



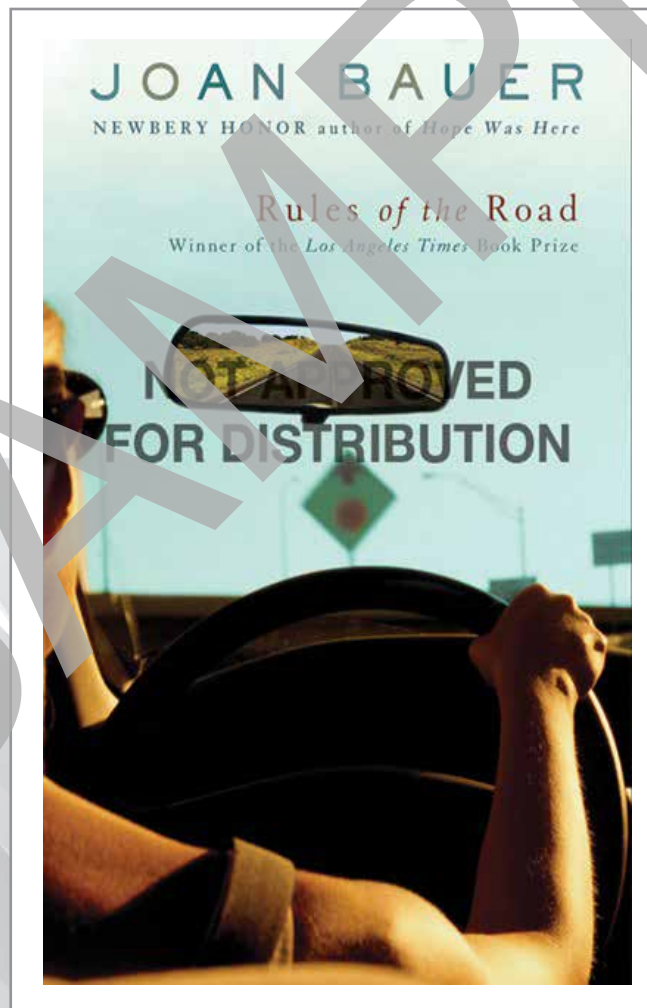
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 9-12

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Rules of the Road

Joan Bauer



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Rules of the Road

Joan Bauer

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

Comprehension

Compare/contrast, identifying attributes, predicting, evaluating, supporting opinions

Literary Elements

Plot development, setting, characterization, tone, theme, alliteration, assonance, consonance, irony, point of view

Vocabulary

Synonyms, antonyms, using context clues, using a thesaurus/dictionary

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, debate, acting, oral presentation

Writing

Essay, creative writing, newspaper article

Thinking

Brainstorming, analysis, inferring, decision making, problem solving

Across the Curriculum

Art—drawing, collage; Drama—script; History—research; Social Studies—geography, map use; Math—trip planning; Law—labor laws

Genre: fiction

Setting: 1998; Chicago, Peoria, Springfield (Illinois); St. Louis, Kansas City (Missouri); Topeka, Wichita (Kansas); Oklahoma City (Oklahoma); Fort Smith, Little Rock (Arkansas); Dallas (Texas)

Point of View: first person

Conflict: person vs. self, person vs. person, person vs. society

Themes: friendship, loyalty, betrayal, ethics, integrity, greed, illness, loss, maturity, gender roles, family, responsibility

Tone: alternately humorous and serious

Date of First Publication: 1998

Summary

Exceptionally knowledgeable and astute when it comes to footwear, Jenna Boller easily masters her sales job at a local shoe store and takes profound pride in her work. However, her time at Gladstone's is an escape from her life beyond its doors, which is filled with a lack of self-confidence and challenging situations beyond her control. Jenna's parents are divorced, and her alcoholic father cannot sever his ties with Jenna, although his contact is sporadic and unpredictable. Her mother logs long hours as a night-shift ER nurse, and her beloved grandmother is in a nursing home, suffering from Alzheimer's disease.

