



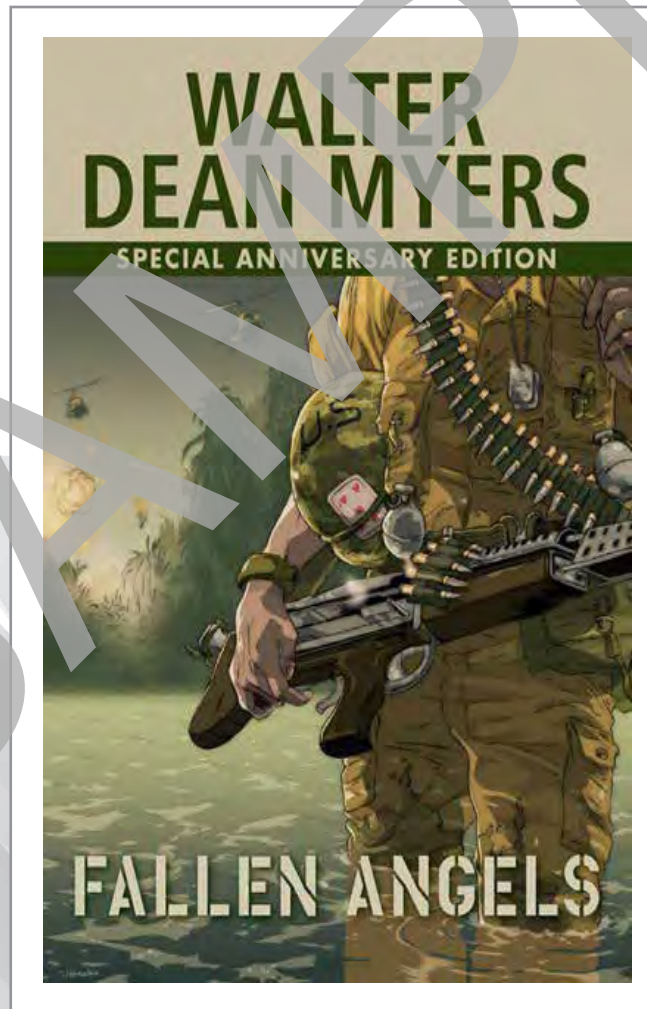
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 9-12

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Fallen Angels

Walter Dean Myers



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Fallen Angels

Walter Dean Myers

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 978-1-50203-776-3

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Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Brainstorming, predicting

Writing

Characterization, letter
writing, poetry

Listening/Speaking

Guest speaker, discussion,
role-play, oral reports,
debate, interview

Comprehension

Comparison/contrast

Literary Elements

Simile, metaphor, allusion,
personification, acronym,
paradox, irony

Other

Geography, military time,
drama, current events,
drawing, painting, collage

Summary of *Fallen Angels*

Genre: Realistic Fiction

Setting: Vietnam, 1967

Point of View: First-person narrative

Themes: Courage, friendship, survival

Conflict: man against man, wartime and personal, i.e., conflict over racism; inner conflict, including personal fear and questions about U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War; man against natural elements of Vietnam.

Summary: *Fallen Angels* relates the story of Richard Perry, a seventeen-year-old recent graduate of a Harlem high school, who enlists in the army after his dreams for college fail to materialize. He is sent to the front lines of the Vietnam War, where he and members of his platoon encounter the brutalities of war, the inequities of racism, and their own inner conflicts. Their experiences, as they face violence and death as well as compassion and honesty, reveal true character and forge firm friendships. This is a graphic, authentic depiction of the horrors of war.

Honors: the 1989 Coretta Scott King Author Award; ALA Notable Children's Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies.

About the Author

Personal Information: Walter Dean Myers was born August 12, 1937, in Martinsburg, West Virginia, to George and Mary Myers. Herbert and Florence Dean adopted him when he was three years old. The family lived in the Harlem district of New York City. He is married to Constance Brendel and has three children: Karen and Michael Dean from a first marriage, and Christopher from his second marriage. He served in the Army from 1954-1957 and later received a B.A. degree from Empire State College. In addition to his writing career, he has worked as an employment supervisor, a trade book editor, and a teacher of creative writing and Black History. He is a member of PEN and the Harlem Writers Guild. Although perhaps most well known for writing novels that examine the lives of young black people, Myers also writes skillfully in other mediums such as fantasy and adventure.

Writing Career: He began writing poems and stories as a teenager, winning awards for his achievements, but his race and economic status seemed to limit him. However, he continued to write while serving in the U.S. Army and later in menial jobs and began to have some of his works published in magazines. Winning a contest for picture book writers with his text for *Where Does the Day Go?* inspired him to continue, and writing has been his full-time profession since 1977. A sampling of his numerous works includes *Hoops* (1983), *Motown and Didi* (1987), *Scorpions* (1990), *The Young Landlords* (1991), *Brown Angels: an Album of Pictures and Verse* (1993), *The Glory Field* (1995), and *Slam!* (1998). Among those scheduled for release in 1999 are *Malcolm X: A Fire Burning Brightly*, *Monster*, and *Amistad: A Long Road to Freedom*.

