



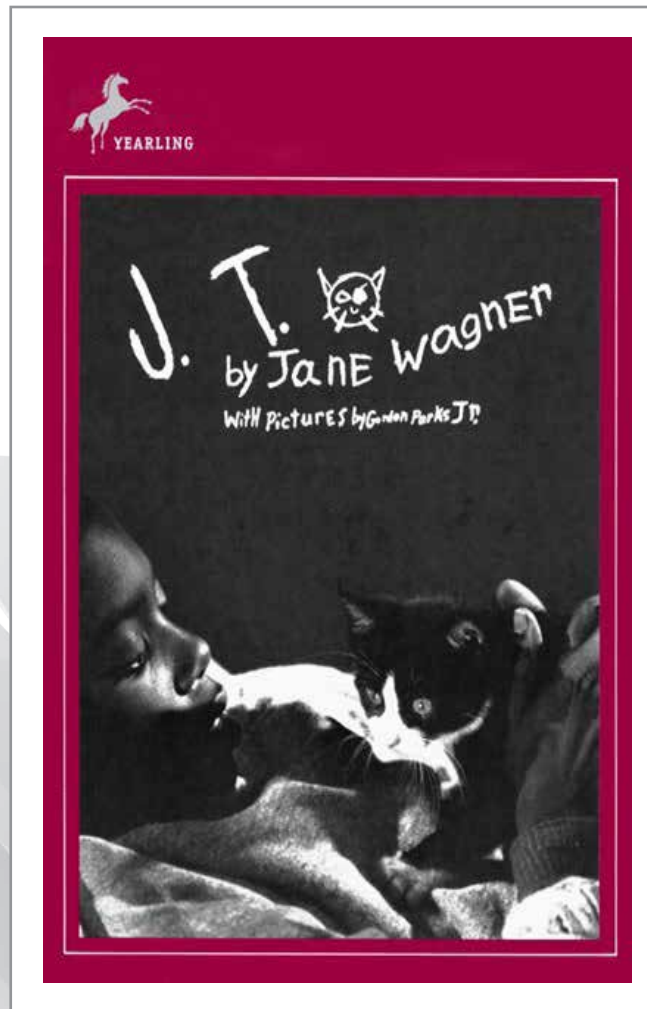
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 3-5

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

J.T.

Jane Wagner



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

J.T.

Jane Wagner

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

Thinking

Brainstorming, research

Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing,
comparison/contrast

Writing

Reports

Vocabulary

Synonyms, word mapping

Listening/Speaking

Drama, discussion

Literary Elements

Characterization, story
elements

Summary

J.T. Gamble is a tough city boy who finds an old, one-eyed, near-dead alley cat in a trash-filled lot in Harlem. The love for this cat helps J.T. find a new path for his life to take. J.T. is a boy with real feelings and problems that all children will understand.

About the Author

Jane Wagner, a person with many talents, was born in Morristown, Tennessee, and attended the School of Visual Arts. As a teenager, she joined a local theatre group and won a scholarship to the Barter Theatre in Virginia. Summers were spent touring with the theatre group. At seventeen she moved to New York City to study painting and sculpture at the School of Visual Arts.

She worked as a designer for Kimberly-Clark and Fieldcrest, and some of her textile designs have been exhibited at the Brooklyn Museum of Art. She was a co-writer and co-producer for comedian Lily Tomlin in various recording, television, and stage performances.

Wagner's first writing effort was an hour-long teleplay, "J.T.," which was subsequently published in book form. This won many awards, including the Peabody Award in 1969.

Introductory Information and Activities

Initiating Activities

You may choose to do one of the following activities before starting the story, and the other at some other time during the reading of it.

1. **Pets:** After the children have gathered in a group, ask them if anyone has a pet, and, if so, what kind. The information received may be recorded on the grid on the bulletin board. (See Bulletin Board Ideas/Pets.)

Make some concluding statements about the graph that has been made. What animal is the favorite pet in the group, having the most? What animal is next? Are any equal in numbers? How many more ___ than ___? What pet seems to be the most unusual?

Record these statements, and place them with the graph on the bulletin board.

