



TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

One - Eyed Cat

Paula Fox

READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

One-Eyed Cat

Paula Fox

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

Brainstorming, research

Vocabulary

Word mapping, antonyms,
synonyms, analogies

Listening/Speaking

Discussion

Comprehension

Predicting, inference,
comparison/contrast

Literary Elements

Characterization, story
elements

Summary of *One-Eyed Cat*

Ned knows that he is forbidden to touch the birthday rifle from Uncle Hilary, yet he takes it from the house to the back by the old stable, and fires it, just once, at a fleeting shadow. Returning home, he's sure that someone is watching him from the attic window.

Feelings of guilt and fear increase as Ned, while helping old Mr. Scully, sees a wild cat with one eye missing. He feels that he is responsible for the cat's injury. Can he ever bring himself to reveal his secret, knowing that he has betrayed the trust that his father has bestowed upon him?

About the Author

Paula Fox was born on April 22, 1923, in New York, New York. She married Paul Hervey, a writer, in 1948. They had two children, Adam and Gabriel. She divorced him in 1954, and married Martin Greenburg, a professor, in 1962. She attended Columbia University, 1955-58. She worked as a teacher at the Ethical Culture School in New York, and at the University of Pennsylvania, as a professor of English Literature, starting in 1963.

Paula Fox is a highly-regarded writer. Her books for children and young adults are regularly cited for their intelligence, originality, and social consciousness. She has said, "It is the work of other writers and the examples of their lives that provide the deepest encouragement and the most abiding inspiration. At times I am weary of myself, tired of my own mind. To an extent we are all prisoners of ourselves, even though we write to lessen that bondage. Early in my career, I was hungry for attention, for praise, for awards. I am less vain now. I have my work to do, and I do it. Come what may."

Introductory Information and Activities

Note:

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 discretionary choices made are most appropriate for your use and group of children. A wide range has been provided, so that individuals as well as groups may benefit from these selections.

Introductory Activities

Choose one of the three introductory activities for this unit depending upon the focus you wish to take. After selecting one to use as an Initiating Activity, the others may be used as Supplementary Activities during the course of the study.

1. The 1930s: (See the Supplementary Activities Section, The 1930s, for additional suggestions.)
Play some tapes or compact discs that have the big band sound of the 1930s.
Have on hand the soft drinks, Coca-Cola and Pepsi, a *Life* magazine, some Alka-Seltzer, a game of Monopoly, a can of whipping cream, a sound recording of *Peter and the Wolf*, a ballpoint pen, a video of Judy Garland in *The Wizard of Oz*, a copy of the book *Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, and anything else that you can find that came into being, or had an impact, in the 1930s.

Chapter I: "Sunday"—Pages 1-23

Vocabulary

parsonage (2)
doxology (11)
abutted (17)

amethyst (4)
gargoyle (12)
westering (19)

sullen (7)
tintypes (14)

philosophical (10)
adversity (15)

Vocabulary Activity

The word *philosophical* is used by the author on page 10 in conjunction with defining the character, Mrs. Scallop, the housekeeper. Read the paragraph, and tell us something that you predict, or can imagine, about Mrs. Scallop.

"By philosophical, Ned knew that his mother meant they had to remind themselves there was a bright side to Mrs. Scallop's presence in the house. It was hard to find anything bright about Mrs. Scallop, only red and inflamed, like skin around a splinter. Even the rag rugs she was always braiding were without a touch of brightness, just dull and rusty-looking."

