



TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Dew Drop Dead

James Howe

READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Dew Drop Dead

James Howe

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!

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3901 Union Blvd., Suite 155

St. Louis, MO 63115

sales@novelunits.com

novelunits.com

Table of Contents

Summary	1
About the Author	1
Introductory Activities	1
Using Predictions in the Novel Unit Approach, Prediction Chart, Using Character Webs— In the Novel Unit Approach, Story Map	7
Thirty-Six Chapters	11
Chapters contain: Vocabulary Words and Activities, Discussion Questions, Post- reading Activities, Predictions	
Supplementary Activities	29
Teacher Information	35
Bibliography and Resource Information	39
Assessment for <i>Dew Drop Dead</i>	42

Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Brainstorming, classifying
and categorizing, comparing
and contrasting, evaluating,
analyzing details, logic,
synthesizing ideas

Literary Elements

Character, setting, plot
development, forms of
poetry, figurative language

Vocabulary

Synonyms/antonyms,
analogies, puzzles

Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing,
cause/effect, inference

Writing

Poetry, description, reports

Listening/Speaking

Participation in discussion
and cooperative groups,
participation in dramatic
activities

Drama

Role play

Summary of Dew Drop Dead:

An open window at the back of the closed and boarded up Dew Drop Inn launches three friends on an investigation into the lives of some homeless people in their town. Sebastian, David and Corrie are looking for a good mystery as they search through the dark and deserted inn. However, fear engulfs them when they see an unresponsive body on the bed in a second floor room. Curiosity takes over when the body disappears during the time the three report the incident to the Chief of Police. What is going on? Did they see a dead body or not? Who has been using the inn as a shelter? Is there more to the incident than meets the eye? Discover the answers to these questions, and much more, as you investigate with the trio of friends.

About the Author:

James Howe was born August 2, 1946, in Oneida, New York. He attended Boston University, B.F.A., 1968; Hunter College, M.A., 1977. He has been a free-lance actor and director, and a literary agent. He has said, "I don't believe I was born to write. Writing, at least writing professionally, is a recent development. But the creative itch has been with me for as long as I can remember. And it has always been strong enough that it demanded to be scratched. I majored in acting at Boston University, and worked as an actor and model, then as a director. I enjoyed directing more than acting because it allowed for a different kind of control of the creative process. I then went to producing several plays Off-Off-Broadway, worked as a literary and theatrical agent, and then I began to write."

With his late wife, Deborah, Howe wrote *Bunnacula*, and has gone on to write several other books for children, finding "in writing a kind of creative control that is deeply fulfilling."

Note:

Please be selective, and use discretion when choosing the activities that you will do with the unit. It is not intended that everything be done, but that the discretionary choices that are made are the most appropriate for your use and group of students. A wide range has been provided, so that individuals as well as groups may benefit from these selections.

Initiating Activities and Bulletin Board Ideas—Mystery:

1. Before starting the mystery unit, go to the library and check out additional mystery novels to place in an area that will be easily accessible to the students. In addition, look for sound recordings to use with the unit, either for background music or audio recognition, such as:

Blues Brothers. *The Blues Brothers*. (Compact Disc) NY: Atlantic, 1988. "Peter Gunn Theme"

Eddy, Duane. *Duane Eddy: Compact Command Performances*. (Compact Disc) Hollywood, CA: Motown, 1986. "Peter Gunn Theme"

Kunzel, Erich. *Bond & Beyond*. (Compact Disc/Cassette) Cleveland, OH: Telarc Digital, 1991. "Peter Gunn Theme," "Dick Tracy," "Dragnet," "Perry Mason Theme," etc.

Mancini, Henry. *Pure Gold*. (Cassette) NY: RCA, 1975. "Charade," "Peter Gunn Theme," "The Pink Panther"

Silver. *Silver: Music From the Motion Picture*. (Compact Disc/Cassette) Beverly Hills, CA: Virgin Movie Music, 1993. "Peter Gunn Theme"

2. Make a large chart for the recording of favorite mystery books, movies, and TV programs, and place it on a bulletin board that has been covered with plain background paper. Invite the students to record personal choices during the course of the unit.

The Choice of the Students of _____

Mystery Books	Mystery Movies	Mystery Television

(Examine the choices, and then invite "critics" to review some of the above.)

