



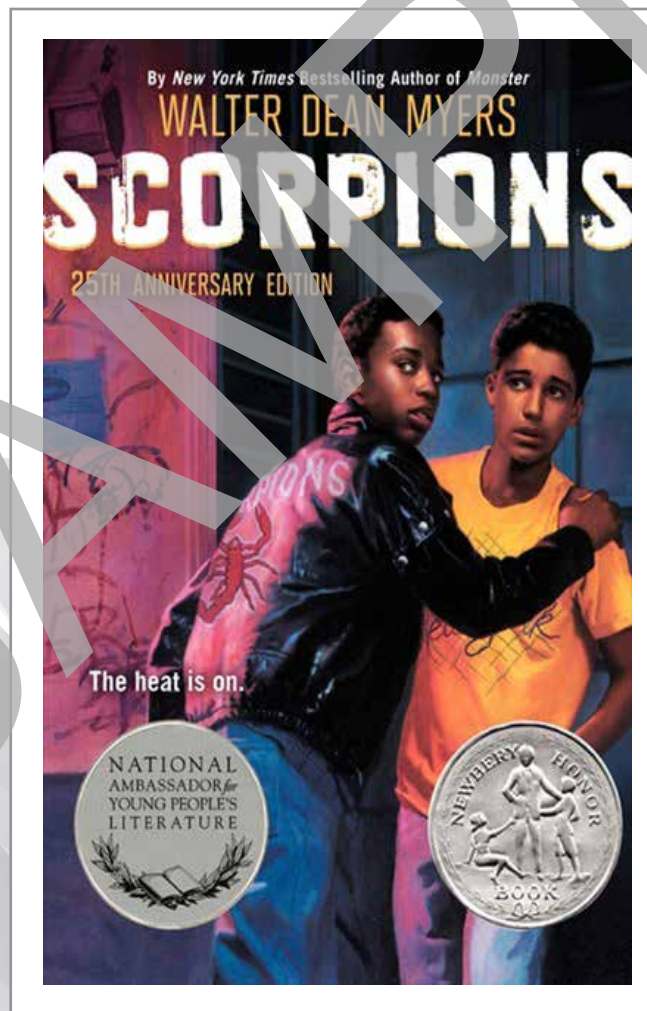
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 9-12

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Scorpions

Walter Dean Myers



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Scorpions

Walter Dean Myers

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 978-1-50204-149-4

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

About the Author.....	3
About the Guide	3
Twenty Chapters.....	4
Chapters contain: Summary, Initiating Activity, Vocabulary Words, Discussion Questions, Supplementary Activities	
Culminating Projects	31
Final Test	32
Rubric for Essay-Writing	35
Assessment for <i>Scorpions</i>	36

Skills and Strategies

Literary Elements

Characterization, story elements, colloquialisms

Comprehension

Predicting, comparison/contrast

Writing

Descriptive, opinion, letter-writing

Vocabulary

Thesaurus, synonyms

Listening/Speaking

Music, poetry reading, videotaping pantomime of selected scenes

Thinking

Brainstorming, research

About the Author

Walter Dean Myers grew up in Harlem, the setting of many of his books. He learned to read at an early age, encouraged by his mother. He recalls reading the newspaper to her when he was only six.

Myers was often in trouble at school, spending more than his share of time in the principal's office. Fortunately, his interest in books and reading was recognized by a few teachers. They convinced him to exchange comic books for classic literature.

He used earnings from a part-time high school job to buy a typewriter and began to write poems and stories. Putting the words that were in his head on paper made him feel "connected." It was the beginning of a prolific and successful career. After a stint in the Army, Myers earned a Bachelor's Degree and held several jobs. He was happiest as a teacher, editor, and writer.

Myers writes stories about the black experience, but they are stories for children of all races. His characters struggle with problems common to all young people as well as those faced primarily by blacks. Myers' novels help white and Asian readers to realize that black teenagers experience the same joys and frustrations that they do.

Although he is best known for his young adult fiction, Myers has also written a number of books for young children and some non-fiction. A unique offering is *Sweet Illusions*, a novel-workbook about unwed pregnancy published in 1987.

Myers has twice received the Coretta Scott King Award, has published a number of ALA Notable Books and ALA Best Books for Young Adults. *Scorpions* (1988) won the Newbery Honor Award. Some of Walter Dean Myers' most popular titles for young adults are *Fast Sam*, *Cool Clyde*, and *Stuff*; *Mojo and the Russians*; *The Young Landlords*; *It Ain't All for Nothin'*; *Brainstorm*; *Hoops*; *Outside Shot*; *Motown and Didi*; and *Crystal*.

