

Teacher Guide

Grades 7–8

So B. It

Sarah Weeks



**NEW WAYS TO TEACH READING,
WRITING, & CRITICAL THINKING**



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So B. It

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Teacher Guide

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Note

The 2005 Harper Trophy paperback edition of the novel, © 2004 by Sarah Weeks, was used to prepare this guide. Page references may differ in other editions. Novel ISBN: 978-0-06-441047-2

Please note: Please assess the appropriateness of this book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading and discussing it with them.

ISBN 978-1-60878-509-4

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Publisher Information

For a complete catalog, contact—

Novel Units, Inc.
P.O. Box 97
Bulverde, TX 78163-0097

Web site: novelunits.com

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Skills and Strategies

Comprehension

Creative thinking, identifying attributes, inferring, predicting, supporting judgments

Literary Elements

Story mapping, characterization, conflict, setting, theme, point of view, author's purpose, figurative language, genre, suspense

Vocabulary

Synonyms, word maps, definitions, sorting

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, oral presentation, interviewing, drama

Writing

Creative writing, personal narrative, dialogue, poetry, essay, report

Critical Thinking

Brainstorming, research, compare/contrast, cause/effect, fact/opinion, analysis, evaluation

Across the Curriculum

Social Studies—family relationships, history, legal rights, Clara Barton; Geography—map; Science—mental disorders, agoraphobia, health, psychology, color vision deficiency, body language, ethics, brain anatomy, bath bombs, bird migration; Math—computation; Art—illustration, design, models; Music—soundtrack

3. Geography/Math: Create a map of Heidi's bus trip from Reno, Nevada to Liberty, New York. Chart the bus stations mentioned in the novel, and guess at those stations that "blended together after a while" (p. 135). (The Greyhound Line's Web site is a useful source of information. See their "Station Locator" at <http://www.greyhound.com/home/en/Location/Locator.aspx> [active at time of publication].) For each stop along the route, include a brief report about the town. Finally, compute how many miles Heidi travels.
4. Science: Research reasons why people lie. On a separate sheet of paper, complete the sentence below and write several paragraphs explaining your answer. Use what you learned in your research to justify your explanation.

Honesty is the best policy because _____.

Good—Blue

Heidi is homesick and gets physically ill when a storm knocks out phone service and she cannot get in touch with Bernadette. Georgia Sweet, an 18-year-old leaving to college in New York, helps Heidi, and Heidi feels as if she has found a sister. Reaching Liberty, Heidi discovers that her mother was stolen, but her lucky streak wins her a safe home to Hilltop Home.

vocabulary

puckered
mental
humiliating
nausea
distorted
retched
lull
cogs
intertwined
resemblance
ignite
anxiety
queasy
grimy
inconsolably

Discussion Questions

1. Why does Heidi consider going home? What motivates her to keep going? (*Heidi is sad and homesick, so when so that she forgets her original reasons for going to Liberty. When she hears "soof," Heidi remembers that she needs to know about her past.*)
2. Why is Heidi bothered by the lies she told Alice Wilinsky? What does she do to sort out her feelings on the matter? (*Heidi doesn't like not knowing why she lied. She knows that "truth is good" and lies are bad" (p. 136). She worries not so much about what Alice thinks of her, but about what her own actions say about her character. To sort out her thoughts, Heidi makes a list titled "Things I Know About Lying."*)
3. Why does Heidi get sick? What do you think is the main reason for her illness? (*Heidi feels guilty about lying, is homesick, and panics when she can reach Bernadette. The coffee she buys comforts her at first, but after a while the smell makes her even more nauseated. Answers will vary, but Heidi's sickness is most likely a result of her panic about being in a strange place and not being able to reach Bernadette.*)
4. Alice was "a teller" and Georgia is "an asker" (p. 125). Explain what Heidi means by these labels as well as the difference between the two. (*Askers are interested in other people and can draw a shy person into a conversation. However, askers can also be considered nosy. Tellers may bore others by talking about themselves, but their chatter can sometimes be a welcome distraction to a person who wants to avoid thinking about his or her own problems.*)
5. Why doesn't Heidi miss her father? Do you agree that "you can't miss what you don't remember ever having" (p. 128)? (*Since Heidi never knew her father, her life feels normal without him. Answers will vary but should include that sometimes, as in Heidi's case, a person feels cheated out of a piece of his or her personal history. S/he may feel like there is something missing due to the absence of something or someone. In this way, it is possible to miss something you never had.*)

