



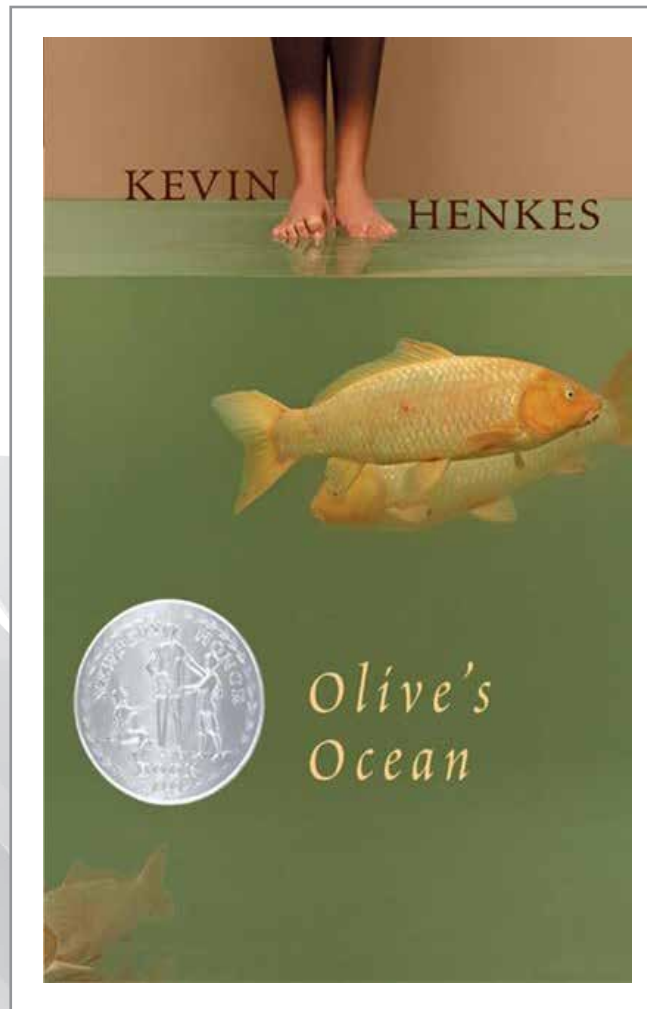
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Olive's Ocean

Kevin Henkes



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Olive's Ocean

Kevin Henkes

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

Research, compare/contrast,
analysis, critical thinking,
brainstorming, predicting

Comprehension

Cause/effect, conflict

Writing

Letters, poetry, persuasive, journal,
recipes, stories, book chapter

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, oral presentations,
interviewing

Vocabulary

Definitions, part of speech,
synonyms and antonyms

Literary Elements

Setting, conflict, simile, metaphor,
personification, point of view,
theme, characterization

Across the Curriculum

Health—stages of grief, ocean
safety; Media—documentary, film
industry; Science—ocean wildlife;
Art—painting, sculpture, collage;
Literature—*To Kill a Mockingbird*

Genre: young-adult fiction

Setting: Madison, Wisconsin; Cape Cod, Rhode Island

Point of View: third-person omniscient

Themes: mortality, family, honesty, trust, friendship, acceptance

Conflict: person vs. person, person vs. self, person vs. nature

Tone: candid, intuitive

Summary

Martha Boyle is preparing for her family's annual visit to Cape Cod to visit her grandmother, Godbee. Before she leaves, Martha receives a journal entry from the mother of a classmate, Olive Barstow, who was recently killed by a car while riding her bicycle. Olive and Martha weren't friends, but the journal entry references Martha, as well as Olive's hopes and dreams, such as one day seeing the ocean. Olive's words affect Martha during her trip as she experiences the ocean, romance, and what it might feel like to be alone.

About the Author

Kevin Henkes, award-winning author and illustrator, was born in Wisconsin in 1960. He began writing and drawing at age 19. His first picture book was *All Alone*, published in 1981. *Owen*, a 1994 Caldecott Honor Book, and *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse* are among his other picture books. His young-adult novels include *The Birthday Room*, *Protecting Marie*, *Words of Stone*, and the Newbery Honor book *Olive's Ocean*. He says that experimenting with words and paint "keeps his job interesting." Henkes now lives with his wife and family in Madison, Wisconsin. His official Web site is www.kevinhenkes.com (active at the printing of this guide).

Characters

Martha Boyle—12-year-old girl; aspires to be a writer; impacted by Olive's death after receiving a journal entry from Olive's mother

Dorothy Boyle, a.k.a. Godbee—Martha's beloved grandmother with failing health who lives on Cape Cod

Dennis Boyle—Martha's father who is considering returning to his career as a lawyer after taking time off to try to write a novel; Godbee's son

Alice Hubbard—Martha's mother; Dennis' wife; works for Wisconsin Public Radio as producer and host of a radio talk show

Vince Boyle—Martha's older brother; both teases and cares for Martha

Lucy Boyle—Martha's little sister who is almost three years old

Jimmy Manning—the oldest Manning brother who lives next to Godbee; making a movie called *The World Is Not What You Think It Is*; pretends to be interested in Martha so he can film a segment for his movie

Tate Manning—Manning brother who truly likes Martha; tries to defend Martha's honor after Jimmy videotapes himself kissing Martha

Holly—Martha's best friend in Wisconsin

John Waverly—former neighbor of Olive and her mother; tells Martha about Olive and her mother when Martha tries to find Olive's mother

Olive Barstow—a girl in Martha's class who is killed in a hit-and-run car accident while riding her bicycle; *Note:* Olive never actually appears in the book, though her journal is referenced.

Foreshadowing Chart

Foreshadowing is the literary technique of giving clues to coming events in a story.

