



TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Moonshiner's Son

Carolyn Reeder

READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Moonshiner's Son

Carolyn Reeder

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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

Research, visualization

Comprehension

Predicting, comparison/
contrast

Writing

Summarizing, persuasive
letters, limerick, short story,
news article, couplet

Vocabulary

Antonyms/synonyms, word
mapping, analogies,
alliteration

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, puppet drama

Literary Elements

Characterization, story
elements

Summary of *Moonshiner's Son*

Tom Higgins is learning that it is hard work to be part of a family tradition, that of making the best whiskey in the hills of Virginia. Since Prohibition is in effect, Tom is also watching and listening intently as his father tries to earn a living while maneuvering around the law. The arrival of Preacher Taylor and his family to the area upsets the status quo, and the lives of the people living there change in spite of their valiant efforts to keep things as they have always been. A series of personal traumas cause King Higgins and Tom to review their lives and to ultimately make major changes. Can a new family tradition be established?

About the Author

Carolyn Reeder was born November 16, 1937, in Washington, DC, the daughter of Raymond and Pauline Owens. She is married to Jack Reeder, and they have two children, David and Linda. Carolyn Reeder attended the American University, and earned B.A. and M.Ed. degrees. She is a writer and elementary school teacher. She received the Scott O'Dell Award for historical fiction in 1989 for *Shades of Gray*. She has written, with her husband Jack, nonfiction books for adults about Shenandoah. Her novels for children include *Shades of Gray* and *Grandpa's Mountain*.

Introductory Information and Activities

Note:

It is not intended that everything presented in this guide be done. Please be selective and use discretion when choosing the activities you will do with the unit. The choices that are made should be appropriate for your use and group of students. A wide range of activities has been provided so that individuals as well as groups may benefit.

Initiating Activity:

Before starting the novel, make arrangements for storytellers to visit the group and to share their expertise with the students. If possible, make arrangements for the students to be introduced to the techniques that may be used to tell a story effectively. Storytelling may be used during the time the novel is being read and discussed.

Collect recordings of music that were popular during the 1920s, such as: "I'll Be With You In Apple Blossom Time," "April Showers," "Some Day I'll Find You," "Somebody Stole My Gal," "Tea For Two," "I'll See You In My Dreams," "The Man I Love," "Always," "One Alone," "I'd Climb The Highest Mountain," "Bill," "Side by Side," "Me and My Shadow," "When You're Smiling," "Button Up Your Overcoat," "Stardust," "When It's Springtime in the Rockies," etc. Play as background music during art activities and other appropriate times.

Chapter-by-Chapter Vocabulary, Discussion Questions, and Activities

Chapter 1: Pages 1-7

Vocabulary:

laurel 1	hovering 1	fermenting 1	revenuer 1
moonshiner 1	still 1	scuttled 2	impenetrable 2
defiantly 3	confiscate 3	confident 4	intersected 4
contemptuously 5	whittling 7		

Vocabulary Activity:

Match a vocabulary word to its antonym.



ANTONYM	VOCABULARY WORD
respectfully	_____ (contemptuously)
crawled	_____ (scuttled)
give	_____ (confiscate)
accessible	_____ (impenetrable)
uncertain	_____ (confident)
compliantly	_____ (defiantly)

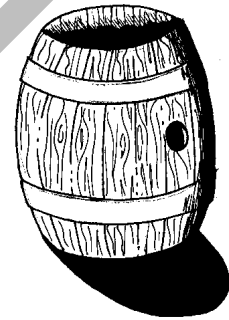
Discussion Questions:

1. Why is Tom waiting in a laurel thicket by the creek? (*Page 1, He is waiting to see if the person who poured salt into one of the mash barrels returns to do it again.*) As Tom waits, he reviews the possibilities that come to mind. What does he think about as the names come to his mind? (*Page 1, Tom thinks of reasons why each one would NOT pour salt into the mash.*) By doing this, Tom is reasonably sure who the people are who did NOT spoil the mash. What do you think of this reasoning technique? (*Opinion—answers will vary.*) Is this a technique that you have used, or could use, yourself? Discuss ways in which this technique might be useful.

2. Is Tom's father surprised when he is told that a girl spoiled the mash? Why? (*Pages 4-5, No. Tom's father was in the store when the girl purchased the salt.*) How is it that the girl admits to Ol' Man Barnes that the salt purchase is her own and not for either of her parents? (*Page 5, Ol' Man Barnes offers the girl a drink of water, figuring she would be very thirsty if the salt purchased the week before had been used up by her ma, and Mr. Higgins asks if the girl is buying the salt for her pa.*) Discuss the manner in which information is acquired from the girl.

Postreading Activities:

1. Do some research about the art of whittling. Obtain samples of wood that are suitable for that type of art for comparison purposes. Invite someone who knows how to whittle to give a demonstration to the group.
2. Find out if your community has ordinances covering the making and selling of liquor, and trespassing. Place the local ordinances on display.
3. Do some investigating. Find out what your community was like in the 1920s. Interview senior citizens, and visit historical societies and libraries in the area. Research the development of parks, schools, and other governmental agencies of the community. Make then-and-now comparisons. (You may wish to have the students divided into interest groups for these projects. Comparisons might be done in a variety of ways, such as: charts, graphs, murals, photographs, stories from those interviewed on audio or videotapes, maps, etc.)
4. Make attribute webs for Tom Higgins and his pa. (See page 7 of this guide.)
5. Start a story map. (See page 6 of this guide.)
6. What do you think might happen next? Make a prediction.

**Chapter 2: Pages 8-13****Vocabulary:**

mimicked 9 rebuffed 10 indignantly 13

Vocabulary Activity:

Use all three of the vocabulary words in the same sentence. For example:

Because he once *mimicked* her actions, she *indignantly rebuffed* his later offer of friendship.

Discussion Questions:

1. Does it bother Tom that he is twelve years old and unable to read? (*page 8, yes*) When asked by Tom, what reason does Mr. Higgins give Tom for not teaching him to read? (*Page 8, Mr. Higgins tells Tom that moonshiners don't need "book learning."*) Do you agree or disagree with Mr. Higgins? Why or why not? Discuss. What do you infer about Mr. Higgins' ability to read? See Postreading Activity #1.
2. Reread page 11. What are Tom's feelings about the preacher doing more than preaching the gospel? Do you agree or disagree with Amy, that it is all right for her to trespass on the land of others and to destroy the property of others as long as she feels that it is for a good cause? Discuss.