



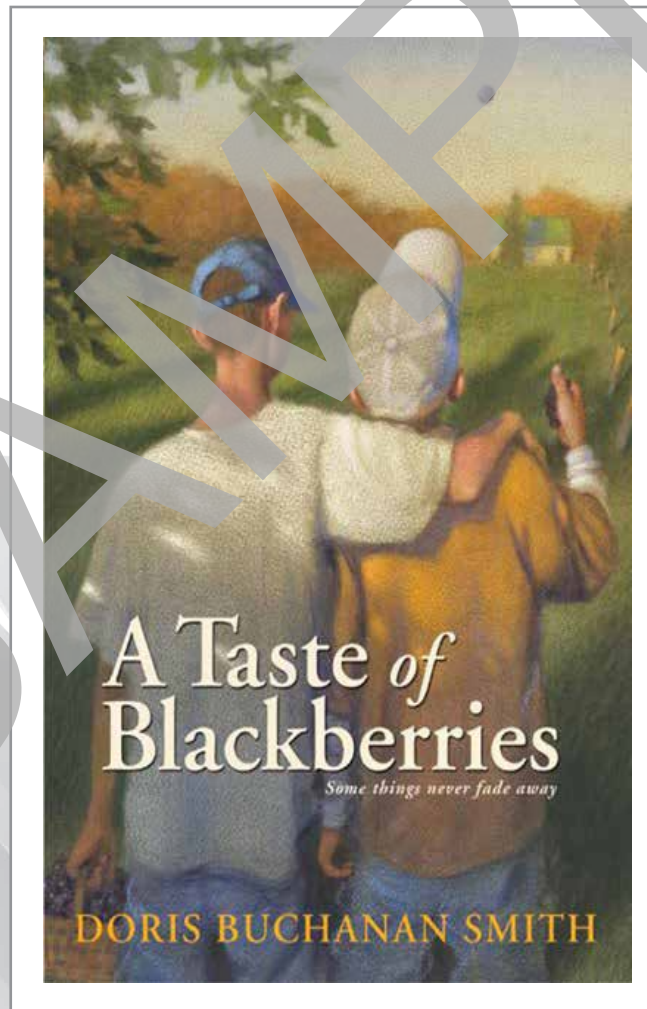
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 3-5

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

A Taste of Blackberries

Doris Buchanan Smith



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

A Taste of Blackberries

Doris Buchanan Smith

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, comparing
and contrasting, analyzing
details

Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing,
cause/effect

Vocabulary

Antonyms/synonyms, words
in context

Listening/Speaking

Participation in discussion

Writing

Descriptive, narrative, poem,
persuasive

Literary Elements

Character, setting, plot,
figurative language, fore-
shadowing

Summary

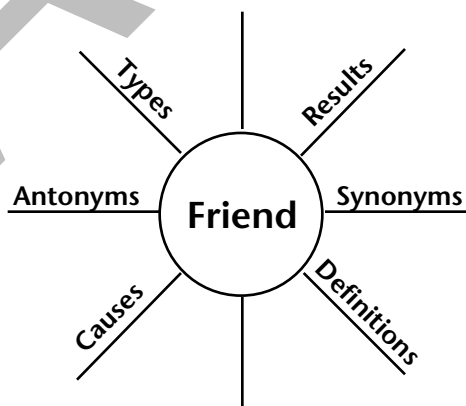
A Taste of Blackberries is about the friendship between two boys. Jamie is special, full of surprises, and quite capable of getting into and out of trouble. But when something sudden and terrible happens to Jamie, his best friend has to face the tragedy alone. Jamie is alive one minute and the next, gone forever. Why does this happen? How does a friend act? The subject of death is treated with taste and honesty in a moving story about believable boys.

Introductory Information and Activities

Initiating Activities

1. Look at the title. What do you think it means? Generate as many possibilities as you can.
2. Look at the cover. What significant thing do you see? Make up some questions about the cover.
3. Read the back cover. Predicting is a very important part of reading. What did you learn about the characters? What is the setting? When and where do you think this novel took place? What do you think is the problem of the story? Does the back cover make you want to read the book? Why or why not?
4. What is a Friend? The teacher will help the students make a concept web for the word "Friend."

Directions: Write the word "Friend" in the center of a large piece of paper. Ask students to brainstorm ideas this word brings to mind. Quickly jot students' ideas around the word, organizing them in a branching fashion, where appropriate. This graphic organizer may be the center of a bulletin board and may be added to as the novel is read.



Using Predictions in the Novel Unit Approach

We all make predictions as we read—little guesses about what will happen next, how the conflict will be resolved, which details given by the author will be important to the plot, which details will help to fill in our sense of a character. Students should be encouraged to predict, to make sensible guesses. As students work on 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 us to help us in making our predictions? Why are some predictions more likely than others?

A predicting chart is for students to record their predictions. As each subsequent chapter is discussed, you can review and correct previous predictions. This procedure serves to focus on predictions and to review the stories.

Use the facts and ideas the author gives.

Use your own knowledge.

