

**Teacher Guide**

**Grades 5–6**

# **Rules**

**Cynthia Lord**

 **NOVEL UNITS**



**NEW WAYS TO TEACH READING,  
WRITING, & CRITICAL THINKING**



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# RULES

by  
Cynthia Lord

## Teacher Guide

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### Note

The 2008 Scholastic Inc. paperback edition, © 2006 by Cynthia Lord, was used to prepare this guide. Page references may differ in other editions. Novel ISBN: 0-439-44383-0

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ISBN 978-1-60878-493-6

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**Publisher Information**  
For a complete catalog, contact—  
Novel Units, Inc.  
P.O. Box 97  
Bulverde, TX 78163-0097

Web site: [novelunits.com](http://novelunits.com)

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## Skills and Strategies

### Thinking

Research, brainstorming, critical thinking, compare/contrast

### Comprehension

Prediction, cause/effect, evaluation

### Writing

Poetry, essay, interview, blog, review

### Listening/Speaking

Discussion, interview, presentation, nonverbal communication—word cards, Morse code

### Vocabulary

Definitions, synonyms/antonyms, parts of speech, context

### Literary Elements

Setting, conflict, theme, characterization, point of view, genre, figurative language, symbolism, universality

### Across the Curriculum

Art—collage, drawing, colors, Georgia O’Keeffe, story illustrations; Literature—Arnold Lobel, “The Fisherman and His Wife”; Music—guitar and piano; Science—autism, gardening; Animals—egrets, guinea pigs

### Supplementary Activities

1. Figurative Language: Continue adding to your chart of literary devices. Examples: **Similes**—“Jason laughs, a sharp bark like a Canada goose” (p. 73); “waves the remote...like it’s a magic wand” (p. 78); “Nice as a cockroach” (p. 82); “...David’s face lights up like Christmas morning, Halloween night, and his birthday, all rolled into one big grin” (p. 83); “doing the pieces...like he’s reading the puzzle” (p. 86)
2. Critical Thinking: Attempt to put a puzzle together the way David does—with the pieces in order, top to bottom, left to right. Is it easier or harder to assemble a puzzle this way rather than randomly? Why?

### Pages 89–123

Catherine enjoys her time at Kristi’s house but feels guilty about disappointing Jason. She tries to make it up to him by bringing her guinea pigs to the clinic on her next visit. Jason and Catherine talk in secret, using only his word cards. After arriving home, Catherine and David encounter Kristi and Ryan. Ryan teases David until David has a meltdown. Catherine is overwhelmed by the complexities of being David’s sister. She discusses her feelings with Jason, learns more about him, and takes him on a “run” in the parking lot of the therapy center.

Vocabulary
sponsoring
peril
jostle
scuffle
gingerly
tolerant
imitation
yoga
avalanche
perspective
receptionist

### Discussion Questions

1. How does Catherine feel while visiting Kristi’s house? What does this show about her character? What does this scenario reveal about Kristi’s character? *(Catherine is glad to leave behind her sister role and just be a friend. Kristi is interested in boys and Catherine isn’t as interested. While Kristi has already had a boyfriend, Catherine has yet to find a boy whom she would consider dating. Catherine feels a little insecure about Kristi’s new things. Kristi is sociable; she expresses interest in getting to know people in her neighborhood. She seems responsible and good-hearted, as she volunteers at the community center and makes dinner for her mother. Kristi reveals that her parents are separated.)*
2. Describe Jason and Catherine’s conversation the next time she visits the therapy center. Why does Catherine bring Jason new word cards? Discuss the benefits of spending time in someone else’s shoes. *(Their conversation is pleasant. Jason is happy to meet the guinea pig and enjoy playing the “secret” game where they must use only word cards to communicate. Because Catherine has so much she wants to say, she has a difficult time using only the words in Jason’s book. She discovers there are many more words Jason needs to be able to communicate. Spending the way Jason must, Catherine realizes how difficult communication is when one has no access to words. Answers will vary.)*
3. What dilemma does Catherine face upon arriving home and seeing Kristi and Ryan next door? What decision does she make? Does she make the right decision? *(Catherine does not want David to accompany her next door because his presence will complicate things. She does not want to upset David by forcing him to go home, nor does she want her mother to think she is selfish.)*

On the other hand, she fears Ryan will make fun of her little brother. She hopes Ryan will be nice in front of Kristi, and she allows David to come next door. Answers will vary.)

4. After the encounter with Ryan outside, Catherine calms David and feels sorry for herself. Do you think Catherine has a right to feel disappointed, considering how difficult life is for her brother? (Answers will vary. In some ways, David does have a more difficult life than Catherine does. Catherine, however, also has feelings and emotions that affect her. She is disappointed about her relationship with Kristi, and she is torn between caring for David and pursuing friendships without him. Students should consider other reasons why her brother's life is just as significant as David's.)
5. Jason sometimes wishes he wasn't alive. He asks Catherine to keep this information a secret. What do you think about how Catherine responds? Discuss the best response to such critical information. (Answers will vary. Catherine tries to respect the trust she is developing with Jason, complies with his request to keep his statement secret from his mother. Note however that Catherine wisely encourages Jason, telling him he is incomplete and that he would be missed if he died. Also note that she could give this information to an authority figure if necessary. Encourage students to seek counsel about a friend, even if they must keep their friend's identity anonymous, if they are ever concerned about a friend's emotional well-being or intentions. Seeking help on behalf of a friend, even if the friend does not want it, could damage a friendship, but it could also save a life.)  
Catherine helps Jason feel alive by taking him outside for a "run" in his wheelchair. How does this event make you feel? How do you think it makes Catherine and Jason feel? What does it mean to be alive? (Answers will vary. Catherine is happy to help Jason feel as if he is running, and Jason is excited to race in his wheelchair. Everyone cheers for them. Realizing the gift Catherine is giving to Jason, Jason says he feels incomplete, but Catherine tells him he is not. Being alive may look different for each person, and while Jason cannot move or speak the way he wants to, he can still fully experience life in his own unique way. Although Catherine initially feels awkward, Jason's joy positively affects her, too.)
7. **Predict**—What will become of Catherine and Jason's friendship?

### Supplementary Activities

1. **Figurative Language:** Add to your chart of literary devices. Examples: **Simile**—"two hooks, like upside-down question marks" (p. 91); "hopkins deflates like a balloon with the smallest hole" (p. 95); "fingers flicker, like blades of grass shivered by wind" (p. 112); "muscles tight as rope" (p. 121); "palm of a hand like a traffic cop" (p. 122); **Personification**—"Unfairness punches me in the stomach" (p. 111); **Metaphors**—guilt: avalanche (p. 110); people: statues (p. 122)
2. **Art:** Along with the words on the word cards for Jason, Catherine draws pictures. Create at least three word cards for the definition, and add a visual image.

## Character Analysis Blocks

**Directions:** Select at least two characters from the novel to describe using the blocks below.

Who is the character?			
What does the character do?		Why does he do it?	
What, if anything, is significant about the character's name?	What is the nature of his character? (reactive, active, important, consistent, secondary)	What is the significance of the novel's time and place to the character?	
What is unusual or important about the character?	How does the character change in the story?	Does the character remind you of another character from another novel? Who?	Do you know anyone similar to this character?

## Computer Blog

**Directions:** In the space below, give your opinion on the importance of accepting others, based on what you learned from the novel.



A large, stylized computer monitor with a light gray screen and a white bezel. The screen area is filled with horizontal lines for writing. Below the screen are four small black dots representing a taskbar or navigation buttons. The monitor is supported by two curved legs.