



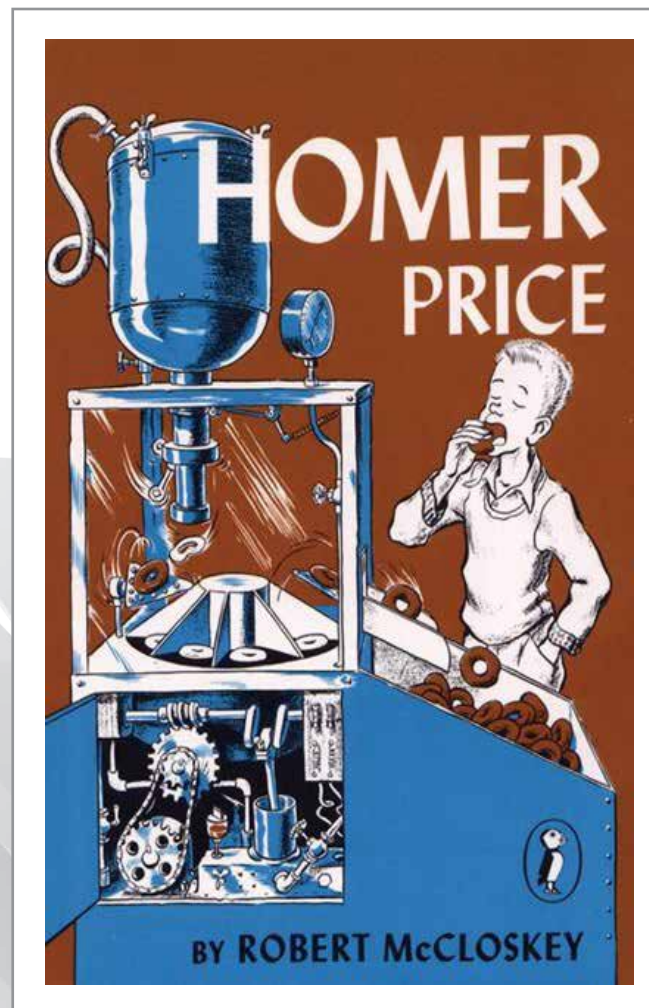
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 3-5

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Homer Price

Robert McCloskey



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Homer Price

Robert McCloskey

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 978-1-50203-860-9

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Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Brainstorming, research,
problem-solving

Comprehension

Predicting, cause and effect,
comparison/contrast

Vocabulary

Word mapping, synonyms,
antonyms, analogies

Writing

Narrative, descriptive, news
articles, poetry

Listening/Speaking

Readers' Theatre

Literary Elements

Characterization, story
elements, spoonerisms,
idioms

Summary

First published in 1943, this is a collection of six stories about a boy named Homer who lives in "Centerburg." In "The Case of the Sensational Scent," Homer and his pet skunk, Aroma, help capture four robbers. It all starts when N.W. Blott wins \$2,000 and a dozen bottles of Dreggs Shaving Lotion for thinking up the best advertising slogan. The armed robbers steal the suitcase with the prize and hide in the woods, where Homer and Aroma discover them. Aroma sprays the suitcase, and the lingering scent tips Homer off later when the men arrive at Homer's father's tourist camp and reserve a cabin. Homer quietly gathers up the robbers' guns and orders the robbers to march to the barber shop, where the sheriff gets out of the chair long enough to handcuff the ne'er-do-wells.

In "The Case of the Cosmic Comic," Homer, Freddy, and Freddy's little brother, Louis, go to the Centerburg theatre to see a "Super Duper" movie, and meet their hero in person. As the boys head home in Freddy's family's horse and wagon, the Super-Duper's sleek car speeds past, rounds a curve, and lands upside down in a ditch. The hero's image becomes tarnished when the boys discover that he needs their help to get back onto the road—and unstuck from a barbed wire fence! Super-Duper thanks the boys with a present—a stack of Super-Duper Comic Books, but as he leaves, the boys are already thinking of ways to trade the books starring their ex-hero for something really valuable.

In "The Doughnuts," Homer's Uncle Ulysses, who has a lunch room in Centerburg, asks Homer to begin making doughnuts while he goes to talk to the sheriff. Homer is not quite sure how this latest of his uncle's labor-saving devices works, but he agrees. A wealthy woman stops in and offers to help, then proceeds to mix up a tremendous amount of batter. The machine is still making doughnuts when she leaves, and Homer discovers that he cannot turn it off. Luckily one of his customers, Mr. Gabby, is an advertising professional, an outdoor "sandwich man." Uncle Ulysses returns and he and Homer frantically stack doughnuts while Mr. Gabby advertises the sale on doughnuts. The wealthy woman returns, distraught because she lost her diamond bracelet while making the doughnuts. Suddenly the problem of selling the mountain of doughnuts is solved: A new sign is put into the window, stating that there will be a \$100 prize for the customer who buys the doughnut with the bracelet. Rupert Black returns the bracelet and wins the prize, and all ends happily.

