



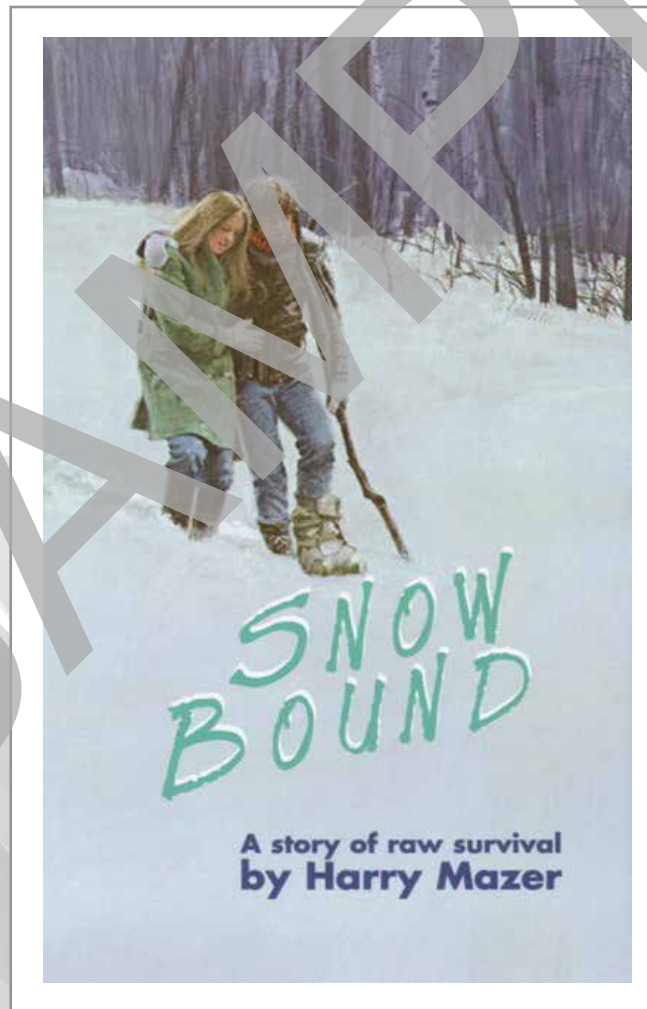
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Snow Bound

Harry Mazer



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Snow Bound

Harry Mazer

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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Table of Contents

Summary	3
About the Author	4
Initiating Activities.....	4
Eight Sections	11
Sections contain: Vocabulary Words and Activities, Discussion Questions, Predictions, Supplementary Activities	
Post-reading Discussion Questions	29
Post-reading Extension Activities	30
Assessment	35

Skills and Strategies

Literary Elements

Characterization, setting, conflict, suspense, theme, atmosphere, mood, point of view, figurative language, style

Writing

Writing log, description, narrative, creative, newspaper article, comparison/contrast, letter

Listening/Speaking

Participation in discussion and cooperative groups, entertainment of others with dramatic activities

Comprehension

Significant details, comparing and contrasting, cause and effect, drawing conclusions

Vocabulary

Synonyms/antonyms, context, analogies

Thinking

Brainstorming, classifying and categorizing, analyzing, interpreting, anticipating, retrospectively, evaluating, synthesizing, detecting fallacies of reasoning

Summary

One January, 15-year-old Tony Laporte finds a stray dog near the clubhouse he and his friends built the summer before. When Tony lets "Arthur" into the cellar a few nights later to keep warm, Arthur starts whining, the landlord complains, and Tony's father chases Arthur away. After arguing with his parents, Tony goes out into a fine snow to find the dog—without success. While his mother is at work, he takes her 1951 Plymouth from the garage and heads toward Watertown, in northern New York state, where his uncle lives. Driving without a license, he decides to avoid the troopers by turning off the Interstate onto the old state highway. The snow gets heavier and Tony decides to pick up a bundled hitchhiker, who turns out to be a girl, Cindy Reichert.

