



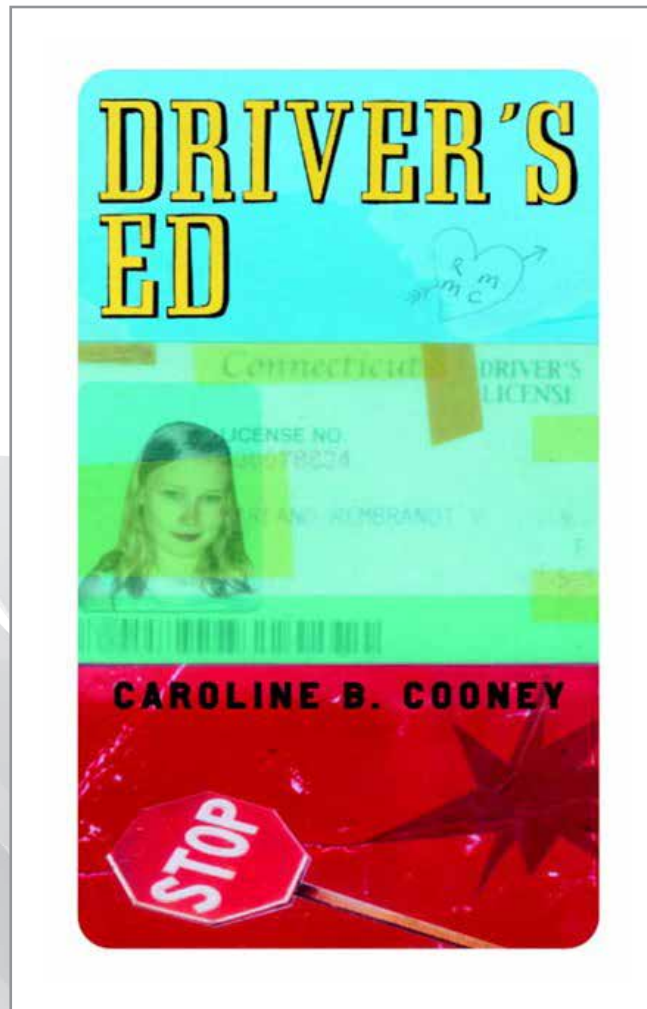
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Driver's Ed

Caroline B. Cooney



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Driver's Ed

Caroline B. Cooney

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

Interpreting, research,
compare/contrast,
forming opinions,
identifying stereotypes

Comprehension

Cause/effect, details,
generalizing, inferencing,
predicting, summarizing

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, oral report,
role-playing, interviewing

Vocabulary

Prefixes, context clues,
synonyms, definitions,
classifying, visuals, parts of
speech

Writing

Essay, list, narrative, letter,
news report, poem

Literary Elements

Characterization, theme,
descriptions, foreshadowing,
plot development, setting,
point of view, simile,
figurative language

Across the Curriculum

Art—architecture, drawing;
Science—hydraulic tools,
chemical changes; Social
Studies—maps, current
events, laws; Math—
statistics, percentages;
Technology—Internet
research; Music—chorus;
Cooking—family recipes

Genre: contemporary realistic fiction

Setting: a town in Connecticut where two major interstate highways merge

Point of View: third-person from many different points of view

Themes: guilt, unconditional love, courage of conviction, family values, coming of age, peer pressure, boy-girl relationships, death, responsibility, fear, truth, choices

