



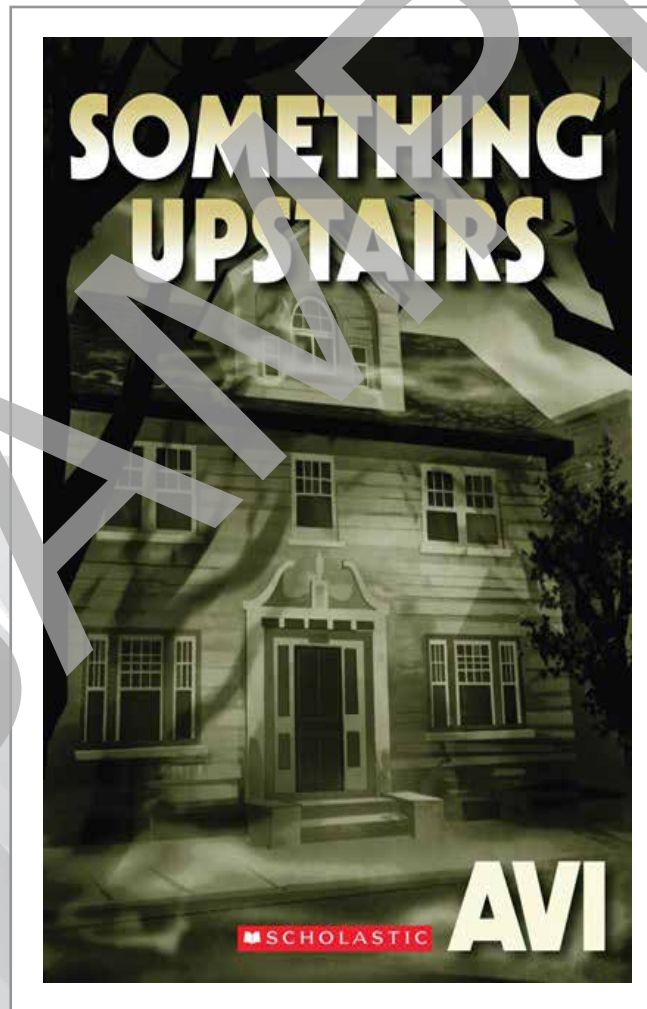
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Something Upstairs

Avi



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Something Upstairs

Avi

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 978-1-50204-193-7

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

Summary.....	3
About the Author	3
Introductory Activities.....	3
Vocabulary Activities.....	4
Nine Chapters and Author's Explanation	12
Each section contains: Vocabulary, Discussion Questions, and Supplementary Activities	
Post-reading Discussion Questions	25
Post-reading Extension Activities	26
Assessment.....	28

Skills and Strategies

Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing, cause and effect, inferences, anticipation

Listening/Speaking

Discussing, interviewing, storytelling, music

Literary Elements

Characterization, foreshadowing, setting, plot development

Thinking

Analysis, compare/contrast, pros/cons, creative thinking, critical thinking

Across the Curriculum

Social studies—maps, geography; History—research; Art—drawing, collage, puppet making, mobiles, bookmarks, advertisements, illustrations

Vocabulary

Target word charades, target word maps, synonyms, antonyms, defining parts of speech, context clues

Writing

Character journal personal writing, creative writing, poetry

Summary

In *Something Upstairs*, Avi writes about a young boy named Kenny Huldorf who relocates to Rhode Island from Los Angeles. His family moves into a historical home that was built in 1789. Kenny instantly has a distinct feeling of unease as he examines the newly decorated attic that his parents prepared for him. When Kenny investigates a small room off the attic, he notices the floor is marked with a disturbing dark stain. Late at night, the appearance of a smoky being in the shape of a young boy emerges from the stain. The ghost tries to convince Kenny to help him solve the mystery of his death. This dangerous adventure of deceit and murder takes Kenny and the young ghost-slave, Caleb, back to the time of the slave traders. "Who is the murderer?" is the question asked as Kenny struggles to find the truth and get back to the present.

About the Author

Avi is known for books filled with imagination and subject matter that children love. He has won two Newbery Honor Book Awards. Avi recently published *Beyond the Western Sea, Book I: The Escape from Home*, the first of a two-part serial novel. His home is presently in Denver, Colorado.

