



TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Tiger Lives

Judy Blume

READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Tiger Eyes

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!

ISBN 978-1-50204-261-3

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Skills and Strategies

Literary Elements

Characterization, suspense,
symbol, setting, flashback,
descriptive details, temporal
sequence, simile, coincidence

Thinking

Concept-mapping, research,
brainstorming

Vocabulary

Analogies, word-mapping,
etymology, synonyms

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, role play, oral
reading

Comprehension

Predicting, inference,
comparison/contrast

Writing

Letter writing, description,
diary, opinion, poetry

Summary

15-year-old Davey Wexler's story begins with an unspeakable tragedy: her father is shot and killed during a hold-up. When relatives invite Mrs. Wexler, Jason (7), and Davey to come to New Mexico for an extended visit, Davey is ambivalent about leaving Atlantic City. Certainly she is glad to get away from the family's Seven Eleven store, with the horrible memories it now holds, but she just cannot feel comfortable in Los Alamos—known as a center for the development of military weapons. She misses her best friend, Lenaya, and she has mixed feelings about her separation from Hugh; she feels vaguely guilty that they were embracing outside the night of the murder—within earshot of the gunfire. Whatever their good intentions, Bitsy (Davey's father's sister) and Walter drive Davey crazy.

Bitsy, housekeeper and cook, is constantly warning and advising Davey (from everything about bike helmets to proper attire and friends). And practically everything about Walter bothers Davey—from the fact that he seems to have no ethical qualms about his work at the weapons center, to the fact that he carries a loaded gun in his truck and feels he has the right to tell Davey what courses she should take.

Things begin to look up when Davey meets a mysterious, handsome stranger ("Wolf") while walking in the canyon. She makes a new friend, Jane, who seems to have it all (including a drinking problem). She even agrees to talk with Miriam, her mother's therapist. When Davey volunteers at a local hospital, she discovers that the patient who has become her best friend—Mr. Ortiz—is Wolf's father. Sadly, Mr. Ortiz dies and Davey must face loss for the second time in a year. Wolf leaves, reminding Davey in a note to remember Mr. Ortiz as he was—"full of life."

While Davey begins to realize she may never see Wolf again, his philosophy helps her finally come to terms with losing her own father so that she can get on with her life. Gratefully, Davey realizes that her mother, too, has begun to heal. Although she is disgusted at first when her mother dates a "nerd," she is happy to see that her mother seems to be coming out of the daze she's been in since her husband's death. Finally, despite Walter and Bitsy's objections—but to Davey's great joy—the family moves home to Atlantic City.

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

Has anyone close to you ever died? What was the impact on the people around you? What was hardest about losing that person? Was anyone able to comfort you? How did you cope with your loss? How did your feelings change as the days, weeks, and months went by?

Do you think you tend to be too careful? take too many risks? Do you think your parents worry too much about risks you take? When do you think it is worth taking risks? When should you be careful? Would you rather live in a very safe, quiet suburb, or an exciting urban environment with more safety risks?

Have you ever stayed in someone else's house for more than a few days? What did you like about it? What did you find difficult?

Prereading Activities

1. Complete each of the following sentences and compare your reactions with Davey's as you read the story.
 - a. If I had climbed down into a deserted canyon and a stranger began to climb down after me, I would _____
_____.
 - b. If my little brother took up baking cookies as a hobby, I would _____
_____.
 - c. If I found out that my new friend seemed to have a drinking problem, I would _____
_____.
 - d. If my uncle hit me in the face I would _____
_____.
 - e. If my mother began dating someone I considered a "nerd," I would _____
_____.
 - f. If my mother suggested it might help for me to discuss my problems with her therapist, I would _____
_____.
 - g. If I had to live with some relatives, but didn't like their rules, I would _____
_____.
 - h. If I had a choice between living in Los Alamos, New Mexico, or Atlantic City, New Jersey, I would _____
_____.

Chapters 30–33, pp. 176–197

Vocabulary

deposits 188

overprotective 192

Compound words are made up of two or more smaller words. When the words are put together, they have a meaning different from that of each word alone. Below are some of the many compound words found in the story. List a compound word that has the opposite meaning of the one in the story. The words can be real ones or ones you make up (“stayarounds” for runaways, for example). Use your new words in sentences that show their meanings.

understatement
headache
fingernail
overprotective
supermarket

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you suppose Wolf didn't leave a forwarding address?
2. Compare Walter's and Davey's mother's reactions to Davey's grades. (*Davey's mother thinks they are okay, considering all the classes Davey missed; Walter is horrified that the grades are not higher.*)
3. Why does Walter explode at Davey? What does he say and do? Is it “in character” for Walter to act this way when Davey has just lost her father? (*Already angry about Davey's grades, Walter explodes when Davey quotes her father's philosophy that “it's what you learn that counts, not what grades you get”. Walter says that both of Davey's parents had wasted lives because Adam failed to be a “better man”—then he hits Davey in the face. p. 177*)
4. Earlier in the story, Davey had wondered whether she would ever feel like singing again. How can you tell that she is beginning to “heal”? (*She gets a lead role in a musical.*)
5. Why didn't Jane get a part in Oklahoma? (*She was drunk when she tried out.*)
6. Why does Davey agree to talk with Miriam? Would you? How does the session go? (*When Davey's resentment of Ned grows more and more obvious, Gwen suggests that Davey talk to Miriam, and Davey—eager to “tell on” her mother—agrees to go.*)
7. **Prediction:** Do you think the relationship between Ned and Davey's mother will continue? Will the family stay in Los Alamos?
8. Obtain a tape or record of “Oklahoma” and listen to it. Try to learn the song Davey memorized to get the lead role.
9. You are Davey. Write a letter to Lenaya. Describe Jane's problem and ask for her advice.
10. Write one of the letters to Wolf that you plan to put with the others in the cave.