



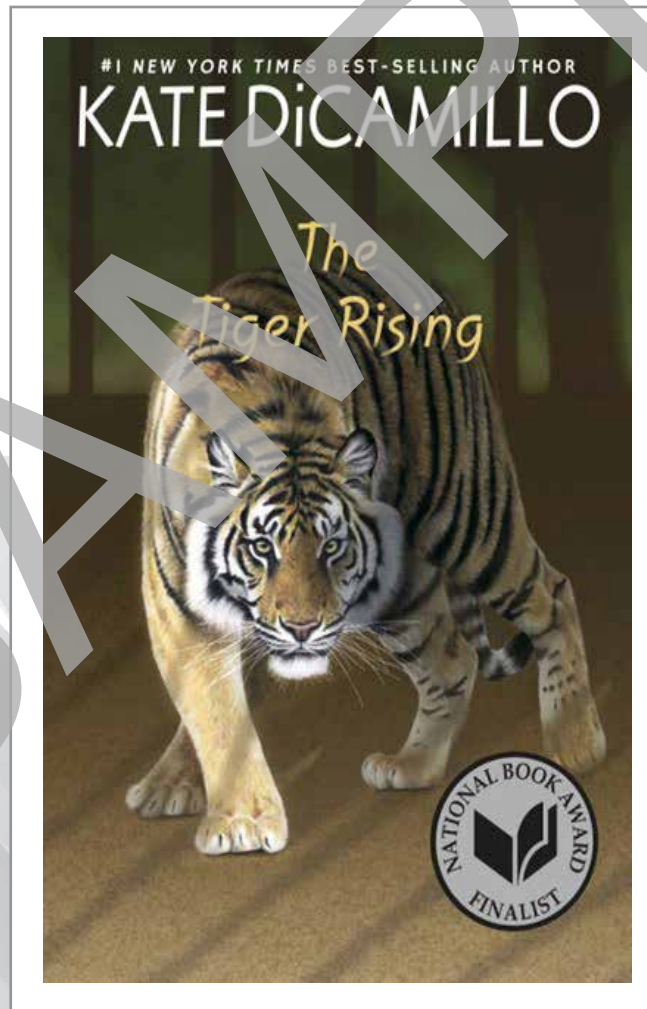
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

The Tiger Rising

Kate DiCamillo



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

The Tiger Rising

Kate DiCamillo

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

Identifying attributes, brainstorming, problem solving, predicting, critical thinking, compare/contrast, decision-making

Comprehension

Foreshadowing, cause/effect, inference, context clues, summarizing, drawing conclusions

Listening/Speaking

Audio, discussion, presentations

Vocabulary

Charades, word maps, synonym/antonym, prefix/suffix, parts of speech

Writing

Creative writing, poetry, letters, essays

Literary Elements

Literary analysis, story mapping, plot development, setting, character analysis

Across the Curriculum

Music—recordings;
Language—poetry interpretation; Art—illustrations, collages;
Science—internet research;
Social Studies—new environments, families, friendships

Genre: fiction

Setting: small town in Florida

Point of View: third-person

Themes: self-discovery, friendship, emotional freedom, triumph

Conflict: person vs. person, person vs. self, person vs. nature

Style: narrative

Tone: optimistic, realistic

Date of first publication: 2001

Summary

Rob, a lonesome young boy, is trying to come to terms with his mother's death from cancer. His father refuses to let Rob cry; Rob isn't even allowed to talk about his mother. Rob's father does not allow himself to grieve, either. To make matters worse, Rob's father decides they should move to another place in order to make a fresh start. The bullies at Rob's new school make his life miserable. Rob has only one friend, a girl named Sistine with problems of her own. Rob and Sistine soon befriend Willie May, a maid at the motel where Rob and his father live. Willie May seems to know things about the future. Rob discovers a caged tiger behind the motel. He and Sistine struggle with whether or not to free the tiger. Finally, they agree to release the tiger, only to have Rob's father shoot it in order to protect his son. The release of the tiger releases a multitude of feelings, thoughts, and emotions that Rob has hidden inside since the death of his mother.

