



TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

No More Dead Dogs

Gordon Korman



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

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Gordon Korman

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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, compare/contrast, brainstorming, identifying attributes, analyzing details, drawing conclusions

Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing, main idea, inference, summarizing

Writing

List, journal, riddle, letter, newspaper story, research, memo, essay, playbill, song lyrics, review, haiku/acrostic poetry, play scenes, direct quotes

Listening/Speaking

Debate, discussion, monologue, interview

Vocabulary

Parts of speech, definitions, root words, synonyms/antonyms, word origins

Literary Elements

Stereotypes, point of view, figurative language, allusion, plot development, dialogue, epiphany, irony, author's style, slang, characterization, suspense, setting, sarcasm

Across the Curriculum

Social Studies—jury oaths, maps, Chinese water torture, George Washington; Art—magazine cover, scenery sketch, flier design, playbill design, comic strip, book jacket, diorama, poster; Drama—acting, facial expressions, role play, stage setting; Math—graphs, charts; Science—Indian summer; Music—songs; Library skills—dictionary, thesaurus, fiction book search

Genre: young-adult fiction
Setting: present-day, Bedford Middle School
Point of View: multiple first person
Conflict: person vs. person, person vs. self
Themes: friendship, values, honesty, talents, stereotypes
Tone: humorous
Date of First Publication: 2000

Summary

Eighth-grade football hero Wallace Wallace has been sentenced to detention for writing a bad review of *Old Shep, My Pal*, which just happens to be English teacher Mr. Fogelman's favorite novel. His detention takes him out of football practice and puts him right in the middle of the drama club, which is practicing for a production of...*Old Shep, My Pal* with Mr. Fogelman as the director! Wallace refuses to write a favorable review of the novel. He finds it boring because the dog dies in the end, as happens in so many other books about dogs. His detention will continue until he writes a favorable book report of the novel for Mr. Fogelman. The football team is irate that their star player is missing practice, and the team is losing every game. Drama club members are incensed that a football player has been thrown into their midst. And all this happens because Wallace truly believes that honesty is the best policy. But as Wallace begins making suggestions to improve the dated dialogue and stilted predictable action of the play, drama club members take on a renewed interest in the play, much to the chagrin of Mr. Fogelman and drama club president Rachel Turner. Then someone begins to sabotage the play. Likely suspects include Wallace and members of the football team. Despite the setbacks, the play transforms into a wild, rollicking production, and Wallace learns the true meaning of friendship. Told from multiple viewpoints, the novel is a lively story that explores the angst of middle-school students, the misconceptions of stereotypes, and the value of true friends.

Characters

Wallace Wallace—eighth-grade football hero sent to detention for being honest in his review of the novel *Old Shep, My Pal*

Rick Falconi—middle-school football quarterback; Wallace's friend who wants him back on the team

Mike "Feather" Wrigley—middle-school football player; coach's son

Steve Cavanaugh—middle-school football player; team captain; Wallace's ex-best friend

Rachel Turner—seventh-grade actress and president of the drama club who resents Wallace's presence at play practice

Trudi Davis—Rachel's best friend

Nathaniel Spitzner—whiny drama club member

Vito Brundia, Leticia Ogden, Leo Samuels, Everton Wu, Kelly Ramone—drama club members

Mr. Fogelman—young English teacher and play director whose favorite novel is *Old Shep, My Pal*

Character Analysis

Directions: On pages 98–122 of the novel, several characters start to change. Choose Wallace, Rachel, or Mr. Fogelman. List how the character was portrayed prior to this section in the Before column. List ways the character has changed in the After column.

Character Name _____

Before	After
SAMPLE	

Pages 1–19

Wallace Wallace, the local football hero, is sent to detention during football practice for writing a novel review that his teacher, Mr. Fogelman, finds improper. Wallace is just being honest when he writes that he does not like the book *Old Shep, My Pal*. He serves detention during Mr. Fogelman’s play practice, a play that just happens to be based on the book Wallace poorly reviewed.

Vocabulary
percolated (2)
slant (3)
toupee (3)
fluke (7)
titan (7)
mediocre (7)
grueling (8)
bamboozled (9)
earnestly (17)
intoned (19)

