



**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 6-8**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# Izzy, Willy-Nilly

Cynthia Voigt

**READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT**

# Izzy, Willy- Nilly

Cynthia Voigt

## 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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## Skills and Strategies

### Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing,  
comparison/contrast, cause  
and effect

### Thinking

Brainstorming, visualization

### Vocabulary

Synonyms, story mapping,  
hierarchical organizer,  
antonyms, analogy

### Listening/Speaking

Discussion, drama

### Literary Elements

Characterization, symbol

### Writing

Narrative, descriptive, journal,  
monologue, advertisements,  
creative

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## Summary of *Izzy, Willy-Nilly*

Fifteen-year-old Isobel has to have half of her right leg amputated after the car her date is driving hits a tree. Marco, who has drunk too much at a party, loses control of the car while playing the “swerving game.” Izzy’s friend, Suzy, calls her at the hospital to convince her not to tell the truth about what happened because it would get Marco and the others at the party into trouble. When Suzy, Lisa, and Lauren first visit Izzy at the hospital, their discomfort is apparent—and their visits taper off quickly. Izzy makes every attempt to hide her depression and anxiety—from her cheerful, well-manicured mother, her serious, practical father, and her older twin brothers—even from the counselor who visits her each day at the hospital—but her failing appetite betrays her. Then an unexpected visitor helps to revive her spirits. Rosamunde—a bright, quirky, rather dowdy classmate who had never been part of Izzy’s crowd—begins showing up regularly, and Izzy finds her honesty about the amputation disconcerting, but also refreshing. Izzy wants desperately to go home, but when the time finally comes, her relief is short-lived.

Izzy feels guilty about all the changes her mother has made in the arrangement of furniture and rooms, to better accommodate Izzy and her new disability. Izzy’s 10-year-old sister Francie is more jealous of Izzy than ever (“Izzy gets everything just because she’s crippled”) and Izzy still has to return regularly to the hospital for workouts with the aloof black physical therapist whom Izzy is convinced hates her. Hardest of all is the prospect of returning to school, and if it weren’t for Rosamunde’s appearing at her door one morning, there is no telling how long Izzy would have managed to put it off. Once she’s back in school, of course, there are many physical and emotional obstacles to overcome.

The problem of how to carry books is solved by Rosamunde’s help, and a high school senior offers to carry her up and down the cafeteria steps each day, but coping with people’s reactions proves more difficult. Lauren avoids her, as if she doesn’t want to be seen with a “cripple”; Marco not only avoids her, but never even apologizes. Lisa overcompensates—treating Izzy with “kid gloves.” And Suzy actually begins dating Marco without telling Izzy. Fortunately, Tony Marcel—editor of the school newspaper, invites her to join the staff and she finds herself becoming more and more absorbed in that activity.

Izzy “graduates” from a wheelchair to crutches and finally to a prosthetic leg. At the end of the school year, Izzy realizes how much she has changed—and that along with the terrible changes have come good ones. She is no longer the conforming, pretty, ever-“nice” girl she was. When she sees Marco flirting with Georgie, a young cheerleader whom she had helped “teach the ropes,” Izzy finds the courage to do what no one at the party had done for her—protect others from Marco. Smiling as if oblivious to Marco’s fury, she asks Georgie: “So. Are you going to go out with him? I only went out with him once, but it was quite an experience.” Izzy recognizes her own envy and pain—and she realizes that many difficulties lie ahead—but she accepts herself, now, and has found the strength to face the future.

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## Using Predictions in the Novel Unit Approach

We all make predictions as we read—little guesses about what will happen next, how a conflict will be resolved, which details will be important to the plot, which details will help fill in our sense of a character. Students should be encouraged to predict, to make sensible guesses as they read the novel.

As students work on their predictions, these discussion questions can be used to guide them: What are some of the ways to predict? What is the process of a sophisticated reader's thinking and predicting? What clues does an author give to help us make predictions? Why are some predictions more likely to be accurate than others?