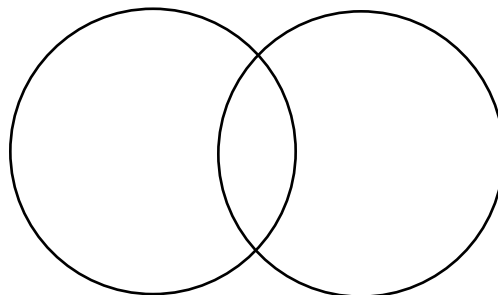
Discussion Questions and Activities

1. On page 9, we learn that Ned will soon be celebrating his eleventh birthday, and that he was born in September of 1924. In what year is this story taking place? How old would Ned be in September of the current year?
2. On page 13, Ned is thinking about the happiness that he felt in the past, before his mother became ill. "When he was happy now, he would remind himself he was. He would say, *At this moment I'm happy*, and that was different from simply being a certain way and not having to give it a name." Give your explanation of the differences that Ned is feeling. Have you ever been aware of having to label a feeling?
3. How much money does Ned earn by doing chores for Mr. Scully every afternoon except Sunday? (Page 19, Ned earns *thirty-five cents a week*.) How much money would Ned earn in four weeks? (\$1.40) 36 weeks? (\$12.60) 52 weeks? (\$18.20) Would you work for that pay? Why? Why not? If not, how much would you charge Mr. Scully? If he paid you what you asked, how much would you earn in 52 weeks?

Supplementary Activities

1. Make a timeline. Put the year of Ned's story, 1935, and the current year on the timeline. What important events happened in between? What inventions do we have that Ned did not know?
2. Looking at the timeline, or thinking about Ned's life and yours, make a comparison. Use a Venn Diagram to help you sort out the differences in your lives, and what things are basically the same.

Ned's Life



Your Life

3. Begin attribute webs for Ned's parents. What is known about them now? Are they very different types of people? Add to the webs as more is learned about them. (See page 12 of this guide.)
4. Start a story map. Develop it as the story is read. (See page 10 of this guide.)
5. Make a prediction as to what will happen next. Look at the last sentence in the chapter. Ned is thinking about the way in which Uncle Hilary's presence has temporarily changed his mother, and of the special things that his mother and uncle, her brother, must know that he and his father do not. "But he, (Ned), felt a touch of strangeness, as though Uncle Hilary's presence had changed the day for him, too." Are changes to take place? If so, will they be happy ones? What do you think will happen?

Chapter II: "The Gun"—Pages 24-46

Pre-reading Activity

If you have not done the Firearm Safety Introductory Activity, this would be a good time to do it, or at least to invite the expert to speak to the children regarding firearm safety.

Vocabulary

meditative (24)

consternation (33)

anticipation (27)

conciliating (38)

anguished (28)

maimed (39)

persuasive (28)

Vocabulary Activity

Use each of the following sets of words in a sentence. Illustrate one of the sentences. (anticipation, anguished, maimed) (consternation, persuasive, anticipation) (meditative, conciliating, anguished)

Discussion Questions and Activities

1. How would you interpret the following statement that Mrs. Wallis makes regarding the visits by the people from the church? "I can't bear all that *goodness!* Try to understand me...When someone is as helpless as I am, that goodness is like being drowned..." (page 26)
2. The author, with her words, paints a picture of Mrs. Scallop. On pages 24 and 25 we are told by Ned, "He was pretty sure she, (Mrs. Scallop), had been listening to them, that she often eavesdropped, and that whatever she heard filled her up like a big supper." Describe eavesdropping in a different way. (See Post-reading Activity #2.)
3. What are some of the things that Ned has previously received from Uncle Hilary as gifts? (Page 36, "Ned had a shelf of presents from Uncle Hilary, coins and ancient bones, a piece of oily spinach-colored jade from China, a pitcher made from lava spewed out from Mount Vesuvius, a butterfly in a glass case from Mexico and, the most valuable one of all, a bronze goat from Greece, so small Ned could hide it in his hand.") Which of the things on the shelf would be your favorite? Why?
4. What does Ned receive as a birthday gift from Uncle Hilary? Is he surprised? (Page 37, He receives a Daisy Air Gun. "If he had made a guess, [about the gift], it would have been the last thing he would have guessed, even if he'd been given one hundred chances.) What does Ned's father think of the gift? (Page 37, He tells Hilary, "Hilary, your gift is not quite the thing...Something dead...That's what there is to imagine with a gun." On page 38 he adds, "Oh, Hilary! Really, you should have asked me about this!") Do you agree with Ned's father? Should Uncle Hilary have discussed the gift with him before giving it to Ned? Have a class discussion regarding the approval by a parent of a gift given to a child.