



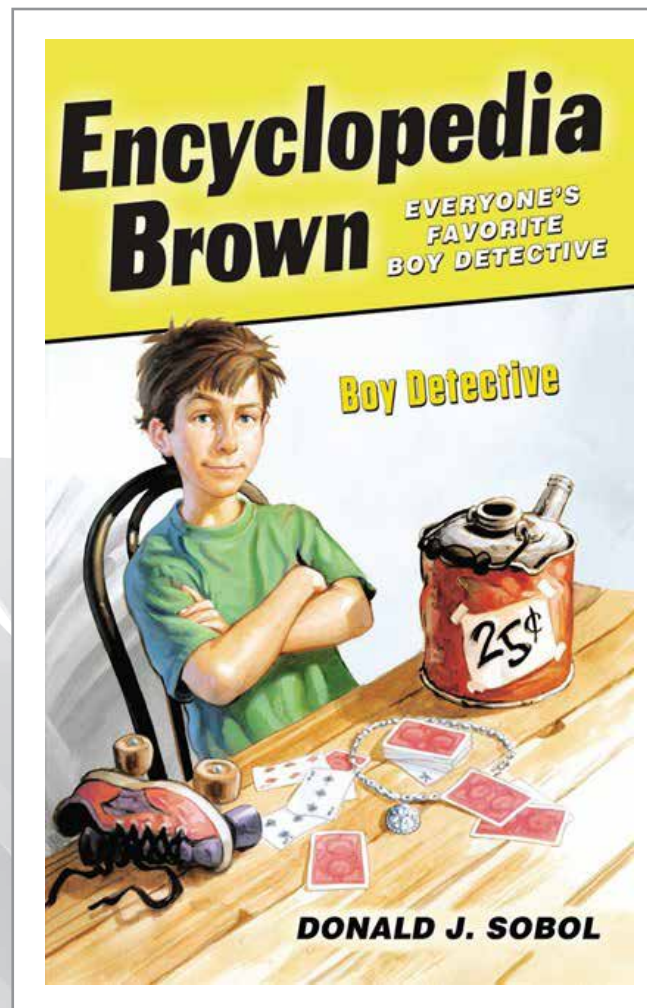
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 3-5

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Encyclopedia Brown: Boy Detective

Donald J. Sobol



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Encyclopedia Brown: Boy Detective

Donald J. Sobol

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!

ISBN 978-1-50203-764-0

Copyright infringement is a violation of Federal Law.

© 2020 by Novel Units, Inc., St. Louis, MO. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any way or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without prior written permission from Novel Units, Inc.

Reproduction of any part of this publication for an entire school or for a school system, by for-profit institutions and tutoring centers, or for commercial sale is strictly prohibited.

Novel Units is a registered trademark of Conn Education.

Printed in the United States of America.

To order, contact your
local school supply store, or:

Toll-Free Fax: 877.716.7272

Phone: 888.650.4224

3901 Union Blvd., Suite 155

St. Louis, MO 63115

sales@novelunits.com

novelunits.com

Table of Contents

Summary	3
Pre-reading Questions and Activities	5
Ten Stories	12
Chapters contain: Vocabulary Words, Discussion Questions and Activities, Supplementary Activities	
Post-reading Questions and Activities	24
Assessment	27

Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Visualizing, sequencing,
problem-solving

Literary Elements

Sequels, detective story,
story elements,
characterization

Vocabulary

Synonyms, analogies,
word mapping

Comprehension

Predicting, compare/contrast,
cause/effect

Writing

Journaling, note-taking,
creative writing, letter-
writing, research

Listening/Speaking

Dramatizing, storytelling,
jingle writing

Summary of *Encyclopedia Brown Boy Detective*

There are ten stories in this — the first — collection of “cases” solved by ten-year-old Leroy, better known as “Encyclopedia Brown” for his head full of facts. Students will enjoy trying to predict the solutions to each case, listed at the end of the book.