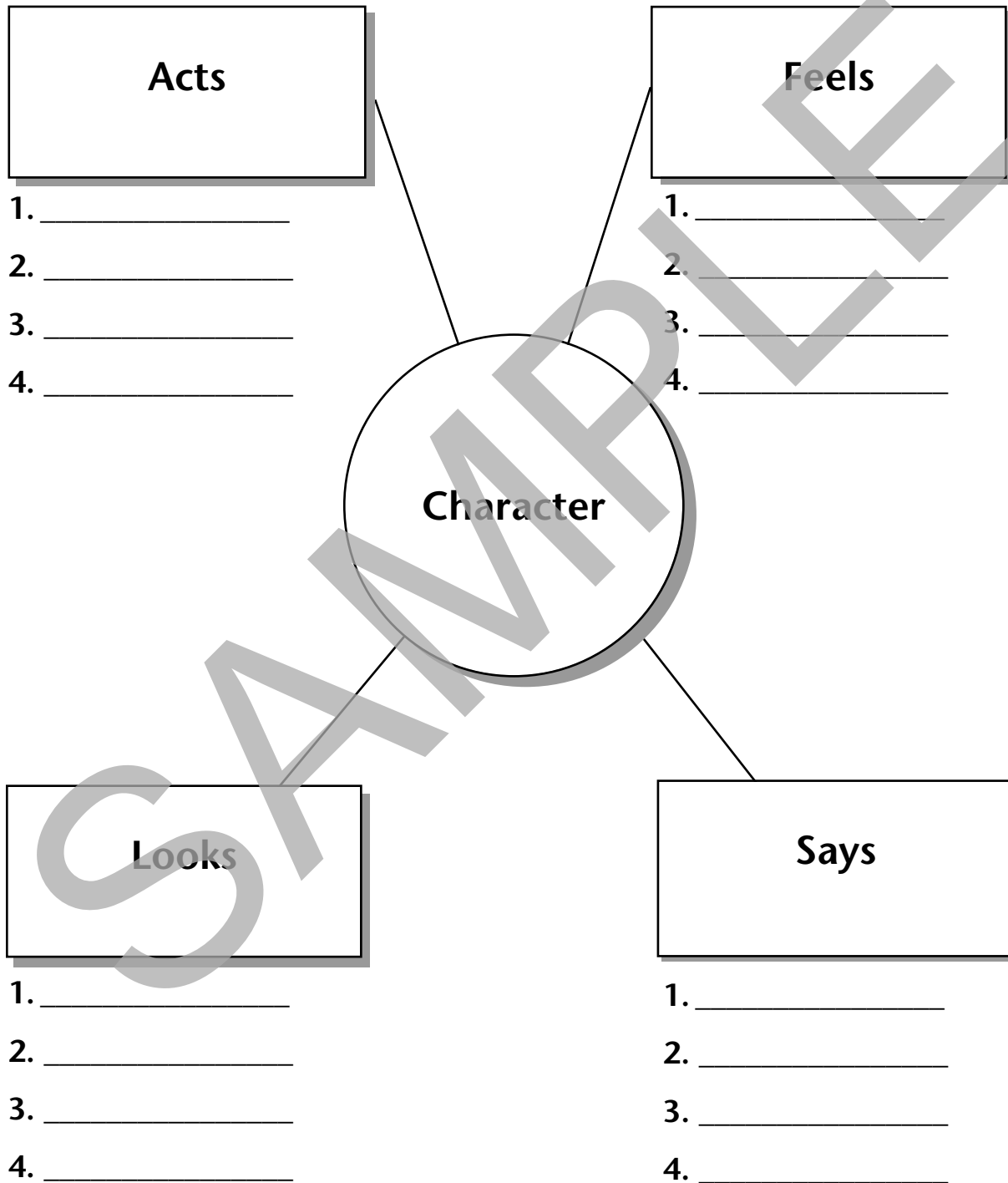
Use new information that may cause you to change your mind.

Prediction Chart

What characters have we met so far?	What is the conflict in the story?	What are your predictions?	Why did you make those predictions?

Character Attribute Web

The attribute web below is designed to help you gather clues the author provides about what a character is like. Fill in the blanks with words and phrases which tell how the character acts and looks, as well as what the character says and what others say about him or her.



Vocabulary

solutions 18

chauffeur 18

ransom 19

mimicked 20

uncanniest 20

Vocabulary Activity

Place the words for the day in categories, e.g.:

Feelings**Actions****Things****Persons****Descriptive**

mimicked

solutions

chauffeur

uncanniest

ransom

Discussion Questions and Activities

1. Do we know the narrator's name? Why do you think the author does not give it?
2. Art of the Novel: Foreshadowing is a technique writers use in which they give clues in earlier chapters about what is to come later in a book. What do you think the storm foreshadows? (page 17)
3. What is another way of saying, "My whole insides fell to my toes"? (page 19) Literary Analysis: What is the literal meaning of, "My whole insides fell to my toes"? What is the difference between literal and figurative language? (Literal means "word-for-word" and "exact." Figurative means "not literal," or "in a manner of speaking.")
4. Why does Jamie hitch a ride when he knows it is very dangerous? What could he have done?
5. Was it wrong for Jamie to say that Mr. Chambers brought them home? How do you know that the man was not Mr. Chambers? (Page 21, "Ed Chambers' father would be surprised to know it" [that he brought them home].)
6. Why do the boys "roll their eyes" at each other? What does that mean? (page 21) Does mother know what they are doing?
Research: Japanese beetles. What do they look like? What do they eat? How do gardeners control them?