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

Style: narrative

Tone: gripping, realistic, intense, occasionally humorous

Date of First Publication: 1994

Summary

Remy Marland, who has a huge crush on Morgan Campbell, will soon get her driver's license. She and others in Driver's Education can't wait for the day they can legally sit alone behind the wheel of a car. The class whispers about stealing road signs, and a sign-stealing expedition is planned. Remy agrees to participate because Morgan will be there, too. Nickie, an older boy and a hoodlum, agrees to drive. Remy, Morgan, and Nickie steal the signs THICKLY SETTLED and MORGAN ROAD. Nickie wants a corner stop sign, so Morgan saws off the signpost for Nickie while Remy merely watches. When a woman is killed at the intersection because she doesn't know to stop, Remy and Morgan feel responsible, but Nickie denies involvement. Morgan and Remy suffer tremendous guilt, and when the grieving spouse and young father takes out threatening newspaper and TV ads to find the sign vandals, they fear exposure. Finally Morgan and Remy confess. Their parents react to the risk taken by their teenagers—the mothers feel betrayed, the fathers are disappointed. Remy and Morgan feel unloved by their mothers, and they must convince their parents that they are not bad kids. In the end, the unconditional love of their parents helps Morgan and Remy deal with the tragedy of death.

About the Author

Caroline B. Cooney was born in Geneva, New York, in 1947 and grew up in Greenwich, Connecticut. This talented and prolific author first trained to be a nurse but didn't finish nurse's training. An accomplished musician, she plays both piano and organ. She began writing mysteries while in college and penned eight unpublished novels for adults before her first book for young adults was published. She now has over 75 published books for young readers. *Driver's Ed* was named an ALA Best Book for Young Adults, an ALA Quick Pick for Young Adults, and a Booklist Children's Editor's Choice. It also won several state awards. Cooney's full biography is available through the Random House Web site: www.randomhouse.com (active at time of publication).

Characters

Remy Marland: 16-year-old girl taking Driver's Ed; involved in stealing road signs

Morgan Campbell: 16-year-old boy; Remy's crush; involved in stealing road signs

Lark: girl in Driver's Ed; Remy's best friend

Nickie Budie: hoodlum; a senior with a driver's license; involved in stealing road signs

Mr. Fielding: Driver's Ed instructor at East Line High

Rafe Campbell: Morgan's father; lawyer and candidate for governor

Nance Campbell: Morgan's mother; also a lawyer

Mrs. Marland: Remy's mother

Mr. Marland: Remy's father; loves to watch Remy's basketball games

Mac Marland: Remy's pesky 13-year-old brother

Denise Thompson: 26-year-old wife and mother; killed while driving through intersection where stop sign is missing

Mark Thompson: grieving widower and father of 2-year-old Bobby; offers reward for information leading to arrest of stop sign vandals

Initiating Activities

Use one or more of the following to introduce the novel.

1. **Visuals:** Show pictures of drivers on a variety of different roads, from merging onto interstate highways to driving country roads and city streets. Show pictures of schools, girls' basketball teams in action, and churches. Continue to have student pass around resource materials. Brainstorm how these visuals might relate to the the novel's plot.
2. **Music:** Play music sung by a high school chorus and discuss harmony. As a class, discuss the roles of sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses.
3. **Politics:** Discuss with students the role of political parties and the media in a campaign for governor.
4. **Math/Science:** Have students research statistics about traffic accidents in your state and in the United States, including statistics about how many teens die in accidents. As a class, discuss the major causes of car accidents.
5. **Social Issues:** Discuss the dynamics of a family with two working parents. Ask students to brainstorm how having working parents affects children.
6. **Social Issues:** Discuss juvenile delinquency—mailbox bashing, graffiti, and stealing road signs. Have students research the consequences for such acts in your state and share their findings.

Chapter 1

In Remy Marland's 11 a.m. Driver's Ed class, she is chosen along with Morgan and Christine to drive with their instructor, Mr. Fielding. Christine is afraid to drive, so Lark takes Christine's nametag and drives in her place. Mr. Fielding hates his job and only endures it by listening to his Walkman. Remy drives first. She has a 13-year-old brother and a one-year-old brother who will gain her chauffeuring services as soon as she gets her license. She gives up the driver's seat after running over a divider and leaving part of the muffler behind. Lark takes the wheel. In the back seat, Morgan takes Remy's hand to comfort her. Remy loves Morgan (blond, slim, athletic, articulate), and Morgan has certainly noticed Remy, but he doesn't have the courage to ask her out. When Lark runs a red light, Morgan finally takes his place in the driver's seat.