About the Author

Kate DiCamillo was born in Philadelphia but spent most of her childhood years in Florida. Her first novel, *Because of Winn-Dixie*, was on the *New York Times* Best Sellers list and received a number of awards, including the Newbery Honor. Her second novel, *The Tiger Rising*, was a finalist for the National Book Award.

Major Characters

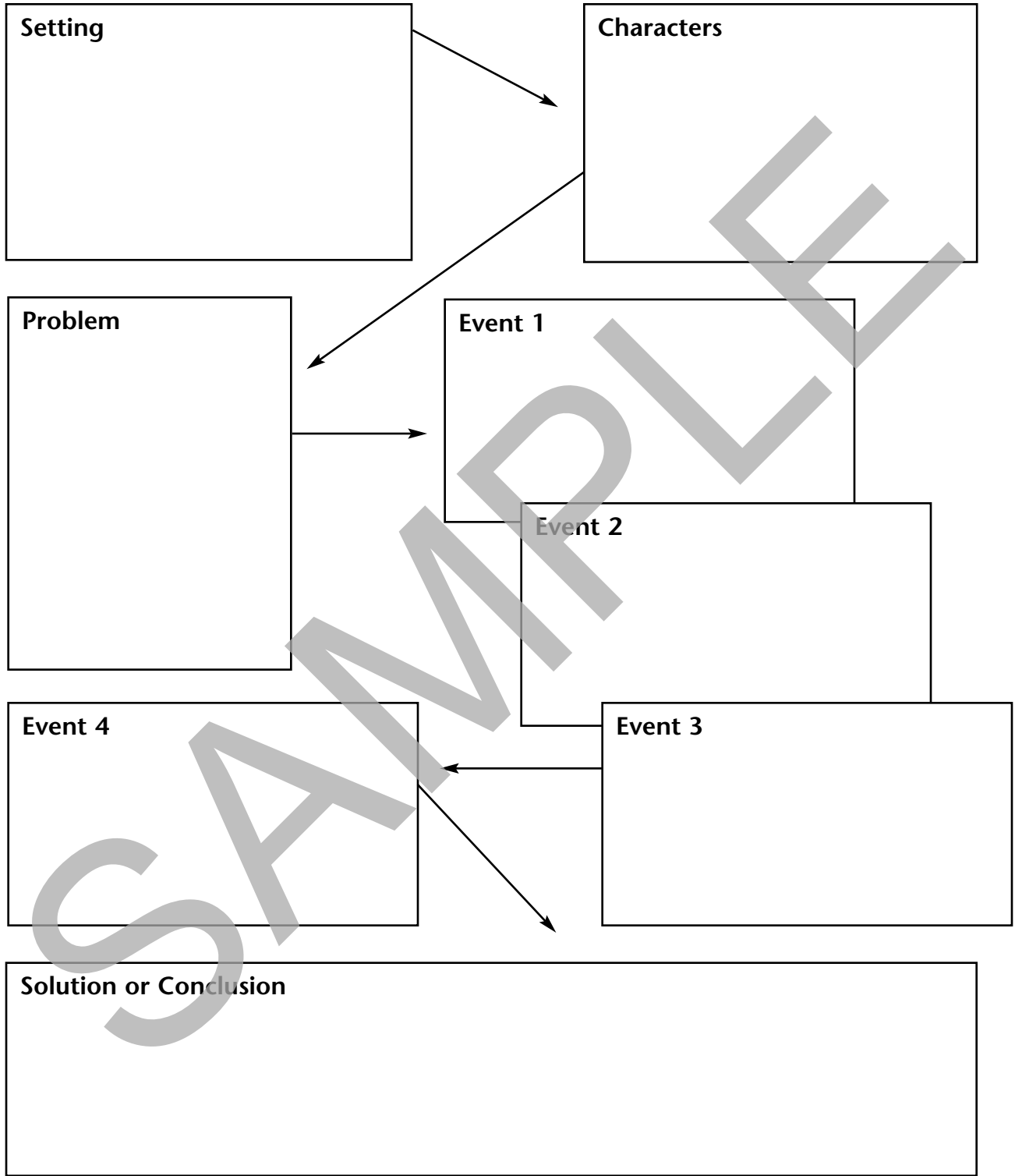
Rob Horton—young boy who is lonely and sad due to the death of his mother; a loner who keeps his feelings locked in a “suitcase”

Sistine Bailey—young girl who befriends Rob at school; full of anger from her parents' divorce; rebellious and independent

Mr. Robert Horton—Rob's father; overwhelmed by the death of his wife; uncommunicative with Rob

Willie May—wise, kind-hearted, prophetic maid at the Kentucky Star Motel; befriends Rob and Sistine

Story Map



Character Analysis

Directions: Working in small groups, discuss the attributes of the characters listed below. In each character's box, write several words or phrases that describe him or her.