Gladstone's co-founder, Madeline Gladstone, has been struggling to save Gladstone's from a merger facilitated by her son. She hires Jenna for six weeks during the summer to drive her from Chicago to visit various Gladstone's stores and attend a pivotal stockholders meeting in Dallas, Texas. When Jenna sets out with Mrs. Gladstone, Jenna feels alone and unsure of herself at times, but she soon becomes Mrs. Gladstone's unlikely cohort. Jenna helps Mrs. Gladstone through some difficult and emotional situations and befriends two of Mrs. Gladstone's closest allies, both of whom teach Jenna important life lessons. Jenna returns from her trip more mature and empowered, and she makes the difficult decision to assertively deal with her father's drinking. She attempts to get her father to commit to changing his life, but at the story's conclusion he remains in deep denial about his problems.

About the Author

Author of *Squashed*, *Peeled*, and the sequel to *Rules of the Road*, *Best Foot Forward*, Joan Bauer grew up in River Forrest, Illinois. As a young woman, Bauer worked in sales and advertising for the *Chicago Tribune* and other publications. She made the switch to professional writing after her marriage in the early 1980s, writing for newspapers and magazines. She had just embarked on a screenwriting career when she was in a serious car accident requiring surgery and a lengthy rehabilitation. It was during recovery that she used her sense of humor to craft her first young adult novel, *Squashed*, which served as a kind of therapy. Bauer has said that *Rules of the Road* represents the first time that she has dealt with her father's alcoholism in her writing. Bauer's novels have received the Christopher Award, the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize, the Newbery Honor, and the Golden Kite Award of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, among other honors. She lives in Brooklyn, New York.

Chapters 1–5

Jenna Boller describes a typical day working as a salesperson for Gladstone’s Shoe Store. Her otherwise good day is marred when her father shows up unexpectedly and inebriated, insisting on speaking with her. Jenna has a deep sense of responsibility for her father, and before she puts him in a cab she makes sure he has somewhere to go and someone to care for him. Jenna reflects on memories of her grandmother, who now has Alzheimer’s disease and lives in a nursing home. She and her grandmother are very close. She gets a phone call from Gladstone owner Madeline Gladstone requesting that Jenna become her driver. She spends a day driving Mrs. Gladstone, who later explains that she would like to hire Jenna to drive her cross-country to a stockholders meeting in Dallas. Jenna attempts to persuade her mother to let her go. But only after her father calls does her mother decide that Jenna could use a break from her home life.

Vocabulary

rifling
chimed
density
compression
commission
traction
alignment
lumbered
fumbled
penalize
exhuming
shallowness
forage
suspicious
promptness
qualification
solitary
confinement
postpone
perilous
premature
behemoth
rudimentary
monetary
steeling

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the similarities and differences between the person Jenna is at work and the person she is at school. What is it about each place that brings out different qualities in Jenna? *(Students will most likely note marked differences in Jenna’s confidence and level of success in work and school. Answers will vary, but students may note that Jenna deals more with adults and small children at work, and her business savvy and knowledge are better suited for the work environment. These qualities have not helped her interact with her peers at school, which is a more casual environment where she holds no special position. Part of the problem may be that she is more mature than most of her peers and cannot relate to them.)*
2. How does Jenna feel about her driver’s license? How can you tell? *(Jenna is excited about the possibilities a license can make available to her. She calls the license her “most prized possession” [p. 7] and daydreams about the places she can go with it.)*
3. How does Jenna feel about her father, and why? Discuss the effect of the author’s repetition of “Daddy’s home.” *(Jenna loves her father but is worried, angered, and saddened by his unpredictability, unreliability, and embarrassing behavior, which are the result of his alcoholism. He appears in her life only sporadically, and his displays of warmth and affection are always temporary, fruitless, and tainted by his alcohol consumption. “Daddy’s home” is typically used in a positive, reassuring way, but here it is juxtaposed with Jenna’s father’s sudden appearance and drunken actions. The stark contrast between the sentence’s usual connotation and Jenna’s father’s actions is jarring and disturbing, reminding the reader that parts of Jenna’s family life have been far from ideal.)*
4. Based on the letter she leaves for Jenna and Faith, what sort of person is Jenna’s mother? What insights about the Bollers’ lives and relationships with each other does this letter convey? *(The humor evident in the letter suggests that Jenna’s mom is very funny and likeable and that she has a good rapport with her daughters. The fact that she has to leave the letter implies that she has a very busy work schedule. Jenna’s mother asking for help around the house indicates the level of responsibility the girls have, and her request indicates that Jenna and Faith are not always self-motivated to help her. In other words, there are a lot of grown-up duties expected of them, but they are still kids.)*

