



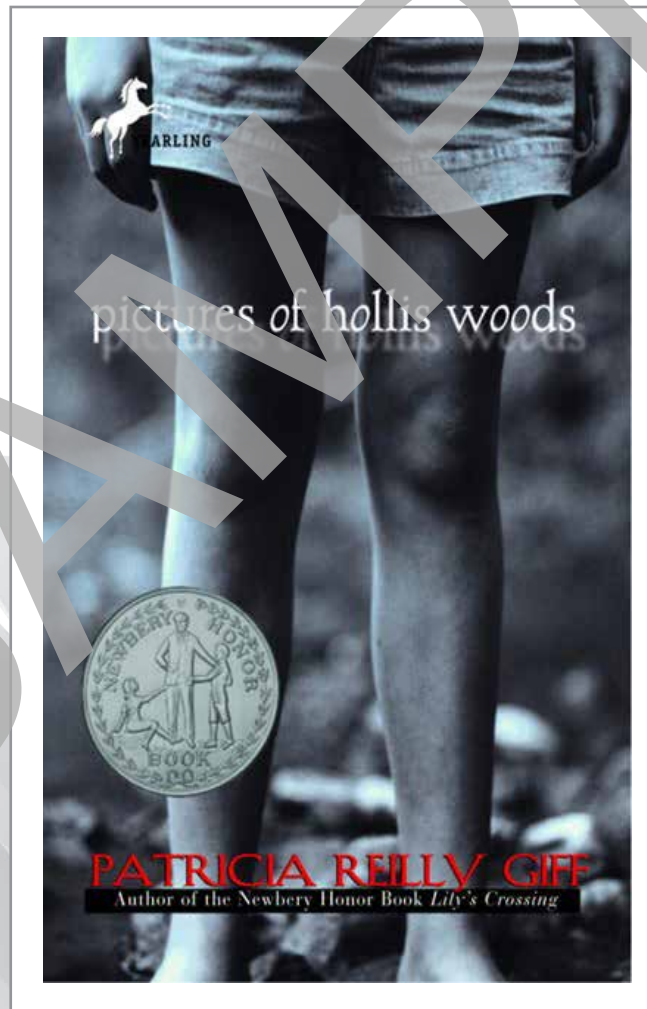
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 6-8**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# Pictures of Hollis Woods

Patricia Reilly Giff



**READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT**

# Pictures of Hollis Woods

Patricia Reilly Giff

## 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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3901 Union Blvd., Suite 155

St. Louis, MO 63115

[sales@novelunits.com](mailto:sales@novelunits.com)

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## Skills and Strategies

### Thinking

Research, problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, compare/contrast, decision making, multiple perspectives, attributes, brainstorming

### Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing, foreshadowing, cause/effect, drawing conclusions, inference, summarizing

### Listening/Speaking

Interviewing, discussion, charades, presentations

### Vocabulary

Pictionary, word maps, synonyms, antonyms, parts of speech, defining

### Writing

Personal writing, creative writing, poetry, reports, essays, plays, poetry

### Literary Elements

Literary analysis, story mapping, plot development, setting, character analysis, similes, metaphors

### Across the Curriculum

Social Studies—geography, developing maps, research, charting a course, interpreting maps, famous explorers; Science—botany, weather, astronomy, physics; Math—measurement; Language—poetry, debate, newspaper writing, outlines, research; Music—composing lyrics; Art—designing maps, illustrations, collages, experiment with different media, dramatization; Health—diet; Technology—Internet research

**Genre:** fiction

**Setting:** New York State, Long Island, near the Atlantic Ocean (Josie's house); upstate New York on the Delaware River (the Regan's house)