Create a chart for recording predictions. This could be either an individual or class activity. As each subsequent chapter is discussed, students can review and correct their previous predictions about plot and characters as necessary.

Use the facts and ideas the author gives.

Use your own prior knowledge.

Apply any new information (i.e., from class discussion) that may cause you to change your mind.

Predictions:

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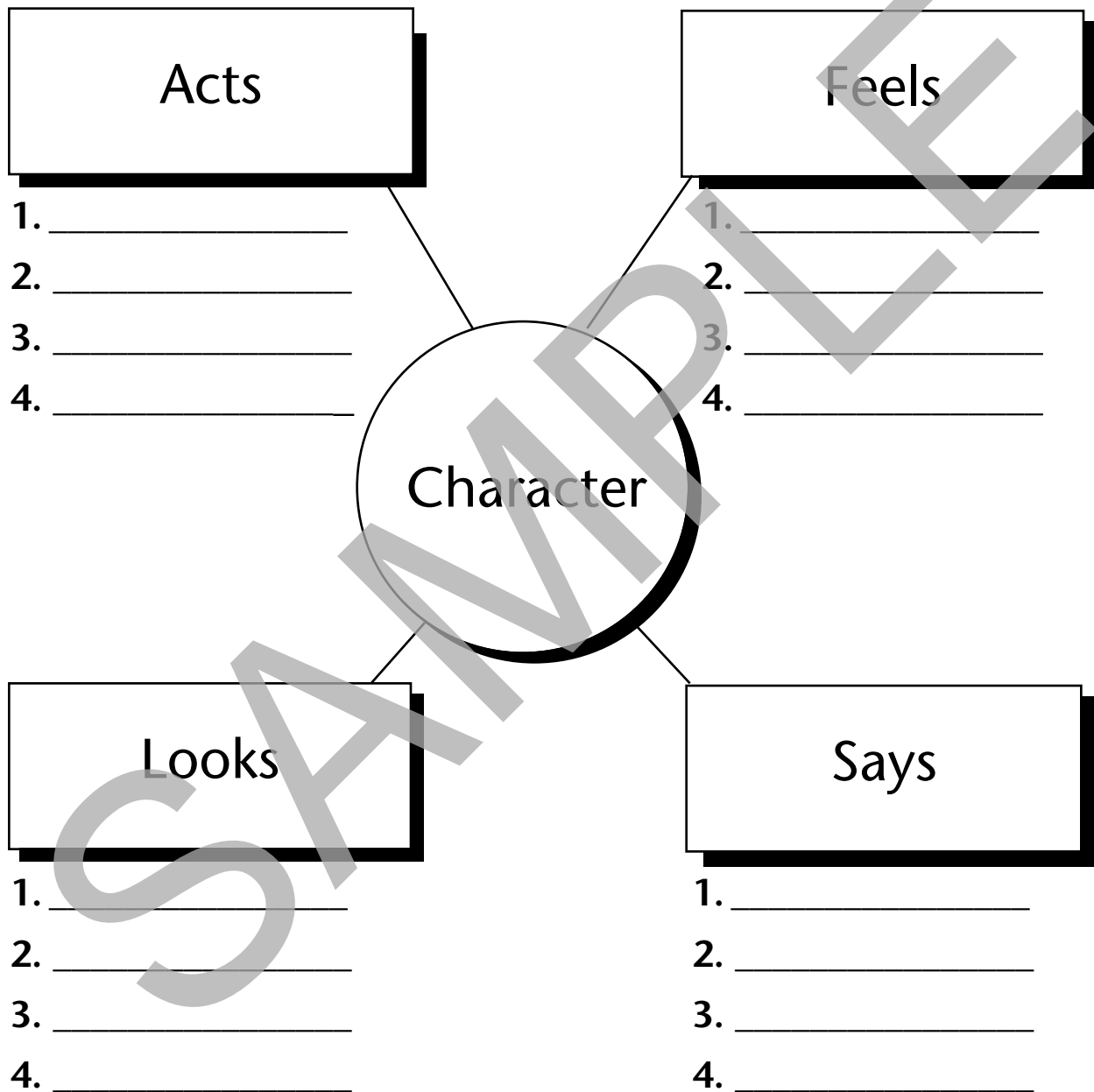
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## Attribute Web

The attribute web below will help you gather clues the author provides about a character in the novel. Fill in the blanks with words and phrases which tell how the character acts and looks, as well as what the character says and what others say about him or her.



