



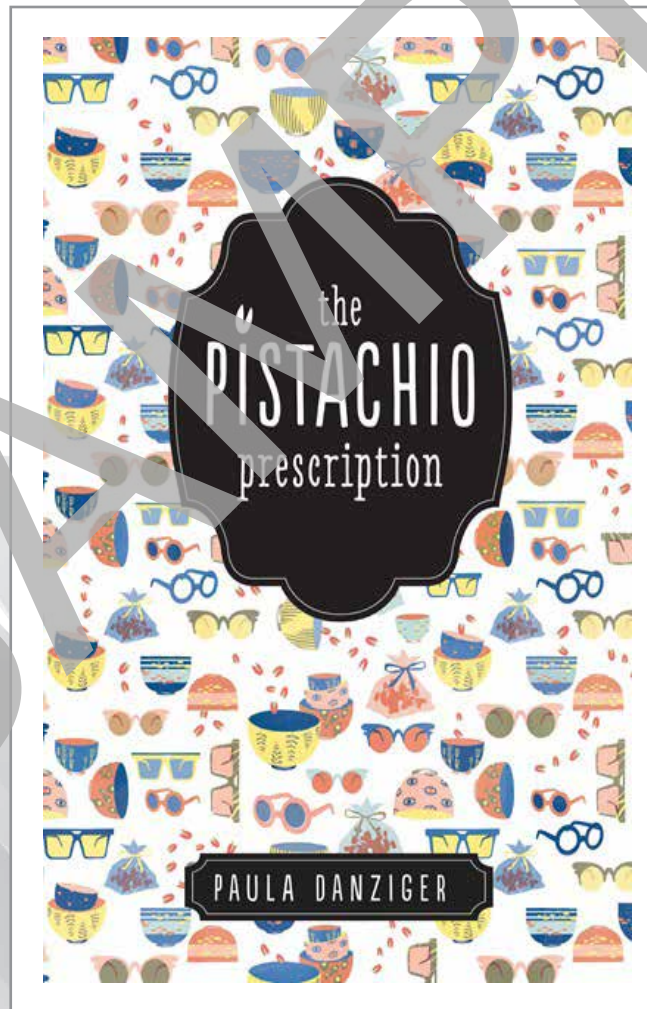
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

The Pistachio Prescription

Paula Danziger



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

The Pistachio Prescription

Paula Danziger

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!

ISBN 978-1-50204-085-5

Copyright infringement is a violation of Federal Law.

© 2020 by Novel Units, Inc., St. Louis, MO. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any way or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without prior written permission from Novel Units, Inc.

Reproduction of any part of this publication for an entire school or for a school system, by for-profit institutions and tutoring centers, or for commercial sale is strictly prohibited.

Novel Units is a registered trademark of Conn Education.

Printed in the United States of America.

To order, contact your
local school supply store, or:

Toll-Free Fax: 877.716.7272

Phone: 888.650.4224

3901 Union Blvd., Suite 155

St. Louis, MO 63115

sales@novelunits.com

novelunits.com

Table of Contents

Summary.....	3
Introductory Information and Activities.....	3
Fourteen Chapters.....	9
Chapters contain: Vocabulary Words and Activities, Discussion Questions, Predictions Supplementary Activities	
Post-Reading Questions.....	23
Post-Reading Activities.....	24
Assessment.....	27

Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Brainstorming, classifying and categorizing, evaluating, analyzing details, comparing and contrasting, synthesizing ideas

Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing, cause/effect, inference

Vocabulary

Antonyms/synonyms, etymology, context clues

Literary Elements

Character, setting, plot, development, conflict, theme, realistic fiction, tone

Writing

Campaign poster, slogan, and platform speech; narrative, fantasy, letter, chapter titles

Listening/Speaking

Participation in discussion groups, role play, interview

Summary

Pistachio nuts are Cassie's favorite comfort food. Her stylish mother disapproves of the unsightly stain they leave, but 13-year-old Cassie makes sure she has a plentiful supply; it's been a hard year and she needs all the comfort she can get. Her parents aren't getting along; her bossy, beautiful, older sister Stephie seems to think that Cassie puts on asthma attacks for attention; she has an adoring brother—Andrew—but there's only so much that you can share with a seven-year-old. Even her best friend, Vicky, thinks she's a hypochondriac. Then on the first day of school, she finds herself in the homeroom of the school ogre—Mr. Stoddard.

To top it off Vicky nominates her to run for Class President — a post usually reserved for someone in the clique. Cassie ends up with practically no eyebrows after she makes an over-zealous attack with a tweezers. Mr. Stoddard sends Cassie to the principal's office when she refuses to remove her sunglasses and somehow—just when all seems so terrible— things begin to turn around. Mr. Zimmerman, the principal proves surprisingly sympathetic to Cassie's plight, and gives her permission to wear the glasses in school. Cassie starts seeing a lot of Bernie, Vicky's "cute" good-humored new neighbor. To her dismay, Cassie even wins the election. The roll of good luck seems to end shortly afterward, though, when Cassie's parents reveal that they are splitting up. Cassie's mother begins to date "Milton" who wears gold chains and calls Cassie a "cute kid." Cassie, Stephanie, and Andrew hold treehouse conferences about how to get their parents back together. There is a temporary reunion of sorts—at the hospital, after Andrew falls through the treehouse boards. But as her parents argue about whose fault the accident was, Cassie realizes she has to accept things the way they are now. Her father seems to have a new girlfriend and divorce seems inevitable; still, everyone will survive. The story ends on a humorous final note as Cassie thinks about taking up a new comfort food—Twinkies.

