



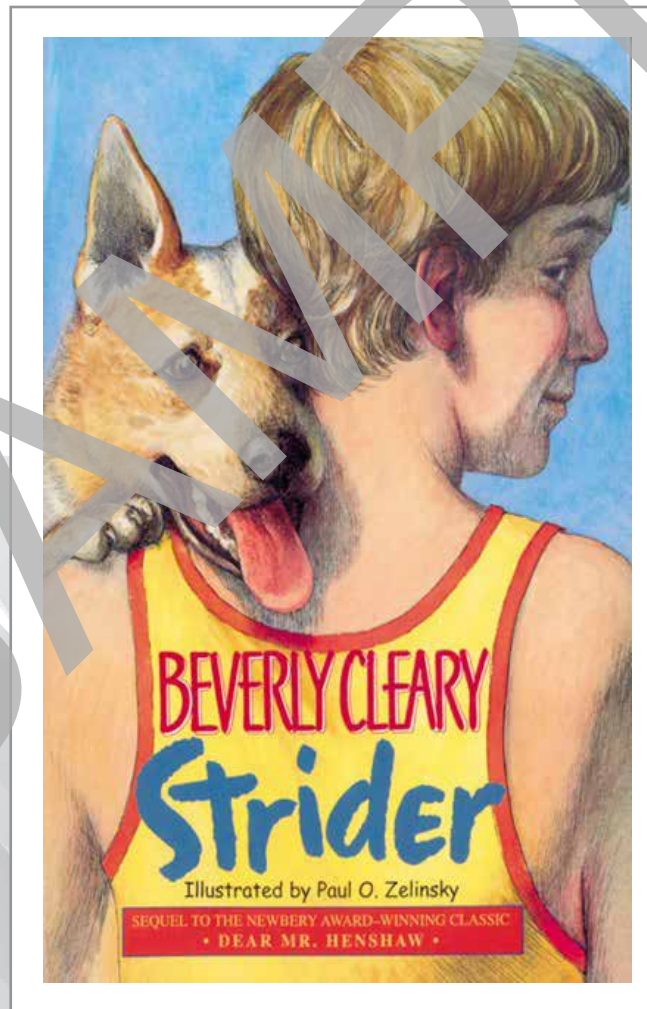
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Strider

Beverly Cleary



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Strider

Beverly Cleary

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

Research, brainstorming,
visualizing

Comprehension

Predicting, comparison/
contrast

Writing

Poetry, letters, descriptive,
diary

Vocabulary

Synonyms, word mapping

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, drama

Literary Elements

Characterization, story
elements, alliteration,
viewpoint

Summary

Still following the advice of Mr. Henshaw, Leigh Botts continues to write in his diary. This story starts during the summer before Leigh enters high school, and, although his parents have been divorced for some time, Leigh's feelings of hurt and anger toward his father persist. Leigh's life starts to change when he and his friend Barry find an abandoned dog at the beach. Named Strider by the boys, the dog and Leigh face many problems, and enjoy many good times, together.

About the Author

Beverly (Bunn) Cleary was born in 1916 in McMinnville, Oregon. She married Clarence T. Cleary, an accountant, in October of 1940. Their children are Marianne, Malcolm and James. She attended Chaffee Junior College in Ontario, California, A.A. 1936; University of California, Berkeley, B.A., 1938; and University of Washington, Seattle, B.A. in Librarianship, 1939. She became a librarian after graduation and made that her career until 1950, when she decided to devote all of her time to writing for young people.

"Writing for young readers was my childhood ambition. I wanted to read funny stories about the sort of children I knew, and I decided that someday when I grew up I would write them. And so, with some hardship to my parents, I was sent off to college to become independent. I became a children's librarian. During that time I met a variety of children. Two groups stand out in my memory. One was a band of unenthusiastic readers. They wanted funny stories about the sort of children that they knew. I sympathized, because that's what I wanted at their age, too. The second group was a loyal story-hour audience to which I told folk and fairy tales. When I began to write *Henry Huggins*, I mentally told the stories to that remembered audience."

"As I write, I have a collaborator, the child within myself—a rather odd, serious little girl, prone to colds, who sits in a child's rocking chair with her feet over the hot air outlet of the furnace, reading for hours, seeking laughter in the pages of books while her mother warns her that she will ruin her eyes. That little girl prevents me from writing down to children, from poking fun at my characters, and from writing adult reminiscences about childhood instead of a book to be enjoyed by children. And yet I do not solely write for that child; I am also writing for my adult self. We are collaborators who must agree. The feeling of being two ages at one time is delightful."

"A writer must enjoy what is being written. If I find that I'm not having fun with what I'm writing, I stop. Life is humorous, sorrowful, and filled with problems with no solutions. My intent is to write about feelings, and to avoid the genre of the problem novel."

Using Predictions in the Novel Unit Approach

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

As students work on their 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 to help us make predictions? Why are some predictions more likely to be accurate than others?