**Point-of-View:** first-person narrative, Hollis' perspective

**Themes:** belonging, self-discovery, self-image, family

**Conflict:** person vs. self, person vs. past, person vs. future

**Style:** "photo" journal/chapter narrative

**Tone:** initially bright; darkens as events unfold

**Date of First Publication:** 2002

## Summary

Hollis Woods is a young female protagonist who has dealt with more than most twelve-year-old girls. Her life begins in a remote part of New York State where she is left at birth. Growing up an orphan isn't easy for Hollis. She is shuffled from place to place with only her exceptional artistic talent to keep her happy. She is eventually placed with the Regans and all goes well until an accident causes Hollis to run away—again. With the help of Josie, her new foster parent, her drawings of a magical summer, and a carving she receives for Christmas, Hollis begins to realize that she is special and deserves to belong to a family.

## About the Author

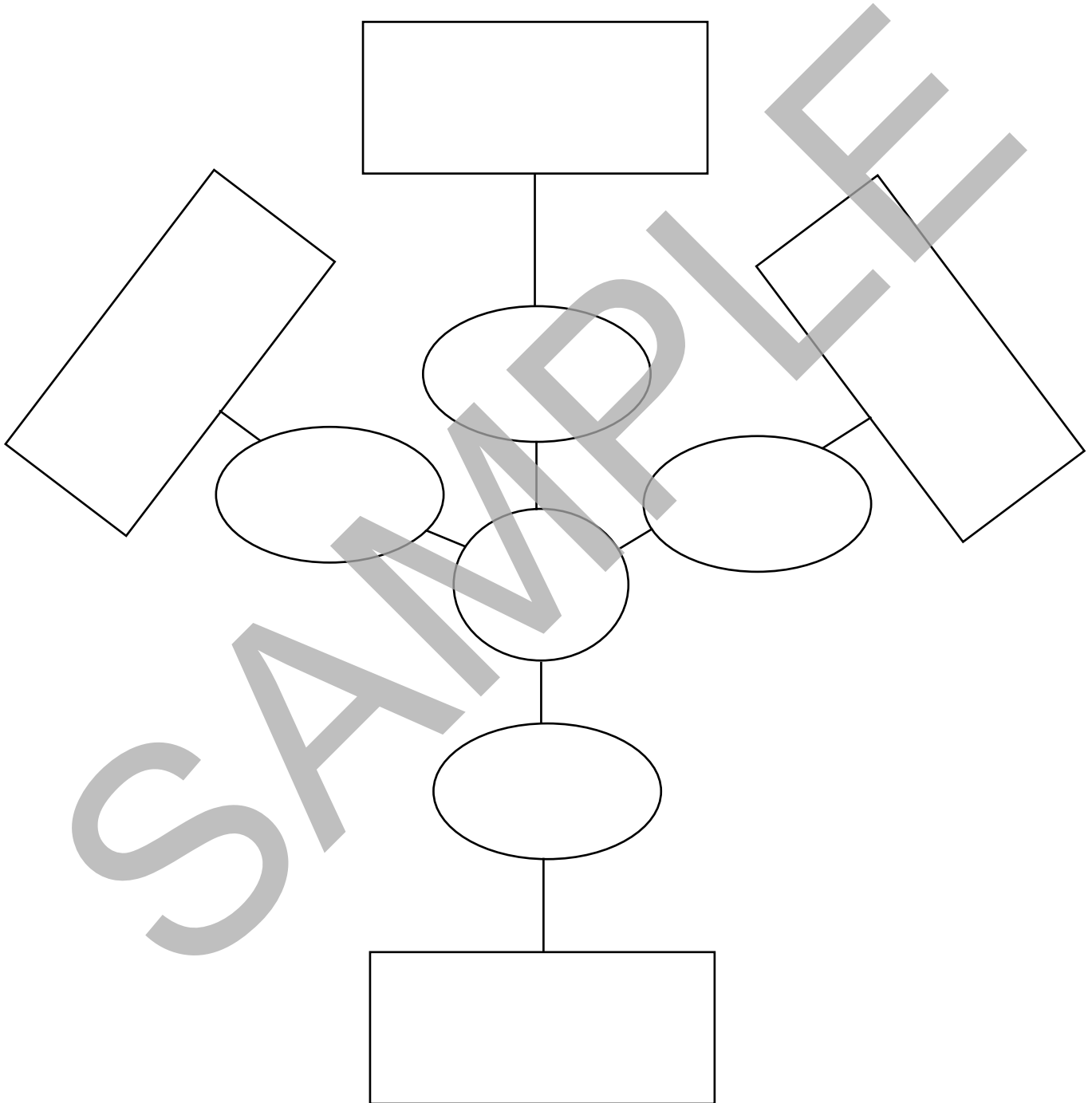
Patricia Reilly Giff wanted to be a writer all her life. According to her Web site, her sister had to take books out of her hands so they could play. She lives in Weston, Connecticut, and has three children and five grandchildren. Giff worked in education as a reading teacher for twenty years and has a Doctorate of Humane Letters from Hofstra University. Giff says she writes about her family, people she knows, and students she had through the years. *Pictures of Hollis Woods* and *Lily's Crossing* are Newbery Honor Books.