5. In what ways is Jenna envious of Faith and vice versa? How does this affect their relationship? (*Jenna envies Faith's beauty and the way Faith, as the younger of the two, "got off easy" [p. 17]. Faith envies that Jenna gets to speak with and see their father. Answers will vary, but it is reasonable to say that the girls' jealousy causes tension and misunderstandings between them.*)
6. Take a closer look at the dialogue between Jenna and Mrs. Gladstone. Using examples from the text, explain how you might categorize Jenna's and Mrs. Gladstone's manners of speaking. (*Most of the time, Jenna uses an adult manner of speaking but has moments of informality when she uses slang or colloquial sayings such as "hunker down" and "hacked off." Mrs. Gladstone's manner of speaking is decidedly formal. Examples include "I believe it's customary to open the garage door...!" and "Proceed.... And may God Almighty be merciful" [p. 28].*)
7. Why does Mrs. Gladstone choose Jenna to be her driver? (*Mrs. Gladstone is sympathetic to the embarrassment Jenna feels in the presence of her drunken father. Mrs. Gladstone realizes that Jenna is unusually responsible and hard-working, and she says that Jenna reminds her of herself as a teenager. Mrs. Gladstone is elderly and near the end of a long career in the shoe business. In Jenna she sees a younger version of herself, and spending time with Jenna may be a way to vicariously relive her youth, make peace with her impending retirement, and pass on her experiences to someone she identifies with and trusts.*)
8. If you were Jenna's parent, would you let her take the job with Mrs. Gladstone? Explain your decision. (*Answers will vary.*)
9. Why does Jenna's mom change her mind about letting Jenna go on the trip with Mrs. Gladstone? (*Jenna's father calls twice while drunk and asks to speak with or see Jenna. After the phone calls, Jenna's mom suddenly realizes that Jenna deserves some kind of temporary escape from this stressful relationship, so she agrees to let Jenna go with Mrs. Gladstone to Texas.*)

Supplementary Activities

1. Character Analysis: Using the Venn Diagram on page 25 of this guide, chart similarities and differences between "Jenna at work" and "Jenna at school."
2. Character Analysis: Fill in the first ring of the Character Growth chart on page 26 for Jenna. After each section of chapters, fill in another ring on the chart.
3. Literary Analysis/Writing: Bauer uses assonance (the repetition of a vowel sound in subsequent words), alliteration (the repetition of a vowel or consonant at the beginning of subsequent words), and consonance (the repetition of a consonant sound in subsequent words). For example, on page 10 she writes: "An El train barreled by overhead, shaking the street. Steel scraping steel, the train screeched around the corner." After you spot the assonance, alliteration, and consonance in this sentence, write a paragraph describing your own surroundings using assonance, alliteration, and consonance.
4. Research: Determine the requirements in your state for obtaining a driver's license.

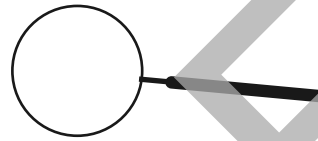
Be a Detective!

Directions: Check out the novel by looking at the cover and thumbing through the pages. Then, ask yourself who, what, where, when, why, and how. Write your questions in the spaces below. Exchange papers with a partner, and answer each other's questions.

Who?

What?

Where?