Create a chart for recording predictions. This could be either an individual or class activity. As each subsequent chapter is discussed, students can review and correct their previous predictions about plot and characters as necessary.

Use the facts and ideas the author gives.

Use your own prior knowledge.

Apply any new information (i.e., from class discussion) that may cause you to change your mind.

Predictions:

January 20–March 13, Pages 101-125

Vocabulary

contribution 109 compulsory 115 immortalized 118 suspicious 120

Vocabulary Activity

How many words can you make from the letters in the word immortalized in three minutes? (*Here are some: time, mine, dime, maze, raze, laze, daze, rot, dot, mode, load, toad, road, mime, tad, lad, mad, rid, lid, lime...*)

Discussion Questions and Activities

1. Who is Leigh's new friend? (*Page 102, Kevin is Leigh's new friend.*) When Leigh tells his mother about Kevin, what problem does Leigh ascribe to Kevin? (*Page 107, "He's rich."*) How do you think that being rich could be a problem?
2. Kevin and Leigh turn out for track. Mr. Kurtz gives a pep talk. What does Mr. Kurtz stress? (*Page 108, Mr. Kurtz stresses the importance of taking part and doing the best that one can. Mr. Kurtz feels that competing and improving, not winning, is what is important.*) Do you agree with Mr. Kurtz? What are your feelings about competition? (*Opinion—answers will vary.*)
3. How is the quarrel between Barry and Leigh resolved? (*Pages 110-113, Strider comes back to Leigh's house on his own. The boys decide that Strider is "mature" enough to make an "intelligent preference." Strider is Leigh's dog, and Barry will help out, as a friend to both.*) How do you feel about this resolution to the problem? Do you think that the problem would have been resolved this easily if Strider had not come back to Leigh's house? What might have happened? Discuss.
4. How does Leigh solve his problem about the fence? (*Page 118, Leigh asks his dad to build the fence. His dad agrees to build it.*) Do you think that this is a good move on Leigh's part? Why? Why not? (*See Post-reading Activity #1.*)
5. Reread the entry for March 13. (*Pages 124-125*) How is Leigh feeling about himself now? What statement does he make to let you know that there has been an attitude improvement? (*Page 125, "I like to volunteer, even if I am sometimes wrong."*)

Post-reading Activities

1. Mrs. Smerling tells Leigh that a fence would help, and suggests that he build one for his dog (page 115). This presents a problem for Leigh, who thinks, "Problem solving, and I don't mean algebra, seems to be my life's work. Maybe it's everyone's life's work" (page 117). Think of some problems that you have been faced with, and how you have solved them. Write about one incident, and make an illustration to go with it.
2. On page 116, Leigh misquotes Shakespeare when he says, "A fence, a fence, my kingdom for a fence." What is the quotation? (*"A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse."*) Do you know

of any other famous quotations or sayings that you could share with the group? What do the sayings/quotations mean? For example:

- We've got to build a better man before we can build a better society.
- We are all manufacturers, making goods, making trouble or making excuses.
- Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.
- May you live all the days of your life.
- It is better to wear out than to rust out.
- Remember, there are no bad days. Some are just better than others.
- Character is the diamond that scratches every other stone.

3. Leigh's dad asks him a difficult question after the fence is built. "How come you never asked me for anything before? It always seemed like you wanted a ride in my rig, but you didn't want me" (page 122). How would you answer it, if you were Leigh?

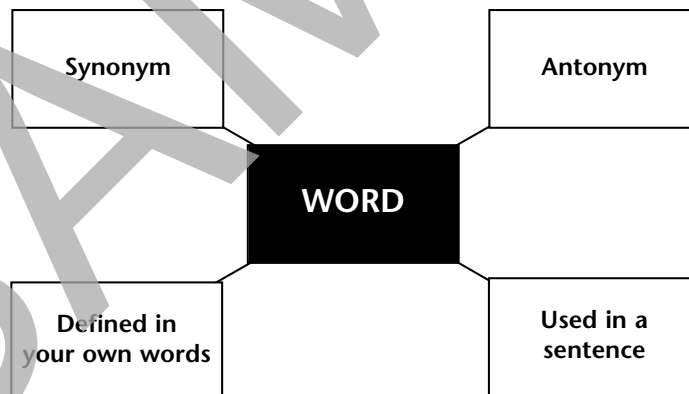
March 14–May 2, Pages 126-152

Vocabulary

tendrils 126	exhilaration 128	aura 129	pistons 131
uncontrollable 138	seismic 138	iodine 139	agitated 142
guardian 143	invitational 144	resistance 149	

Vocabulary Activity

Make word maps for the following words: exhilaration, uncontrollable, agitated, and resistance.



Discussion Questions and Activities

1. In what event does Leigh race in his first track meet? (*Page 131, Leigh runs in the 800 meter race.*) How does he do? (*Page 134, Leigh takes third place at 2:27.*) Does anyone in your group compete in track events, or attend them? How did Leigh do in comparison to the times in your locale? Do you think that he would have become a member of your local track team? Why? Why not?