



TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 3-5

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

The Grand Escape

Alan Daniel

READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

The Grand Escape

Alan Daniel

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 978-1-50203-826-5

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
Initiating Activities	3
Fifteen Chapters	10
Chapters contain: Vocabulary Words and Activities, Discussion Questions, Predictions, Post-reading Activities	
Post-reading Extension Activities	25
Teacher Information	30
Bibliography	31
Assessment	32

Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Brainstorming, classifying,
research

Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing

Writing

Short story, couplet, poetry,
limerick, composite report,
descriptive, proverbs

Vocabulary

Synonyms, word mapping,
analogies

Listening/Speaking

Role play, survey, discussion,
dramatizing

Literary Elements

Personification, alliteration,
story elements

Summary

House cats Marco and Polo decide that they must escape from the Neals' house and find out what the outside world is like. Marco wants to find a ranch and Polo wants to find his mother. The brothers wait for the right moment, and then leave their protected world for that of the unknown. Luckily, Marco and Polo are found and befriended by a she-cat named Carlotta. She introduces Marco and Polo to the members of the Club of Mysteries. In order to belong, the two cats must find the answers to three Great Mysteries of Their Time, given to them by Texas Jake, the head of the club. Marco and Polo become known as "the cats that could not die," for they always return from their dangerous missions, but not without harrowing experiences to relate to the others. The brothers wonder how and when it will all end.

About The Author

Phyllis Reynolds Naylor was born January 4, 1933, in Anderson, Indiana. She and her husband, Rex Naylor, have two children. She was educated at Joliet Junior College and the American University, receiving a B.A. in 1963.

Naylor's childhood was filled with books and storytelling, so it is not surprising that she began writing her own stories while in grade school. By the time she was sixteen, Naylor was writing stories and poems for a church paper. After a career in education, Naylor became a full-time writer in 1960 because, as she put it, "I can't think of anything else in the world that I would rather do than write."

Initiating Activities

1. **Initiating Activity:** Brainstorm the word MYSTERIES with the students. What does that word bring to mind? Make lists in categories, such as: books, videos, films, etc. Ask if anyone has ever said, "Gosh! I don't know. It's a mystery to me." Include that kind of mystery in the brainstorm.
2. **Bulletin Board Idea:** Cover the bulletin board with plain paper. Make a caption to go on the board that refers to the Great Mysteries, such as: IMPORTANT MYSTERIES OF THE PAST AND PRESENT. As the story progresses, have each student (or group of students) think of a "mystery" to research. The mysteries may be presented to the group in some agreed upon way, and illustrations of the mysteries may be made and displayed on the bulletin board. (This will make everyone aware of the mysteries that have been, or are being researched, so there is no duplication.)
3. **Recommended Procedure:** It is recommended that the book be read one chapter at a time. Collect books from the library about cats, rats, tunnels, sewers, Marco Polo, water pollution, and river flooding for the students to use for research and special interests and activities.
4. **Vocabulary:** For vocabulary introduction, have the students give brief definitions of the words. After reading each chapter, change the definitions, as needed, to conform with the context of the story. Use the dictionary to define troublesome words.

-
5. Previewing The Book: Look at the picture on the cover of the book. What does the picture relate about the story? To what do you think the title of the book refers? What do you think could possibly be a *Grand* escape? Discuss. Do the cats look like they are ready to take on any challenge? Discuss the facial and body language of the cats depicted by the artist.
 6. Prereading Activity: What does the word ESCAPE bring to mind? Make a list.
 7. Prereading Discussion: What might one escape from? What are some means of escape? Discuss. Relate back to the cats pictured on the cover of the book.

Chapter 1: “How It All Began”—Pages 1–9

Mr. and Mrs. Neal have two cats, Marco and Polo. Marco is able to get outside for about an hour, and decides that he and Polo must find out more about the outside world.

