



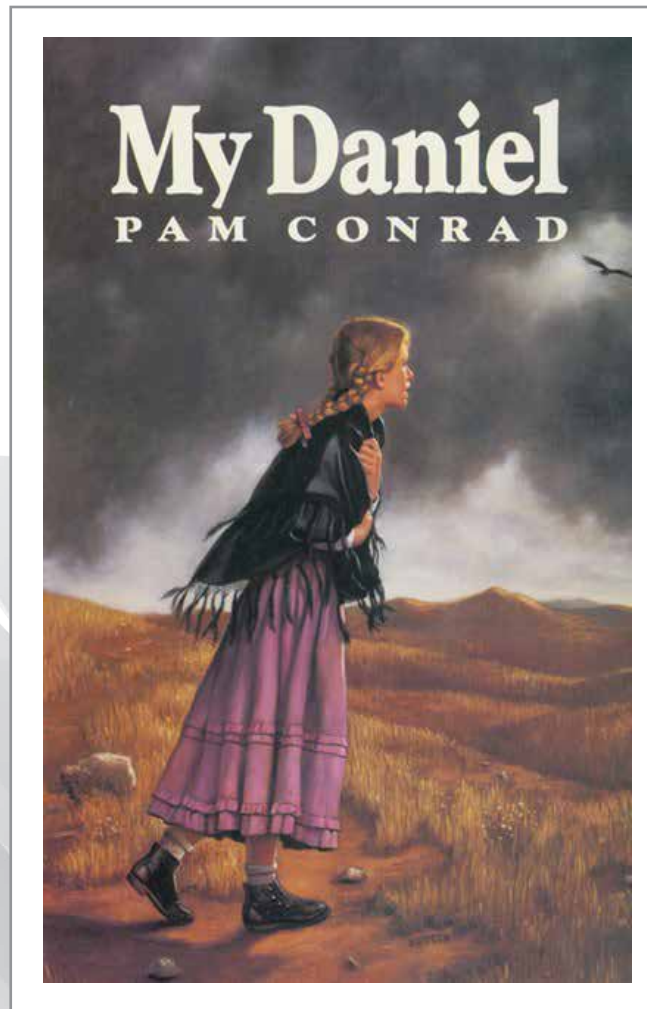
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

My Daniel

Pam Conrad



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

My Daniel

Pam Conrad

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

Visualizing, summarizing,
research, inference

Comprehension

Predicting, comparison/
contrast, sequencing

Vocabulary

Sorting, synonym chains,
cinquains

Writing

Narrative, letters

Listening/Speaking

Brainstorming, oral reports

Literary Elements

Story elements, similes,
characterization,
personification

Summary of *My Daniel*

Julia Creath Summerwaite, at the age of eighty, leaves her Nebraska farm to go east to visit her youngest son and his family. Charlie Summerwaite has promised his mother that she and her two grandchildren will visit the Natural History Museum. At the museum, as the three wend their way toward the fourth floor and the dinosaurs, Julia tells Ellie and Stevie about her brother Daniel's discovery of dinosaur bones in a creek on their farm in Nebraska. Julia Summerwaite becomes Julie Creath and relives the past as she recounts the excitement, treachery and despair that the discovery of the dinosaur brings to the Creath family. Stevie and Ellie watch as their grandmother climbs over the railing surrounding the huge brontosaurus from Nebraska, and says, "We did good, Daniel! We did real good."

(Some suggested topics for study during this unit: death of a family member [in this case, a brother], dinosaurs, recent dinosaur discoveries, Nebraska, paleontology, the development of the family farm in the 20th century, etc.)

About the Author

Pam Conrad was born in New York, New York on June 18, 1947. She married Robert R. Conrad in 1967, and they have two daughters. Pam Conrad attended Hofstra University from 1977–79. She earned a B.A. in 1984 from the New School for Social Research. She has been a full-time writer and lecturer since 1979. Conrad feels that each book that she writes has something about her life in it, and that each story comes through her, not from her. "The greatest happiness for me is when all of a sudden little parts of my life begin to take on a strange, new significance."

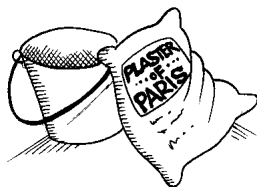
Introductory Information and Activities

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 your group of students. A wide range of activities has been provided so that individuals as well as groups may benefit.

Initiating Activity:

Have some of the following on display in the room: plaster of Paris, various sizes of paint brushes, pick, shovel, other paleontological tools and equipment, fossils, pictures of dinosaurs, newspaper and magazine articles that tell of recent dinosaur discoveries, banners with the most recent dinosaur names on them, etc. Use the materials on display as the book is being read.