3. Make a large "mystery" banner to display in the room, such as:



4. Refer to the the following book of quotations.* Prepare some of them to display in the room. For example, the following are statements by Sherlock Holmes from the work of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle:

- "There is nothing like first-hand evidence."
- "I never guess. It is a shocking habit-destructive to the logical faculty."
- "You see, but you do not observe."
- "As a rule, the more bizarre a thing is the less mysterious it proves to be."
- "There is nothing more deceptive than an obvious fact."

* Horning, Jane. *The Mystery Lovers' Book of Quotations*. NY: The Mysterious Press, 1988.

Chapters 1-4 (Pages 1 through 11)

Vocabulary:

condescending 1 salvage 2 crisis 3 consulting 3
pointless 3 incredulous 6 anonymous 9 eccentric 9

Vocabulary Activity:

Match the vocabulary word with its antonym.

<u>Antonym</u>	<u>Vocabulary Word</u>
Conventional	_____ (<i>eccentric</i>)
Discard	_____ (<i>salvage</i>)
Signed	_____ (<i>anonymous</i>)
Modest	_____ (<i>condescending</i>)
Significant	_____ (<i>pointless</i>)

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the problem in Sebastian's home? (*Pages 1-2, Sebastian's father might get fired from his job. Mr. and Mrs. Barth speak angrily to one another because Mr. Barth thinks that the family might have to move, and Mrs. Barth has a restaurant in town, and does not want to leave it.*) Do you think that speaking in anger is helping the situation? (Page 2, For instance, Mrs. Barth accuses Mr. Barth of not listening to her. He replies, "I'm listening, I'm listening. I'm just not hearing anything!") (*Opinion—answers will vary.*) What might you suggest to Mr. and Mrs. Barth?
2. What is the problem in the Lepinsky home? (*Page 4, Mr. Lepinsky is a writer of mystery stories, and has "writer's block." He owes his editor a book, which was due the previous year.*) Rachel Lepinsky tries to help by thinking up book titles. (*page 3*) Think of some book titles for mystery stories. Make a list of those thought of by group members. Which titles interest you enough to entice you to want to read the book? Discuss what it is about the title that grabs your interest and attention. (See Postreading Activity #1.)
3. What is the problem at the Wingate home? (*Pages 6-7, Corrie's father is a minister, and he feels that his "flock" is letting him down with regard to a food-and-shelter program at the church.*) Do you have food-and-shelter programs in your area? How is the local program doing? Do you have some suggestions for Corrie's father as to how to get more people involved? List suggestions and discuss.
4. Sebastian is feeling like a has-been at the age of 13. What has happened to make him feel as he does? (*Pages 2 and 6, Sebastian's radio show has been canceled. He has*

been the host of a weekly talk show for kids for three years.) If the show were still on the air, what would you like to talk about with Sebastian? Why? List topics. (See Postreading Activity #2.)

5. What, if anything, have you identified as a possible clue or important information for this section of the story? Why do you think of this as a clue or important information? Discuss, and list the suggestions. Do this activity for the sections that follow. (See below for an example of possible clues/important information for this section.)

Postreading Activities:

1. Choose a book title. Make a book jacket, with the title on the front cover. Put an illustration on the front cover. (What does the title suggest to you?) Place the first page inside the cover, and on it write the opening sentence. Can you keep the interest in the book alive? Write the opening of the story. (Continue it, if you wish.)
2. Choose one of the topics listed for Sebastian's talk show. Do some research, and investigate the topic. Share gathered information with others.
3. Make attribute webs for the three friends, Sebastian, David and Corrie. (See page 9 of this guide.)

(Characterization is the way an author lets the reader know what the characters are like. In **direct** characterization, the author describes the character directly. (blue eyes, brown hair, etc.) In **indirect** characterization, the author produces clues about the character through thoughts, speech, and actions.)

4. This mystery about the inn also has three other stories going on, one about each of the friends. Choose Sebastian, David or Corrie, and make a story map that deals with that character's story within the story. (See page 10 of this guide.)
5. Map a group story map that deals with the inn and its unfolding mystery. (See page 10 of this guide.)
6. Make a prediction about what you think is going to happen next. (See pages 7-8 of this guide.)

Possible Clues/Important Information:

Remember to list the possible clues/important information as the story is being read. Refer to them as the discussions warrant. For example:

Page 11: The Dew Drop Inn has been closed about a year, and is all boarded up.

Page 11: The owners of the Inn disappeared, mysteriously.