



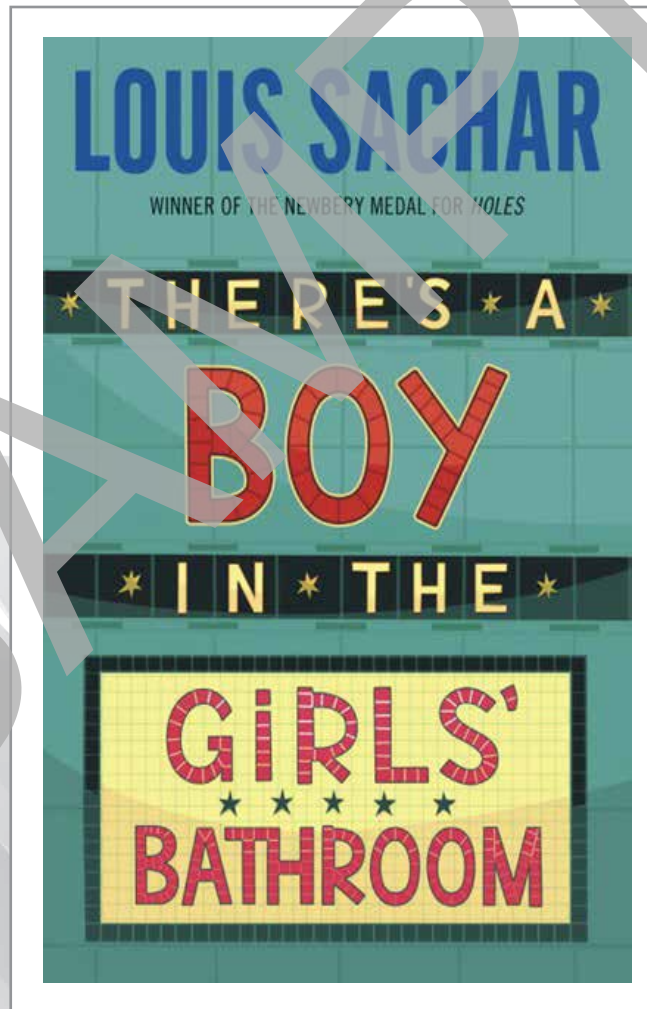
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 3-5**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# **There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom**

Louis Sachar



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

# There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom

Louis Sachar

## 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

### Comprehension

Predicting, comparison/contrast, cause-and-effect

### Writing

Letters, poetry, creative writing—short story

### Vocabulary

Word mapping

### Listening/Speaking

Role play, drama, discussion, Reader's Theatre

### Literary Elements

Genre, character analysis, humor, point of view, story elements

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## Summary

Bradley Chalkers is the boy no one likes and every teacher fears will be added to her class list. He is the oldest kid in the fifth grade, tells lies, picks fights with girls, and is a serious problem for almost everyone except the new school counselor, Carla. Carla sees the positive side of Bradley and believes that he can change and will change for the best.

## Introductory Information and Activities

### *Instructions Prior to Reading:*

You may wish to choose one or more of the following Prereading Discussion Questions/Activities. Each is designed to help students draw from their store of background knowledge about the events and themes they will meet in the story they are about to read.

### *Prereading Discussion Questions:*

1. **On problems with teachers:** How strict does a good teacher have to be? What reasons do teachers have for disciplining students? Which of these are good reasons? How should a teacher correct a student before the group? What should a student do if a teacher is being too strict?
2. **On belonging to a group:** Have you ever felt outside the mainstream of your family, your group of friends, or your class at school? What was the situation and how did you feel about it? What did you do about it?
3. **On friendship:** What qualities does a friend of yours usually have? Once you have made a friend, how do you keep that friend? Do you ever make fun of a friend? What kind of behavior would make you “drop” a friend? to make fun of him? to ignore him?
4. **Thinking positively:** Have you ever heard the expression, “the power of positive thinking”? What does it mean? Do you believe in it? If not, why not? If so, when have you seen it work for someone else? When has it worked for you?

