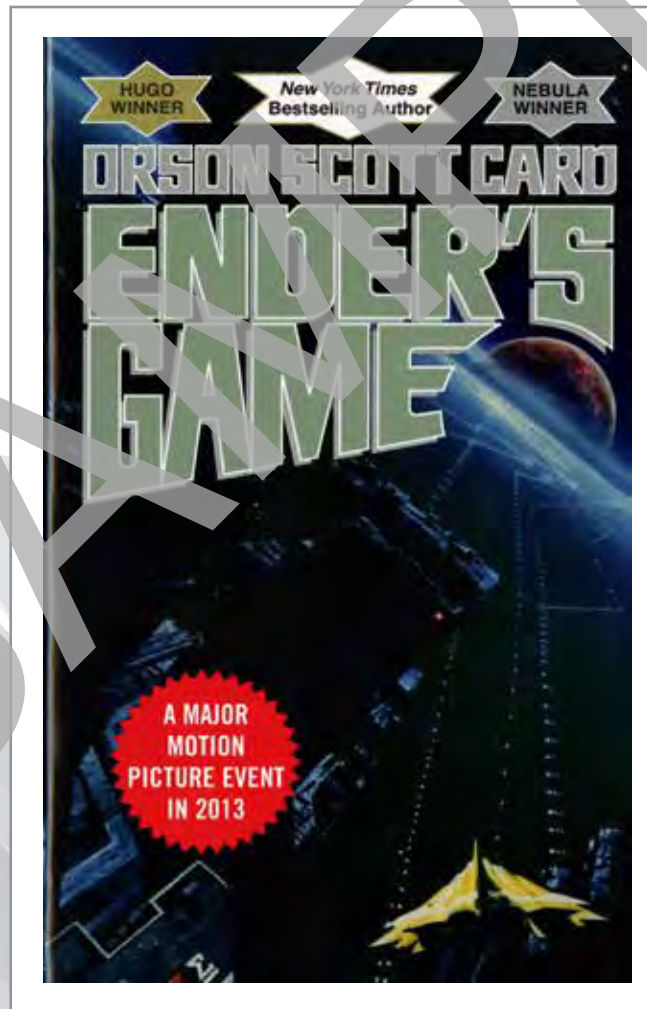COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Ender's Game

Orson Scott Card

READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Ender's Game

Orson Scott Card

TEACHER GUIDE

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Skills and Strategies

Critical Thinking
Interpreting evidence, compare/contrast, forming opinions, identifying stereotypes, paradox, pros/cons, research

Comprehension
Cause/effect, classifying, details, generalizing, inferencing, main idea, predicting, summarizing

Listening/Speaking
Discussion, oral report, role-playing

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Definitions, compound words, context clues, synonyms, antonyms

Writing
Article, description, column, list, narrative, letter, report, press release

Literary Elements
Analogy, characterization, descriptions, setting, foreshadowing, plot development, point of view, simile, theme, figurative language

Across the Curriculum
Art—architecture, drawing; Science—space exploration, inventions, insect colonies; Social Studies—maps, alien culture, history, politics, laws; Math—statistics, percentages; Technology—Internet research, computer games

Genre: young adult fiction

Setting: Earth, the Battle School, Command School on Eros, and the universe

Point of View: third-person, from various characters' points of view

Themes: coming-of-age, government corruption, acceptance, isolation, stolen youth, good vs. evil, personal responsibility, voluntary actions vs. mandatory actions

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

Style: narrative

Date of First Publication: 1985

Summary

Andrew Wiggin, known as Ender because he is an authorized Third when government allows only two children, is as gifted as his two siblings, Peter and Valentine. He's actually a combination of the two, not as ruthless as Peter and not as compassionate as Valentine. He's a genius and perfect for the role of commander for the International Force that is preparing for the Third Invasion against an alien population, the buggers. Ender is taken from home at age six by I.F. and sent to Battle School. There he is lonely, but he excels as a leader. He trains his own forces, but after fighting with a boy who wants to kill him, he is graduated and sent to Command School at age ten. There he is trained by the hero of the Second Invasion, and the best soldiers from Battle School join him as his squadron leaders. He plays the simulator games brilliantly, and after his final exam on the simulator, he learns that the games have been real, and he's just destroyed the planet of the buggers. He suffers mentally and physically. His sister, who with brother Peter has used net columns to gain control and assert influence on others around the world, takes him with her to a new colony. He finds a queen cocoon of the bugger species and goes from planet to planet looking for a safe home for the race he has destroyed. His insight into the buggers (a book published and signed as "Speaker for the Dead") creates the basis for a new religion in the new world colonies.

About the Author

Orson Scott Card was born in Richland, Washington, on August 24, 1951. He grew up in California and Arizona and traveled to Brazil to serve two years as an unpaid missionary for the Mormon Church. He graduated from Brigham Young University in 1975 and earned a master's degree in literature from the University of Utah in 1981. Card lives in Greensboro, North Carolina, with his wife, Kristine. They have five children. His official Web site is www.hatrack.com (active at the printing of this guide).

In 1977, Card wrote a short story, "Ender's Game," which he later expanded to a full-length novel. It won both the Hugo and Nebula awards in 1986. Its sequel, *Speaker for the Dead*, won both awards the following year. The third novel in the series, *Xenocide* (1991), was followed by *Children of the Mind* (1996). A parallel series features the same world with Bean as the main character, and other children of the Battle School figure prominently. Those books are *Ender's Shadow*, *Shadow of the Hegemon*, and *Shadow Puppets*.

