



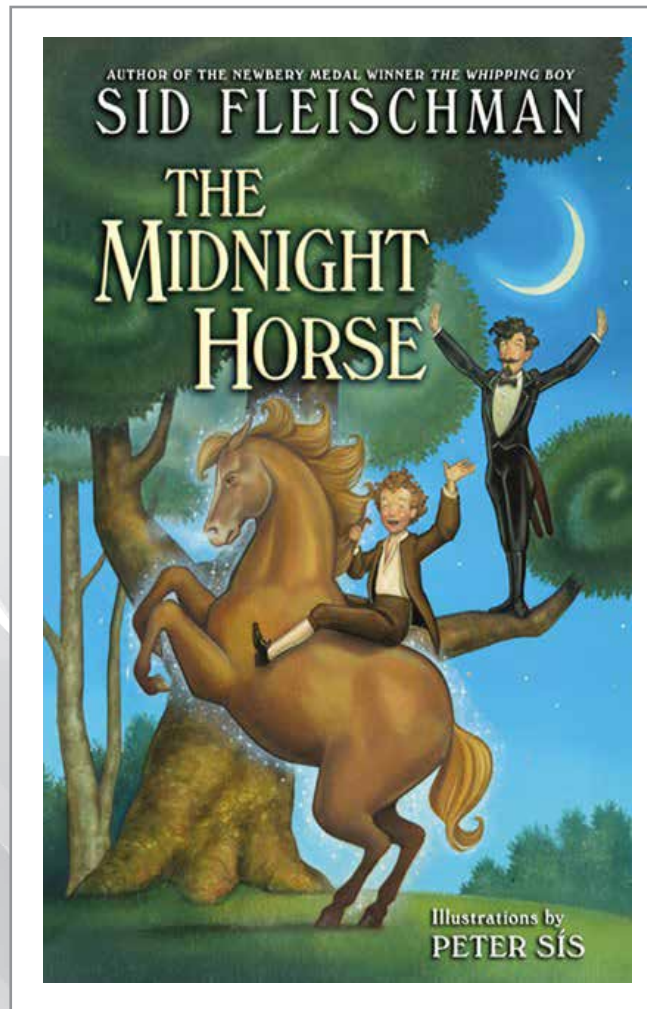
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

The Midnight Horse

Sid Fleischman



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

The Midnight Horse

Sid Fleischman

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 978-1-50203-991-0

Copyright infringement is a violation of Federal Law.

© 2020 by Novel Units, Inc., St. Louis, MO. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any way or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without prior written permission from Novel Units, Inc.

Reproduction of any part of this publication for an entire school or for a school system, by for-profit institutions and tutoring centers, or for commercial sale is strictly prohibited.

Novel Units is a registered trademark of Conn Education.

Printed in the United States of America.

To order, contact your
local school supply store, or:

Toll-Free Fax: 877.716.7272

Phone: 888.650.4224

3901 Union Blvd., Suite 155

St. Louis, MO 63115

sales@novelunits.com

novelunits.com

Ask students to look and listen for news stories about villains and heroes. You might start a "Villains and Heroes" bulletin board of news clippings, or post summaries students write of events they see or hear about on the news. For a historical tie-in, you might have students read short biographies of heroes, and add their names, with short written descriptions, to the "heroes" side of the bulletin board.

2. Have students peruse the front and back covers of the book. **Ask:** What seems odd about the man on the horse? What is he wearing around his neck? Does he look like he will be a villain in this story—or a hero? Where do you think the people in the coach are going? What are they looking at?
3. Have students look at the chapter titles in the Table of Contents, and predict what the story will be about. For a writing exercise, have them choose one of the titles and freewrite about that topic for a few minutes. For example, a student might choose the title "Thirty-seven Cents" and write about what one could buy for that amount.
4. Have students look at the picture of the covered bridge, just before page 1. **Ask:** What clues does this picture give us about where this story might take place? (Covered bridges are found primarily in the northeast.) You might add this note about covered bridges: They provided a resting place for travelers in bad weather, they kept horses from being afraid of the rushing water below, and their pitched roofs shed snow and kept it from collecting on the bridges and weighing them down.)
5. Tell students that this story involves both magic and mystery, but that the author does give some important clues to help solve the mystery. Have them set up **Clue Logs** to keep track of events and items that may be possible clues. A sample framework is shown below, and a reproducible form appears on page 24.

