



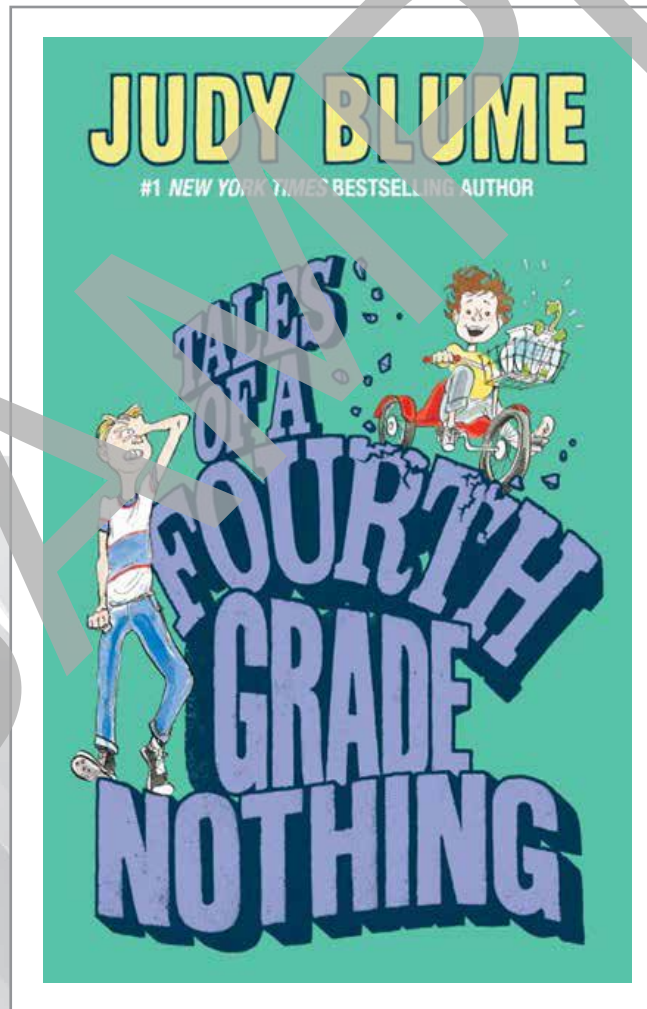
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 3-5**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# **Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing**

Judy Blume



**READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT**

# Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing

Judy Blume

## 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, decision-making, evaluating, summarizing

### Literary Elements

Story types, story elements, characterization, point of view

### Listening/Speaking

Discussion, Reader's Theater

### Writing

Journaling, research, advice column

### Comprehension

Predicting, comparison/contrast, timeline

### Vocabulary

Context clues, categorizing, sorting, differences in degree, word mapping

## Summary

Any fourth grader would agree that Peter Hatcher had a terrible problem—his little brother, Fudge. Peter was finding his brother harder and harder to take and when Fudge got at his pet turtle, Dribble, that was the end. Peter’s parents try to help. This makes for a hilarious story.

## Initiating Activities

1. Look at the cover of this novel. What is unusual about the illustration? Can you find any clues about the story? the characters? Look at the title page and end papers of the book. What do you think this story will be about? What animal might be important?
2. What does the title tell you about the story? Can you name any other books by this author or illustrator?
3. There are several types of stories—realistic, biographical, historical, science-fiction, and fantasy. Do you know what each of these types is? Can you name books that might fit in these categories? (Teacher writes class responses on a large piece of paper or the board.) What type of story do you think this will be?
4. What do you think the author meant by her dedication? (For Larry, who is a combination of Peter and Fudge, and for Willie Mae who told me about Dribble.)
5. Many stories have the same parts—a setting, a problem, a goal, and a series of events that lead to an ending or conclusion. These story elements may be placed on a story map. Just as a road map helps a driver get from one place to another, so too, a story map helps the reader to understand the direction of the story. There are many different types of story maps. Students may use the one included or make up their own. (See page 8 of this guide.)

We need answers to some questions which we’ll look for as we begin the novel:

- Who is the main character?
- Where does the story take place?
- What is the problem?

As the story is read, more characters may be added, and the setting and problem may change. After each chapter is read, changes should be made.



## Decision-Making Grid

The decision-making grid below is supposed to make it easier to find the best solution to a problem. Give examples of other questions you should ask yourself when you are trying to “weigh” different solutions. Then fill in the grid for the following problem: My best friend has been telling lies about me. See if classmates agree with the solution you decide is best.

Problem	Criterion #1	Criterion #2	Criterion #3
State the problem.	Will the solution hurt someone?	Will it make me feel better?	
Solution #1			
Solution #2			
Solution #3			
Solution #4			

## Chapter 1 “The Big Winner”

### Vocabulary

cushioned

combination

### Discussion Questions

1. What did Peter win at the birthday party? (*A glass bowl with a green turtle in it.*)
2. Where does Peter live? (*On 25 West 68th Street in New York City.*)
3. How was Peter to care for his pet? (*Change his water, clean out the bowl, feed him, and see to it that he’s happy.*)
4. What is Peter’s biggest problem? Why? (*His brother, Fudge. He is always in the way. He messes up everything he sees. When he gets mad, he throws himself on the floor, screams, kicks, and bangs his fists.*) Begin attribute webs for Peter and Fudge. (See pages 9–10 of this guide.)
5. What does Peter’s father do for an occupation? (*writes TV commercials*)

### Prediction

Do you think Peter’s father’s job will be important in this novel? Why?

### Supplementary Activities

1. Begin a journal in which you react to each section of the story you read. Reactions might include: Questions you have about the story; memories the story evokes; people or other stories of whom characters remind you; judgments about whether you agree or disagree with what characters have done; your thoughts about topics which come up—such as friends, bossy girls, brothers or sisters, etc. Try sometimes including vocabulary words from the story in your journal.
2. Assume the role of Peter. After reading each section, jot down an entry about what has happened and how you feel about it in your “diary.”
3. Begin a time line. Plot the events on the time line as they occur in the book. This could be done with a symbol for each chapter—for example Chapter 1, a turtle, at the beginning of the line. Events could be written and placed on the line. The symbols could be plotted on a rising line to the climax of the story, and then in a declining line to visually show the plot line. (See diagram on page 9.)
4. Make up map activities using the New York City map (page 30). Write questions for a classmate to solve. Write an answer sheet.
5. Research turtles. Prepare a bulletin board with information you obtain. Borrow a turtle. Examine it closely. Draw it and label its parts. (See Teacher Information about Turtles on pages 28–29.)