2. **Initials:** Ask a volunteer to define the word *initial*. Record the definition, which may be used to replace the one that you have on the bulletin board or made into a banner to hang in the room. Ask the children to think of their initials. Has anyone ever used their initials for a special purpose? Has anyone seen initials used for a specific reason? When are initials used?

Take note of the bulletin board. (See Bulletin Board Ideas/Initials.) Invite the children to make their initials to place on the board. Have magazines, catalogs, wallpaper, gift wrap, and other materials available for use, and choice. Multiple materials may be used. How unique can the initials be?

Bulletin Board Ideas

1. **Pets:** Cover the bulletin board with plain mailing, craft, or butcher paper. Make this into a grid for graphing by making horizontal and vertical lines, the baseline being thicker than the other lines. Leave space under the baseline for the naming of the animals that the children have as pets. Be sure to leave a space for "none." Place numbers along the boxes on the vertical, starting with 1 at the bottom.

6									
5									
4									
3									
2									
1									
	Pet #1	Pet #2	Pet #3	Pet #4	Pet #5	Pet #6	Pet #7	Pet #8	None

2. **Initials:** Cover the bulletin board with plain, light-colored background paper. Put the word *initial* and the definition on plain paper, and place in the center, or near the top, of the bulletin board. (Initial: The first letter of a person's name or names, used as a shortened signature or for identification.)

Cut your initials out of colored magazine pictures, gift wrap, or wallpaper, and place them on the bulletin board.

Previewing the Book

Look at the picture on the cover of the book. This picture gives a clue as to two of the main characters of the story. Who/what are they? Do you think that they care for one another? Are they friends?

Look at the picture next to the title page. This picture gives a clue as to the setting of the story. What kind of a neighborhood is this? Do you think that you would like to live there?

Make and record some predictions about the story. Refer back to them after the story has been read.

Recommended Procedure

This book may be used in several ways: a) read to the entire class; b) read with the class; or c) read in reading groups.

This book may be read one section at a time, using DRTA, Directed Reading Thinking Activity, Method. This technique involves reading a section, and then predicting what will happen next based on what has already occurred in the story. The story is continued, and the predictions verified. (See pp. 6-7 of this guide.)

Pages 11 - 27 (From “For two days the red convertible...” to “You hear me?”)

Vocabulary

transistor 11
sulk (off) 17

leatherette 11
vibrated 18

cop (things) 12
liable 21

tenement 15
transistorized 21

Vocabulary Activities

1. Is there a relationship between the words *transistor* and *transistorized*? If so, what might it be? Can knowing what the word *transistor* means help to define the word *transistorized*? What do you think that the word *transistorized* means, as it was used in the story?
2. J.T. sees boys “cop things.” What do you think that means? (cop/slang: to steal) Is there some other word or phrase that would be used today to mean the same thing? What is it?
3. The music that J.T. listens to seems to vibrate from the little radio. What does vibrate mean? Can you show us how something would look if it vibrates? How do you think that music would vibrate?

Discussion Questions and Activities

1. Start a story map. Many stories have the same parts—a setting, characters, a problem, a goal, and a series of events that lead to an ending or conclusion. These story elements may be placed on a story map. Just as a road map helps a driver get from one place to another, so, too, a story map leads a reader from one point to another. There are many different types of story maps. (See p. 10 of this guide for an example.) Continue to fill in the story map as the story evolves.
2. At what time of year does this story take place? (*Page 11, “It was just a few weeks before Christmas.”*)
3. What gift does J.T. want? (*Page 11, He wants a radio.*)
4. How does J.T. get a radio? (*Page 12, He steals the small transistor radio out of a car.*) Do you think that J.T. would have stolen the radio if he had not seen Claymore and Boomer “closing in on the car”? Why? Why not?
5. What is the reaction of Claymore and Boomer to J.T.’s action? (*Page 17, They threaten to “get him.”*) What do you think that they will do? What kinds of feelings do you think all three boys have at this time?
6. When J.T. looks at the bottom of the radio, what does he see? (*page 18, “Made in Japan”*) Do you have a radio? Where was your radio made? Make a survey. Find out where the radios owned by the children in the group were made. If interest is high, expand the survey to include other groups. Locate the places of manufacture on a world map. Draw some conclusions from the survey. Get some opinions pertaining to the conclusions.