



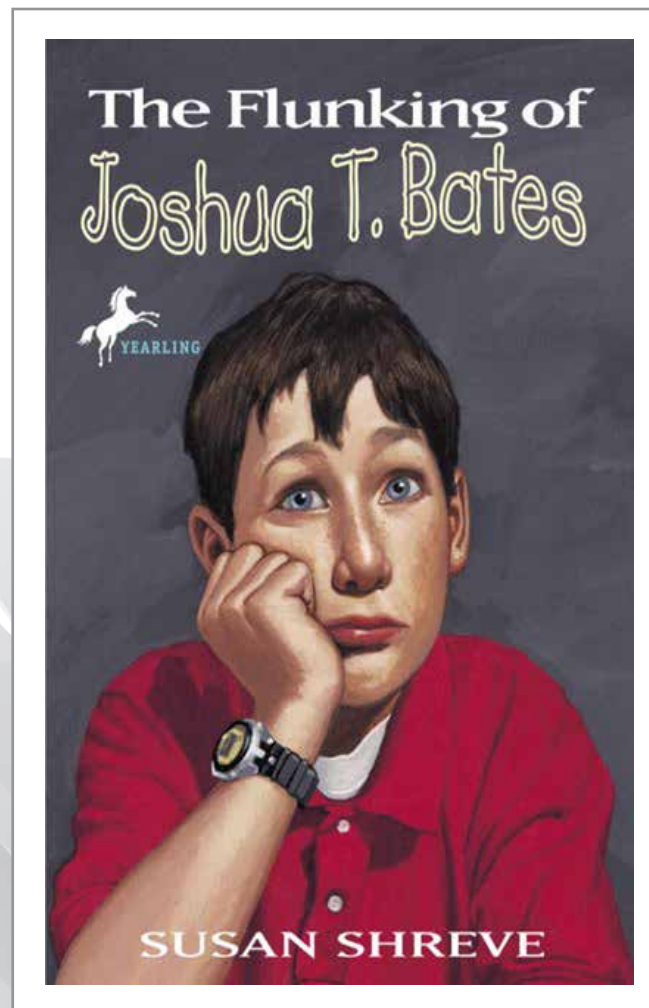
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 3-5

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

The Flunking of Joshua T. Bates

Susan Richards Shreve



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

The Flunking of Joshua T. Bates

Susan Richards Shreve

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 978-1-50203-792-3

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
About the Author.....	3
Introductory Activities.....	3
Chapter by Chapter.....	8
Chapters contain: Vocabulary Words and Activities, Discussion Questions and Activities, Post-reading Activities, Predictions	
Conclusion.....	19
Supplementary Activities.....	20
Teacher Information.....	26
Bibliography.....	27

Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Brainstorming, classifying
and categorizing, evaluating,
analyzing details

Literary Elements

Character, plot, setting

Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing

Vocabulary

Synonyms/antonyms,
analogies

Writing

Lists, descriptive, narrative

Listening/Speaking

Participation in discussion

Summary of *The Flunking of Joshua T. Bates*

Joshua decides that he would rather travel to East Africa than repeat third grade. However, by recess time of the first day of school, he is ready to change his plans; in a matter of weeks he becomes the most respected boy in 3X, and by October no one in third grade cares a bit that Joshua Bates has flunked. With the help of his teacher, Mrs. Goodwin, by late November Joshua is able to “ace” the tests that enable him to go on to fourth grade. Although leaving the third grade classroom behind, one feels that the friendship established between Joshua and Mrs. Goodwin will endure.

About the Author

Susan Richards Shreve was born May 2, 1939, in Toledo, Ohio. She and her husband have four children. Shreve was graduated *magna cum laude* from the University of Pennsylvania in 1961, and received a M.A. degree from the University of Virginia in 1969.

Shreve was a teacher of English in private schools before co-founding an alternative school in Philadelphia in 1972. She became a professor of literature at the George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, in 1976.