Introductory Activities

1. Previewing the book: Have students look at the cover and answer the journalist's questions about what they see: Who? What? When? Where? and Why? Based on their answers, students predict what the book will be about.
2. Predicting: Given the following clues, students should write a paragraph predicting what they think will happen in the story.
time travel slavery history obligation ghost murder
3. Character Journal: List the main characters from *Something Upstairs* and have students choose one. As they read the book, students should write regular 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 journals with classmates.
4. Attribute Web: Create an attribute web (see pages 8-9 of this guide) with students for each of the following ideas: freedom, bravery, justice, greed, and time travel. Ask students to quickly tell what each word brings to mind. Encourage students to elaborate on particular ideas.
5. Prediction Chart: Have students set up a prediction chart (see pages 6-7 of this guide) to use as they read the book.
6. Anticipation Questions: Have students respond to each of the following statements with a "thumbs up" (I agree) or a "thumbs down" (I disagree) and discuss their responses.
 - It is important to know the reasons for the events of history.
 - You should not help those who are different from you.
 - Parents should help and support their children.
 - You are not responsible for anyone but yourself.
 - You do not need to keep a promise if you are in danger.
 - No adult will hurt a child.
 - No human should be made a slave.

Vocabulary Activities

1. Target Word Charades: Have students act out some of the vocabulary words and have classmates guess the target word. Some suggested words for *Something Upstairs*:

retreated (19)	fetches (20)	fiddling (25)	straining (29)
cringed (31)	disdain (33)	fascinated (36)	heaved (36)
contempt (36)	urgency (37)	bickering (45)	boisterous (45)
confusion (49)	tension (52)	ecstatic (54)	sneered (55)
pleaded (56)	provoke (57)	perplexity (63)	fury (67)
implore (67)	nudged (71)	groped (74)	dumfounded (77)
peered (85)	swaggering (87)	rowdy (88)	jeered (89)
lurched (91)	reluctantly (96)	stammered (100)	anguish (109)
wincing (109)	twitched (111)	smarted (111)	remorse (115)

2. Target Word Maps: Have students complete word maps for vocabulary words of a certain part of speech. For example, verbs from *Something Upstairs* would include:

bulged (14)	laden (24)	summoned (30)	surmise (62)
scrutinize (80)	reverberated (99)	faltered (114)	

Word Map for a Verb

	What does it mean?
What kind of actions does it describe?	Dictionary:
Focus word: _____	In Use:
What are examples of when to use the word?	In Use:

3. Sentences: Have students select five or six vocabulary words and use as many of the words as possible in one sentence.
4. Synonym Match: Have students select vocabulary words from a chapter and list one synonym for each vocabulary word on a small piece of paper. Students mix the pieces of paper and match each synonym to the appropriate vocabulary word.
5. Vocabulary Sort: Have the students sort vocabulary words into categories (e.g., nouns, verbs, and adjectives/adverbs).

Author's Explanation

Vocabulary

occasion (1)	anxious (1)	inwardly (2)	doubtfully (2)
flattered (2)	murmured (2)	indication (2)	tentative (2)
reluctantly (3)	closeted (3)	fiddle (3)	distracting (3)
searchingly (4)	gazed (4)	baffled (4)	shrugged (4)
frustration (4)	aspects (5)		

Discussion Questions

1. Why is the author, Avi, flattered when the teacher tells him a certain student wants to meet him? *(The student has read all his books and thinks the author is the only person who will understand him.)*
2. Is Avi excited about meeting Kenny on his lunch break? Why? *(No. He wants his whole lunch break to himself. He already has a full day planned.)*
3. What does Avi think about Kenny when he first sees him? *(He doesn't think there is anything particularly special about Kenny. He thinks Kenny looks small but could "double his size" at any moment.)*
4. Why does Avi think it is up to him to get the conversation going? *(Kenny looks nervous and is fiddling with a key chain. Kenny doesn't seem to be eager to begin talking.)*
5. What is Kenny referring to when he asks if the information in Avi's books is part of a memory? *(Answers will vary.)*
6. Why does Kenny want to share his story with Avi? *(There is something about the books Avi writes that makes Kenny think Avi will understand the story he is about to tell.)*
7. What does Avi think about the story Kenny tells him? *(He thinks it is the strangest story he has ever heard.)*
8. How does Kenny feel about Avi writing a book about his story? Why do you think he feels this way? *(He seems relieved; Answers will vary.)*

Supplementary Activities

1. **Character Analysis:** Have students begin a character attribute web (see page 8 of this guide) for Kenny, Caleb, Willinghast, Mr. Huldorf, and Mrs. Huldorf. The students should add information to the webs as they read each chapter.
2. **Story Map:** Have the students begin a story map (see page 10 of this guide) to use as they read the story. As they read, they should add new information about characters, settings, problems, and events.