Vocabulary

poise
indulgently
supervised
privacy
accelerate
merged
barriers
chauffeur
contaminated
hostile
signifying
rotate
relentlessly
intersection
primitive
rarity
gaudy
yearning
discipline
masculine
pedestrian
pathetic

Discussion Questions

1. The author strives to make the reader suspend disbelief and think this story could be real. Is the nametag switch a realistic situation? Have you had teachers who never bothered to learn student names? *(If the teacher is as inattentive as Mr. Fielding and the class is short like this eight-week course, then the name switching is believable; Answers will vary about having a teacher like this one.)*
2. What do you think of Mr. Fielding's way of making students conquer their fear? Is there a better method for introducing the power of the automobile to students? *(Answers will vary. He doesn't let the students become familiar with the car before throwing them into heavy traffic. Many students, such as Christine, won't drive and become paralyzed with fear. This shows what a bad driver's ed teacher Mr. Fielding is; Answers will vary.)*
3. How do you feel about Mr. Fielding's thoughts on kids' names? Since names are such personal things, do you find humor in "designer spelling along with designer names" (p. 7)? Why or why not? *(Answers will vary. Kids who have these names will not think Mr. Fielding's musings are funny. However, it will give readers another reason to dislike this teacher.)*
4. When Remy vaults the car over the median, she thinks first of how people will perceive her. What does this say about Remy's personality? *(She is overly concerned about appearances, especially what Morgan thinks of her. However, when she thinks she could have hurt a person, she's horrified. She is a good person at heart.)*
5. Without naming the second type of magazine that Morgan likes, the author has effectively conveyed the information by mentioning the focus on girls. Is this portrayal of Morgan as a teen who thinks of fast cars and girls typical of most boys? Does his belief in masculine superiority make him a likeable character? *(Most teens will agree that Morgan's thoughts represent teen boys' thoughts, including the masculine superiority; Answers will vary. He is likeable because he is the focus of Remy's thoughts, yet he seems uncertain and confused about girls.)*
6. Morgan assesses his sister as having no friends, yet being popular. How is this possible? What does his opinion reveal about Morgan? *(Because others are afraid of Starr's candid and rude comments, they try to keep on her good side to avoid being targets. She seems popular, yet no one calls her a friend; Morgan is a thinker, since he's figured out that his sister rules by fear.)*

7. **Prediction:** Will someone cross the line between “big deal and little deal” (p. 15)?
8. **Prediction:** Will Morgan find the nerve to ask Remy out?

Supplementary Activities

1. Social Studies: No town has been named as a setting in the first chapter, although the cover shows a Connecticut license. Find a place on a Connecticut map where two interstate highways merge, and determine if it would be a good place for the setting of this story. Discuss suggested sites as a class.
2. Literary Analysis/Symbols: Mrs. Bee’s sunglasses are a symbol of a person disregarding what is going on around her. Begin a list of symbols in the novel and explain the meaning of each.
3. Literary Analysis/Plot Development: Begin the Story Map on page 26 of this guide to use as you read this novel.
4. Literary Analysis/Similes: The author uses similes such as “[Remy] surveying her instrument panel like a bomber pilot heading to the battlefield” (p. 3) and “Remy’s heart developed a new rhythm, like some Caribbean dance nobody had learned yet” (p. 12). Begin a list of similes and add to the list as you read.
5. Research: Check with an insurance agent to find out if taking driver’s ed lowers car insurance premiums, and why. Check with a driver’s license bureau to see if driver’s ed is required before students can take the driver’s test in your state. What is the required content of the course? Is it offered in local high schools?

Vocabulary Word Map

Directions: Create a word map for five vocabulary words provided by the teacher. Use the chart below as your model.