Discussion Questions

1. Why does Wallace feel it is necessary to always be truthful? (*because his dad lied so much that it caused his parents to divorce, pp. 2–3*)
2. Wallace states that “honesty wasn’t just the best policy; it was the only one” (p. 2). How do you feel about this statement? (*Answers will vary.*)
3. Wallace never confronts his dad about his lies. Why isn’t he honest with his dad about his feelings? (*Wallace feels that it is enough for his dad just to be his dad, not a CIA agent or an astronaut; however, he discovers that his dad will continue to lie and doesn’t feel that confronting him will change anything. p. 3*)
4. Do you think Mr. Fogelman is justified in assigning Wallace detention for what he considers a poor review of a book? (*Answers will vary, but should be based on supporting evidence from the novel. pp. 4–5*)
5. Why is Wallace Wallace considered a football hero? Is this justified? Give reasons for your decision. (*Wallace sat on the bench most of his seventh-grade season, but was sent in as a blocker during the county championship game. He happened to be in the right place at the right time and fell on a fumbled football in the end zone in the final three seconds of the game to score the winning touchdown. Answers will vary on if the “hero” title is justified but should be supported by evidence from the novel. pp. 6–7*)
6. Why does Mr. Fogelman’s detention time cause a problem for the football team? (*Wallace is assigned detention during football practice, and the players feel they need Wallace to practice for the opening game of the season. pp. 8–9*)
7. Why does Rachel call Trudi’s comments “warning signs” (p. 13)? (*Rachel realizes that Trudi is more interested in boys than in acting and feels that her comments are a prelude to Trudi doing something silly and embarrassing. pp. 13–19*)
8. Do you think Wallace’s second attempt at writing a review is an improvement over his first review? Defend your answer. (*Answers will vary. p. 16*)
9. Why do you think Rachel tells on Wallace for “writing a terrible review” (p. 17)? (*She is reading his review when Mr. Fogelman calls on her to read her lines, and she is not prepared. p. 17*)
10. How do you think Wallace reacts when Mr. Fogelman tells him he has a second day of detention? (*Answers will vary, but will probably include that he is upset because he still does not understand why his writing is unacceptable. p. 18*)

Supplementary Activities

1. Social Studies: Use print and Web resources to research where the phrase “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth” (p. 4) is commonly heard today. Discuss why it is used in this situation.

- Literary Analysis: The author uses the term “Rick-isms” (p. 9) to describe a play on words used by Rick Falconi. Keep a journal of “Rick-isms” used in the novel. Add others you hear to the list.
- Writing: Write a letter to a favorite celebrity asking questions about his or her career, telling him or her about yourself, and asking advice on how to get started in the business.
- Literary Devices: Working in pairs, locate at least two examples of each of the following types of literary devices in this section—simile, metaphor, and hyperbole. Examples: **Simile**—“Uncle Ted’s toupee really *did* look like a small animal had crawled up onto his head and died there” (p. 3); **Metaphor**—“Rick looked daggers” (p. 6); **Hyperbole**—“I saw stars” (p. 5).
- Story Map: Begin the Story Map on page 6 of this guide with information from the novel provided thus far.

Pages 20–45

Wallace discovers that his reassignment to detention prevents him from practicing football with the team even on weekends. School reporter Parker Schmidt misinterprets the situation and reports that Wallace is holding out for better grades. Wallace writes his third book review giving reasons why he hates the novel, but Mr. Fogelman doesn’t accept it either. A mystery begins to develop as someone vandalizes the play set, and of course, all eyes turn to Wallace.

Vocabulary

mulling (21)
 reverie (25)
 mobbed (26)
 uncanny (27)
 chortled (28)
 hyperventilating (41)
 calisthenics (41)
 ruckus (44)
 snarl (45)

Discussion Questions

- Why does Coach Wrigley tell Wallace that Mr. Fogelman is Wallace’s problem? (*Since Mr. Fogelman has given Wallace detention until he writes an acceptable review, it is Wallace’s job to write the review so he can get out of detention and return to football practice. p. 24*)
- Do you think the Giants lost Saturday’s game because Wallace did not play? (*Answers will vary, but should be supported with evidence from the novel. pp. 26–27*)
- Why do you think Wallace describes Steve Cavanaugh as his ex-best friend? (*It could be that Wallace stole Steve’s glory by scoring the touchdown at the championship game, or it could be something that happened earlier. Answers will vary. p. 27*)
- Discuss the reasons why Parker’s newspaper story about Wallace is incorrect. (*Students should provide examples of how Parker misinterprets the truth, doesn’t have all the facts, exaggerates, doesn’t tell the truth, etc. p. 31*)
- If Wallace did not spray-paint the scenery board, why does he laugh when he sees it? (*He agrees with what it says and thinks it is funny. p. 33*)
- Why doesn’t Mr. Fogelman like Wallace’s third review of the novel? (*The title labels the book as terrible, he claims Wallace’s reasons aren’t valid, and Wallace starts making suggestions to change the dialogue of the play. pp. 34–36*)
- How does Rachel’s latest letter to Julia Roberts show that her attitude toward Wallace is changing? (*Rachel states that Wallace is good-looking and that his ideas for changing the script are good. pp. 37–39*)