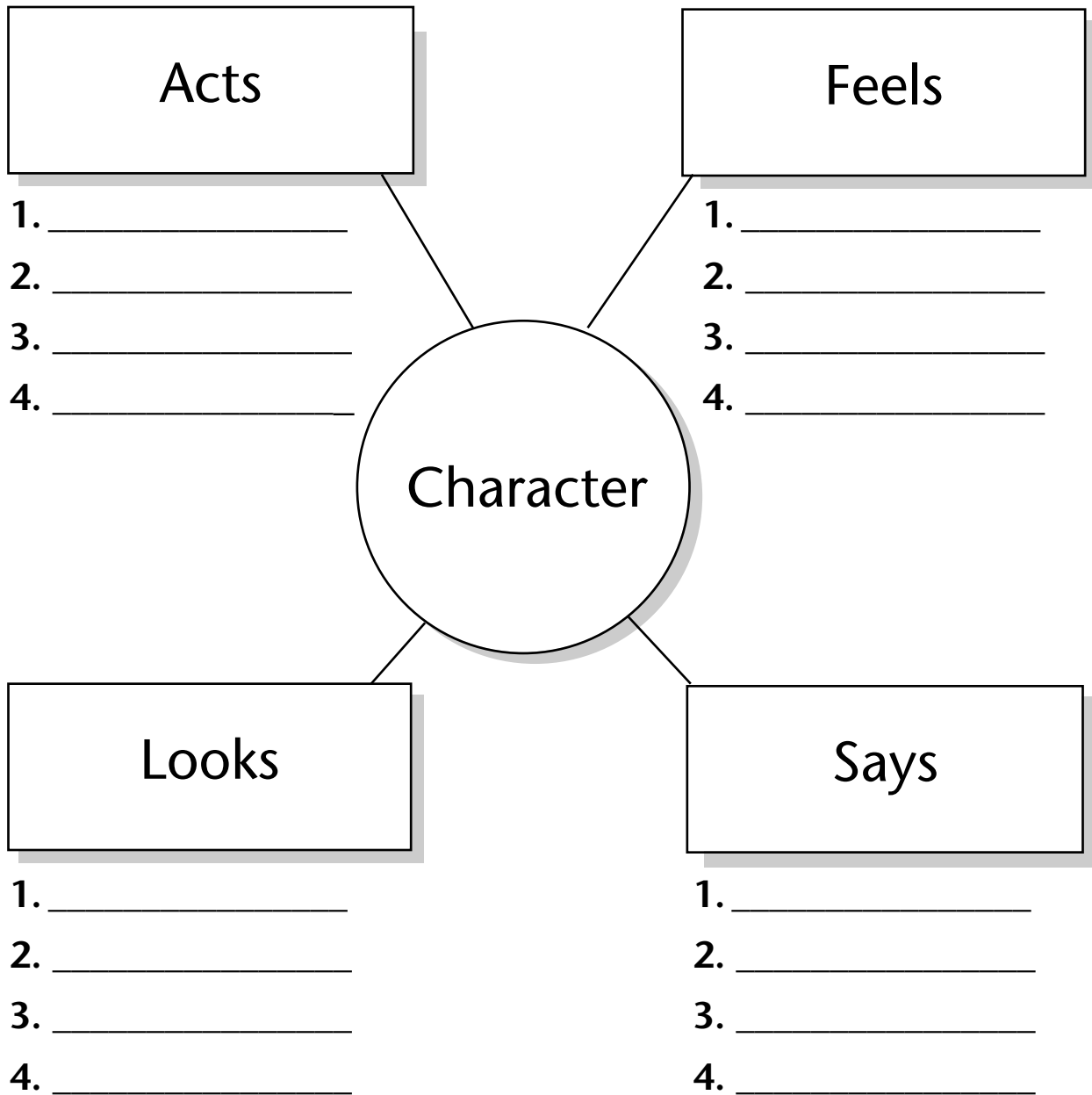
1. **The Case of Natty Nat:** At dinner one night, Encyclopedia’s father — the Chief of Police announces that the Men’s store in Idaville has been held up by “Natty Nat” (so named for the gray coat with the belt in the back which he wears to all his robberies). Encyclopedia detects an inconsistency in Mr. Dillon’s (the storekeeper’s) statement about the robbery, and figures out that Mr. Dillon made the story up to hide the fact that he himself had already stolen the money. (Mr. Dillon stated that he never saw the back of the man who robbed him, yet identified him as Natty Nat.)
2. **The Case of the Scattered Cards:** One summer, Encyclopedia sets up his own detective agency, complete with a sign which advertises “... no case too small ... 25 cents per day plus expenses.” His first customer, Clarence, explains that the Tigers, a boys’ club headed by tough Bugs Meany, has taken a tent which he found and mended. Encyclopedia and Clarence walk through the rain to the tent, occupied by the Tigers, who claim that Clarence stole the tent from their clubhouse that morning. Encyclopedia scatters a pack of playing cards on the ground inside the tent and proves that the Tigers are lying. (The cards — and the ground — are dry. If the tent had been stolen by Clarence and put up that rainy morning, the ground would still be wet.)
3. **The Case of the Civil War Sword:** Peter Clinton pays Encyclopedia Brown to make sure that the Civil War sword for which he plans to trade his bike is real. Encyclopedia suspects that Bugs Meany, who is behind the trade, is lying when he claims that the sword belonged to Stonewall Jackson. When he looks at the inscription on the blade, Encyclopedia’s suspicions are confirmed. (The inscription, supposedly by Stonewall’s men, refers to the battle date as “The First Battle of Bull Run;” the men could not have known that there would be a second such battle.)
4. **The Case of Merko’s Grandson:** Sally Kimball and Encyclopedia have a “battle of the brains.” Encyclopedia has five minutes to solve the mystery Sally describes. Merko the magician died in 1922, leaving a will which directed that his money be put away for 40 years, then given to his oldest grandson (or, if no grandson was alive, to Merko’s nearest living relative). Forty years later, Merko’s grandson Fred went to claim the money and found that Merko’s grand-niece claimed the right to the money, saying that Merko was not Fred’s grandfather. Encyclopedia takes most of his allotted five minutes, but manages to figure out who got the money — Fred. (Merko was a woman, so Fred was Merko’s oldest grandson, as the will dictated — even though Merko was not a grandfather.)
5. **The Case of the Bank Robber:** Encyclopedia Brown witnesses a bank robbery: A gunman with a handkerchief-mask and a yellow bag runs from a bank and collides with a blind beggar (Blind

