

Teacher Guide

Grades 5–6

The Invention of Hugo Cabret

Brian Selznick

NOVEL UNITS[™]

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THE INVENTION OF HUGO CABRET

by
Brian Selznick

Teacher Guide

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Teacher Note

The pages without text in this edition of *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* are not numbered. For your quick and easy reference while using this guide, the Novel Units® editors have assigned page numbers to the novel. The activities and sections in this guide are based on the assumption that the Part One title page falls on page 1.

Note

The 2007 Scholastic Press hardcover edition of the novel, © 2007 by Brian Selznick, was used to prepare this guide. The page references may differ in other editions. Novel ISBN: 978-0-439-81378-5

Please note: Parts of this novel deal with sensitive, mature issues. Please assess the appropriateness of this novel for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading and discussing it with them.

ISBN 978-1-60878-248-2

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Publisher Information
For a complete catalog, contact—

Novel Units, Inc.
P.O. Box 97
Bulverde, TX 78163-0097

Web site: novelunits.com

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Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Predicting, creative and critical thinking, identifying attributes, research

Comprehension

Evaluating decisions, compare/contrast, inferring, supporting judgments, problem solving

Writing

Poetry, essay, journal, synopsis, newspaper journalism, creative writing, scriptwriting, autobiography

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, oral presentation, performance, critical viewing

Vocabulary

Word relationships, synonyms/antonyms, context clues, multiple-meaning words, analogies, root words, thesaurus/dictionary

Literary Elements

Setting, conflict, point of view, theme, symbolism, figurative language, unreliable narrator, character analysis, author's purpose, foreshadowing

Critical Thinking

Sequencing, recalling, questioning, classification, summary, opinions

Across the Curriculum

Literature—picture books, science fiction, fairy tales, Greek mythology; Social Studies/History—geography, research, newspaper journalism, inventions, cycles, scientific method; Art—poster, collage, mobile, diorama, drawing, comic; Music—rhythm, tempo, beat

a high priority for him. Also, Hugo does not have the necessary facilities to wash. He has only “the spluttering sink in his tiny kitchen” [p. 131].)

9. **Prediction:** Why do you think Georges Méliès stopped making films?

Supplementary Activities

1. **Literary Analysis:** Add to your list of literary devices. For example, **Simile**—“the vast subway system that snaked beneath the city like hidden rivers” (p. 321); **Metaphors**—Mama Jeanne’s house: a hospital ward (p. 302); the station inspector’s hands: long, ragged claws (p. 318)
2. **Culture:** Both Hugo and Isabelle steal, but for different reasons. Write a persuasive essay (two or three paragraphs) in which you explain why the two characters steal and list other options Hugo and Isabelle could employ to get what they need.
3. **Art:** Create a collage that illustrates a dream you remember having. Give your collage a meaningful title.
4. **Writing:** Hugo recalls about one of the very first films ever shown, called *A Train Arrives in the Station*. This is a reference to an urban legend concerning the first public showing of *Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat*, directed and produced by Auguste and Louis Lumière. Research the history of this film. Imagine you were a member of the same audience. Then, write an eyewitness report of your experience for a Parisian newspaper. Make sure you describe your emotions, as well as this new medium—film.
5. **Art:** Georges Méliès’ film *Trip to the Moon* is loosely based on the science-fiction novels *From the Earth to the Moon* by Jules Verne and *The First Men on the Moon* by H.G. Wells. Watch the film, which is available online. Then, create a collage that illustrates your vision of a trip from Earth to the moon. Give your collage a meaningful title.

Part Two: Chapter 17

Isabelle comes to visit Hugo in his apartment. She apologizes for slipping his fingers in the clock and then shares her worries about Papa Georges’ illness. Hugo tells Isabelle about his trip to the library and that he invited Étienne and René Tabard to visit the home of Georges Méliès. The next morning, Hugo and Isabelle begin working in the toy booth to raise money for Papa Georges’ medicine. While working, they talk about the myth of Prometheus. Hugo is terrified because the clocks are breaking down and the station Inspector has requested a face-to-face meeting with Uncle Claude. When Étienne and René Tabard visit the Méliès’ apartment, they bring one of Méliès’ films, *A Trip to the Moon*. Papa Georges becomes upset and locks himself in the bedroom with the movie projector. Isabelle picks the door lock, and the group opens the door to see Papa Georges sitting at a desk like a giant automaton. Papa Georges begins to talk about how his career in the movies began and ended, and he asks Hugo to bring him the automaton from the train station.