In "Mystery Yarn," the judge asks Homer's Uncle Telly to compete with the sheriff in a county fair contest, to see which one has collected the biggest ball of yarn. Uncle Telly agrees, on condition that if he wins, the sheriff will promise to spend Thursday afternoons out of town to give Miss Terwilliger (upon whom they both have their eye) a chance to make up her mind to marry him. When Miss Terwilliger learns of the agreement, she decides to enter HER ball of yarn in the contest. Somehow, despite the fact that her ball appears smallest, Miss Terwilliger wins (probably by some sleight-of-hand unraveling of her skirt...) Thus, it is Miss Terwilliger who gets to decide who is to marry whom, and she chooses to marry Uncle Telly the following week.

In "Nothing New Under the Sun—Hardly," a quiet stranger with long hair and a long beard comes to town with a mysterious contraption in the back of his car. Homer befriends the man and learns that he is Michael Murphy. Thirty years earlier he built himself a vacation cabin in the hills and decided to stay. He invented a mouse trap which doesn't hurt mice, but lures them with music. The mayor agrees to pay Mr. Murphy \$30 to remove every mouse from Centerburg. The deed is done, and the

mayor is paying Mr. Murphy when the sheriff announces that Mr. Murphy must buy a new license for his old car—a license costing \$30. Mr. Murphy gives up the money and leaves, but all the children in town follow the musical mousetrap—just as the children followed the Pied Piper. In the end, Mr. Murphy does let the children go—but he also releases every last mouse.

In “Wheels of Progress,” Homer is helping Uncle Ulysses in the lunchroom when Miss Enders, the wealthy woman who lost her bracelet earlier, drops in. She announces that in appreciation for the wonderful reception she has been given by the people of Centerburg, she is going to build a housing development around the site of her family homestead. The houses are built, and the homestead moved, since it is the only house which does not look like the others. The identical appearance of the houses causes problems for the residents, however—especially when the street signs are not finished on time. Dulcey Dooner had been paid \$10 a sign to finish by the end of the pageant, but unfortunately he had come upon a bottle of Elixir Compound, the cough medicine whose patent had earned the Enders’ fortune. After drinking the stiff elixir, Dulcey had fallen asleep. Now that the residents know where the homestead had been, they can each locate their house, and all ends on a note of peace and prosperity.

Prereading Discussion Questions

Dilemmas: Have you ever been in a situation where you had to make a choice—and both choices were “bad”? How do you decide which choice to make? What do you do when you have a problem to solve in real life? What steps do you take?

Labor-Saving Devices: What is a labor saving device? What are some labor saving devices you use? Which of the labor saving devices in your home/school/community today were not around 45 years ago?

Robert McCloskey: Have you read any other stories by Robert McCloskey, such as *Make Way for Ducklings* or *Blueberries for Sal*? What kinds of stories does McCloskey write? mysteries? funny stories? adventures? Do you like the way he illustrates his books?

Prereading Activities

1. Have students read the title, examine the cover and table of contents, and glance at the pictures as they flip through the book. Ask: What can you tell about the boy on the cover? What do you think happens after he finishes his doughnut? What kind of story do you think this will be? funny? serious? realistic? make-believe?

Say: Read *Homer Price* to find out more about a boy who uses his good supply of common sense to solve some outrageous problems.

