



TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Double Dutch

Sharon M. Draper

READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Double Dutch

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!

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Skills and Strategies

Critical Thinking

Research, brainstorming,
decision making,
compare/contrast,
pros/cons

Comprehension

Prediction, sequence,
evaluating decisions,
cause/effect

Writing

Poetry, essay, report, pledge,
journal entry, magazine
article, short story, speech

Listening/Speaking

Discussions, oral
presentation, news report

Vocabulary

Definitions, parts of speech

Literary Elements

Conflict, plot, theme, irony,
characterization, point of
view, figurative language

Across the Curriculum

History—Double Dutch;
Art—collage, drawing,
trophy design; Health/Science
—jumping rope, safety,
learning differences; Math—
budgeting; Social Studies—
illiteracy, divorce

Genre: young-adult fiction

Setting: middle school in present-day Cincinnati, Ohio

Point of View: third-person omniscient

Themes: fear, hope, truth, community, self-worth, courage, judgment, triumph over one's limitations

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

Tone: honest, informal

Date of First Publication: 2002

Summary

Delia is an excellent Double Dutch competitor who hopes to win the world championship. The only roadblock is her illiteracy, which she has successfully hidden from friends, family, and teachers for years. Delia's friend Randy also has a secret—that his father, a truck driver, disappeared weeks ago. Coupled with the school's paranoia about the potentially dangerous Tolliver twins, these secrets cause tension for Delia, Randy, and their circle of friends. In the end, however, they learn the importance of unveiling secrets and the dangers of judging others by appearances.

About the Author

Sharon M. Draper was born in Cleveland, Ohio. Her father was the son of a slave, and though she never met her paternal 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 is married and has four children. She and her husband Larry reside in Cincinnati with their golden retriever, Honey.

Draper taught middle and high school for over 30 years and now writes full-time. In 1997, she was named Ohio State Teacher of the Year and went on to become the National Teacher of the Year. Among her other distinctions, she 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 teaching and 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*. In addition, Draper has written *Romiette and Julio*, a modern version of Shakespeare's tragic tale, and *Copper Sun*, a book about the slave trade, after extensive research and several visits to Africa. She has also authored books for teachers, poetry books, and the "Ziggy" series for children. Her advice to those who want to become writers is that they should first become readers.

Characters

Delia Douglas: eighth-grade girl; champion Double Dutch competitor on a team called the Queen Bees; has hidden her illiteracy from teachers and family for years

Yolanda (Yo Yo) Pepper: Delia's best friend; member of the Queen Bees Double Dutch team; often stretches the truth

Randy Youngblood: Delia's and Yolanda's friend; has a secret crush on Delia; helps manage the Cincinnati Double Dutch team; embarrassed and worried about his father's recent disappearance

Tabu and Titan Tolliver: twins whose father died during their early childhoods; scare Delia and her classmates; threaten acts of violence on a talk show; ultimately save Yolanda from rubble after tornadoes hit the school

Charlene Byrd: Delia's and Yolanda's friend and classmate; member of the Queen Bees Double Dutch team

Misty: member of the Queen Bees Double Dutch team; attends a different school than Delia, Yolanda, and Charlene

Jesse: eighth-grade boy; Yolanda's current love interest

Bomani: Double Dutch coach at the school; tough, but well-liked; has a large family

Mrs. Tolliver: the Tolliver twins' mother; has struggled with her boys since their father's death; bribes the twins to appear on a talk show so she can seek help for her sons

Miss Benson: young, inexperienced English teacher whom Delia likes; active and interested in her students' lives

Mrs. Parks: experienced social studies teacher; holds classroom discussions about fear and aggression to help her students

Mr. Clifford: runs a local pawn shop; helps Randy financially when Randy runs out of money during his father's absence

Mrs. Douglas: Delia's divorced, single mother; unaware of Delia's illiteracy until Delia confesses to her

Mr. Douglas: Delia's dad with whom Delia spends every other weekend; remarried to a woman named Jillian

Winston Youngblood: Randy's father; a truck driver; disappears for two months after someone beats him up and steals his identification while he is on the road; loves his son

Initiating Activities

1. Prereading: Have students complete the Getting the "Lay of the Land" activity on page 19 of this guide.
2. Brainstorming: Place the word "Gossip" in the center of an attribute web (see p. 20 of this guide). Allow students to brainstorm the meanings and effects of gossip.
3. Prediction: Ask students if they have read other books by Sharon M. Draper. If so, have students describe the plots, conflicts, and main characters in her other books. Based on this information, have students predict character traits or storylines in *Double Dutch*.
4. Prediction: Have students begin the Prediction Chart on page 21 of this guide.