## Chapters 1-2—pp. 1-21

### Vocabulary

vamp (1)	tibula (4)	fibula (4)	femur (4)
elapsed (4)	avulse (4)	debride (5)	stabilized (5)
necrosis (5)	catheter (11)	attaché case (13)	

### Vocabulary Activities

1. Locate a labeled diagram of the human skeleton in a biology textbook. Find the tibula, fibula, and femur.
2. Identify the attributes (qualities) of each concept, below, with a plus or minus. (Mark a plus if the concept has a particular attribute, a minus if it doesn't.)

CONCEPTS	ATTRIBUTES				
	for building	nonwooden	liquid passes through	medical supply	cylindrical
catheter					
pipe					
wire					
tube					
barrel					

### Discussion Questions

1. Who is telling the story? Begin an attribute web of the things you have learned about Izzy so far. (See pages 12-14 of this guide.) (*Fifteen-year-old Izzy, who has lost her leg as the result of a car accident, is the narrator; she is a "nice," cheerful girl—formerly a cheerleader.*)
2. What are your impressions of Izzy's mother? (*upbeat, well-dressed, volunteers at the hospital*) How is she like your mother? How is she different? What about her father and your father? (*Her father is serious, practical, a "tax man."*) List points of comparison and contrast on a T-chart like the one below.

Izzy's Parents	Your Parents

- 
3. What does Izzy mean when she describes her father as looking “like someone in an Ingmar Bergman movie”? (*Bergman’s actors are often Nordic—tall and blond—with serious, if not depressed expressions.*)
  4. Why do you think Izzy says “I’m sorry” when she regains consciousness? Why does that make her father angry? Is he right to be angry? (*She is sorry for the worry she has caused, and for her lack of judgment in going out with Marco; her father blames Marco.*)
  5. “I concentrated on behaving well, because then things would have a better chance of turning out all right.” (p. 5) What does that comment show about Izzy? Would it have been better to show that she was frightened and in pain? (*She always tries to be “good,” even when that means keeping her true feelings inside.*)
  6. Why do you think the officer asked Izzy if she had been fooling with the steering wheel? (*Maybe Marco indicated that.*)
  7. Why does Izzy like Dr. Epstein better than Dr. Carstairs? Is Dr. Epstein a better doctor? Does he remind you of your former pediatrician in any way? (*Dr. Epstein is kind and humorous, whereas Dr. Carstairs has little “bedside manner.”*)
  8. Why had Izzy agreed to go out with Marco? Her parents hadn’t liked the idea. Why didn’t they say no? Should they have? (*She wanted to go to the party and be “seen” by the seniors; perhaps they wanted to avoid the kind of fights they used to have with her in 10th grade; they seemed to trust her.*)
  9. Do you think the others at the party share in the blame for the accident? Could they have prevented it? Should they have? (*Students will probably have differing opinions; someone could have physically restrained Marco and/or been more outspoken in their attempt to convince Izzy not to go with him.*)
  10. **Prediction:** What will Izzy learn about how Marco behaved right after the accident? What will Marco say to Izzy the next time he talks to her?

### Writing Activities

1. Izzy says, “When bad news comes you don’t believe it right away.” (p. 6) Write about a time in your life when you didn’t believe the bad news at first.
2. Officer Thoms was at the scene of the accident. Assume his identity and write the accident report.
3. Izzy gives a thumbnail sketch of herself on page 2. Try creating a thumbnail sketch of yourself.

### Art Activity

Reread the description of Izzy’s dream about the accident (p. 9) and illustrate it. Try to recreate the sense of helplessness and fear Izzy felt as she saw the tree “coming at me.”