Attribute Web

Directions: Select a character from the book to tell about using the blocks below.

<i>Who is the character?</i>			
<i>What did the character do?</i>		<i>Why did s/he do it?</i>	
<i>Why is the character's name well chosen?</i>	<i>What is the nature of this character's actions? (reactive, active, important, consequential, secondary)</i>	<i>What is the significance of the book's time and place to the character?</i>	
<i>What is unusual or important about the character?</i>	<i>How does the character change in the story?</i>	<i>Does the character remind you of another character from another book? Who?</i>	<i>Do you know anyone similar to this character?</i>

Story Map

Directions: Fill in each box with information about the novel.

Main Characters:

Setting: (time and place)

Main Conflict:

Summary of Major Story Events:

Climax:

Resolution of Conflict:

The diagram consists of five rectangular boxes arranged in a descending staircase pattern from top-left to bottom-right. The boxes are labeled as follows: 'Main Characters:' (top-left), 'Setting: (time and place)' (top-right), 'Main Conflict:' (middle-left), 'Summary of Major Story Events:' (center), 'Climax:' (bottom-left), and 'Resolution of Conflict:' (bottom-right). Dashed arrows indicate relationships: an arrow points from 'Main Characters:' to 'Setting: (time and place)'; an arrow points from 'Main Conflict:' to 'Summary of Major Story Events:'. From the 'Summary of Major Story Events:' box, three arrows point outwards: one to 'Climax:', one to 'Resolution of Conflict:', and one to the right side of the 'Setting: (time and place)' box. A fourth arrow points from the right side of the 'Setting: (time and place)' box to the right side of the 'Resolution of Conflict:' box.

Supplementary Activities

1. Locate the cities Osaka, Japan, and Chu Lai, Vietnam, on a map.
2. Note and discuss allusion to Uncle Tom [p. 17].

Pages 25-56

Summary

Perry and other members of his company fly into Vietnam, where they join others and engage in a variety of experiences. The first member of Alpha Company dies.

Vocabulary

confrontation (30)
surveillance (38)
phosphorous (49)

latrine (30)
silhouette (39)

boonies (32)
shard (41)

platoon (34)
theology (45)

Discussion Questions

1. Identify Jenkins, Johnson, Lt. Carroll, Sgt. Simpson, Monaco, Brunner, Brew, Lobel, and Walowick. Refer back to question as other events and facts about the characters unfold. [throughout section] (*All are members of Alpha Co. **Jenkins**: looks like a character from Archie comics, well-liked, gullible, father is a colonel, terribly scared and feels he will die in Vietnam, Alpha Co.'s first casualty. **Johnson**: big, strong black from Savannah, GA, in Vietnam because he couldn't find a job, conflicts with Peewee. **Lt. Carroll**: platoon leader, goes "by the book," offers prayer when Jenkins dies, 23 years old, faces doubts about his faith in God. **Sgt. Simpson**: tall, thin-faced black, squad sergeant, determined to stay alive for remaining 120 days of his tour of duty, unsure about new men. **Monaco**: Italian, scared. **Brunner**: corporal, has a chip on his shoulder. **Brewster, "Brew"**: religious. **Lobel**: tall, pudgy, soft, possibly homosexual, acts out different roles. **Walowick**: Polish, tells others about Carroll's experiences in Vietnam.)*
2. Compare students' reaction to death with Perry's reaction to Jenkins' death. Reflect on how students react to the graphic portrayal of death. [pp. 42-43,46] (*Jenkins' death by a booby trap and the ensuing routine of tags and body bags makes Perry face the reality of death in the war, and he becomes nauseated and numb inside. He is sorry Jenkins died but glad Jenkins died instead of himself.*)
3. Discuss the importance of a medical profile and the captain's explanation about Perry's. [pp. 27-28, 32] (*It would keep a soldier out of combat; Perry's was issued because of a problem with his knee but hasn't arrived in Vietnam. The Captain seems unconcerned, and Perry is to stay with the company until his medical records arrive.*)
4. Discuss the importance of Perry's flashbacks. [pp. 12, 35-38] (*They reveal facts about his childhood, show his intelligence, and relate how his basketball skills could have led to an NBA career but ended with a knee injury.*)
5. Discuss the conversation between Brew and Lt. Carroll. [pp. 45-46] (*Carroll almost went to theology school but now has many doubts. Brew tells him to turn to God, and Carroll replies he doesn't have doubt about God but about who he (Carroll) is, and that war has changed him.*)
6. What event symbolizes the reality of war? [pp. 40-43] (*Jenkins death from a booby trap; the routine handling of death in a war (tags, body bag); Perry's nausea and realization of how fragile life can be in a war zone.*)