary Activities

1. Add similes and metaphors from this section to your chart. Examples: **Similes**—“...[Amari] discovered with surprise that [the ocean] was salty—like tears” (p. 39); “Like pigs in heat, [the sailors] came for the women” (p. 50); **Metaphors**—knowing English: a weapon (p. 54); Amari’s legs: mashed *fufu* (p. 67)
2. Many of the things Afi says to Amari reflect major themes in this novel. Find at least two quotes from Afi in this section, and explain the significance of each on a separate sheet of paper.
3. From Besa’s point of view, describe the voyage from Cape Coast Castle to Sullivan’s Island.
4. Using the Internet and other sources, locate Cape Coast Castle on a map. Then trace the route Amari’s ship might have taken across the Atlantic to Sullivan’s Island.

Character Analysis

Directions: Discuss the attributes of the characters listed below. In each character's box, write several words or phrases that describe him or her. Add to your chart as you discover more about each character.

Amari	Besa	Afi	Polly
Clay	Noah	Teenie	Tidbit