

Teacher Guide

Grades 5–6

Crash

Jerry Spinelli

 **NOVEL UNITS[®]**



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CRASH

by
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Teacher Guide

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Note

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Table of Contents

Summary.....	3
About the Author	3
Introductory Activities	3
Vocabulary Activities.....	4
Ten Sections.....	13
Each section contains: Vocabulary, Discussion Questions, and Supplementary Activities	
Post-reading Discussion Questions	29
Post-reading Extension Activities	29
Assessment	31

Skills and Strategies

Thinking

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

Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing,
foreshadowing, cause/effect,
inference, anticipating

Listening/Speaking

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

Vocabulary

Charades, word maps,
synonyms, antonyms,
defining, parts of speech

Writing

Character journal, personal
writing, creative writing,
headlines, directions, radio
advertisements, acrostic
poem

Literary Elements

Literary analysis, story
mapping, plot development,
setting, characterization

Across the Curriculum

Social studies–maps, research;
Science–weather maps,
animal research; Math–Venn
diagram; Art–drawing,
design/color, diorama,
collage, poetry, puppet
making, mobiles,
advertisements, comic strips,
illustrations

Chapters 1–4

Vocabulary

stance (1)	bugged (2)	gawking (2)	scrawny (2)
prairie (3)	prairie chickens (3)	plucked (4)	snickered (6)
dinkiest (7)	wobbled (8)	moist (8)	demon (8)
bamboozled (11)	beaming (11)	marks (11)	Quaker (12)
violence (13)	sneered (13)	snatches (13)	afterburners (15)

Discussion Questions

1. How did John Coog come up with his nickname, Crash? *(When he was young, he knocked his cousin down by imitating a football player. Also, for as long as he can remember, he has been crashing into people and into things, with or without a helmet.)*
2. Who is the only person who doesn't call Crash by his nickname? Why? *(Penn Webb; Answers will vary.)*
3. What made Crash decide not to tell Penn he was by his house? *(He saw Penn strolling down the sidewalk, whistling like he owned the street, about to walk onto Crash's property.)*
4. How did Penn get his name? Why was this name chosen? *(His great-grandfather named him; His great-grandfather worked at the Penn Relays.)*
5. Why did Crash tell Penn his name is Mergatroid? *(Answers will vary.)*
6. How did Penn react when Crash took his button? *(He froze in midlaugh, turned, and walked away.)*
7. Why do you think Crash behaved the way he did when he first met Penn Webb? *(Answers will vary.)*
8. What surprised Crash about Abby's worm races? Why? *(He was surprised that she wasn't afraid to pick up slimy worms. He thought that regular girls would scream if they ever touched anything slimy or crawly.)*
9. Why did Crash go looking for Penn? *(Answers will vary.)*
10. Why did Crash lie again about his name? *(Answers will vary.)*
11. Why did Crash take Penn's sew button then give it back? *(He said he didn't have a hole to dump it in and he didn't want to wear it, so he gave it back.)*
12. What did Crash think of Penn's house? *(He thought it looked like a garage and couldn't believe anyone lived there.)*
13. What did Crash think of Penn's father? Why? *(Crash thought that Penn's father looked like he should be Penn's grandfather because he had white hair.)*

14. What did Penn mean when he said he was a “late baby”? (*His parents had him late in life.*)
15. Why do you think Crash told Penn he had a great-great-grandfather? (*Answers will vary, but he seemed to feel the need to compete with or be better than Penn, and Penn’s stories about his own grandfather.*)
16. Why did Crash ask his sister if they had a great-great-grandfather? Why didn’t he ask his mom as Abby suggested? (*Abby was the only person around; His mother was upset that he buried her pansies.*)
17. What about Penn bugged Crash more than his button did? (*the goofy grin on Penn’s face that he never seemed to turn off*)
18. How did Crash feel about coming to dinner at Penn’s house? (*He didn’t want to have dinner with them, but he was curious to see what their house looked like inside. He felt if he did come to dinner, Penn would have to “pay for it.”*)
19. How did Crash feel about Penn calling him “friend”? (*He didn’t like it.*)
20. How did being a Quaker prevent Penn from having a water gun fight with Crash? (*Quakers don’t believe in violence, and since guns represent violence, Penn wouldn’t play with them.*)
21. How did Crash react when Penn couldn’t use his water gun? (*He shot Penn in the face until he ran out of ammo.*)
22. How did Crash react when Penn offered him his water gun still full of water? (*Crash got angry and threw Penn’s gun over his house, and then stomped his own gun into pieces.*)
23. Why was Crash surprised when Penn almost lost to beating him in the race? (*Crash had never lost a race. Penn was a runt and didn’t do well in all of their other contests.*)

Supplementary Activities

1. Research: Have students use resources from the library to learn about Quakers. What are their beliefs? Where did the religion originate?
2. Science: North Dakota is known as the Flickertail state. Have students search for information on the Flickertail in the encyclopedia or on the Internet. They should illustrate a flickertail and include specific details about the bird (where it may be found, eating habits, etc.)
3. Sports/Research: Ask students to find out more about the Penn Relays. Where are the relays held? When did the contests first begin?
4. Research: Penn is named after the Penn Relays. Penn’s name was chosen by his great-grandfather. Have the students research their names. Does it hold a special meaning for their families? Were they named after a relative? Have a name book available so that students may look up the meaning of their names.
5. Nicknames: Crash was given his nickname when he was very young. Discuss nicknames. Ask students for examples of nicknames from their own experience. Have students create their own appropriate nicknames based on personality and appearance, and explain the reasoning behind their choices.

Character Chart—Feelings

Describe the character in the beginning

Summarize important events in the boxes below. Describe how the character feels after each one.

Event #1:	The character feels ...
Event #2:	The character feels ...
Event #3:	The character feels ...
Event #4:	The character feels ...
Event #5:	The character feels ...
Event #6:	The character feels ...

Describe _____ at the end.