Tom) carrying a white cane and a tin cup. Police arrest the robber, but find only bread in the bag. Encyclopedia visits the blind man at home, notices the lights on and newspaper open, and figures out that Blind Tom is the robber's accomplice. (Since he maintains he has had no visitors in quite a while, he must have been the one reading the paper.)

6. The Case of the Happy Nephew: Encyclopedia accompanies his father on a police visit to John Abbot's. Abbot, a "reformed" ex-con, was seen near the scene of a bakery robbery. While Abbot talks with Encyclopedia's father, he puts his bare-foot nephew — a toddler — on the roof of his, Abbot's, car. He has an alibi for the time of the robbery; he claims to have just returned home minutes earlier from a long car trip. Encyclopedia figures out that Abbot did, indeed, rob the bakery. (If he had driven so far recently, the car hood would still be hot and the boy would have cried out as his bare feet touched the car.)
7. The Case of the Diamond Necklace: While Encyclopedia's father was guarding a diamond necklace at Mrs. Van Tweedle's yearly party, the necklace was stolen from around the neck of Miss Stark (Mrs. Van Tweedle's former college roommate). Mrs. Van Tweedle had planned to auction the necklace as a charity fund-raiser, and had received an extortion note before the party (telling her to put \$10,000 behind a statue in the park, or the necklace would be stolen.) During the party, Miss Stark had claimed to feel ill and gone to lie down, locking the door behind her. Shortly afterward, she screamed and two shots were then fired. Encyclopedia figures out that it was Miss Stark who stole the necklace. (She screamed before two shots were heard; if, as she said, she hadn't seen the thief, she wouldn't have screamed until after hearing the shots.)
8. The Case of the Knife in the Watermelon: Mr. Patch, a grocery store owner, comes to Encyclopedia after a robbery attempt with a piece of evidence — a knife stuck in a watermelon. Someone with an "L" on his jacket used a knife to break into the storeroom and open the money box. As he ran away, he tripped and the knife plunged into the watermelon. Evidence in hand, Encyclopedia confronts the Lions (a boy's club), questions them about their knives, and figures out that this one belongs to Corky. (Corky gave himself away by describing the knife as having a longer blade — but no one can see the blade of the knife in the watermelon.)
9. The Case of the Missing Roller Skates: While Encyclopedia is at the dentist's office, having a tooth pulled, Sally Kimball's roller skates (which he had just fixed for her) disappear from the waiting room. After questioning several people in the office building, Encyclopedia figures out that Billy Haggerty, who had gone to see Dr. Stanton about a sprained wrist, is the thief. (There is an inconsistency in Billy's claim to innocence — Billy claims not to have been in Dr. Wilson's office, nor to have heard of him, yet reveals that he knows that Dr. Wilson is a dentist.)
10. The Case of the Champion Egg Spinner: Encyclopedia's friends ask him to investigate their suspicion that Eddie Phelan, who manages to win the egg-spinning contest every time — uses unfair tactics. All contestants take an egg from the same box, mark it, and give the egg to another boy that day before the match to ensure that no one changes his egg before the match. Encyclopedia figures out how Eddie DOES manage to change his egg into a sure winner, nevertheless. (Eddie boils the egg; boiled eggs spin better than raw ones.)