Vocabulary	
devoted	
rhythmic	
barreled	
brandishing	
impose	
employed	
fondness	
fragile	
skeptical	
stirred	
archives	
guttural	
interspersed	
chaos	
muse	
hunched	

Discussion Questions

- How does the friendship between Hugo and Isabelle change? *(Answers will vary. Once Hugo describes for Isabelle his life before the train station, the friendship between Hugo and Isabelle deepens. Hugo makes an effort to find out the truth about Georges Méliès and uses that information in a way that could improve the situation for everyone. He proves to be a concerned friend when he works in the toy booth to raise money for the old man's medicine.)*
- Why does Isabelle thank Hugo for telling her “the whole story” (p. 365)? *(Isabelle sees Hugo as a friend, and she has wanted Hugo to become a writer. She probably feels honored that he trusts her enough to share his story with her.)*
- Mama Jeanne says that the old man must like Hugo since he kept the blue windup mouse trapped and hidden in a drawer. Do you think the old man is proud of Hugo? How do you think this makes Hugo feel? *(Answers will vary. Yes, the old man is likely proud of Hugo. The old man's saving the mouse is reminiscent of Hugo's father proudly displaying Hugo's mechanical animals on his workbench. The old man cannot help but notice that Hugo has “got some talent” [p. 162]. “Hugo liked that the old man] had kept [the mouse] safe.” [p. 165]. Now that his father has passed away, Hugo does not have any adults in his life to show affection for or pride in him, so he probably longs for affirmation.)*
- How are the young theatrical desires of Georges Méliès similar to Hugo's? *(Méliès comes from a family of shoemakers. Méliès takes the machinery involved in shoemaking, but he dreams of getting away from his parents' factory to become a magician. Hugo comes from a family of horologists. Hugo likes the machinery involved in clock making, but he, too, would rather become a magician.)*
- What does Mama Jeanne's defense of Papa Georges say about her own character? How would you describe her personality as a complex character? *(Answers will vary. Mama Jeanne is compassionate toward her husband's needs, and she cares when he suffers. She is proud of his accomplishments as a filmmaker, but at Georges' request, she has promised not to dredge up the past. Her defense of him can make her seem rude, but it does show her strong loyalty to her husband. When it does not threaten to reveal the secrets of the past, she is still kind toward others. She gives Hugo ice for his injured hand and wraps makeshift bandages around Hugo's and Isabelle's injuries. Mama Jeanne has always had a supportive role in Papa Georges' life—acting as a pianist, assistant, film star, and muse for Georges.)*
- Why does Georges Méliès dread the sound of shoe heels clicking on the floor as the ghosts that haunt him? *(When Méliès sold his movies, the company that bought them melted them down and turned them into shoe heels. When Méliès hears shoe heels clicking against the floor, it reminds him of his failures. In his toy booth in the train station, a lot of people walk by, so he is forced to hear this haunting sound all day.)*
- How do you think Georges Méliès felt when the museum to which he donated the automaton burned down? Why? *(Méliès probably felt devastated. He donated the automaton because it was the only thing he did not have the heart to destroy, and when the museum and his automaton were destroyed in the fire, it was probably a very personal loss.)*