About the Guide

There are eight lessons in the guide. Each begins with a summary, initiating activities, and a vocabulary list. Questions for discussion during or after the reading are included, along with a question for individual writing. Extension activities are suggested for art, music, drama, social studies, and research. There are four activity sheets, three plans for whole-class projects, a list of ideas for culminating activities, and a final test.

Chapters 4 - 5 Pages 23-57

Summary:

When Jamal goes to the auditorium to help Miss Brown, it turns out she just wants him to open all the windows, not paint trees. When Jamal goes home, he is relieved to see that his mother took the money from her day's work and bought food. He jokes around with Sassy, and then goes to the park and draws trees. The next day, Miss Brown tells him they're "not bad." Tito, Jamal's best friend, walks home with him. Sassy tries to get Tito to tell her she's cute, but Tito is embarrassed. The boys walk to 126th Street so that Jamal can see Mack. Mack's hangout is a crack house, but he's not there. While Jamal and Tito wait for him, Jamal leans up against a Mercedes. The car's owner, obviously a drug pusher, hits Jamal in the face. When Mack shows up, he tells Jamal he should take over Randy's place as leader of the Scorpions. Jamal thinks that if he makes some crack deliveries he can get the money for Randy's appeal, and Mack tells him he'll bring him a gun ("Miss three five seven"). Tito is concerned for his friend and has a bad feeling about Mack. Later, as Tito's grandmother lovingly prepares food for the boys, they decide it would be better to work at the A&P to earn the money for Randy. When Jamal tells his mother he "ran into" Mack, she again warns Jamal to stay away from the Scorpions. She is so tired and sad that Jamal tells Sassy he hopes Randy never gets out of jail—he'll only cause more trouble. Sassy passes this comment on to Mama, who reacts with anger and tears.

Initiating Activity:

Pre-reading questions: If you were Jamal's friend, what problems would he be likely to discuss with you? What would you tell him to do? How could you make him feel more hopeful? What do you think will happen in the next two chapters? Will Jamal fight Dwayne? Will he go see Mack in spite of his mother's wishes?

Vocabulary:

criminal 26
menacingly 34
crack house 36
testify 43

bodega 27
heavyset 34
beeper 36
warlord 43

straddled 31
appeal 35
plea 41
hoodlums 50

Discussion Questions:

1. What disappointing thing happens after school? (*Miss Brown just wanted Jamal to open the windows—not paint scenery.*)
2. How would you feel if Miss Brown reacted to your best tree drawings the way she did to Jamal's? (*Answers vary.*)

-
3. Give some examples from the book that show that Sassy is very quick and clever. *(See pages 30-32.)*
 4. What do we know about Tito? Begin an attribute web for him. *(He is Puerto Rican, very good-looking, and is being raised by his grandmother. He doesn't hear from his father often.)* What does *abuela* mean in English? *(grandmother)*
 5. Why is Jamal upset that Tito told his cousin about Randy? *(He's embarrassed and afraid he'll be judged by his brother's actions.)*
 6. What really goes on inside the building with the *Video Games* sign? *(It's a crack house where crack cocaine is made and sold. Dealers and runners wait around for deals to come in.)* What was Randy's association with it? *(Randy had made crack deliveries in the past.)*
 7. Why was Jamal angry at Randy? *(for making his mother cry)*
 8. What did Mack want Jamal to do? *(take over as leader of the Scorpions)* Who/what is Miss three five seven? *(a .357- caliber gun)*
 9. Find examples of Jamal's mother's behavior and conversation to show what kind of person she is. Add these to her attribute web. *(Examples will vary somewhat, but there are many on pages 49-55 that show Mama as loving, hard-working, and religious.)*
 10. Why did Jamal say he hopes Randy never gets out of prison? *(He thought he would just get into trouble again.)*

Supplementary Activities:

Writing

1. Reread the sections of Chapters 4 and 5 involving Tito. What things does Tito do and say that show he is a good friend to Jamal? Think about one of your friends. Then write a paragraph explaining how your friend shows that he/she cares about you.

Math

2. Jamal and Tito figure out it would take them about 41 days to earn approximately \$500 if they made \$12 a day. How long would it take them to earn approximately \$2,000? *(166 days)*

Wish Lists

Jamal put “plain white paper” on his wish list right under “leather jacket.” Imagine you are Jamal, and add more items to his wish list. These can be changes in his life as well as things that can be purchased. Then make a wish list for yourself. Do you and Jamal have anything in common?

Jamal’s Wish List

Leather Jacket

Plain White Paper

My Wish List