



TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Daphne's Book

Mary Downing Hahn

READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Daphne's Book

Mary Downing Hahn

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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

Thinking

Brainstorming, evaluation,
visualization

Comprehension

Predicting, Cause-effect,
comparison-contrast

Writing

Poetry, descriptive, letter writing,
persuasive

Vocabulary

Word mapping, analogies

Listening/Speaking

Role play, discussion, dramatizing

Literary Elements

Figurative language, similes,
story elements, dialogue,
characterization

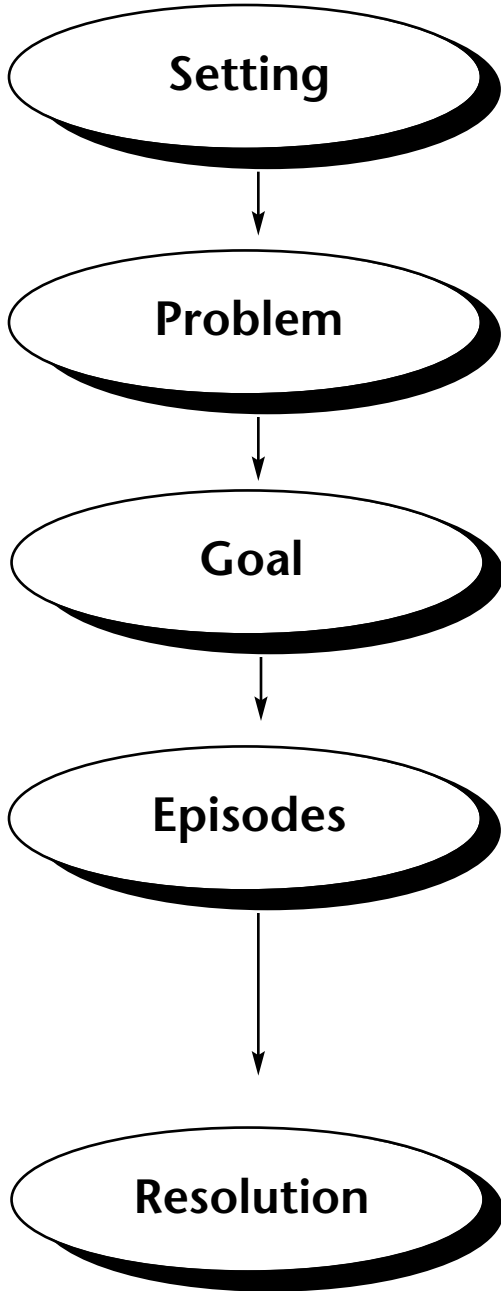
Summary

Jessica gets to know Daphne Woodleigh when they are paired by their seventh-grade English teacher for the Write-a-Book contest. Daphne is new to the school and doesn't fit in; in fact, she is dubbed Daffy Duck and is greeted throughout the school by quacks. Jessica, initially distressed about being paired with Daphne, becomes a friend. Along the way Jessica learns Daphne's secret—she and her younger sister Hope live outside of town with their deranged grandmother who expects the girls' dead father to return. Daphne stays home from school, fearful to leave her kindergarten-aged sister alone with the grandmother. It's a deplorable situation which Jessica initially keeps a secret. When she tells her mother, Jessica's mother investigates and the grandmother is hospitalized and the girls are placed in an orphanage 50 or 60 miles away. In the end Daphne and Jessica win the Write-a-Book contest and relatives in Maine plan to take care of Daphne and Hope.

About the Author

Mary Downing Hahn was born in 1937 in Washington, D.C., the daughter of an automobile mechanic and a teacher. She married William Hahn in 1961 (divorced in 1976) and they have two daughters, Katherine Sherwood and Margaret Elizabeth. Hahn earned her B.A. and M.A. from the University of Maryland-College Park. She is a writer, artist, and librarian. She has been a children's librarian in the Prince George's County Memorial Library System. From an early age she was intrigued with writing and illustrating picture stories. An avid reader, she majored in fine arts and English at the University of Maryland. She creates her stories from her experiences and strives to re-create real life; her characters are a combination of strengths and weaknesses. She believes that happy endings and easy answers are hard to come by, and so she avoids them in her novels. She does try to provide hope in her conclusions. Among her other books are: *The Sara Summer*, *The Time of the Witch*, *The Jellyfish Season*, *Wait till Helen Comes: A Ghost Story*, *Tallahassee Higgins*, *Following the Mystery Man*, *December Stillness*, *The Doll in the Garden*, *The Dead Man in Indian Creek*, and *The Spanish Kidnapping Disaster*.

Story Map



Characters _____

Time and Place _____

Problem _____

Goal _____

Beginning → Development → Outcome

Resolution _____

Supplementary Activities

1. Literary Analysis—Similes:

What are similes?

How/why do authors use them?

Find examples in the chapter.

Add examples from your own reading and experiences.

Try writing a simile.

Take a simile from the book and then suggest an alternative comparison to convey the same idea.

2. Collect some information on Maryland. How accurate is Jessica's description on page one?

Chapter Two—Pages 8–14

Plot Summary

Jessica contemplates working with Daphne and even asks her mother to plead her case with Mr. O'Brien but with no luck.

Vocabulary
plodded 8
hovering 8
tolerated 8
condescending 10
thunked 10
frantically 10
irreversible 11
weird 13

Discussion Questions and Activities

1. What do you learn about Jessica as the chapter unfolds? Record on an attribute web.
2. Act out the dialogue between Jessica and her mother in this chapter. How authentic is the dialogue? How is Jessica's mother typical or atypical?
3. Why does Jessica toss a pillow at the cat? (*Snuff is not feeling cuddly and supportive of Jessica's plight. Jessica is rough with the animal.*)

Supplementary Activities:

1. What is the nature of sister/brother relationships? What do you expect of Jessica and Josh?
2. What should Jessica do about the English class pairings? Write a sentence or two to answer.
3. What is it like to be the new kid in middle school, like Daphne? Collect your ideas in an illustration or mind map.

