



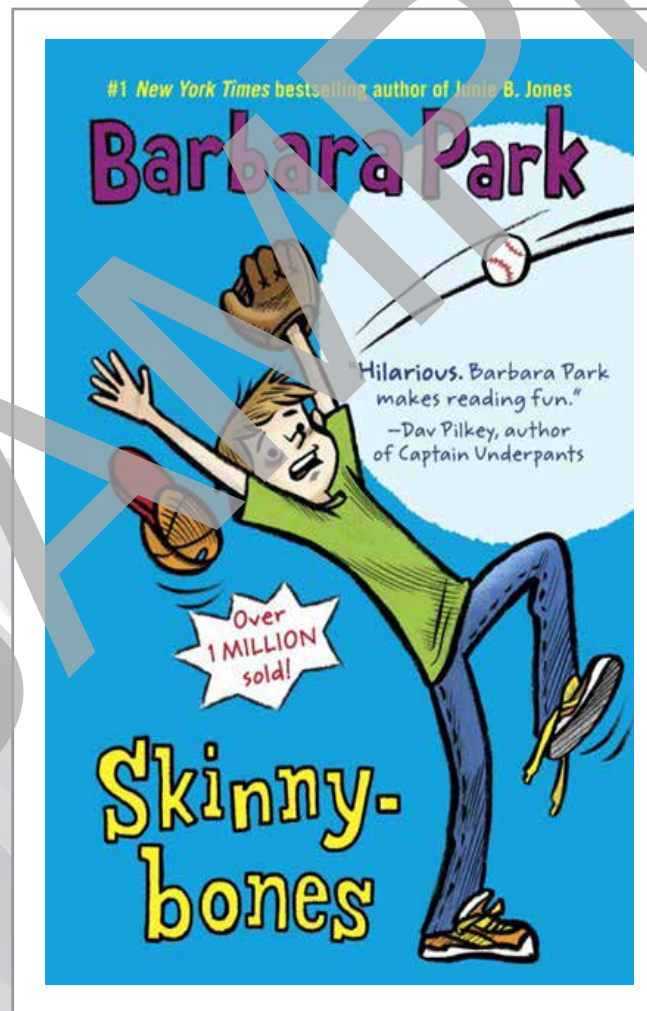
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 3-5

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Skinnyy bones

Barbara Park



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Skinnyy bones

Barbara Park

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

Comparing, evaluating,
analyzing details

Writing

Interviews, directions,
research

Listening/Speaking

Participation in discussions,
participation in dramatic
activities, describing,
defending opinions

Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing,
story mapping, cause/effect,
inference, problem solving

Vocabulary

Words in context, root/base
words, synonyms

Literary Elements

Character analysis, setting,
plot, figurative language

Summary of *Skinnybones*

Skinnybones tells the story of Alex Frankovitch, a fifth-grade boy. Alex, one of the smallest boys in his class, has trouble excelling in activities at school, in sports, and at home. Adventures with Kitty Fritters and baseball prompts Alex to develop a big lying mouth. *Skinnybones*, Alex, begins to brag about his pitching ability (which in reality stinks). He then lands himself into a contest with T.J. Stoner, the biggest jerk, but the best baseball player in the entire school. This mistake may not even be able to be solved with Alex's humorous fast talking.

About the Author

Barbara Park is considered one of the funniest writers around. She has earned fifteen Children's Choice awards. She is very popular with middle-graders. Ms. Park lives with her husband in Paradise Valley, Arizona. She attended The University of Alabama and earned a B.S. degree in education.

Introductory Activities

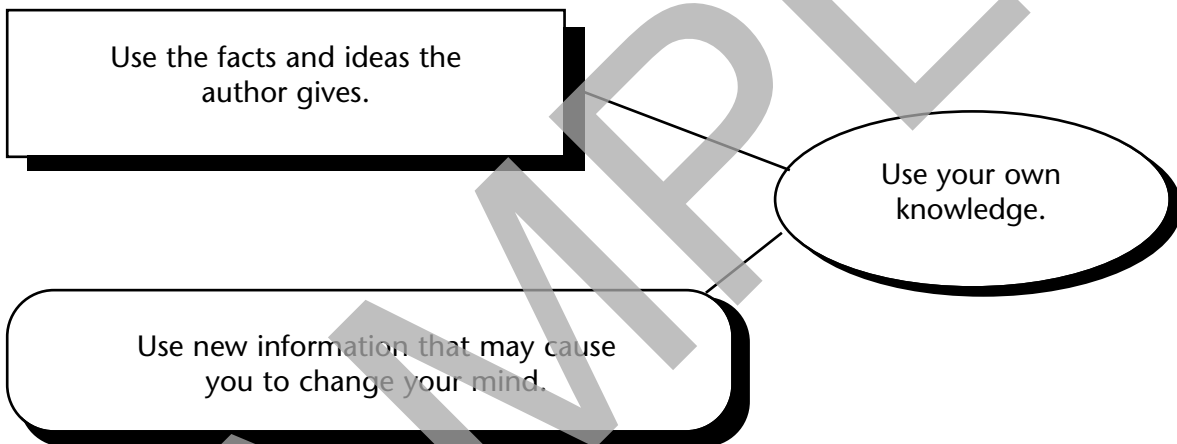
1. Previewing the book: Have students look at the cover of the book and answer these questions: who? what? where? when? why? Based on their answers, students predict what the book will be about.
2. Given the following clues, write a paragraph predicting what they think will happen in the story.
fifth grade baseball kitty pitching lying bragging contest
3. Character journal: List the main characters from *Skinnybones* and have the students choose one. As they read the book, students write regular journal entries from that character's point of view. Journal entries should reflect on the events of the story. At various points in their reading, have students share their journal entries with classmates.
4. Create an attribute web (see next page) with students for each of the following ideas: baseball, family, school, lying, bragging, contest. Focus on one word at a time. Begin by writing the word in the center of a large piece of paper. Ask students to quickly tell what each word brings to mind. Encourage students to elaborate on particular ideas.