Vocabulary Word Map

Synonyms

_____
_____
_____

Antonyms

_____
_____
_____

WORD

_____

**Definition in
your own words**

_____
_____
_____

**Used in a
sentence**

_____
_____
_____

Chapters 1–2, pp. 1–15

Andrew Wiggin—a Third—is Ender, a third child authorized by the government because his siblings are gifted. The government is looking for military leaders, and they monitor every mood and movement of gifted children in order to find those leaders. When Ender is six, his monitor is removed. The bandaid on the back of his neck tells the other students that he has not passed the government's test. A bully, Stilson, pushes Ender after school. Ender fights him and kicks the boy when he's down. Afterward, Ender cries. At home, Ender faces his brother, Peter, and his sister, Valentine. Although Valentine offers sympathy for the bandaid, Peter takes advantage and proposes a game of war. Ender puts on the bugger mask, and Peter is the astronaut. Peter gets Ender on the floor and threatens to kill him. Valentine intervenes, but Peter says she won't always be around to save Ender. Later that night Peter tells Ender he's sorry, thinking that Ender is sleeping. Once again, Ender cries.

Vocabulary

prediction (2)
glint (2)
vengeance (7)
opponent (7)
pathetic (12)
authorized (12)
convict (13)
silhouetted (15)

Discussion Questions

1. Who is talking at the beginning of each chapter? Why is the type in different print? (*It must be government officials observing Ender through his monitor. The type difference shows the division of the government observation and Ender's point of view. throughout*)

2. Ender thinks, "Sometimes lies were more dependable than the truth." Why does he think this? (*Adults tell him one thing, but experience has taught him that the opposite is usually true. For example, he is told that removing the monitor won't hurt, but he knows that it will. p. 2*)

3. Ender returns to class and confuses Stilson with Peter. What does this reveal about Ender's present state? (*He's confused and can't remember things, but he associates Stilson, the bully, with his brother. He knows they are both his enemies. p. 4*)

4. Although he knows it's forbidden to strike someone who's already on the ground, Ender kicks Stilson. Why? What does this say about Ender's character? (*He is smart and knows he will face Stilson and his gang again and again if he doesn't stop the harassment now. Answers will vary. p. 7*)

5. Government observers want to see how Ender will react to his brother, not what his angry brother will do to him. Why? (*They want to see if Ender will fight Peter or if he will respect the family tie that binds them. Answers will vary. p. 9*)

6. Does Ender believe Peter when he says the threat to kill him and Valentine was a joke? (*He's uncertain. He believes his brother is a murderer at heart, but he doesn't know if Peter would actually kill him. Answers will vary. pp. 12–14*)

7. Twice Ender cries, after the fight with Stilson and after his brother apologizes to him. What do these tears say about Ender? (*He's tenderhearted, and he knows when he's done something wrong. He doesn't like what he or his brother have turned into. Answers will vary. pp. 8, 15*)

8. **Prediction:** Do you think Peter will actually try to kill Ender?

Supplementary Activities

1. Social Studies: Draw a contour map of mountainous islands similar to the one Ender draws on page 4 of the novel.

2. Literary Analysis/Symbols: The monitor has been removed from Ender's neck, but now his sister becomes his monitor. Could this be a symbol that a person's choices and reactions are always being monitored by someone? Begin a list of symbols that occur in the novel.

3. Literary Analysis/Predictions: Begin a Prediction Chart (see page 7 of this guide).

4. Literary Analysis/Characterization: Complete an Attribute Web (see page 8 of this guide) for Ender.

5. Literary Analysis/Similes: The author uses similes such as the bugger mask "closed him in like a hand pressed tight against his face" (p. 11). Begin a list of similes and add to the list as you read.

6. Research: Research the types of devices now available to trace a person's movements. Write a three-paragraph essay that reports your findings.

Chapters 3–4, pp. 16–36

Breakfast is interrupted by a visit from Colonel Hyrum Graff of the International Fleet. He asks Ender why he kept kicking Stilson after he was down. Ender tells him that he had to take care of himself, and he had to show the boys that he would win so there would not be a repeat incident. Graff asks Ender to go to Battle School, and Ender accepts, although he doesn't want to leave Valentine. After the launch into space toward the school, Graff singles out Ender and tells the other boys that he is the smartest. Ender is hit on the head by the boy behind him and soon anticipates the attacks and flips the boy across the shuttle, breaking the boy's arm. Graff has successfully separated Ender from the others and tells him he must be so good that the others can't ignore him.

Vocabulary
juvenile (17)
taunted (18)
requisitions (20)
motivation (20)
classified (20)
ambiguous (22)
disorientation (28)
significance (30)
humanity (32)
bluntly (35)

Discussion Questions

1. Graff says it isn't the fight that earned Ender an invitation to enter Battle School, it was why he fought as he did. Why is this important? (*Ender thinks past the current situation and understands future consequences of actions. Answers will vary. pp. 19–20*)

2. Ender is told that all who want to make it through the first year make it. What does this mean? (*Those who dedicate themselves to something will succeed. This applies to most situations in life. If a person wants something badly enough, he will achieve it. p. 21*)

3. Ender's family dynamics are very complicated. Do his parents want him to stay home or not? Do his brother and sister want him to go? (*Ender's parents are from noncompliant families who had more than two children. They were proud to be allowed three children, but they had no more even though they wanted more. They have mixed feelings about Ender leaving—they love him and will miss him, but they are also relieved to be rid of the stigma of having a Third. Peter is jealous of Ender and wants him out; Valentine loves him and wants him to stay. pp. 21–23*)

4. Why does Graff ask Ender three times if he wants to go to Battle School? (*It is a huge decision, and Graff wants Ender to go for the right reason—to serve. p. 26*)

5. Why does Graff single Ender out and make the other boys dislike him? (*He wants to see how Ender will react, and he feels it's the only way to make Ender be a creative leader. pp. 27–28, 32, 35*)