

Teacher Guide

Grades 5–6

# Poppy

Avi

NOVEL UNITS<sup>™</sup>

NEW WAYS TO TEACH READING,  
WRITING, & CRITICAL THINKING



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by  
Avi

## Teacher Guide

Written by  
Phyllis Green

### Note

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## Skills and Strategies

### Literary Elements

Irony, conflict, similes,  
characterization, fantasy,  
story elements, theme,  
allegory

### Comprehension

Comparison/contrast,  
predicting, sequencing

### Vocabulary

Compound words, synonyms,  
antonyms

### Writing

Letter-writing, newspaper,  
definition, reporting,  
description, journaling

### Thinking

Visualizing, sorting, research,  
brainstorming

### Listening/Speaking

Discussion, drama,  
pantomime

## Supplementary Activities

1. Write a letter to Mr. Ocax asking permission to relocate.
2. Start a newspaper for the mouse community in the book. What kind of articles might be included? Look over your own newspaper to get ideas about particular kinds of articles and sections that might be included.
3. Make a drawing of the emergency meeting.
4. Dramatize in pantomime some of the different emotions mentioned in the book, such as anger, fear and outrage. Classmates will guess the emotion portrayed and then cite where it is found in the book.

## Chapter 5: "Leaving My House" —Pages 36-47

### Vocabulary

deputation (39)      constructions (41)      job hire (43)



### Discussion Questions and Activities

1. Compare the study you might use and Lungwort's study. (*Lungwort has adapted an old boot for his study, adding windows, a potato saucer, and a plaid necktie curtain. The comparison will vary from student to student.*)
2. How does Lungwort prepare to approach Mr. Ocax? (*He writes and rehearses a speech, and a new white flag is prepared.*)
3. What were some of Agweed's maxims? (*"You haven't lived until you die for something." "A soft head carries sorrow at both ends."*) What other maxims do you know that might have been applicable to Agweed? (*Answers will vary.*)
4. Why do Lungwort and Poppy get such an elaborate send-off? (*The mission is important, and they are a special team going to talk to Mr. Ocax.*)
5. How do Lungwort and Poppy feel about their travel to talk to Mr. Ocax? Find specific words from the book to support your answer. (*They are fearful and worried, as evidenced by losing the thimble cap and dropping the white flag. Lungwort walks behind Poppy with the white flag. Lungwort is very agitated.*)
6. Why does Poppy tell herself not to give way at the end of the chapter? (*She wants to be strong in front of the community.*)
7. **Prediction:** You've read nearly one-quarter of the book. What will happen? What clues has the author sprinkled in these chapters? (*Answers will vary.*)

### Supplementary Activities

1. Look for evidence of irony in the book. Irony is when a writer or character expresses a meaning contradictory to the literal meaning of his or her words or actions.
2. Act out Poppy and Lungwort on their trip to Mr. Ocax.
3. Make a list of feelings expressed in the book. Choose one or two of them to describe in a sentence or two.
4. Does the send-off Lungwort and Poppy receive remind you of anything you've seen or heard about? Ask your parents or other relatives for ideas. Support your ideas in writing.

## Chapter 6: "Standing before Mr. Ocax"—Pages 48-56

### Vocabulary

upchucked (48)  
skedaddle (54)

snarl (49)

queasy (50)

compassion (52)

### Discussion Questions and Activities

1. How does Mr. Ocax put Lungwort and Poppy to a disadvantage? (*He continues partially sheltered from the rain while they are forced to stand in the rain. He is demanding, unpleasant and argumentative.*)
2. What are owl pellets? (*Owl pellets are undigested bits which owls regurgitate after they've eaten.*)
3. How does Mr. Ocax treat Poppy? (*He makes her feel as though she is being attacked, and then blames her for his unfavorable decision about the mice moving.*)
4. Why don't Lungwort's careful preparations help in his talk with Mr. Ocax? (*Mr. Ocax almost mocks the mouse leader. Mr. Ocax is unimpressed by Lungwort's demeanor and choice of words.*)
5. How does Mr. Ocax's demeanor change when Lungwort explains where the mice want to move? (*He hesitates. Poppy detects uncertainty in Mr. Ocax's voice.*)
6. Why does Mr. Ocax mention a new, particularly vicious porcupine spotted in the area? (*He mentions the porcupine to keep the mice fearful and indebted to Mr. Ocax.*)
7. What does Poppy find and take with her when she and Lungwort leave Mr. Ocax? (*She finds Lungwort's earring in an owl pellet.*)

### Supplementary Activities

1. Put together a four-panel cartoon scenario of the chapter. Use simple line drawings or words to tell the story.

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2. As a science lesson, dissect an owl pellet.
3. Writing topics:
  - a. Deference
  - b. Persuasion
  - c. Power



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**Approach No. 2:** Students are assigned to groups of two or three within their reading group. During the reading time, the teacher directs instruction for about half the time, using the Novel Unit guide for activities. Then students divide into their pairs or triads to complete various activities including: 1) Partner reading; 2) story-structure and story-related writing; 3) reading words out loud [using a list provided by the teacher]; 4) vocabulary activities; 5) story re-telling. When students have completed the activities, their partners initial a student assignment form indicating that they completed their tasks. A sample student assignment form is below.

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Reading Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

For this reading assignment, our group including \_\_\_\_\_,  
and \_\_\_\_\_, completed the following activities: \_\_\_\_\_

We had these problems: \_\_\_\_\_

We need help on: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_