## Style

This story is related to the reader in a unique format. It is written in first-person narrative, and Hollis begins by reflecting on an incident that happened in first grade. The chapter is called First Picture. Then the reader moves on to Chapter 1 in which Hollis meets her new foster parent, Josie. Throughout the book the chapters alternate from present day ("The Time with Josie") to Hollis' memories ("Picture") in italicized typeface. Each "Picture" adds depth and understanding to Hollis' actions, and emotion to what happens in Hollis' present.

## Characterization

**Directions:** Place a main character's name in the center circle. Write words that describe him/her in the ovals around the name. List details from the story that demonstrate each quality in the rectangles.



# Feelings

**Directions:** Choose a character from the book and complete the chart below.

Describe the character in the beginning.

Summarize important events in the boxes below. Describe how the character feels after each one.

Event #1:	The character feels ...
Event #2:	The character feels ...
Event #3:	The character feels ...
Event #4:	The character feels ...
Event #5:	The character feels ...
Event #6:	The character feels ...

Describe \_\_\_\_\_ at the end.

## First Picture—Chapter 3, pp. 1–36

The novel alternates between italicized (“Picture”) sections that represent memories and present day (“The Time with Josie”) sections. The readers are introduced to this unique format of the book in this reading section. The readers meet Hollis Woods, a talented and artistic foster child who has been shuffled between many foster homes in her life. The first chapter begins with Hollis’ memory of a time when she felt that her teacher did not understand her feelings. This sets the stage for a common theme in the novel, Hollis’ inability to express her feelings. The present story involves her current foster parent, Josie. While at Josie’s house, Hollis recalls other foster families she ran away from and which of those she most regrets, especially the Regan family—Steven, Mrs. Regan, and the Old Man.

### Vocabulary

dollop (1)  
tinge (5)  
mangy (7)  
rearranged (8)  
irritable (8)  
crouched (10)  
stucco (13)  
lumbered (13)  
whittling (18)  
iridescent (23)  
jetty (23)  
skittered (24)  
trundled (30)

