



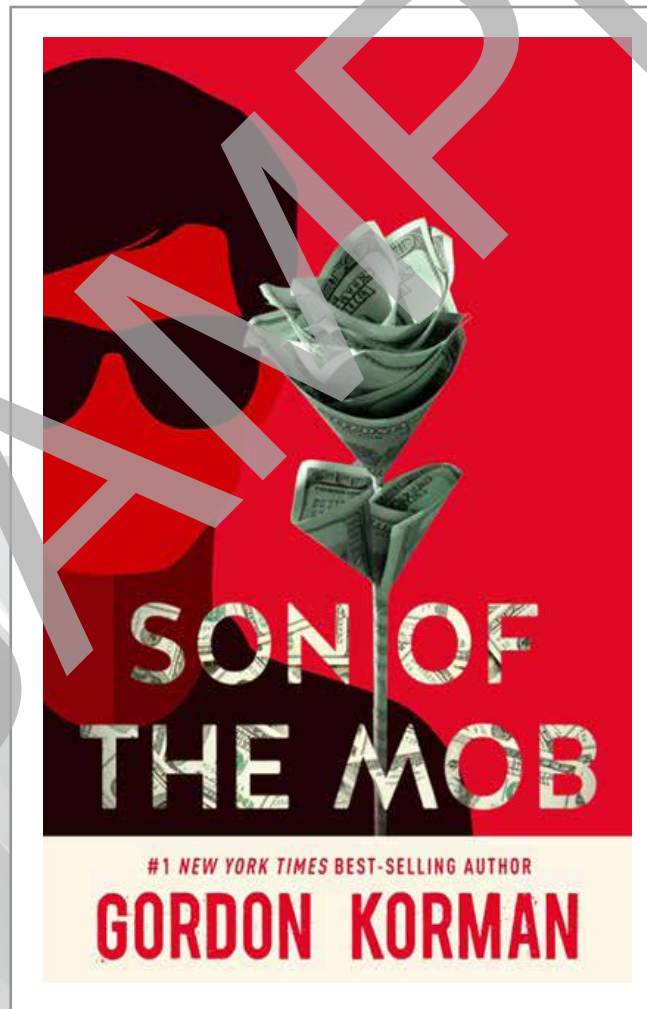
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 9-12

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Son of the Mob

Gordon Korman



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Son of the Mob

Gordon Korman

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

Brainstorming, research, compare/contrast, analyzing details, drawing conclusions, problem solving, decision making, advantages/disadvantages

Comprehension

Predicting, cause/effect, sequencing, main idea, inferences

Writing

Journal, riddle, newspaper article, song lyrics, haiku, novel endings, advertisement, essay, summary, dialogue, diary, FBI report, book review

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, debate, audio recording

Vocabulary

Parts of speech, definitions, context clues, usage, dictionary skills, mnemonic devices, word roots, word origin, word relationships, homonyms

Literary Elements

Paradox, irony, sarcasm, similes, metaphors, allusion, analogies, hyperbole, idioms, epiphany, cliché, characterization, conflict, point of view, foreshadowing, imagery, plot development, dialogue, setting

Across the Curriculum

Math—multiplying fractions;
Art—poster, comic strip, illustrated dictionary, photography; Drama—novel scenes, facial expressions;
Technology—Internet domain names; Music—lyrics; Social Studies—statute of limitations

Genre: young adult fiction

Setting: present day, New York City

Point of View: first person

Conflict: person vs. self, person vs. person

Themes: importance of family, personal responsibility, making ethical choices, trials and tribulations of first love

Tone: mostly humorous

Date of First Publication: 2002

Summary

Vince Luca is just like every other 17-year-old boy except for one thing—his father Anthony Luca is the boss of New York City’s largest crime organization. To complicate matters, Vince falls for Kendra Bightly, the daughter of the FBI agent who has bugged the Luca home and is trying to send his father to prison. Vince wants no part of his father’s Mafia business, but he becomes involved anyway. From the “hot” Porsche he gets for his sixteenth birthday to inadvertently saving lowlifes Jimmy Rat and Eddie Mishkin, Vince cannot escape “The Life.”

About the Author

Gordon Korman was born October 23, 1963 in Montreal, Quebec in Canada. When he was 12 years old, he wrote his first book, *This Can’t Be Happening at Macdonald Hall!* Two years later he submitted his manuscript to Scholastic Canada, where it was published when he was 14 years old. At 16, he won the Air Canada Award, which is given to the most promising young author in Canada. Korman has written over 50 novels for middle-school students and young adults. His book series, *The Monday Night Football Club*, was the inspiration for the Disney TV series *The Jersey*. Korman received his bachelor’s degree from New York University in 1985, with a major in dramatic and visual writing and a minor in motion picture and television. Korman received a 2003 Young Reader’s Choice Award, Intermediate Division; he was also a nominee for the following: 2004 Rebecca Caudill Young Readers’ Book Award, 2003–04 California Young Reader Medal Middle School/Junior High Level, and the Young Hoosier Book Award. *Son of the Mob* was named an ALA Top Ten Best Book for Young Adults, an ALA Top Ten Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Adult Readers, and a New York Public Library Best Book of the Year.

Other works by Korman include: *The 6th Grade Nickname Game* (1998), *No More Dead Dogs* (2000), the *Island* trilogy (2001), *Son of the Mob: Hollywood Hustle* (2004), the *On the Run* series (2004–05), *Born to Rock* (2005), *Schooled* (2007), and *One False Note*, Book 2 of the interactive *39 Clues* series (2008).

