



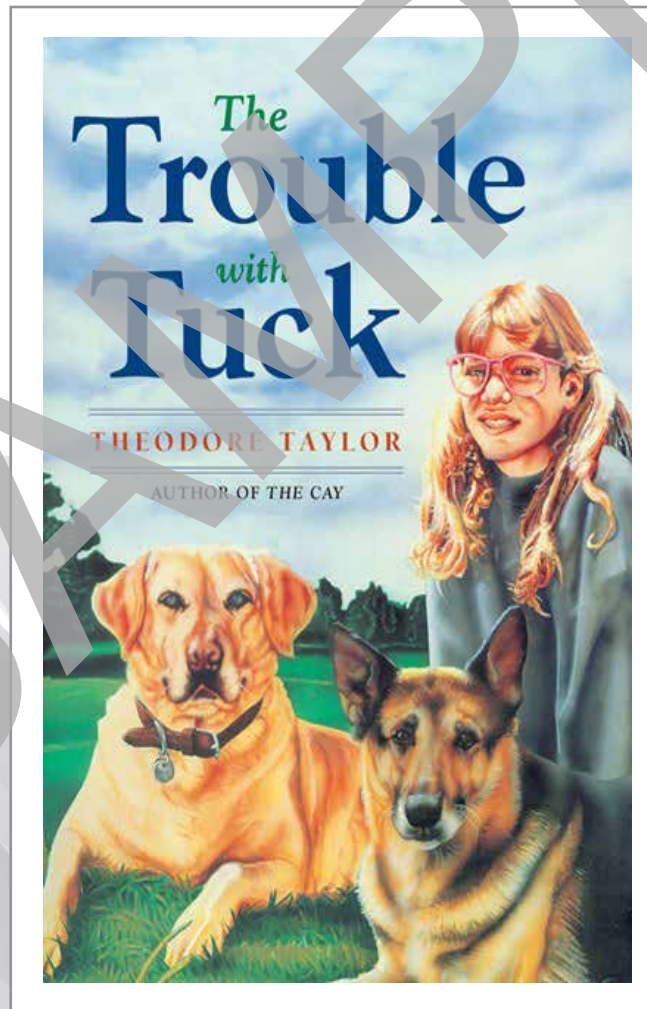
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 3-5**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# **The Trouble with Tuck**

Theodore Taylor



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

# The Trouble with Tuck

Theodore Taylor

## 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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## ***The Trouble With Tuck* by Theodore Taylor**

### ***Summary:***

Friar Tuck was given to Helen by her parents in the hope that he would enable her to become more self-confident and outgoing. Ironically, it is Tuck who needs Helen's help as he progressively goes blind. Helen's determination to help Tuck leads them to an unusual solution to the problem.

### ***About the Author:***

Theodore Taylor was born June 23, 1921, in Statesville, North Carolina. He attended the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point, New York, 1942-43, and Columbia University, 1948. He also studied at the American Theatre Wing, 1947-49. He has, among other things, been a reporter, sportswriter, publicist, story editor, and assistant producer. He has been a full-time writer since 1961.

Taylor says of himself, "The first stories that I recall were mainly Bible stories. Action was what I liked, and I still prefer action stories, both to read and to write. I never was a very good student. When I should have been listening to the teacher, I filled sheets of paper with war scenes. It was after school that I excelled in the practice of freedom. I roamed fields and muddy creeks and other interesting places around and about town. My mother trusted in God that I'd always be safe. I had remarkable freedom for a kid curious about most things."

Taylor began writing at the age of 13 as a cub reporter for the Portsmouth, *Virginia Evening Star*. He covered the high school sports events, and was paid 50 cents a week for his weekly sports column. This started him on a newspaper writing career. He had a stint with the Merchant Marines, and then the United States Navy followed. He and his family moved to California in 1955, where Taylor worked in Hollywood for the next 13 years as a publicist, story editor, associate producer and free-lance press agent. His first children's book was published in 1967 and titled *People Who Make Movies*.

For relaxation, Taylor enjoys walking along the beach, and traveling. He works on his various writing projects, often working on two or three novels at once, in his office every day. He works eight hours a day, seven days a week, except during football season. Then, he works five days a week.