Using Predictions in the Novel Unit Approach

We all make predictions as we read—little guesses about what will happen next, how the conflict will be resolved, which details given by the author will be important to the plot, which details will help to fill in our sense of a character. Students should be encouraged to predict, to make sensible guesses.

As students work on predictions, these discussion questions can be used to guide them: What are some of the ways to predict? What is the process of a sophisticated reader's thinking and predicting? What clues does an author give us to help us in making our predictions? Why are some predictions more likely than others?

A prediction chart is for students to record their predictions. As each subsequent chapter is discussed, you can review and correct previous predictions. This procedure serves to focus on predictions and to review the stories.



Predictions:

Chapter 1, Pages 1-9

Vocabulary

comments (2)	frustrated (3)	sifted (3)	scattered (4)
considered (4)	basically (4)	blame (4)	unfortunately (4)
sprinting (5)	positive (5)	insane (5)	groggy (5)
gasp (6)	ridiculous (6)	indignantly (6)	shifty (7)
embarrassed (7)	inspect (8)	weird (8)	shrugged (8)
seriously (8)	disgusting (8)	extremely (8)	immature (8)
hurled (9)			

Discussion Questions

1. Who is writing a letter to the makers of Kitty Fritters? (*Alex Frankovitch is writing the letter.*)
2. Why does Alex's mother buy Kitty Fritters? (*His mother buys it because it is cheap.*)
3. Does Alex's mother think that the family cat is a member of the family? (*No, she thinks that a cat is just a cat.*)
4. Alex's mother says that his aunt has "a screw loose." What does she mean by that? (*Answers will vary.*)
5. Why do you think Alex is entering the Kitty Fritters TV Contest? (*Answers will vary.*)
6. Why does Alex take the bag of Kitty Fritters off the bottom shelf? (*Alex needs to read the rest of the directions and to find the address.*)
7. Where is the entry blank located? (*It is inside the bag.*)
8. Why is Alex frustrated? (*He can not find the entry blank.*)
9. How does Alex find the entry blank? (*He dumps the Kitty Fritters on the floor and sifts through about a million fritters.*)
10. Who is scratching at the door? (*His mother.*)
11. What does Alex's mother say when she sees the Kitty Fritters scattered all over the floor? (*"Been fixing yourself a little snack?"*)
12. What is the first thing that Alex is going to do to handle this situation? (*He will try to get his mother to laugh the whole thing off.*)
13. What is Alex's Plan B? (*To tell a lie about how the Kitty Fritters got on the floor.*)
14. Does Alex's mother believe him? (*No*)
15. Why does Alex's mother compare Alex to Pinocchio? (*Because Alex kept on telling bigger and bigger lies.*)
16. What does Fluffy, the cat, do on Alex's shoe? (*The cat throws up on his shoe.*)

Supplementary Activities

1. Research: Have students consult reference books for information on the different breeds of cats. They should choose one and write a short paragraph about that breed.
2. Science/Health: Invite a veterinarian to speak to the class about the care of cats.
3. Critical Thinking: Have students create a T-chart that lists the positive and negative things about lying.
4. Literary Analysis/Character: Have students begin a character attribute web (see pages 8-10 of this guide) for each character. Students should continue to add information to the webs as they read the following chapters.
5. Literary Analysis/Story Maps: Have the students begin a story map (see page 11 of this guide) to use as they read the story. As they read the book, they should continue to add new information about the characters, setting, problems, and events of the story.

Chapter 2, pages 10-15

Vocabulary

shy (10)	collection (11)	freaked (11)	admit (11)
difference (11)	blatantly (12)	personally (12)	appreciates (12)
introduce (12)	lame (12)	boring (13)	totally (14)
impressed (14)	barf (15)	annoyed (15)	competition (15)

Discussion Questions

1. When is the first time that Alex made people laugh? (*He is in Kindergarten.*)
2. What is Weird Peter's hobby? (*He collects sweater fuzz.*)
3. What does Alex do to Weird Peter's collection? (*He sneezes in his box of fuzz on purpose.*)
4. What does Alex do when he runs out of funny things that happened to him? (*He makes things up that are not true.*)
5. Do you think that the teacher is pleased when Alex tells a lie to the class? Support your answer. (*No, because the teacher said that there was a big difference between Show and Tell and Show and Blatantly-Lie-Right-to-Our-Faces.*)
6. What is Alex's goal in life? (*His goal is to find a teacher that appreciates his sense of humor.*)
7. Do the students in Alex's class think that he is funny when he tells them his sandwich's name? (*Yes, the whole class cracks up.*)
8. Why is T.J. Stoner the last student to talk about himself? (*He is sitting in the back of the room.*)

Character Chart

Describe _____ in the beginning

Summarize important events in the boxes below. Describe how the character feels after each one.

Event #1:

_____ feels ...

Event #2:

_____ feels ...

Event #3:

_____ feels ...

Event #4:

_____ feels ...

Event #5:

_____ feels ...

Event #6:

_____ feels ...

Describe _____ at the end.