



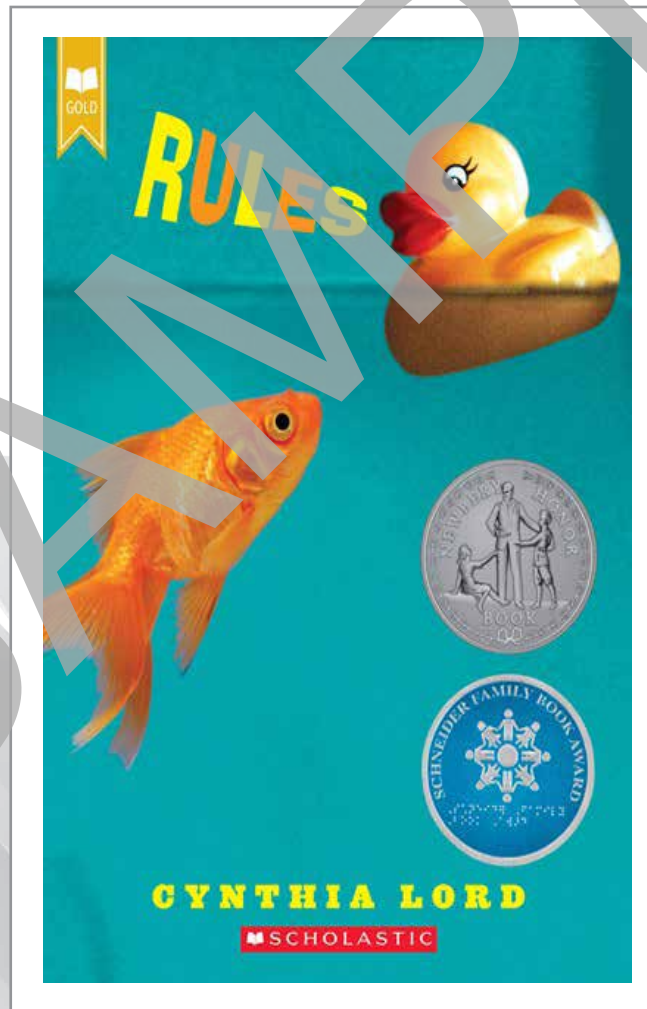
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 3-5

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Rules

Cynthia Lord



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Rules

Cynthia Lord

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

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

Genre: young-adult fiction

Setting: oceanside town in Maine

Point of View: first person

Themes: friendship, family, self-awareness, honesty, acceptance, diversity

Conflict: person vs. person; person vs. self; person vs. society

Tone: heartwarming, compassionate, candid

Date of First Publication: 2006

Summary

Twelve-year-old Catherine spends a lot of time taking care of her autistic brother, David, and teaching him basic rules about social situations. Catherine hopes that these rules will reduce her embarrassment over David's behavior. She also learns about honesty as she encounters two new friends during the summer—one from the world she lives in because of David, and one who lives next door. Catherine tries to keep her two worlds separate, but she discovers that living a dual life is impossible. She cannot keep her new neighbor Kristi from meeting her disabled friend Jason, and the truth about why she has been vague about Jason comes out. In the end, she realizes the only embarrassment she has suffered is due to her own actions. With relief, she allows her two worlds to merge without fearing what others will think.

About the Author

Cynthia Lord was born in New Hampshire and grew up next to a lake. As a child, she enjoyed books such as *Fantastic Mr. Fox* by Roald Dahl and *Winnie the Pooh* by A.A. Milne. After college graduation, she married and began teaching. She taught first grade, sixth grade, and all grades in a one-room schoolhouse. She also wrote educational curriculum during this time. She began writing *Rules* in 2000, and she was thrilled when, six years later, it was published. Some of the characters reflect aspects of her family, including some of herself in Catherine and some of her autistic son in David. *Rules* is Lord's debut book and a 2007 Newbery Honor Book. Other books by Cynthia Lord include *Touch Blue* (2010) and *Hot Rod Hamster* (2010), an illustrated book. Lord currently lives in Brunswick, Maine with her husband, daughter, and son.

Pages 1–28

Twelve-year-old Catherine gets ready to go with her autistic eight-year-old brother David to his therapy appointment. She watches her neighbors move in and is excited at the prospect of having a new friend next door. To help her little brother cope in the world, Catherine maintains a list of rules for him—some pertaining to basic good behavior, some to help him understand social situations better. An artist, Catherine passes time in the therapy office’s waiting room by drawing what she sees. She decides to draw a mute teenage boy in a wheelchair who is only able to communicate using word cards. He takes offense, and in Catherine’s efforts to apologize, the two become friends.

