



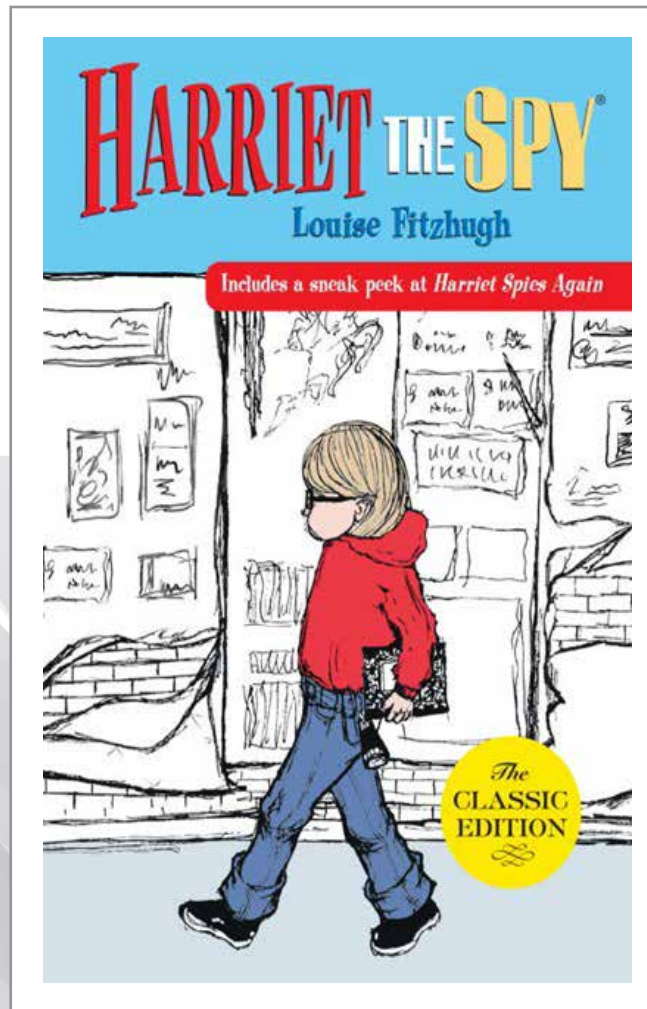
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 3-5

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Harriet the Spy

Louise Fitzhugh



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Harriet the Spy

Louise Fitzhugh

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!

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Chapters contain: Vocabulary Words, Discussion Questions, Predictions, Supplementary Activities	
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Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Research, visualization,
synthesizing

Comprehension

Predicting, comparison/
contrast

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, dramatize,
debate

Writing

Journal, opinion, persuasive,
creative, letter writing,
descriptive, newspaper

Vocabulary

Synonyms, classifying

Literary Elements

Characterization, story
elements, similes

Summary

Harriet the Spy, organized into three books, recounts the adventures of a precocious eleven-year-old female who fancies herself as a spy. Sure that her destiny lies as a writer, she carefully records in her journal details of the neighbors on whom she is spying. She has been advised to prepare to be a writer by writing down everything; being a spy seems to her a good way to do it.

Book One (Chapters 1-6) introduces Harriet, her East Eighty-seventh Street home in Manhattan, her parents, her friends, and her nurse, Ole Golly. The reader also meets Mrs. Agatha K. Plumber, Little Joe Curry, the Dei Santis, the Robinsons, and Harrison Withers, on whom Harriet spies. Spying details are recorded in capitalized letters as excerpts from Harriet's journal. Meanwhile, Ole Golly has met George Waldenstein, a mustached delivery man who drives one of those delivery bikes with a cart in front. Harriet delights in observing the courting pair, but feels an emptiness when Ole Golly leaves the Welsches to marry George.

Book Two (Chapters 7-14) finds Harriet without the support of Ole Golly. Her secret notebook is read by her classmates who are furious at the unflattering, though truthful, notes she has included about them. She is excluded and tormented in typical sixth grade fashion, even extending to a Spy Catcher Club from which she is banned. The Welsches try taking her to a child psychiatrist. "No" and tears are common throughout the book.

In Book Three (Chapters 15-16), the plot is resolved with Harriet editing the Sixth Grade Page of the school newspaper. Harriet eventually does apologize to her classmates.

Initiating Activities

(Several are included from which the teacher may choose.)