About her life and work Shreve has said, “I grew up in a house full of stories. When I was nine, I started a theater for which I wrote the plays and directed the actors who performed for the neighborhood twice monthly in our living room. I began to write books when I was a teenager. I now write the kinds of books I liked to read as a child—stories that could happen, often with a rebellious hero because that’s the sort of child I was. I do not believe in false promises but I do believe that in life as well as in books, we owe our children as well as ourselves the promise of a future.”

Note: Please be selective and use discretion when choosing the activities that you will do with this unit. It is not intended that everything be done, but that the discretionary choices made are most appropriate for your use and group of students. A wide range has been provided, so that individuals as well as groups may benefit from these selections.

Introductory Activities

Make some paper “wishbones” to hang about the room. Have a banner hanging that has a caption similar to *The Wish of a Lifetime*. When ready to introduce the novel, ask the students to consider what one thing they would choose to do for the rest of their lives, if granted that wish. Make a record of the responses.

Read the students the poem "A Lifetime in Third Grade" by Kalli Dakos. (See Bibliography, Dakos.)

Did anyone in the group choose to do something like this for a lifetime? How do you think that the person in the poem is feeling? Was this a choice that was made by that person? How do we often feel about choices that are made for us, rather than by us? Discuss. Go on to Previewing the Book.

Bulletin Board Idea

Cover the bulletin board with plain background paper. Make a child-sized paper person who is very old, and put it on the bulletin board. Ask for volunteers to make illustrations or "people" for the bulletin board, who are dressed as children and have faces indicating that they are very old.

Procedure

It is recommended that the book be done a section at a time, some short chapters having been grouped together, and that the DRTA, Directed Reading Thinking Approach, be used with each section. This technique involves reading a section, and then predicting what will happen next, by making good guesses based on what has already occurred in the book. The reading is then continued, and the predictions that have been made are verified.

For the vocabulary words, you may wish to have the students show knowledge of the words before reading by writing simple definitions in their own words of what they think the vocabulary words might mean. After reading, the students may verify or check the meaning of each word.

-
3. As the chapter ends on page 37, Joshua is invited to the home of Mrs. Goodwin for tea and cookies. Why do you think that this invitation has been extended to Joshua? What do you think will happen at this meeting between teacher and student? Make a prediction as to what will happen next.

Chapter Five — Pages 38-42

Chapter Six — Pages 43-49

Vocabulary

gunnysack 39 respected 45

Vocabulary Activity

Think of three different uses for a *gunnysack*. Make an illustration of one use.

Discussion Questions and Activities

1. What is the serious plan that Mrs. Goodwin and Joshua make? (*Page 40, They plan to practice reading and spelling every weekday afternoon, "until the words fell like magic into stories in his [Joshua's] brain."*) What do you think of the plan? What do you think of Mrs. Goodwin? Why do you think that she is doing this for Joshua?
2. When Joshua relates Andrew's problems with Tommy to Mrs. Goodwin, she replies, "Sometimes the only person you can count on is yourself" (*page 44*). What do you think that Mrs. Goodwin means by this statement? Think of situations in which you must rely upon yourself. Make a list. Do you think that self-reliance is easy or difficult?
3. How does it come about that, "...in a matter of weeks, Joshua Bates had become the most respected boy in 3X"? (*Page 45, Mrs. Goodwin makes Joshua her permanent assistant. He helps his classmates, and is captain of the third grade softball team.*) Do you think that Mrs. Goodwin has made her own plans regarding Joshua? Might she have possibly made these plans even before school started? Discuss.

Post-reading Activities:

1. Joshua would like to "capture Tommy Wilhelm in a gunnysack, dress him in girls' clothes, perhaps a hippopotamus dress with puffed sleeves, and tie him to the flagpole in front of Mirch Elementary for everyone in the world to see" (*page 39*). Make a cartoon showing Tommy Wilhelm as Joshua would like to have him, or in a different way of your choice. Make a caption for the cartoon.
2. What if Andrew had not pretended to have been stung by a bee? Write a different ending for the softball game episode. Which team will you have win the game? How will the victory come about? Will there be repercussions because of the win? Illustrate your version of the ending of the game.