A worksheet for character analysis featuring seven empty rounded rectangular boxes for notes. Each box is connected to a character name in a small rounded oval at the bottom. The characters are arranged in two rows: Rob Horton, Rob's father, Sistine Bailey, and Mrs. Bailey in the first row; Mr. Phelmer, Willie May, and Beauchamp in the second row. A large, light gray 'SAMPLE' watermark is oriented diagonally across the page.

Rob Horton

Rob's father

Sistine Bailey

Mrs. Bailey

Mr. Phelmer

Willie May

Beauchamp

Chapters 1–5, pp. 1–17

Rob, a young boy suffering from sadness and loneliness, has lost his mother to cancer. Rob is unable to grieve because his father thinks that crying is a sign of weakness. In an effort to make a fresh start, Rob and his father move to another town where Rob's father gets a job at the Kentucky Star Motel. Rob hates his new home. He doesn't have any friends, and he is harassed by bullies on the school bus. Rob keeps his emotions locked inside his "suitcase," the place inside his soul where he is allowed to feel grief and loneliness. Rob discovers a caged tiger in the woods behind the Kentucky Star Motel, but he keeps it a secret.

Vocabulary

composed (1)
harbored (1)
abiding (1)
sullen (4)
metallic (5)
lurched (7)
ignorant (11)
whittle (12)
astonishing (15)
array (15)
contagious (15)

Discussion Questions

1. Rob has many things to deal with in his life. What are some of these things, and how is Rob choosing to deal with them? *(Rob's mother has recently died from cancer, and he and his father have moved to a new town in Florida. Rob is sad and lonely. He doesn't think about his mother, and he doesn't cry. Rob keeps his emotions locked in a "suitcase" within himself. pp. 1–3)*
 2. Describe Rob's experience on the school bus each morning. *(Rob is harassed by Norton and Billy Threemonger. When Rob gets on the bus, Norton and Billy ridicule him, shove him, pull his hair, and call him names. Rob remains quiet and doesn't fight back. pp. 5–6)*
 3. What does Rob find in the woods behind the Kentucky Star Motel? What is Rob's reaction? Would you behave the same as Rob in a similar situation? *(Rob finds a caged tiger behind the motel. At first Rob is frightened, but he soon begins to think of the tiger as something that will help him, i.e., to keep his "suitcase" locked tight. Answers will vary. pp. 2–3)*
4. Why do you think Rob wants to carve the tiger out of wood? *(Rob's mother taught him how to whittle before she died. This is Rob's way of remembering her. p. 12)*
 5. Did Mr. Phelmer do the right thing by sending Rob home because of the rash on Rob's legs? *(Answers will vary.)*
 6. **Prediction:** Will Rob tell anyone else about the caged tiger?

Supplementary Activities

1. **Art:** Have students draw a picture of the sign in front of the Kentucky Star Motel as described on page 1 of the novel. Display the drawings in the classroom.
2. **Literary Analysis:** Discuss with students the way in which the author uses similes, metaphors, and personification throughout the novel. Have students use the Literary Devices chart on page 11 of this guide to keep a list of similes, metaphors, and personification as they read the book.
3. **Character Analysis:** Have students add characteristics for Mr. Phelmer to their Character Analysis charts.
4. **Social Studies:** Sistine introduced herself to the class by saying that she hated "...the South because the people in it are ignorant" (p. 11). Have students write a letter to Sistine explaining what a stereotype is and why it can result in negative feelings toward someone.
5. **Language Arts:** Invite students to stand and introduce themselves as if they were the "new kid" in school.