Prior to Reading

You may wish to choose one or more of the following prereading discussion questions/activities. Each is designed to help students draw from their store of background knowledge about the events and themes they will meet in the story they are about to read.

Prereading Discussion Questions

On Comfort Foods: Are there any special foods which you eat when you are upset? Why do you think these foods make you feel better? What do you know about eating disorders? How much say do you think a parent should have in what a teenager eats? How can you tell if a person's eating habits are unhealthy?

On Asthma: What do you know about asthma? What causes it? How can it be controlled? How does having asthma affect a person's daily life?

On Hypochondria: What is hypochondria? Do you know any hypochondriacs? Do you ever worry about your health more than you should? If so, when?

On Sibling Relationships: What do you think would be hard about being a "middle child" (with older and younger siblings)? Why might you be jealous of an older sibling? Why might that older sister or brother be jealous of you? What would be good/not good about having a little brother?

On Family Tensions: What are some of the main things families fight about? What are some reasons a father might not spend much time with his family? What is the best way for families

Chapters 1–2, pp. 1–21

Vocabulary
pistachio (2)
hypochondria (2)
chic (2)
canopied (3)
deduction (3)
mutant (3)
asthma (4)
multiple sclerosis (7)
chemical (8)
psoriasis (13)
neurotic (14)
repressed (14)
bubonic plague (16)
legionnaire’s disease (16)

Vocabulary Activity

Below are five word pairs. Briefly explain how each of the two meanings are similar, and how they are different.

WORD PAIRS	Similarities	Differences
pistachio, walnut	(both nuts)	(Pistachios are green with red-stained shells; walnuts are larger, with unstained brown shells)
hypochondria, asthma bubonic plague, legionnaire’s disease neurotic, repressed psoriasis, multiple sclerosis		

Discussion Questions

1. Who is telling the story? What can you tell about her, so far? (*13-year-old Cassie is the narrator; she is the middle child of three, likes pistachio nuts, has asthma, and parents who argue.*)
2. Why are Cassie and her mother going shopping? How does Cassie’s mother feel about shopping? Why doesn’t Cassie want to go? (*Cassie’s mother, who loves shopping, wants to get Cassie clothing for school; Cassie hates shopping and the arguments her parents have about money.*) Is your attitude about shopping more like Cassie’s or her mother’s?
3. What is Cassie’s mother like? (*stylish, pretty*) Would you like to have her as a mother? How does she compare with your mother? Begin the T-Chart, below, and add to it as you learn more about Cassie’s mother later in the story.

Cassie’s Mother	Your Mother

4. What is Andrew like? Why did he give his parents a plaque for their anniversary? (*7 years old, good-humored; he wants his parents to get along better so he got a plaque with a saying about a “happy home” as a hint.*)

5. How are Cassie's feelings about her sister different from those about her brother? (*Cassie thinks her older sister treats her badly, but she feels a lot of affection for her loving little brother.*)
6. Why does it "feel as if water is filling up my lungs" (p. 5)? How does Cassie's mother react to the attack? (*Cassie has asthma; her mother is solicitous, but also seems to resent Cassie's asthma attacks.*)
7. What is Operation Overthrow? (*A plan to get the high school clique out of power.*)
8. What is Cassie getting for her birthday? What present would she have preferred? What does this show about her and about her mother? (*She has an IOU to go clothes shopping, but she would have preferred art equipment; she enjoys doing artwork but her mother doesn't seem to value/understand that interest.*)
9. Why is Cassie annoyed by the way her mother reacts to the man at the jewelry counter? Would you be annoyed if it were your mother? (*Cassie is angry that her mother seems to enjoy the flirtation, referring to Cassie as her "sister" rather than pointing out that she is married with a teenage daughter.*)
10. What do you learn about the relationship between Cassie's parents? How do they get along? (*There is a lot of tension; the mother feels the father pays too little attention to her; the father feels the mother spends too much money.*)

Prediction: How do you think Cassie's father will react when he sees the packages Cassie's mother has bought?

Literary Analysis: Theme

The title of a story often provides a clue to the theme, or central message. Explain the significance of pistachio nuts so far. Why does Cassie eat them? How does her mother feel about them? Why? (*Cassie eats them because they make her feel better when she is upset, but her mother disapproves of them as not "chic." A major theme is coping with problems of growing up, particularly problems with parents.*)

Research

Find out about the causes of and treatments for asthma.

Critical Thinking

Decision Making: Why did Cassie's parents get married? (*After Cassie's mother lost both of her parents, she was lonely. Cassie's father seemed to love her and want to take care of her, so she married him when she was only 19.*)

Create a cause and effect chart (see next page) to show some of the events that led to the marriage. Remember that an event can be both cause and effect. Also, there can be many causes for an effect.

Cause/Effect Map