1. Show sample journals or read from a book in which a character keeps a journal. *Anastasia Krupnik* by Lois Lowry, *The Burning Questions of Bingo Brown* by Betsy Byars, *Diary of a Frantic Kid Sister* by Hila Colman, and *Journal of a Teenage Genius* by Helen V. Griffith are books in which characters keep journals. Brainstorm ideas about journals, including what might be included, typical characteristics, etc. Record on a web.

2. Individual class members begin keeping their own journals. Compare to Harriet's journal as they read the book.

3. Look at the cover. What do you predict for the book?

4. Evaluate these review excerpts. What do you expect?

"Harriet the Spy bursts with life. It is up to date, here and now, this minute, real..."

"A brilliantly written, unsparingly realistic story, a superb portrait of an extraordinary child..."

5. Thumb through the book to note the illustrations. Look especially at the illustration on page 35. This is Harriet. What kind of a character do you expect her to be?

Vocabulary Activities

1. Vocabulary challenge words in each chapter which are well-suited to teach via context clues are marked with an asterisk (*). It is suggested that students are asked to recognize context clues with these questions.

What part of speech is the word in question?

Are there any appositives to assist?

Does the word remind you of another word?

What is the word describing?

2. Classify the identified words as to emotional impact. Some words are straight-forward names of objects or specifications, but other words convey an emotional impact. What feeling does a word carry with it?

3. Illustrate a word either in a drawing or by acting it out.

4. In a small group, devise ways to remember a group of vocabulary challenge words.

5. Place at the headings of five columns: Sports, Work, People, Animals, Children. Classify the vocabulary words under the columns.

6. Try to use as many vocabulary words as possible in a sentence.

7. Conduct a survey among friends and family to find out who knows a particular vocabulary word or group of words.

Similes

Directions: As you read, look for similes.

Simile	Page	Compared To
"like a house in the country"	15	Mrs. Golly's little house
"like dough...about to be made into a big round Italian loaf"	16	Mrs. Golly
"like a mountain, her big ham hands dangling helplessly at her sides"	18	Mrs. Golly
"like a giant doll"	20	Mrs. Golly
"like it was cut out of oak"	22	Ole Golly
"as though he's been up all night"	27	Sport
"like a glass of milk, a tall thin glass of milk"	28	Pinky Whitehead
"clears the brain like a laxative"	29	description
"as in a dream"	61	Mr. Walker's hand
"as though you would turn into Mr. Hyde if you drank them"	63	Janie's laboratory bottles
"like a tennis match"	70	Mr. & Mrs. Welsch's conversation
"like frozen food"	132	customers at Dei Santi's store
"like beach cabanas for cats"	172	makeshift houses
"like a crow"	220	Marion's voice
"like a treasure found on the beach"	224	Harriet's letter from Ole Golly
"like the inside of an old thermos bottle"	238	smell in the hardware store

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2. Share one snippet from your journal with the class. Together take those ideas and write in the style of a newspaper article. Include a short headline.
 3. Start a story map to block out the details of the story. (See page 20 of this guide.)
 4. **Vocabulary:** Start a word chain of synonyms for “jack” as mentioned on page 55. Keep adding to your word chain. Ask parents and friends for more synonyms.

Chapter 5—Pages 70-88

Vocabulary

deflection 74

esplanade 80

aplomb 82

Discussion Questions

1. How did Ole Golly win Harriet over to dancing school? (*by reminding her of Mata Hari and other spies who could dance*)
2. Can you think of any similar incidents to the dancing school situation that have happened to you or your friends? Share.
3. What was Harriet’s routine directly after school? (*hurry home for milk and cake*)
4. Look again at paragraph five on page 76, “Harriet...that,” about grown-ups asking unanswerable questions. Would you like to share that paragraph with your parents? Why or why not?
5. What did Harriet do on the Thursday in Chapter 5? (*spy on Ole Golly and Mr. Waldenstein*)
6. Reenact the Ole Golly and Mr. Waldenstein dialogue. Suggest some descriptors to summarize their dialogue. (*Answers vary; quaint, sweet, touching, proper.*)
7. How did Harriet’s parents meet? (*They met on a boat going to Europe when Mr. Welsch threw up at Mrs. Welsch’s feet.*)
8. What do you think Ole Golly was thinking about at the end of Chapter 5? Predict what will happen next.

Supplementary Activities

1. **Art of the Novel:** Describe Mr. Welsch. How has the author revealed him to you? (*short, pithy bits of dialogue, what others say about him*)
2. **Writing:** How would you convince your parents to skip dancing school for you?