Vocabulary

advisory
blotchy
autism
coma
fray
independent
occupational
therapy
egrets
osprey
corridor
strutting
fidgets
assume
wharf

Discussion Questions

1. Read and discuss the list of “Rules for David” that begin the novel. What does this list tell you about the story? What kind of rules are they? Make predictions based on this introduction to the novel. *(Answers will vary. The list indicates that there are characters named David and Catherine who may be brother and sister. David is very young or in need of help understanding basic rules and codes of social conduct, such as chewing with one’s mouth closed, knocking on bathroom doors before opening them, and differentiating between people who are laughing with you from those who are laughing at you. Predictions will vary.)*
2. Describe Catherine and David’s relationship. How does Catherine feel about her younger brother? *(Answers will vary. Catherine is David’s older sister. While they do not always understand one another, they love each other. David depends on Catherine, and while Catherine cares for him, she also feels frustrated by David’s autism. At times, Catherine wishes David’s behavior did not embarrass her or keep the two of them from being invited places. Thus Catherine is motivated to help David function in the world so that they are not ostracized.)*
3. What do you think of Catherine’s rules for David? What is your conception of a “rule”? Why does Catherine make them? *(Answers will vary. Some students may see rules as restrictive policies designed to control behavior. While Catherine’s rules help David control his behavior, they are also designed to help him understand the world. Her intention is not to strip David of his freedom but to help him relate to the world in a healthy way that does not upset him or the people with whom he interacts.)*
4. Why does Catherine like tagging along to David’s appointments? Describe Catherine’s relationship with her parents. *(Catherine enjoys having her mother’s undivided attention—David’s weekly sessions present the only time when another person is in charge of David and Catherine’s mother is not distracted. Answers will vary. Catherine has to share part of the responsibility for David’s care, while her parents spend a larger part of their time with David. Catherine seems to understand this arrangement and accepts her role in the family, even though she sometimes wishes things were different.)*
5. Why does Catherine decide to draw Jason? Do you agree or disagree with her rule about looking at things closely? Explain. *(Catherine decides to draw Jason because she finds it difficult to look at him and she has never drawn him before. She thinks that by looking at him carefully enough to draw him, she may find it easier to look at him in general. Her rule says that looking at something closely can make it beautiful. Answers will vary.)*

6. Describe the conflict that occurs in the waiting room. Who is involved? Is the conflict resolved, and if so, how? (*Jason takes offense that Catherine is drawing him. Catherine is upset that she has angered Jason. She is embarrassed at being told to stop drawing him in front of everyone in the waiting room. Catherine tries to make amends with Jason by commenting that she was sorry he did not get his guitar. Jason is interested in her new drawing, which Catherine gives to him. They begin a tenuous friendship after this initial, uncomfortable meeting.*)
7. **Prediction:** How will Catherine become good friends with her new neighbor?
8. **Prediction:** What will come of Catherine’s new relationship with Jason?

Supplementary Activities

1. Figurative Language: Begin keeping a chart of literary devices the author uses including similes, metaphors, and personification. Continue adding to your chart as you read the story. Examples: **Similes**—“David stands...on the top step, like it’s a diving board...” (p. 3); “flickers his fingers up and down, like he’s playing a piano in the air” (p. 6); “her hands held above her keyboard like a conductor waiting to cue a symphony” (p. 27)
2. Science: The egret and osprey are seabirds. Create a display that provides visual and written information about one of these two birds or other seafowl.

Pages 29–58

Catherine arrives home, anticipating her neighbor’s arrival. David’s excitement to see his father turns into a meltdown just as Catherine’s new neighbor steps outside. Catherine consoles David. She has a difficult time catching her new neighbor at home. Catherine accompanies her mother to David’s appointment again, where she has another conversation with Jason. She offers to make Jason some new word cards—cards he keeps in a book on his lap so he can communicate.

Vocabulary
mimicked
initiating
patter
allergic
grimaces
sliver
adjusting
evaluations
slyly
hovers
aquarium
trickles

Discussion Questions

1. Describe Catherine. What are her interests, annoyances, insights, etc.? Why do you think the author chooses to tell the story from her point of view? (*Answers will vary. Catherine is insightful, realistic, and optimistic. She is both protective of and embarrassed by David; she loves her parents but also sees their flaws. Seeing the world through her eyes helps readers of similar ages relate to Catherine’s dreams and frustrations.*)
2. How do Catherine’s family members function in order to care for one another? What do you think are the characteristics of a strong family? (*Catherine’s father works extra hours so his wife can stay home with David and work from home. Catherine helps her brother understand society so that he can function better among others. Catherine’s mother encourages Catherine’s involvement in the community and is happy for her to make new friends. Answers will vary; encourage students to consider how Catherine’s family makes sacrifices for one another.*)

Character Analysis Blocks

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

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

Story Map

Directions: Complete the story map below for *Rules*.

Title	
Setting, Characters, Problem	
Beginning	
Important Events	
Climax (Turning Point)	
End	