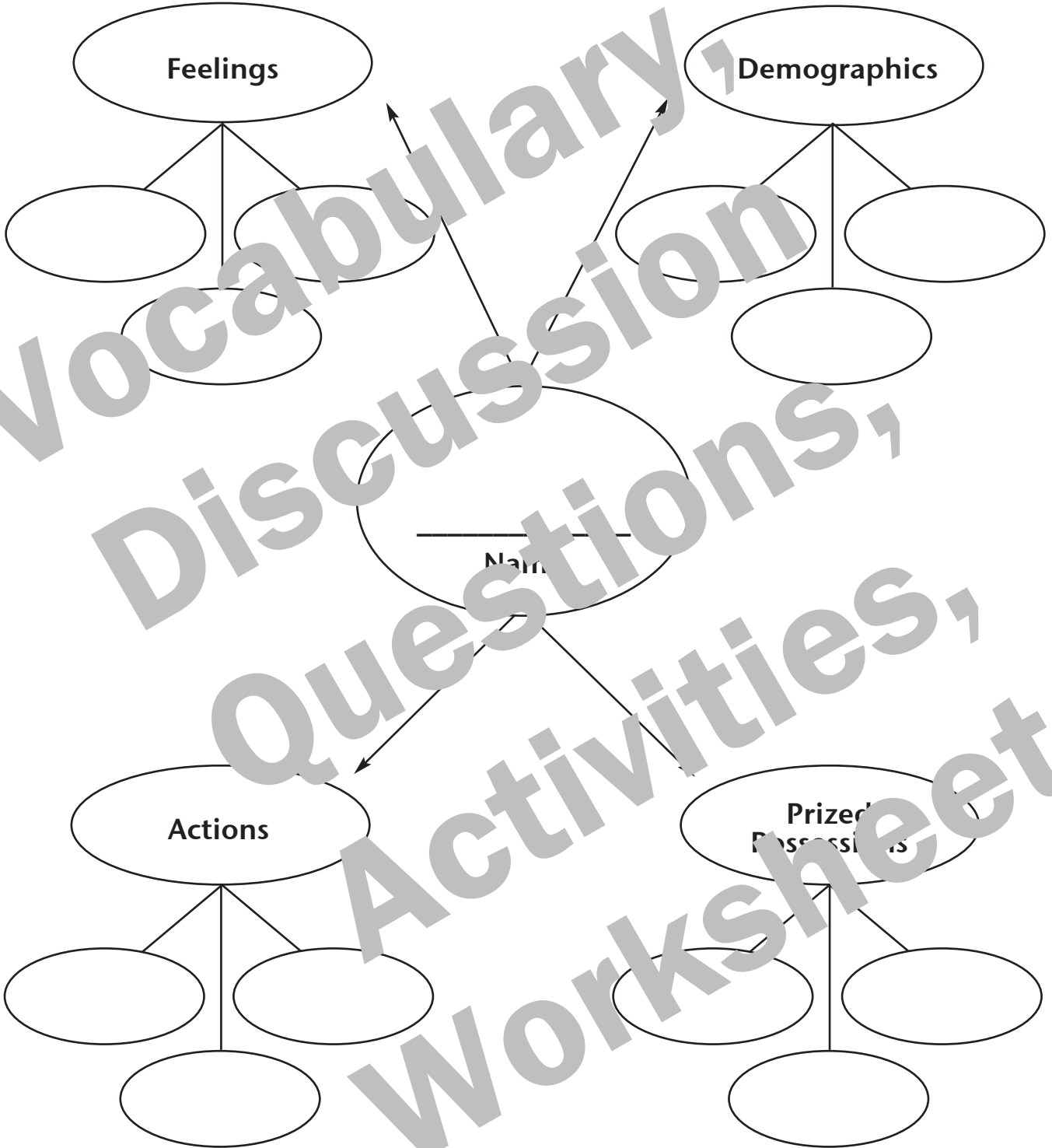
Supplementary Activities

1. Literary Analysis: Add to your list of literary devices. Examples: **Similes**—“...he looked at Isabelle, and it was as if he could feel all the cogs and wheels begin to engage in his mind...” (p. 365); “...the other hand projected light, like it was a film” (p. 371); “The big bronze hands moved slowly across the clock’s face, like the sun across the sky” (p. 371); ““If you lose your purpose...it’s like you’re broken”” (p. 374); ““It looks like the whole city is made out of stars”” (p. 378).
2. Social Studies: In Chapter 7 of Part Two, Hugo has heard stories about a train crash at the station. This is a reference to a derailment at the Gare Montparnasse on October 22, 1895. Create a “new rider’s guide” for the Gare Montparnasse. Your brochure should provide significant details about the station (a brief history, its location, its operating hours, ticket information, its facilities, and its services). Make sure you describe the station’s major routes. Include visual elements such as pictures, diagrams, and maps.
3. Comprehension: Using the Sociogram on page 29 of this guide, analyze and describe the relationships between the following characters from the story: Georges Méliès, Hugo, Isabelle, Jeanne Melis, and Etienne.

Comprehension: Using the Cause/Effect chart on page 30 of this guide, analyze the decisions Hugo made that led to his developing relationships with the old man and the girl.

Character Web

Directions: Complete the attribute web by filling in information specific to a character in the novel.



Cause/Effect Chart

Directions: Make a flow chart to show decisions Hugo made and the result(s) of each.