Ask the students to look around at the items on display and to make some predictions as to the theme of the book that is to be read. Record the predictions and discuss the reason for each one made.

Go on to Previewing the Book.

Bulletin Board Idea:

Cover the bulletin board with plain background paper. In the center, place the word FOSSIL.

Recommended Procedure:

Due to the differing lengths of the chapters in the book, some of the chapters have been combined. Therefore, the guide refers to sections rather than to chapters. Since the guide is written to follow this plan of sectioning, it is recommended that the book be read a section at a time.

You may want to assess the understanding of the vocabulary words by the students by introducing the vocabulary words with each section and have the students, individually or as a group, define each word. There is also a vocabulary activity with each section. After each section is read, the vocabulary words may be reviewed and any changes necessary may be made to have the definitions coincide with the context of the section. The dictionary may be used for troublesome words.

Previewing the Book:

Look at the cover of the book. What does the illustration reveal about the story? Where and when might the story take place? Carefully examine the face of the girl. Does she look worried? ...concerned? ...happy? Might the girl be saying something or calling out to someone? Does the bearing of the girl's body convey anything? Discuss. Make some predictions about the story.

Prereading Activity:

Look at the word on the bulletin board. What do you think might be the connection between the girl pictured on the cover of the book and the word on the bulletin board? Discuss. (Read the short paragraph at the top of the back cover. It is a quotation spoken by Daniel.)

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

Section 1: Pages 3–9

Section Summary:

Julia Creath Summerwaite arrives from Nebraska to visit her youngest son and his family, with the promise that she and the two children will go to the Natural History Museum.

Vocabulary:

conveyor 5
valise 8

mused 5
hoisted 8

fossils 7
traipsing 9

absentmindedly 8

Vocabulary Activity:

Use the vocabulary word that makes the most sense to complete each sentence.

- a) She went _____ through the field of flowers. (traipsing)
- b) He had a collection of _____ and bugs. (fossils)
- c) _____ belts took the baggage to the correct gate at the airport. (conveyor)
- d) Grandma had her _____ in her hand. (valise)
- e) She _____ swayed to and fro while waiting for the bag. (absentmindedly)
- f) The man _____ the bag up to the conveyor belt. (hoisted)

Discussion Questions:

1. How does Ellie feel as the five Summerwaites head for her home? (*Page 8, She is excited and expectant.*) What has Ellie's grandmother talked about with the children while waiting for the baggage at the airport? (*Pages 8–9, Grandmother has already talked about clouds, quilts and farm designs, and death.*)
2. What kind of a relationship do you think Grandmother Summerwaite has with Ellie and Stevie? What makes you think as you do? Discuss student responses and the behavior of the two children with their grandmother.

Postreading Activities:

1. Start attribute webs for Grandmother Julia Summerwaite, Julie Creath*, Ellie and Stevie. (*Make two webs and compare the two at the conclusion of the story. See pages 9–10 of this guide.)

2. Make arrangements to have a quilter speak to the group and to supervise the making of a class quilt. Prepare the materials needed ahead of time, and schedule volunteers to assist as needed during the period of time it takes to complete the project.
3. **Simile:** The figure of speech called a simile uses intermediary words such as: *like, as, than, similar to, resembles, etc.*, to make comparisons between things that are not alike. For example, the author uses this simile on page 7, "...freckles marked his face *like* cinnamon on vanilla pudding."

Find other similes in this section. Write one simile on a sheet of paper, note the page number where it may be found, and make an illustration for it. The illustration may be realistic or humorous.

Repeat the process with an original simile.

4. Will Grandmother Summerwaite make it till Tuesday? What is so important about going to the museum? What do you think might happen next? Make a prediction.

Section 2: Pages 10–29

Section Summary:

Saving the dinosaur exhibit for last, Julia Summerwaite, Ellie and Stevie start their tour of the museum at the lowest level, among the Indians. As the trio looks at the Indians in their frozen poses, Julia starts to relate the story of the dinosaur bones to the children.

Vocabulary:

plied 10	persevered 10	thimble 11	ornery 11
gnarled 12	silhouetted 12	impressive 12	embossed 15
yodeled 15	righteous 16	clods 18	coaxed 19
banister 21	paleontologist 26	extinct 27	petrified (bones) 27
cynical 27	exclusive 28		

Vocabulary Activity:

Match a vocabulary word with its definition.

<u>Definition</u>	<u>Vocabulary Word</u>
twisted	_____ (gnarled)
continually supplied	_____ (plied)
stubborn	_____ (ornery)
lumps	_____ (clods)
admirable	_____ (impressive)
nonexistent	_____ (extinct)