After a strained weekend visit with her grandmother, Cindy had decided to hitchhike home rather than wait for the bus. Relieved at first to get a ride, Cindy soon gets nervous about being in a blinding snowstorm with an underage driver. Tony takes a shortcut and gets lost; Cindy grabs the wheel in anger and the car bumps across a field and crashes against some boulders. Tony finally manages to turn on the car and get the heater going.

The two doze fitfully, waking up cramped and cold; the car is out of gas. Cindy goes out in the snow to look for a road but soon returns with frostbitten feet. Tony turns on the radio, hears no mention of them, and realizes that nobody has any idea where they are. The two independent teens bicker constantly, but gradually begin to cooperate in order to survive.

They build a fire in an oilcan inside the car, and Cindy portions out cookies her grandmother had given her. The snow finally stops falling and Tony goes out to get branches for bedding and for the fire. Unable to sleep that night, they talk and Cindy reads Tony's palm. When Cindy does fall asleep, Tony snatches several of Cindy's cookies. A helicopter passes overhead, but doesn't spot them. They lay a fire outside, to be set ablaze with a gasoline-soaked rag, if another helicopter approaches.

With Cindy unable to walk, Tony decides to strike out on his own to look for help. He sleeps under a tree that night, waking to the barking of wild dogs. Meanwhile, Cindy starts to keep a journal and resolves to be a more relaxed, less critical person.

Tony follows a stream to an empty cabin, where he lights the woodstove and cooks up a rice-and-ketchup concoction. Using a hook baited with a potato sprout, Tony catches and cooks some fish for dinner. Warring with his conscience for several nights, Tony finally packs up some food and blankets and returns to the car. Cindy, who has survived on melted snow heated over the oil-can fire in the car's ashtray, is delighted to see him.

The snow starts again; eight days have passed and Cindy's feet are much better. The next morning is clear, so the two make a sled out of the car hood, pile on the things they feel they might need, leave a note, and set off toward the cabin. Along the way they hear snowmobilers and try to follow the tracks. Tony suggests getting on the sled to catch up with the snowmobilers at the bottom of a steep hill, but the sled flies out of control; Tony's leg is hurt. Cindy wraps Tony's ankle with strips of blanket, and drags him on the sled to shelter under a rock outcropping. There she makes a fire and gets out the last of the food. Wild dogs circle in the night and Cindy feeds the fire.

In the morning, Cindy struggles to pull the sled through the ravine. They argue and Cindy leaves Tony, returning just in time to help him fend off a pack of wild dogs. Supporting each other, they walk for hours, ending up in a state park picnic area, where they sleep in the men's room. Finally they stumble onto a farmhouse owned by kindly Mrs. Littlejohn, the mother of two children.

In the hospital, Tony apologizes to his parents about the car, and they tell him they are just glad he survived the eleven-day ordeal. The novel ends with a letter from Cindy to Tony in which she reflects on how the survival experience has changed them ("...we gave birth to ourselves...You are my brother now...") and tells him how much she looks forward to seeing him, having accepted his family's invitation to visit over spring break.

About the Author

Harry Mazer was born in New York City in 1925, and now lives in Jamesville, New York. He worked at a variety of jobs, including railway switch-tender, sheet metal worker, welder, English teacher, and writer. A sergeant in the Air Force during World War II, he earned the Purple Heart. He obtained his B.A. at Union College and his M.A. at Syracuse University. In 1950, he married Norma Fox, also a novelist (with whom he wrote *The Solid Gold Kid* and *Heartbeat*). They have four children.

