

**Teacher Guide**

**Grades 7–8**

# **Flush**

**Carl Hiaasen**

 **NOVEL UNITS**



**NEW WAYS TO TEACH READING,  
WRITING, & CRITICAL THINKING**



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# FLUSH

by  
Carl Hiaasen

## Teacher Guide

Written by  
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### Note

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## Skills and Strategies

### Thinking

Brainstorming, research, compare/contrast, analyzing details, drawing conclusions, problem solving/decision-making

### Comprehension

Predicting, cause/effect, sequencing, main idea, inferring

### Writing

Journal, letter, essay, riddle, acrostic, brochure, summary, newspaper article

### Listening/Speaking

Discussion, debate, interview, TV newscast

### Vocabulary

Parts of speech, definitions, usage, context clues

### Literary Elements

Point of view, foreshadowing, characterization, imagery, plot development, dialogue, similes, metaphors, theme, hyperbole, setting, conflict, sarcasm, satire, irony, symbolism, paradox

### Across the Curriculum

Art—postcard, drawing, diagram, poster, collage, comic strip, chart;  
Math—calculating distance of a storm; Geography—Florida map, world map;  
Social Studies—free speech, gag orders, types of boats, Florida gambling laws;  
Drama—novel scenes, TV interview; Science—Florida Keys ecosystem, nesting habits of turtles, green flash, environmental awareness;  
Music—pop, appropriate selections

## Chapters One–Four

Noah's father Paine is jailed for sinking the *Coral Queen*, a gambling boat owned by the rich and powerful Dusty Muleman. Paine believes that Dusty has been dumping raw sewage into the waters off the Florida Keys. Noah tries to enlist the help of Lice Peeking and his girlfriend Shelly, acquaintances of his father who once worked aboard the *Coral Queen*. Noah is involved in an altercation with Dusty's son and is interviewed by a newspaper reporter about Paine's past and current legal troubles. Noah and his sister discover that their parents may be headed toward divorce.

### Vocabulary

basin  
murky  
chortled  
squall  
poach  
blow  
rati  
come

### Discussion Questions

1. Why does Noah's father feel it is important for him to stay in jail? (He believes he is right in sinking the *Coral Queen* because its owner is polluting the waters off the Florida Keys. He thinks that staying in jail and not posting bail will bring public attention and show his dedication to the cause.)
2. Discuss why dumping the holding tanks into the sea is a problem. (Besides polluting the water in general, the current carries the raw sewage onto Thunder Beach, making the beach unsafe for swimmers and animals, such as the turtles who nest in the area.)
3. How is the scene in which Noah wishes for the a happy Father's Day ironic? How is the dispersal around the sunken *Coral Queen* ironic? (Noah's father is in jail on Father's Day, which should be a happy occasion for the family but is not. Instead of feeling honored on this day, Paine finds himself the object of the community's scrutiny. In addition to the community of one environmental hazard, the *Coral Queen's* illegal sewage disposal, Noah's father inadvertently creates another, the oil leak from the sunken gambling boat.)
4. Grandpa Bobby left a lot of money to his three children. Explain how you think a charter-boat captain could have accumulated so much money. (Answers will vary but could include that he was a smuggler of some type since he traveled to Cuba, a nation that has long been a hub for drug trafficking.)
5. Discuss the symbolism of Noah's mother's big plain suitcase. (Noah and Abbey know that by that particular suitcase is out, their mother is considering packing everything. If she packs everything then she may be planning to leave Paine.)
6. Discuss the author's use of sarcasm when he writes: "I wondered how miserable life with the Mulemans must have been to make Lice Peeking look like a prize" (p. 26). (Lice is a lazy drunk whose living conditions and personal hygiene are undesirable, yet Shelly chooses to leave Dusty to live with Lice. If living with Lice seems like a good idea, then living with the Mulemans must have really been horrible.)
7. Discuss the author's use of humor in the midst of a serious situation. Name several humorous incidents. (The author injects humor to lighten the mood and entertain the reader. Lice is drunk when Noah first meets him and Noah compares him to "a sick old iguana" [p. 19]. Lice lies facedown on the carpet and does not seem to be breathing, so Shelly kicks him in the ribs and he starts snoring. Later Shelly uses Lice's head as a footrest and thumps him on the head with both heels. Jasper Jr. and Bull taunt Noah but the mood lightens when their boat capsizes and they fall in the water.)

8. Bull and Jasper Jr. bully Noah under the bridge. Noah chooses not to fight them, but he also does not run away. Why? Discuss how one should react to bullies. *(Answers will vary. Noah realizes that it is not to his advantage to fight back since he is outnumbered. By not running away, Noah shows Bull and Jasper Jr. that he is not afraid of them.)*
9. Noah’s mom worries that he is too much like his dad. Based on what you have read so far, what do you think? *(Answers will vary. Like his father, Noah finds himself at odds with a member of the Muleman family. While Paine is directly responsible for sinking the Coral Queen, Noah is only indirectly responsible for sinking Jasper’s boat. When interviewed by the reporter, Noah indicates that he is proud of his father’s principles even if he does not always agree with his methods. That said, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that while Noah shares his father’s strong sense of ethical duty, he also has enough of his mother’s cautiousness and practicality to keep him out of trouble most of the time.)*

**Supplementary Activities**

1. Geography: Using a map of Florida, use pushpins or thumbtacks to chart the different locations mentioned in the novel.
2. Geography: Using a world map, locate Florida in North America and Colombia in South America. Trace what you think may have been Grandpa Bobby’s route and estimate the distance in miles.
3. Literature: Research the identity of the author Abbey is named after — “some weird old bird who’s buried out west in the middle of a desert” (p. 5). Why would Elaine Underwood name his daughter after that person? (Note: Edward Abbey seems like a very good possibility. He was an American author noted for his advocacy of environmental issues and is buried in the Arizona desert. His novel *The Monkey Wrench Gang* is about a group who sabotages industries that threaten the environment.)
4. Science: Research “the green flash on the horizon” (p. 25), and write a relay explaining its causes.

## Character Analysis Blocks

**Directions:** Select a character from the book to describe using the blocks below.

Who is the character?			
What does the character do?		Why does he do it?	
What, if anything, is significant about the character's name?	What is the role of this character's actions? (reactive, active, important, comic, secondary)	What is the significance of the book's time and place to the character?	
What is unusual or important about the character?	How does the character change in the story?	Does the character remind you of another character from another book? Who?	Do you know a person similar to this character?