Page	Clue (Event or Item)	Could Have Something to Do With

Chapters 3 and 4

Summary

Touch goes to visit his uncle, who scornfully accuses Touch of being an ill-mannered and dishonest brat and tells him his inheritance from his father has all been spent except for 37 cents and a watch the Judge says was Touch's father's. He tries to get Touch to sign a paper agreeing to the settlement, threatening him with "the orphan house" if he doesn't sign. Touch notices the initials engraved on the watch are not his father's, and he runs away. Looking back at his great-uncle's house from his perch in a tree, he sees Otis Cratt emerge from a back entrance and skulk off into the woods. He has with him a leather pouch with some small white beads in it. When Touch asks Sally if he can hide at the Red Raven, Sally says she has just signed papers to sell The Red Raven to the Judge, but she'll ask Mr. Hobbs what to do.

Vocabulary

amid 19	scornful 21	inheritance 22	bellows 22
cheeky 23	blaspheming 23	plunder 24	crockery 24
hogwash 25	befuddle 25	miser 26	whirlwind 28
emerge 29	averted 33		

Vocabulary Activity

Write the word list on the board. Divide the students into two teams. Aloud, give the students clues about each word. For example: "You might call the other person's argument this if you disagreed with what they said." (hogwash) The first team to match the clue with the word gets a point.

Discussion Questions

1. Is the house on page 19 the same house pictured on page 9? (no) Whose house do you think it is? (It's Judge Henry Wigglesforth's.) If you were Touch, how would you have felt as you approached the house? Does it seem to bother Touch? (Although he felt "every window peeping at him," he "hesitated only a moment.")
2. What sort of greeting does Touch get from his uncle? (He tells Touch to wipe his feet, doesn't want Touch to call him Uncle, accuses him of stealing and cursing.)
3. What does Touch see on the coat tree? (a long brown muffler) If the judge has no callers, what do you make of the muffler? What does Touch think? (that Otis Cratt came to the judge's house when the coach arrived)

-
-
4. Do you think the judge is bitter over Touch's father's decision to run off to sea, or might the two have had problems before that happened? Why might Touch's father have been anxious to leave?
 5. According to the judge, what happened to Touch's inheritance? Why is his story hard to believe? (He tells Touch the money was spent on burial expenses, paying off debts, and legal expenses. Since Touch's father was lost at sea, there would have been no burial expenses, and since the judge is a lawyer, there would have been no legal expenses. It's also doubtful that Touch's father would have incurred many debts as a sailor.)
 6. How much of the inheritance is left? (37 cents and a silver watch) How does the watch "dangling like an unlucky fish" clue Touch in that the judge's claims are completely false? (The engraved letters on the watch are not Touch's father's initials.)
 7. With what threat does the judge try to get Touch to sign the paper? (the orphan house) Why do you think it's so important to the judge to get Touch to sign? What is Touch's response? (He runs away.)
 8. Who does Touch see leaving his uncle's house? (Otis Cratt) Describe what is happening in the picture on page 30. (Touch watches as Otis Cratt passes by below looking at some white beads he has pulled from a leather pouch.)
 9. Why does the idea of the orphan house worry Touch so much? (He had run away from the one he was put in after his mother died.)
 10. Where does Touch go? (to The Red Raven Inn) Why? (He wants to hide there from the judge.) What does Sally tell him? (He can't stay at the inn because she has just signed papers selling the inn to the judge.) What do you think Touch should do?

Prediction: Why was Otis Cratt at the judge's? What are the small white beads?

Reference Skills

The judge throws two legal terms at Touch (page 25). Where would you look to find out what these terms mean? (a dictionary of legal terminology, such as *Black's Law Dictionary*) (*Corpus delicti*=body of an offense, the fact of its having been committed; *malitia praecogitata*=malice aforethought, premeditation. Note that neither applies to the situation.)

Language Study