Story Map

Characters _____

Time and Place _____

Problem _____

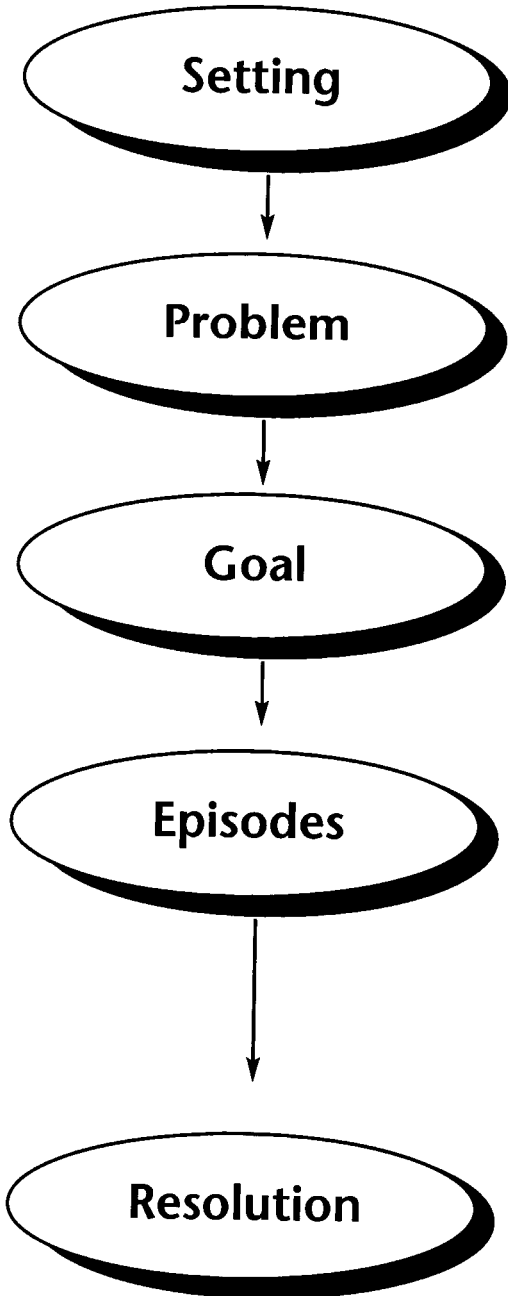
Goal _____

Beginning → Development → Outcome

Attempt: _____

Problem: _____

Resolution _____



V. Nothing New Under the Sun (Hardly) pp. 94-125

Vocabulary

democratic 94	speculate 94	beaming 94	gaping 98
antique 98	canvas 98	commission 98	individualist 102
fugitive 102	amnesia 103	hermit 107	incorporated 108
deduction 112	crimson 117	reedy 117	procession 118
flustered 120	torrent 120	pixied 121	

Vocabulary Activity

Add to the synonym chains begun below:

1. Speculate—guess—suggest— _____
2. Incorporated—included—inserted— _____
3. Pixied—enchanted—bewitched— _____
4. Gaping—open—hollow— _____
5. Flustered—disturbed—upset— _____
6. Fugitive—outlaw—criminal— _____

Discussion Questions

1. Why did the sheriff ask Homer for help? (*p. 102, The stranger did not seem afraid of children.*)
2. Why did the varied townspeople look at different things, e.g., hair, ears, waistline, feet, etc.? (*p. 104, They judged the stranger by the type of business they had.*) How do you judge a stranger?
3. Why was Michael Murphy's invention unusual? (*p. 109, It wouldn't hurt mice.*)
4. What other ending to this chapter can you suggest?

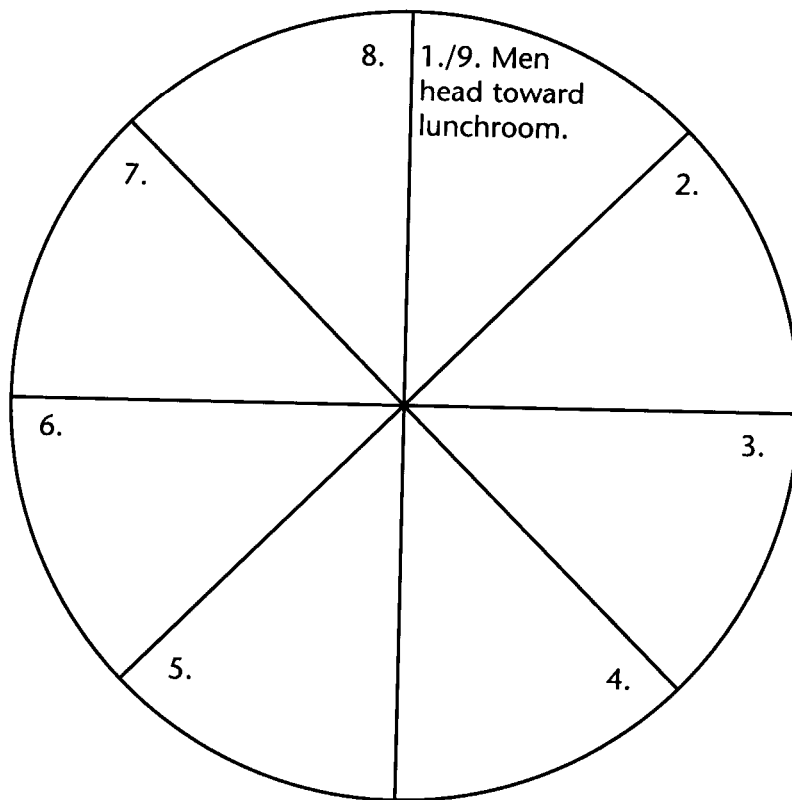
Other Suggested Reading

Read *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* and discuss with a partner which parts of these books are like parts of "Nothing New Under the Sun."

Activity Sheet: Story Map

A story map is a way of understanding the plot, or events in a story. Below is a pie-shaped story map.

This story begins where it ends, with Uncle Ulysses and the other men headed toward the lunch room. That is why the first (and last) "piece of the pie" is labeled MEN HEAD TOWARD LUNCHROOM. Label each of the other "pieces" with the most important events, in the order in which they happened:



(Sample answers: 1. Men head toward lunchroom. 2. Stranger comes to eat. 3. Homer learns about the musical mousetrap. 4. Mr. Murphy agrees to rid the town of mice. 5. Mayor demands \$30 for new license. 6. Children follow Murphy. 7. Murphy is paid another \$30. 8. Murphy releases mice and children return. 9. Men head toward lunchroom.)