Attribute Web

The attribute web below is designed to help you gather clues the author provides about what a character is like. Fill in the blanks with words and phrases which tell how the character acts and looks, as well as what the character says and what others say about him or her.



Case #2: The Case of the Scattered Cards, pages 13–22

Vocabulary

printing press (15) handbills (16) shears (16) blackmail (17)
canal (18)

Vocabulary Activity

Make simple line drawings to illustrate what a printing press, a handbill, shears, and a canal look like.

Discussion Questions

1. What does Encyclopedia want to be when he grows up? (*detective*) What about you? Is there any way you can start your career now, like Encyclopedia does? (*Answers will vary.*)
2. “Nobody dropped in. Only the rain.” (page 17) What is funny about this statement? (*You expect a person to drop in, not rain.*) How could the author have given you the same information in a more serious way? (*Answers will vary.*)
3. Why does Encyclopedia get out his printing press? (*He wants to make flyers advertising his detective business.*)
4. What is Clarence’s problem? (*He claims that the Tigers stole his tent.*)
5. How does Bugs Meany’s name suit him? (*He is a mean bully.*) If you were the author, what else might you have named this character? (*Answers will vary.*)
6. Why does Encyclopedia scatter the cards on the ground? (*He wants to see whether the ground under the tent is wet.*) Is this test foolproof? That is, could there be another explanation as to why the ground was dry? (*Answers will vary.*) Can you think of another test he might have used? (*Answers will vary.*)
7. How does Encyclopedia know that Clarence did not steal the tent? (*If Clarence had stolen the tent that morning, the ground inside the tent would have been wet.*)
8. Some people might say that neither Clarence nor the Tigers own the tent. Why? (*Clarence found the tent in the junkyard and mended it; it once belonged to someone else.*) What do you think? (*Answers will vary.*)
9. What do you think Bugs would have done if Encyclopedia had demanded the tent without proof that Bugs stole it? (*Answers will vary.*)
10. Do you think Clarence will have any more trouble with the Tigers? (*Answers will vary.*) Do you know any bullies like the Tigers? (*Answers will vary.*)
11. **Prediction:** What could be puzzling about a Civil War sword in the next story?

Case #3: The Case of the Civil War Sword, pages 23–30

Vocabulary

auto body shop (27)

Vocabulary Activity

Why might you bring your car to an auto body shop? What kinds of equipment and parts might you see in an auto body shop?

Discussion Questions

1. What is Encyclopedia Brown reading when Peter comes in? (*A book titled How to Build a Nuclear Reactor*) What other books do you think he would like? (*Answers will vary.*)
2. What is Peter's problem? (*He has a chance to trade his bike for a sword, and he wants to make sure that the sword really belonged to Stonewall Jackson.*)
3. What does Encyclopedia Brown mean when he says, "If Bugs is behind the trade, you'll need help"? (*He knows Bugs' reputation for meanness and trickery.*)
4. How does Encyclopedia know that the sword is a fake? (*The inscription gives it away; no one could have known that this was the "first" Battle of Bull Run and that there would be another.*) What other "tests" might he have used? (*Answers will vary.*)
5. Do you think Bugs will every change? (*Answers will vary.*)
6. How might Encyclopedia Brown discourage Bugs from "snookering" another victim by trading the sword with someone else? (*Answers will vary.*)
7. **Prediction:** What does the name "Merko" suggest about a character in the next story?

Supplementary Activity

Complete the following T-chart to show how Bugs and Encyclopedia Brown are similar and how they are different.

Bugs	Encyclopedia Brown