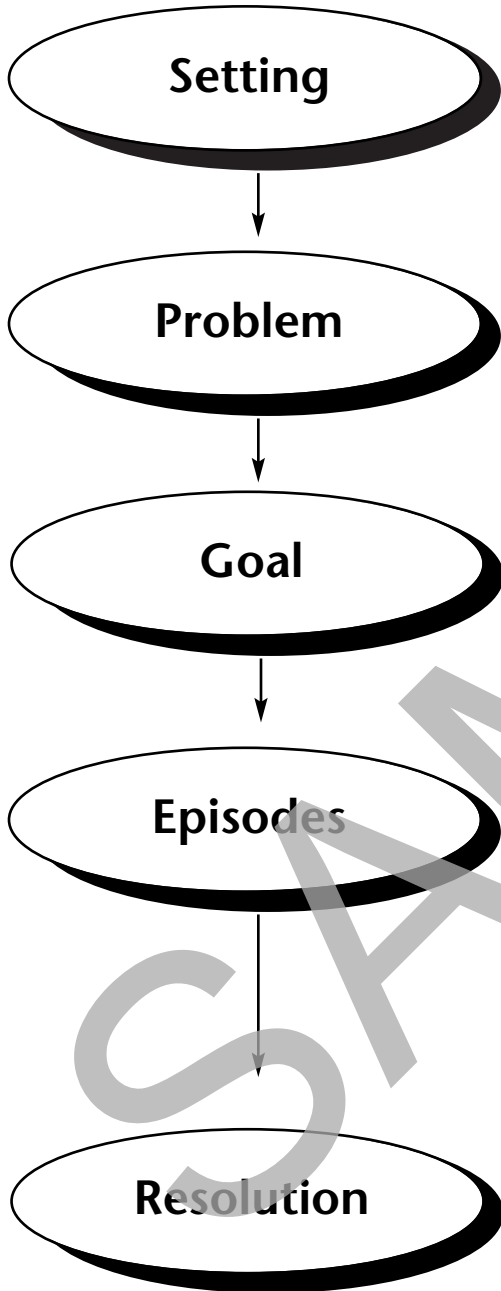
Mazer has said that it is hard for him to write and even sometimes to speak perhaps because of some form of dyslexia. He says that he became a writer not because of any inborn talent but because he wanted to overcome his difficulty—something like an asthma sufferer who decides to become a runner. He decided to write about adolescents at his agent's suggestion and discovered that the joy and pain of the teen years often seems more clear and real to him than more recent times in his life. He tries to grab his readers' interest quickly without oversimplifying or hedging on emotion. Critics have praised his books for describing realistic young people caught in moral dilemmas.

Initiating Activities

Choose one or more of the following prereading activities to help students draw from their background knowledge about the events and themes they will meet in *Snow Bound*.

1. Prediction: Have students examine the cover illustration, title, and table of contents. Ask what predictions they have about the book. Some prompts include: What does it mean to be "snow bound"? What can you tell about the two people on the cover? When and where do you think the story takes place? How do you think they became "snow bound"? What problems do you suppose they face? How long do you imagine it is before they are rescued—or are they? Do you expect the story to be suspenseful? instructive? funny?
2. Anticipation Guide: Present students with these statements and have them discuss whether they agree or disagree, and why.
 - a) Runaways usually have rotten home lives.
 - b) Courage means not being afraid.
 - c) Necessity is the mother of invention.
 - d) If you get frostbite, rub the affected area with snow.

Story Map



Characters _____

Time and Place _____

Problem _____

Goal _____

Beginning → Development → Outcome

Resolution _____

Chapters 12–14

Vocabulary

clamoring 88	scalloped 89	indiscriminately 89	pigeon-holer 91
tinkers 92	refined 92	trudging 95	aspens 95
sullen 95	slogged 95	reverberating 95	expectantly 96
plateau 96	barren 96	chickadees 97	aloof 101

Vocabulary Activity

Have students identify which word does not belong in each group and explain why. (Answers are italicized.)

- | | | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. chickadees | <i>pigeon-holers</i> | cardinals | thrushes |
| 2. tinker | kettle | mender | <i>plateau</i> |
| 3. warily | <i>indiscriminately</i> | suspiciously | watchfully |
| 4. <i>sullen</i> | aloof | withdrawn | detached |
| 5. barren | desolate | <i>frigid</i> | bleak |

Discussion Questions

1. Cindy seems to be trying to think positively and to use humor to keep up her spirits. What is one example? (*She imagines telling her friends about the chocolate chip cookie diet.*)
2. How has Cindy's attitude toward "Mother Nature" changed? (*She doesn't think of Nature as an all-loving God now, but rather as something that can be cruel and indifferent.*) Does she still think that Nature is beautiful? (*Even as she thinks about how cruel Nature can be, she notices that the snow drifts are like lovely scalloped dunes.*)
3. Why does Cindy keep a journal? (*We know she likes to write poetry; this seems to be a way to keep herself company.*) What do you learn from it about how she passes the time while Tony is away? (*She observes animal noises, eats snow, sees a deer, thinks about Tony, resolves to have fewer regrets and be less critical, feeds the fire, makes "tea."*) Why do you suppose the author decided to show the reader Cindy's journal rather than simply describing her thoughts and actions? (*This lends immediacy to the story and makes Cindy seem more real; having Cindy, who likes writing, keep a journal is a realistic detail.*)
4. Why does Cindy refer to herself as a former "pigeon-holer" (p. 91)? (*She criticizes her own tendency to make judgments about the categories people fit into.*) How has she changed? (*She intends to be less self-righteous, critical, and judgmental.*)
5. Why does Cindy think about the nursery rhyme, "If ifs and ands were pots and pans, there'd be no need for tinkers"? What does it mean? (*Regretting the past doesn't change anything.*) Have you ever heard different expressions that convey the same idea? (*Example: "If wishes were horses, beggars would ride."*) Do you agree with that philosophy? Would Tony agree?

-
6. How has Cindy figured out a way to make tea? (*She heated water in the ashtray and added gum wrappers for flavoring.*) Why is that tea so important to her? (*The warm tea is a nicety, a comfort.*) Are you surprised she isn't more discouraged?
 7. Why does trudging through the snow seem like such hard work to Tony? (*The snow is deep and he is exhausted and hungry.*) Why is he afraid? (*He fears falling asleep in the snow, getting lost.*) What does he do to avoid walking in circles and getting even more lost? (*He tries to keep his bearings by noticing landmarks like particular trees and rocks.*)
 8. Why does he start daydreaming about being a hero? (*Maybe this is "wish fulfillment;" the fantasy might give him courage.*) Does that daydreaming work for his survival or against it? (*Imagining himself saving Cindy keeps him moving, but he almost falls asleep while dreaming.*) How are his thoughts about God different from Cindy's? (*Cindy doesn't believe in the conventional God; Tony promises to be better if God will get him through.*) How does Tony vow to be a better person if he survives? (*Tony will stop swearing, picking on his sisters, hitting, will cooperate with his parents.*) Why does he dream about dogs and food? (*He is hungry, thinking about the dog that started all of this, and is subconsciously aware of the barking of the wild dogs.*)
 9. How does Cindy pass her third night alone? (*writes farewell notes*) How is she feeling? (*depressed, anxious*) Do you think she is afraid she'll die? (*She is thinking about death, wondering why the crows are eyeing her.*) What does she think of "night creatures"? (*Their sounds frighten her, remind her of the bones of the dead.*) How does she relight the fire? (*with a stick dips a piece of upholstery into the gas tank, puts the soaked rag in the can, lights it with a match*) Why do you think she memorizes the poem before burning it? (*Maybe memorizing the winter poem soothes and distracts her.*)
 10. **Prediction:** What will Tony find in a deserted fishing cabin? What plan will he and Cindy devise for finding help?

The Author's Craft: Point of View

There are two basic ways an author may present the events in the story: first person narrator ("I") or third person narrator ("he" and "she"). From whose **point of view** is the story told? (*Third person—there is an omniscient narrator who allows us to "hear" what Cindy and Tony are thinking; First person—Cindy's journal allows her to tell us her story herself.*)

Writing Activity

Pretend that you are Tony, telling a friend about your experience six months after it happened. Describe from Tony's point of view what happened between the time Tony left Cindy and found the stream (pp. 94-100).