



TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 3-5

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Oh, the Places He Went: A Story About Dr. Seuss

Maryann N. Weidt

READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

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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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3901 Union Blvd., Suite 155

St. Louis, MO 63115

sales@novelunits.com

novelunits.com

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Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Brainstorming

Writing

Creative writing,
letter writing

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, guest speaker

Comprehension

Predicting, comparison/
contrast

Literary Elements

Poetry

Other

Graphic, metric system,
recipes, music, geography

Summary of *Oh, the Places He Went: A Story about Dr. Seuss*

Theodor Seuss Geisse (Dr. Seuss) was born in Springfield, Massachusetts, on March 2, 1904. He studied literature at both Dartmouth and Oxford Colleges. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1984 and Academy Awards, Seuss is the author and illustrator of 44 children's books, some of which have been made into audio cassettes, animated television specials, and videos for children of all ages.

Forever a child at heart, Dr. Seuss worked diligently at his craft of entertaining children with fun stories that often carry important messages. Even after his death in 1991, Dr. Seuss continues to be the best-selling author of children's books in the world.

About the Author

Maryann Weidt was a children's librarian for 20 years. She lives in Duluth, Minnesota, with her husband and three children. She is the author of three biographies. In addition to *Oh, the Places He Went: A Story about Dr. Seuss*, Maryann Weidt has written *Mr. Blue Jeans: A Story about Levi Strauss (Novel Unit available)* and *Stateswoman to the World: A Story about Eleanor Roosevelt*.

Please be selective, and use discretion when choosing the activities that you will do with the unit. It is not intended that everything be done, but that the discretionary choices that are made are the most appropriate for your use and group of students. A wide range has been provided, so that individuals as well as groups may benefit from these activities.

Introductory Activities

Go to the library and collect as many of the books and beginning readers by Dr. Seuss as are available. Place them in an area easily accessible to the students.

Make different-sized replicas of the hat worn by *The Cat in the Hat*. When ready to start using this guide, place the hats about the room, hanging some in a mobile-like fashion.

Cut some strips of paper for the bulletin board display. As students think of Dr. Seuss titles, ask them to write them on these strips.

Make a **KWL** using Dr. Seuss titles. Note first the information students already know about Dr. Seuss. Next, note what they would like to know, and eventually what they learn. (As information is learned, any incorrect information may be crossed off the form.)

When ready to start, have the **KWL** form, the books, etc., on display. Bring the students' attention to the hats, and ask if anyone knows whose hat they represent. Discuss Dr. Seuss, and fill in the **K** of the **KWL** form. Go to **Previewing the book** (below) before filling in the **W** section.

What I KNOW	What I WOULD Like to Know	What I LEARNED

Bulletin Board Idea

Cover the bulletin board with plain background paper. Make a large replica of the hat worn in *The Cat in the Hat*, and place it on the board. Ask for volunteers to place the strips of paper with the names of some of the books written by Dr. Seuss around the hat.

Recommended Procedure

It is recommended that the book be taken one chapter at a time. You may wish to have the students, either individually or as a group, show knowledge of the vocabulary words before reading by writing simple definitions in their own words. After reading, the meaning of each word may be verified or checked in context and/or with the use of a dictionary.

Previewing the Book

Open up the book, so that both the front and the back covers may be seen. (It is one large illustration.) Ask: What do you think the illustrator, Kerry Maguire, wants to tell the viewer about the book and the person seated in the chair? Look at the girl to the left of Dr. Seuss (it looks like *The Cat in the Hat* is holding his hand out toward her). What do her face and body tell you?

Pre-reading Activity

What does the word *endure* mean? What are some synonyms for that word? List.

Endure: To continue in existence; remain; to last

(Examples: *last, continue, remain, persist, hold, stand, wear, survive, stay...*)

Chapter 3: "Turning the Corner on Mulberry Street"—Pages 22-32

Vocabulary

rejection 22
conjure 28

dismal 23
fanciful 28

fortunate 24
ridiculous 29

outlandish 26

Vocabulary Activities

1. Give a synonym and antonym and make word maps for these vocabulary words: *rejection, dismal, fanciful, fortunate, ridiculous, and outlandish.*

Vocabulary Word

rejection
dismal
fanciful
fortunate
ridiculous
outlandish

Synonym

refusal
dreary
imaginary
lucky
absurd
bizarre

Antonym

acceptance
cheerful
mundane
unlucky
sensible
ordinary

Synonym

Antonyms

Target
Word

**Definition in
own words or
in a sentence**

**Related to
experience**

2. Put the vocabulary words in alphabetical order. Think of a word to go with each that begins with the same letter/sound. For example:

Conjure commandingly
Dismal day
Fanciful fruit
Fortunate fate

Outlandish outerwear
Rejection reaction
Ridiculous racer

Discussion Questions

1. What is Ted's first full time job? (Page 23, *He becomes a staff writer and artist for a cartoon magazine called Judge.*) Describe the cartoon that brings about a change in Ted's life. (Page 24, *A knight is pictured lying on his bed, obviously exhausted. A dragon pokes his head in the knight's face, and the knight says, "Darn it all, another dragon! And just after I'd sprayed the whole castle with Flit."*) What happens? (Page 26, *Ted is hired to produce ads to promote Flit, an insect repellent.*) Ted faces what he thinks of as a problem with this job. What is it? (Page 27, *He is not busy enough.*) Are there times when you think that you are not busy enough? How do you feel at these times? Would you rather be too busy, or not busy enough? Why? Discuss choices and reasons.
2. Ted's contract for the Flit (Standard Oil of New York), advertising does not prevent him from writing children's books* (page 27). However, selling the first book proved to be more difficult than writing it. Twenty-seven publishers rejected the story. (*"The excuse I got for all those rejections was that there was nothing on the market quite like it, so they didn't know whether it would sell."*) What do you think might have happened in Ted's life if this first book had not been published? Discuss various outcomes suggested.

**"Seuss stumbled on writing children's books when he illustrated Bonders (1931), a collection of schoolboy cartoons he worked on to circumvent his advertising contract, which prohibited him from most commercial publishing ventures. Seuss did not want to be limited to illustrating, however, and in 1937 wrote, for his own amusement, his first full-length book And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street." Source: Moje and Shyu.*

Post-reading Activities

1. And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street is a story in verse, telling what Marco sees on the way home from school, on Mulberry Street. What do you see on the way home from school? Change one thing from ordinary to extraordinary. ("Dr. Seussize" the situation.) Make a before and after illustration of the change. Make a rhyming caption for the illustration.
2. Ted dedicated *The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins* to his imaginary child, Chrysanthemum-Pearl, who is, according to Ted, a clever child. She "liked to knit red long underwear for her Uncle Terwilliger and make oyster stew with chocolate frosting" (page 30).

Think of other things that Chrysanthemum-Pearl might like to do, or create your own imaginary child to name and describe. Write a short paragraph about an imaginary child.