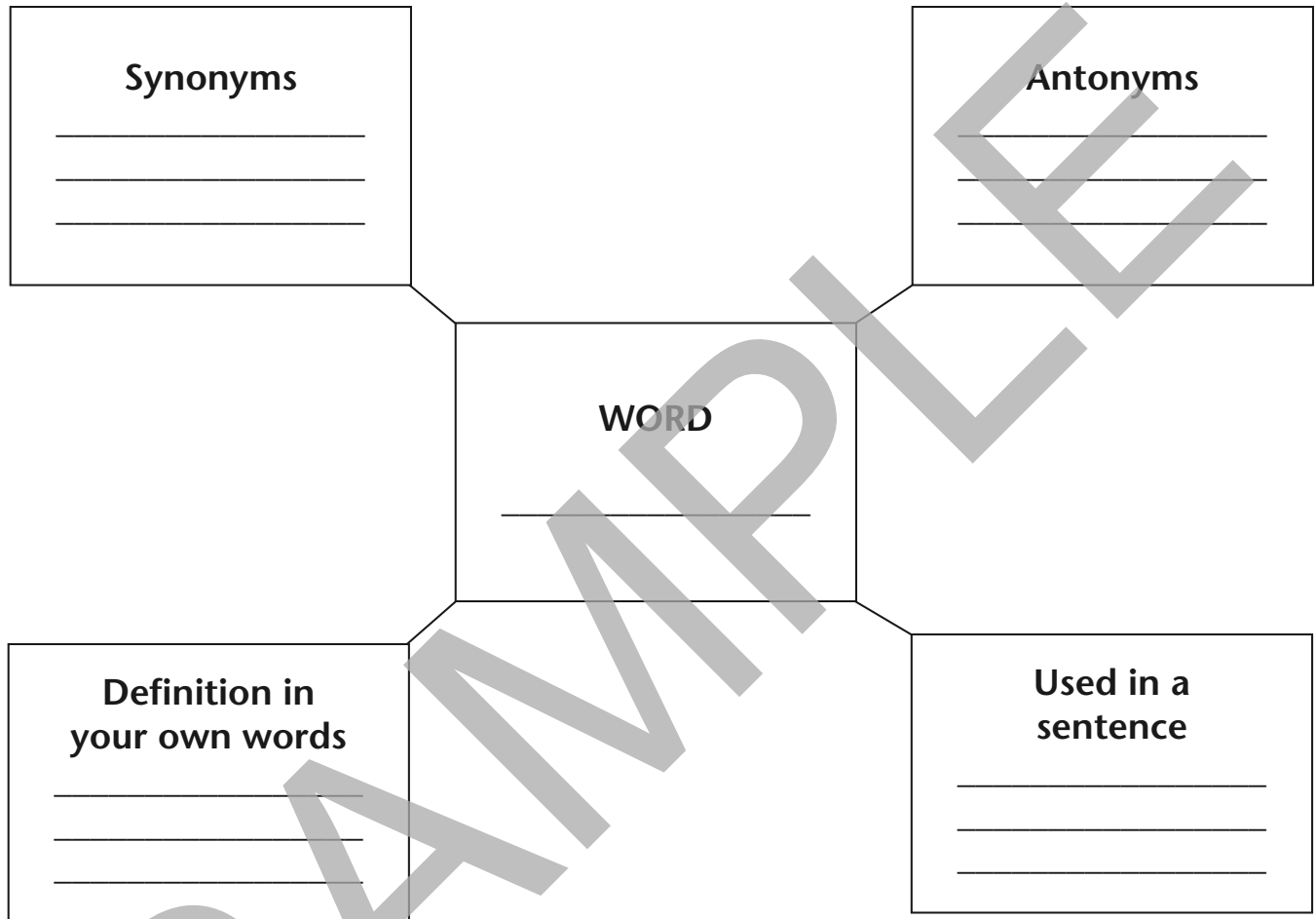


When?

Why?

How?

Vocabulary Word Map



A central box labeled "WORD" with a horizontal line for writing. It is connected to four surrounding boxes: "Synonyms" (top-left), "Antonyms" (top-right), "Definition in your own words" (bottom-left), and "Used in a sentence" (bottom-right). Each of these four boxes contains three horizontal lines for writing. A large, diagonal "SAMPLE" watermark is overlaid across the entire diagram.

Synonyms

Antonyms

WORD

Definition in your own words

Used in a sentence