### *Prereading Activities:*

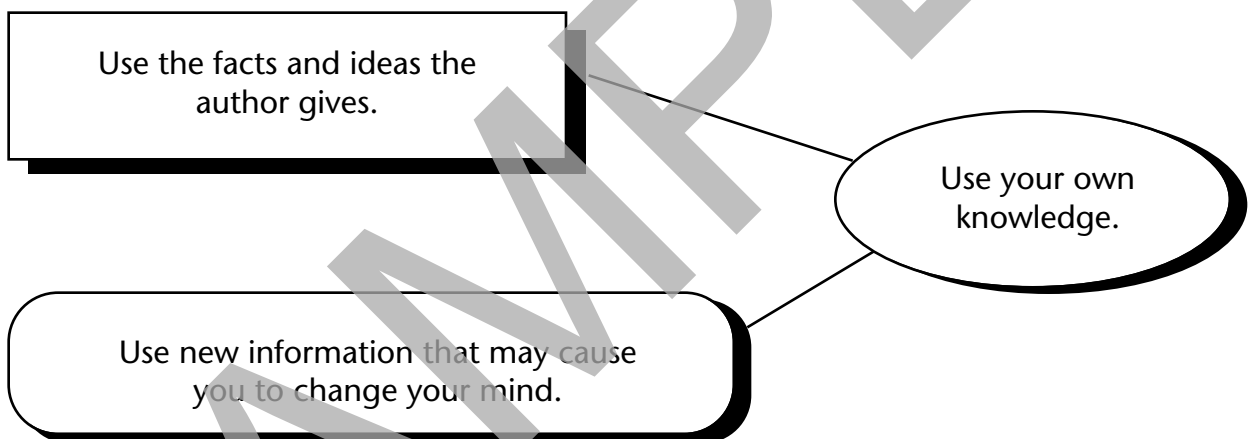
1. **Previewing:** Have the students examine the title and cover illustration. Also suggest that they flip through the book. What can you tell about the time period of the story by the clothing of the characters? What does the boy’s expression tell you about his feelings? What do you predict the story will be about? What do you think the title of the novel suggests?

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## Using Predictions

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.



Predictions:

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**Chapter 8 (Pages 31-35)**  
**Chapter 9 (Pages 36-42)**  
**Chapter 10 (Pages 43-45)**

**Vocabulary:**

ferociously 33                      hag 36                      amazement 41  
distorted 44

**Vocabulary Activity:**

For each of the vocabulary words write a sentence that makes sense. Omit the vocabulary word. Make an answer key on the back of the paper. Share your sentences with a classmate.

**Discussion Questions and Activities:**

1. If you were the teacher, what would you do with a strange pupil who cut up his map of the United States and played during class? (page 31)
2. Bradley contradicted himself and did not make sense. Find an example on pages 32-33. (Bradley said he hated apples and then later "bit ferociously into a red delicious apple." " 'That wasn't an apple,' he said. 'It was a banana.' ") Why do you think he said such outrageous things?
3. Why do you think Bradley said he went into the girls' bathroom all the time? (page 35)
4. Bradley started off his meeting with Carla by being rude and refusing to shake her hand. If you were the counselor, what might you have said and done? (page 37)
5. Bradley always thought he was being tricked, (page 39), or things were not fair, (page 14). What do you think was wrong with Bradley? Why did he scribble on his paper? (pages 4, 40) How did he get this way?
6. Why do you think Bradley would not give his coloring to Carla and yet he wadded the picture into a ball and threw it away? (page 42)
7. Bradley compared himself to Jeff. Use the T-chart to compare Jeff and Bradley, and then continue it for Bradley to show what really was the truth.

Jeff	Bradley	Reality
Smart	Smart	May be bright but did not do schoolwork and did lots of dumb things
Liked the counselor	Said he hated counselor	Probably did not hate counselor
Went into girls' bathroom	Said he sneaked into girls' bathroom	Had never been in girls' bathroom

8. Bradley twisted things around. For example, Bradley had told Carla he ate dog food. In Chapter 10, Bradley said Carla liked to eat dog food. Why do you think he did this? If you had to deal with Bradley, how would you handle him if you were the counselor or the teacher?

**Prediction:**

Do you think Bradley will have a negative effect on Jeff's behavior? Why would Jeff want to go around with Bradley?

**Supplementary Activities:**

- Writing:** Write a letter from an advice columnist to Bradley's mother or Mrs. Ebbel, Bradley's teacher. Each of them needs help as much as Bradley. Then trade letters with a classmate to write an answer.
- Writing:** Write a cinquain about a character in *There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom*. A cinquain poem has five lines. It has a definite pattern but does not require rhyme. Try to capture something special about that character in your cinquain.

Line one: One word (character's name)

Line two: Two words describing character

Line three: Three words expressing action

Line four: Four words expressing a feeling

Line five: One word (character's name again)

- Art:** Cut words and pictures from magazines to create a collage for a character in the novel.