6. What makes Heidi think “certain things that seem to happen by accident don’t really happen by accident at all” (p. 129)? Do you think this is true? (*Heidi believes if she hadn’t gotten sick from lying to Alice and had been able to reach Bernadette by phone, she may have missed meeting Georgia and getting the idea that “soof” could be her father’s name. Answers will vary.*)
7. Why do you think Heidi feels envious of some people who know exactly who they are, yet she is happy for Georgia? (*Answers will vary, but students should realize that Georgia makes Heidi feel safe after Heidi has felt so lost during her trip. Even though Georgia does not feel lost like Heidi does, Heidi is happy that Georgia knows herself. She is also Georgia is her friend, and Georgia’s certainty about things reassures Heidi.*)
8. Why does Heidi think she knows more about Georgia than she does about Mama? Do you think she really knows more about Georgia? (*Answers will vary. Heidi probably feels she knows more about Georgia because Georgia is able to speak and communicate much better than Mama, so Heidi is able to write down what she knows about Georgia. However, Heidi seems to be suffering from an illusion of intimacy with Georgia, whom, in reality, she hardly knows. Students may note Georgia’s quick departure from the story, and even go so far as to suggest that Georgia stole Heidi’s money. Heidi probably knows more about Mama—her moods, her opinions, and her personality—than she realizes. Her connection with Mama is actual intimacy based on experience and time spent together.*)
9. At this point in the story, does Heidi care more about Bernadette or Mama? (*Answers will vary. Heidi is homesick and needs Bernadette’s voice to reassure her, but Bernadette probably needs Heidi more because she can’t relieve her headaches by herself.*)
10. **Prediction:** What will Heidi discover at Hilltop Home?

Supplementary Activities

1. Creative Thinking/Art: Georgia compares the human brain to a watch, and Bernadette compares Mama’s brain to a machine with broken parts. Create a model or drawing that represents the human brain as a mechanical object similar to either of these.
2. Science/Drama: Research body language and what humans use through nonverbal communication. Working in teams, prepare skits that demonstrate the use of nonverbal skills, and then perform your skits for the class. Afterwards discuss as a class what the skits were about based on observations of body language.
3. Comprehension: Create a list titled “Things I Know About Heidi.” Compare your list to Heidi’s list of “Things I Know About Georgia Sweet.” Then write a paragraph or two that explains why Heidi feels that despite their differences, she and Georgia are “like the two yellow ducks in the Memory game” (p. 127).
4. Compare/Contrast: Create a picture of Heidi arriving in Liberia, New York. Compare and contrast your picture with those of classmates. Discuss whether similarities and differences come from details provided by the novel or from details filled in by readers’ imaginations.

Pretty–Hot

At Hilltop Home, Heidi meets Elliot, who goes and calls her “soof.” Thurman Hill, Elliot’s father and owner of Hilltop Home, accuses Heidi of being someone else and wanting money. When Mr. Hill is called out of the room, Ruby unsuccessfully checks the files for the last name “It.” Then a sheriff enters the office, and Heidi runs. Roy Franklin, who is both the sheriff and Ruby’s husband, calls Bernadette, who agrees that Heidi can stay at their house for the time being. Heidi is exhausted and glad to have found such nice people.

Character Web

Directions: Choose a character from the novel, and complete the chart below. Cite evidence from the story as you fill in information.

A central box labeled "Name" is connected by lines to six surrounding boxes. The boxes are arranged in two rows of three. The top row boxes are "His/Her Statements", "His/Her Behavior", and "His/Her Fears". The bottom row boxes are "His/Her Thoughts", "How He/She Looks", and "The Actions Toward Him/Her".

His/Her Statements

His/Her Behavior

His/Her Fears

Name

His/Her Thoughts

How He/She Looks

The Actions Toward Him/Her

Sociogram

Directions: A sociogram shows the relationship between characters in a story. Complete the sociogram below by writing a word to describe the relationships between the characters. Remember, relationships go both ways, so each line requires a descriptive word.