Directions: What examples of foreshadowing do you recall from the story? If necessary, skim through the chapters to find examples of foreshadowing. List at least four examples below. Explain what clues are given, then list the coming event that is suggested.

Foreshadowing	Page #	Clues	Coming Event

Chapters 1–9, pp. 1–28

One of Martha Boyle’s classmates, Olive Barstow, has been killed. Martha and Olive were not friends, so Martha is surprised when Ms. Barstow brings her an entry from Olive’s journal. Martha is amazed at the similarities between herself and Olive. When her family leaves for their annual trip to Cape Cod to see her grandmother (Godbee), Martha brings the journal entry with her.

Vocabulary
audible (1)
coincidences (6)
cocking (12)
lurched (13)
wincing (15)
trinkets (15)
pronouncement (24)
quake (25)
galumphing (26)

Discussion Questions

1. What happened to Olive Barstow? What kind of girl was she? *(She was killed in a hit-and-run car accident while riding her bicycle. She was a shy, quiet student who Martha thought of as a “loner.” p. 3)*
2. What fascinates Martha about Olive’s journal entry? *(She is interested that Olive had wanted to be her friend, and also that they both share similar interests regarding the ocean and wanting to be writers. pp. 4–6)*
3. Why do you think Martha chooses not to tell her father about the journal entry? *(Answers will vary. Note how the entry made Martha feel somehow changed and a little eerie. p. 7)*
4. Reread Chapter 5. How does the author provide basic information about the characters while also developing their personalities? Evaluate the way the author introduces this information into the story. *(He engages Martha and Lucy in a conversation about their ages, which shows Lucy’s character and insight into Martha’s character based on how she responds to and cares for her baby sister. Evaluations will vary. pp. 11–12)*
5. Where does Martha take Lucy in the stroller? Why do you think she takes Lucy to this place? *(to the intersection where Olive was killed; Answers will vary, though perhaps Martha goes there to feel a closer connection to Olive or to honor her memory. pp. 13–16)*
6. Compare and contrast Holly’s and Martha’s reactions to Olive’s death. *(Answers will vary. Note how Holly and Martha are both sad Olive died and agree that the intersection where Olive passed away is a dangerous one. However, Holly seems less grieved by the circumstance than Martha, who regrets not knowing Olive better. Holly is able to dismiss the thoughts of Olive’s death and focus on what she wants to do next while Martha seems to want more time to process and mourn. pp. 17–19)*
7. Martha seems uninterested in having her mother around until Ms. Hubbard leaves Martha’s room. Why do you think Martha’s feelings toward her mother change so quickly? *(Answers will vary. Note that the author is probably trying to relate to his young-adult audience. You may discuss the significance of addressing the universal theme of adolescent/parent relationships. pp. 20–23)*
8. Describe Martha’s relationship with her brother, Vince. *(Discussions will vary. As an older brother, he teases her, and they have their share of conflict. But Vince and Martha also care about each other, evidenced by their nightly talks before bed. pp. 24–27)*
9. **Prediction:** How will Olive’s journal entry affect Martha on her trip?

Supplementary Activities

1. **Figurative Language:** Locate similes, metaphors, and personification used by the author. Keep a chart of them as you read the book. Examples: **Similes**—“braid hanging behind her like a tail” (p. 2); “handwriting...like rows and rows of pearls” (p. 4); “his head coming right at her like a pitched ball” (p. 26)
2. **Writing/Character:** Olive compliments Martha in her journal (see page 5 of the book). Consider how this compliment affected Martha. Then write someone you know a compliment—something that you’ve often thought about him or her but have never actually told them. Then give it to the person as an act of kindness.
3. **Research:** Consider how the characters are all dealing with Olive’s death differently. Research the stages of grief that people often go through when someone dies. Write a short essay answering these questions: What are the stages of grief? Do these stages affect people differently depending on how close someone is to the person who passed away?
4. **Critical Thinking:** Begin the Foreshadowing Chart on page 9 of this guide. Continue this activity as you read the novel.

Chapters 10–22, pp. 29–74

The Boyle family arrives at Godbee’s house, and Godbee invites Martha to play a game with her during the trip—every day they will tell each other something about themselves the other doesn’t know. After a tense family dinner, Dennis Boyle decides to return to his career as a lawyer and leave writing behind, much to everyone’s approval. Jimmy Manning, the oldest of the Manning brothers who live next to Godbee, acts interested in Martha and shows her the film he is currently making.

Vocabulary

dissipating (30)
jockeyed (31)
inclination (32)
belying (32)
cryptic (37)
complied (37)
discourse (38)
reproving (38)
preoccupation (43)
muster (45)
orbs (46)
chided (46)
repose (48)
cleft (54)
labyrinthine (66)
sallow (68)
inscrutable (71)

Discussion Questions

1. Describe Martha’s relationship with Godbee. (*Descriptions will vary. Godbee is Martha’s favorite grandmother, and Martha is the grandchild Godbee has the highest hopes of getting to know better before she reaches the end of her life. Martha gave Godbee her nickname when she was little, and they seem to enjoy each other’s company. pp. 32–36*)
2. How does Godbee’s statement, “...this might be our last summer together” (p. 36) affect Martha? How does Godbee respond to Martha’s reaction? What seems to be one recurring theme thus far in the novel? (*It scares Martha into thinking that Godbee is dying. After Martha tells her father how she feels, Godbee assures Martha that her statement only meant that she is getting older. Answers will vary. Note that the theme of death [or mortality] has already arisen twice in the novel—with Olive and now with Godbee. pp. 36–37*)
3. Why do you think the author includes the dinner-table chaos in Chapter 13? Why would the author choose to show a dinner at home rather than a dinner in a restaurant at this point in the story? (*Answers will vary. Note how it shows the universality of family strife/conflict, as well as a hidden unrest in Mr. Boyle. Also*