2. **Critical Thinking:** Make a list of the characters' accusations against the Tolliver twins. Circle any accusation based on irrefutable evidence.
3. **Research/Health:** Research the National Double Dutch League. Use a visual aid to present information about the organization, such as where it came from, what its goals are, and what it does now. Also explain where people can find more information on a local Double Dutch League.
4. **Character Analysis:** Begin the Character Web on page 23 of this guide. Add to it as you read.

Chapters Three–Six

At school, everyone is gossiping about the Tollivers' television interview. Yolanda confronts Delia about Delia's illiteracy. Delia and her friends jump at the Double Dutch qualifying tournament and advance to the next round. Randy expresses interest in Delia but mentions nothing about his father's disappearance. Students vent their feelings about the Tolliver twins in Mrs. Parks' social studies class.

Vocabulary
potential
accusations
quipped
compulsories
sauntered
brim
deftly
intricate
invincible
exultant
respite

Discussion Questions

1. What does Delia think motivates Yolanda to lie all the time? *(Answers will vary. Delia suggests that Yolanda lies because Yolanda's home life isn't happy or exciting. Through her lies, Yolanda creates a world that is more fun and enjoyable than her reality.)*
2. Do you agree with Yolanda's decision to confront Delia about Delia's illiteracy? Why or why not? Discuss Delia and Yolanda's friendship and why it is unique. *(Answers will vary. Some students may disagree with Yolanda's decision to ask Delia to read a card when she knows Delia cannot read. Others may agree with Yolanda's decision to confront Delia and offer help. Delia and Yolanda have known each other since they were small children and have seen each other through rough times, so they are very close. They have mutual understanding of and respect for each other, which is why Delia is comfortable with Yolanda knowing her secret. Delia is not afraid that Yolanda will judge her.)*
3. How has Delia progressed so far in school without anyone figuring out that she cannot read? Explain your answer. *(Delia had long-term substitutes and lazy or overwhelmed teachers in elementary school. Her parents were also going through a divorce at that time, so her mother did not have a lot of time or energy to devote to Delia and Delia's homework. To get by, Delia copies other people's homework and assignments, pretends to be sick on testing days, acts conscientious toward her teachers, and relies on her keen memory to regurgitate issues discussed in class. As she progresses in school, Delia finds it more difficult to avoid assignments and tests and still pass classes.)*
4. Why do you think the Tolliver twins attend the Double Dutch tournament? *(Answers will vary.)*

5. What does the author reveal about Randy and his father? Do you think Randy's father is the type of parent who would abandon his son? Why or why not? What does Randy's relationship with his father have to do with the story? *(The author reveals that Randy's father used to attend all of Randy's junior-high sports games. Mr. Youngblood usually agrees to go on only short trucking trips to limit his time away from Randy, and he always leaves Randy money and food when he goes away. Randy describes his relationship with his father as "tight" and says that he talks to his dad every night they are apart. This indicates that Randy's father wouldn't abandon his child, which raises questions as to why Randy has not seen or heard from his father in several weeks.)*
6. The Tolliver twins appear intelligent and innocent of any wrongdoing. Yet, students still fear them. Discuss Mrs. Parks' theory that fear and aggression often cause conflict. *(Discussions will vary.)*
7. Discuss Delia's statement on page 54 of the novel: "Sometimes it's hard to tell the difference between the truth and a lie.... And it doesn't really matter who believes it." Do you agree? Why or why not? Give examples from the novel where applicable. *(Discussions will vary. Encourage students to support their opinions with sound logic or applicable examples. The Tolliver twins appear aggressive and scary but make good grades and are interested in Double Dutch. Delia appears to be a decent student, and though she is intelligent, she cannot read. The characters alter other people's perceptions of them, but the façade doesn't change their realities.)*
8. **Prediction:** How long will Delia be able to deceive her teachers that she can read?

Supplementary Activities

1. Literary Devices: Continue to add to your Literary Devices Chart. Examples: **Similes**— "[Yolanda's] whole body swelled up like a balloon" (p. 21); "[Randy]...beamed like a lightning bug" (p. 38); "smooth as ice" (p. 41); **Metaphors**—brain: noodle soup (p. 24); ropes: spinning shadows (p. 43); **Personification**—"hair...jumping up and down" (p. 35)
2. Poetry: Write a poem about fear or aggression and how it relates to conflict or peace.
3. Creative Writing: Use the newspaper graphic on page 24 of this guide to write a news story about the Double Dutch qualifying tournament. Explain the types of events in which teams compete and how points are awarded or deducted. Include information about the Queen Bees' performances.

Character Web

Directions: Complete the attribute web below by filling in information specific to a character in the book.