Gordon Korman’s hallmark in children’s literature is his humor. He transforms real-life situations into hilarious plots with his vivid imagination. Some of his later works are suspense and action-adventure novels. He claims that social relevance is not a priority in his books; he simply wants his books to entertain. He and his wife Michelle, a third-grade teacher, live in Long Island, New York with their three children.

Chapters One–Four

Anthony Luca would like nothing better than for his youngest son to become part of the family's "vending-machine business," but 17-year-old Vince wants nothing to do with his father's criminal activities. It seems, however, that no matter what Vince tries to do—date, play football, buy his own car—he can't escape the fact that his father is the head of New York City's Mob. An unconscious body in the trunk of Vince's car ruins his one and only date with Angela O'Bannon. Fearing retribution, no one will tackle him during the football game when they learn he is Anthony Luca's son. And even though he insists on paying for his own car, somehow his dad's ill-gotten gains cover part of the payment. With his family connections, Vince faces some tough choices.

Vocabulary

vicariously
cajoling
eloquence
disdainfully
ravenous
apprentice
precariously
quintessential
insidious
notoriety

Discussion Questions

1. The author does not immediately tell the nature of Anthony Luca's family business. Discuss some clues the author provides. (*Vince's mom tells him that he is legitimate, "which is more than she could say for the family business" [p. 3]. His family has a reputation with law enforcement. His mom extracts a bullet from one of the uncles. Vince finds diamonds in his Cracker Jacks. FBI agents bug their house.*)
2. Vince's mother tells him, "Your father's in the vending-machine business" (p. 13). Does she really know what kind of business he runs? Explain. (*Yes, she knows he is involved in criminal activity because she once helped remove a bullet from Uncle Carmine in her own home.*)
3. Vince's mother puts on a façade of denial about the true nature of his father's business. Give examples. (*She explains his father's absences in the wee hours of the morning by claiming that "...you never know when a vending machine is going to break" [p. 13]. She feigns shock when Vince states that his father is in the Mob. She buys preppy clothes for Vince and sees her family as the old-fashioned type portrayed in 1950s TV sitcoms.*)
4. Discuss how Vince's mother is tougher than she appears on the surface. (*She removes a bullet from Uncle Carmine with a pair of tweezers. She is a great cook and "can serve a sit-down dinner for 15 guys at four in the morning with ten minutes advance notice" [pp. 17–18]. She attacks Angelo with her dish of chicken potpie for harassing her son Tommy. Vince says, "Where family is concerned, nobody messes with Mom, not even her powerful husband" [p. 19].*)
5. Explain the author's use of stereotype in naming Anthony Luca's business associates. (*Subordinate members of a Mob are often referred to as "uncle" in TV and films. This reference has basis in fact. According to the FBI's Web site, members of the Mafia tend to be "clannish and...rely on familial ties for safety, protection, justice, and survival." Mafia groups tend to be a family business.*)
6. How is Anthony Luca's character a paradox? (*Vince's father "is a man who runs a criminal organization that operates by means of violence and intimidation." Outside of business, however, people see him as "reasonable, sensible, supportive...[and a] classy, soft-spoken gentleman." Vince says that his father, the Mob boss, "is considered the most ethical and trustworthy man alive" [p. 23].*)
7. Why is Anthony Luca called "Honest Abe Luca" if he is a criminal? (*He is "straight" in his business dealings, even if they are illegal.*)

8. Explain how “mob” is used as a homonym in the sentence “Dad’s mobbed up” (p. 15). *(Vince’s brother Tommy says that their dad is “mobbed up,” or involved with underground crime with the Mob or Mafia. Vince believes that Tommy means their dad has a lot of friends, since there is always a mob of people at their house.)*
9. What is the one thing that Vince’s parents, teachers, and friends all agree on concerning Vince? Explain. *(None of them thinks Vince is motivated enough. His teachers think he is unmotivated in school because his grades are not high enough. His dad thinks he is unmotivated about his future since Vince is 17 and undecided about a career of any kind. His mom thinks he is unmotivated about family because she wants the family to be, or at least appear to be, a typical American family. Alex thinks he is not motivated enough about girls to get them both dates.)*
10. The author extensively uses irony for a humorous effect. Give some examples, and explain why irony makes them funny. *(Vince’s red-hot date Angela O’ Bannon really wants to be with him, but she insists he never call her again when she sees an unconscious body in the trunk of his car. Skinny, unathletic Vince gets a lot of attention as the star of the football game, but he quits when he learns that, because of his family’s Mob connections, no one challenges him on the field. Cece is a girl any guy would want to be with and gives special attention to Vince, but he learns she is a call girl arranged by Tommy. Vince wants to stay with Cece, but he leaves Tommy’s apartment when things start to heat up too much. Answers will vary.)*

Supplementary Activities

1. Research: Use Internet and print sources to find out what the FBI knows about the Mafia. Report to the class by adding one new detail to the discussion.
2. Math: Rewrite a recipe for Mrs. Luca’s recipe book by quadrupling the ingredients.
3. Art: Design a movie poster for the horror movie *Harvest of Death* based on the description Vince provides in Chapter One.
4. Drama: Choose one of the humorous scenes from Chapters One–Four, and act it out.
5. Journalism: Write Kendra Bightly’s article for the *Jefferson Journal*, remembering that she did not get to interview Vince.

Prediction Chart

What characters have we met so far?	What is the conflict in the story?	What are your predictions?	Why did you make these predictions?
<p>SAMPLE</p>			

Who Am I?

Directions: Write a riddle describing a character in the novel. Include adjectives, adverbs, nouns, and verbs that will help other students see this character in their mind's eye. Describe how the person looks, acts, feels, talks, and how other people in the story treat this character. (Do not reveal which character is the answer to your riddle.)

Who am I?

I have _____

I can _____

In the story, people say I _____