### Discussion Questions

1. What kind of teacher is Mrs. Evans? *(She is rushed and only looks at the surface of Hollis’ drawing. She thinks Hollis is not following directions, when Hollis is actually interpreting the assignment in an abstract way, with the “W” word “wish” instead of objects that start with “W.” p. 1)*
2. Hollis thinks people can see into another person’s soul through his or her eyes. Do you agree? Why or why not *(Answers will vary. p. 5)*
3. What is a “foster kid”? *(a child who is taken care of by foster parents, people who can give a child a home when the child’s biological parents cannot, p. 6)*
4. Think about Hollis’ personality. What is it that made her run away from her foster families? *(She is strong and constantly looking for a place to belong. When she senses she isn’t in the right place, she runs. p. 10)*
5. Why does Steven say he is going to call Hollis “Holly”? How does she respond? *(He is teasing her. He wants to know if she has a sense of humor and will be easy to get along with. Hollis responds by saying she is going to call Steven’s dad “Old Man.” pp. 15–16)*
6. Why do you think Hollis couldn’t adequately draw a picture of the time when she and Steven played checkers? *(She feels good about being with Steven and the Old Man and cannot fully capture her feeling of the moment on paper. She also knows that this family is different from the others. p. 17)*
7. Judging by Hollis’ description of the kitchen in Josie’s house, what kind of person is Josie? *(artsy, random, scattered, free-willed, p. 19)*
8. Do you think Hollis likes Josie? How can you tell? *(Answers will vary. Throughout section)*
9. How would you feel if you were sitting in the front seat of Josie’s car as she barreled out of the driveway? Explain your answer. *(Answers will vary. p. 22)*
10. Think about your five senses. How does Hollis use all five senses the night she and the Regans eat fish caught in the Delaware? *(She smells the grilled fish and the river; sees the river, fish, and her foster family; tastes the fish; hears the babbling of the river, her foster family, and the sizzle of the grill; feels the touch of Izzy, the pull of the line as she catches the fish, and her bare feet on the porch. p. 29)*

11. Is Josie different from the stucco house woman? If so, how? (*Answers will vary; Suggestion: could refer to simple fact that Hollis refers to Josie using her name rather than a description*)
12. Why would Josie's forgetfulness be a problem for the agency? (*A foster parent is responsible for the foster child and has to be of sound mind. Josie forgot when it was a school day, etc. p. 31*)
13. How does Hollis feel when Beatrice talks about her while she is in the same room? (*shocked and happy about the compliment, p. 34*)
14. What does Hollis mean when she thinks, "It's enough"? Explain your answer. (*Answers will vary. p. 36*)
15. **Prediction:** Will Hollis run away from Josie?

### Supplementary Activities

1. Literary Devices: **Simile**—"dumped them [foster kids] off like the UPS guy dumping off packages on a busy day" (p. 6); **Metaphors**—mountain of trouble: Hollis Woods (p. 13); cinnamon toast/caramel: eyes (p. 15); Silver Bullet: Josie's car (p. 22)
2. Literary Devices: Students should complete the character web on page 11 for main characters as they are introduced in the novel.
3. Story Map: Have students begin the Story Map on page 12. They should continue to add to it as they read the book.
4. Writing: The stucco house woman describes Hollis as a "mountain of trouble." Instruct students to think about themselves. Ask: What are your most distinctive characteristics? How would people describe your behavior? Have them write an essay describing their characteristics and how they are different from other people.
5. Internet research: Have students research the life and explorations of Henry Hudson. For what was he known? Why is he famous in New York history? Have students create a time line of his life to go with their research report.

### Fourth Picture—Chapter 7, pp. 37–67

When Beatrice looks at Hollis' drawings and compliments her extraordinary gift, Hollis recalls the colored pencils the Old Man gave her. Hollis begins to grow aware that Josie's memory is not perfect and realizes that she will have to help her. Hollis wants to stay with Josie and realizes that she must go to school in order to remain in Josie's home.

#### Vocabulary

lurched (39)  
 perspective (44)  
 composition (44)  
 stanchions (53)  
 mast (53)  
 burl (55)  
 bushel (56)  
 canal (63)  
 scampered (65)  
 groping (66)

#### Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Hollis keeps herself from hugging the Old Man after he gives her a set of art pencils? (*Answers will vary; Ideas: She is protecting herself from getting too close. She has never had a present like it before, and she doesn't know how to show her gratitude. p. 38*)
2. How is Hollis a different person when she lives with the Regans? (*She feels accepted and loved, so she is nicer and more pleasant. They teach her how family members treat one another, and she likes it. The longer she stays, the happier she is. pp. 37–40*)