Vocabulary

discomfort 1
taunting 6

conversed 2
linoleum 7

stealthily 4
anticipation 8

bedraggled 4

Vocabulary Activity

Match a vocabulary word with its definition.

Definition	Vocabulary Word
a floor covering	_____ (<i>linoleum</i>)
distress	_____ (<i>discomfort</i>)
disheveled	_____ (<i>bedraggled</i>)
talked	_____ (<i>conversed</i>)
provoking	_____ (<i>taunting</i>)
furtively	_____ (<i>stealthily</i>)
expectation	_____ (<i>anticipation</i>)

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it that Mr. and Mrs. Neal do not know that Marco and Polo can speak the English language? (*Page 2, When Marco and Polo converse, it sounds like they are meowing.*) What makes it possible for this speaking to take place? (*Page 2, They can meow in hundreds of different ways and have 76 different kinds of purrs.*) Do you think cats can “speak” to one another, in any kind of “language”? Why or why not? Discuss. Do you have a cat? Do you think that the cat “speaks” to you? Does it seem to understand when you speak to it? Explain.
2. What does the veterinarian tell Mr. and Mrs. Neal when they take the cats in for their first shots? (*Page 3, The vet tells the Neals that they should never let the cats outside. The vet believes that house cats are happy cats.*) How are Marco and Polo trained to stay inside? (*Page 4, Every time the cats try to go out the front or back door, water is poured on them. The cats think that every time they try to step outside, it rains. They are content to stay inside.*) What happens to change this situation? (*Page 6, Marco reads about a ranch, and decides that he wants to visit one. Page 7, Mr. Neal forgets to close the side door and Marco gets outside.*) Why do you think Marco does not leave home at this time?

Supplementary Activities

1. Personification: When objects, things, ideas, and animals are written about as if they are human, personification is being used. Write a short story in which you use personification.

-
2. With a partner, role-play the cats after Marco has been brought back inside by Mr. Neal. As Polo, what questions would you like to ask? As Marco, what would you like to tell Polo? Switch roles after a predetermined period of time.
 3. Reread the first paragraph on page 1. The author employs the descriptive words icy, spongy, and steamy, plus colors when writing about the seasons. Write a sentence or two about your day. Employ descriptive words paired with colors in your work.
 4. Start a story map. (See page 7 of this guide.)
 5. Start attribute webs for Marco and Polo. (See pages 8–9 of this guide.)
 6. Do some research about the world traveler Marco Polo. Discuss why the author might have named the main characters in this story Marco and Polo.
 7. Will both of the cats be able to get out of the house? Will they get very far from home if they do get outside? What do you think might happen next? Make a prediction.

Chapter 2: “Polo’s Story”—Pages 10–17

Polo misses his mom and eats stringy things which make him sick. After an expensive operation, Polo’s favorite things are all put away. The inaccessibility of these things causes Polo to go a bit wild.

Vocabulary

fascinating 10 indignity 14

Vocabulary Activity

Make synonym trains for the vocabulary words. For example:

fascinating – enthralling – captivating – spellbinding – bewitching – charming...

indignity – affront – insult – slur – humiliation – outrage – dishonor...

Discussion Questions

1. What is it that Polo wants to find when he and Marco get outside? (*Page 12, Polo wants to find his mother. He is sad when he thinks about her.*) What bad habit does Polo have because of his sadness? (*Pages 11–12, Polo sucks on and eats anything wiggly.*) Why do you think that Polo associates wiggly things with his mother? Are there some things that you associate with certain people?
2. What is Polo’s reaction when the Neals put away all of the wiggly things in the house? (*Pages 15–16, Polo goes a little bit crazy, and runs wild around the house.*) Coupled with the wild behavior of Polo is the boredom Marco feels. What is the result of this situation? (*Pages 16–17, Marco and Polo fight more than ever. They decide that they must get out of the house. They make plans.*) Faced with a problem (fighting) what steps do Marco and Polo take to resolve it? What do you think of their plan?