### ***Note:***

The Avon Camelot paperback edition was used to write this study guide. Other editions may yield differing page references.

**Please be selective and use discretion when choosing the activities that you will do with this unit. It is not intended that everything be done, but that the discretionary choices made are most appropriate for your use and group of students. A wide range has been provided, so that individuals as well as groups may benefit from these selections.**

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## Chapters 1-2—Pages 1-12

### Vocabulary:

miserably 1	unpardonable 2	linoleum 2	scoffed 3
expressive 4	brazenly 4	meandered 6	dismayed 6
manicured 9	bespectacled 10	understandably 11	

### Vocabulary Activity:

Complete each of the comparisons using a vocabulary word. (Sample: GOOD is to BAD as HOT is to COLD.)

1. GLAD is to HAPPY as \_\_\_\_\_ is to WANDERED. (MEANDERED)
2. MORE is to LESS as \_\_\_\_\_ is to SHYLY. (BRAZENLY)
3. BETTER is to WORSE as \_\_\_\_\_ is to UNTIDY. (MANICURED)
4. UNHAPPY is to SAD as \_\_\_\_\_ is to DISCOURAGED. (DISMAYED)
5. HERE is to THERE as \_\_\_\_\_ is to PARDONABLE. (UNPARDONABLE)

### Discussion Questions and Activities:

1. What does Helen's mother do to check Tuck's eyesight? (Page 6, *She places a chair near the door, and has Helen call to Tuck from outside. When Tuck goes to the door, he runs headlong into the chair.*) Do you think that this is a good "test" for Tuck? How do you think that Helen and her mother are feeling when Tuck does this? (See Postreading Activity #1.)
2. What does Helen do, often unawares, that almost drives everyone crazy, and why does she do it? (Page 11, *She whistles. Helen's parents have been told by a psychologist that Helen whistles because she has no self-confidence.*) What is something different that Helen might do? Do you know of anyone doing something, like whistling, that seems to be a "quirk" or habit? Do you think that there might be a special reason for that person doing it? Discuss habits. (See Postreading Activity #2.)

### Postreading Activities:

1. How do you think that Tuck is feeling, as he stands by the overturned chair? Choose one word that you feel would best describe Tuck's feelings. Illustrate that word by using art media, music, dance, prose or poetry, either of your own creation or your own choosing.



- Use a T-Diagram to compare Helen to herself, before and after the arrival of Tuck. Keep the diagram, so that additions may be made if necessary.

Helen—Before Tuck	Helen—After Tuck

- Helen describes an incident that, "Only in the movies is that supposed to happen." (page 12) Think of another unusual incident for Helen, yourself, or some other person, fiction or nonfiction. Write about the incident in detail. "Paint" a vivid picture with words.
- Make attribute webs for Helen's mother and father. Add to them as the story progresses. (See pages 10-12 of this guide.)
- Start a story map and follow the "journey" taken by Helen as she tries to help Tuck. (See page 13 of this guide.)

## Chapters 3-4 —Pages 13-26

### Vocabulary:

bestowing 14    exasperated 15    intimidated 16    pestering 20  
 expectantly 21    frustrated 22    grudgingly 23

### Vocabulary Activity:

Match up the vocabulary word with its definition.

Definition	Vocabulary Word
conferring	_____ ( <i>bestowing</i> )
reluctantly	_____ ( <i>grudgingly</i> )
thwarted	_____ ( <i>frustrated</i> )
irritated	_____ ( <i>exasperated</i> )
threatened	_____ ( <i>intimidated</i> )

### Discussion Questions and Activities:

- What is the dog's "official" name? (page 17, *Friar Tuck Golden Boy*) Why do you think the dog is given that name? (Page 14, *His mother's name is Maid Marian Golden Girl.*) Have you read the book *Robin Hood*? What are the names of some of the other male characters? What would you have chosen for a dog's name? For example:\*

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## Using Character Webs—In the Novel Unit Approach

Attribute Webs are simply a visual representation of a character from the novel. They provide a systematic way for the students to organize and recap the information they have about a particular character. Attribute webs may be used after reading the novel to recapitulate information about a particular character or completed gradually as information unfolds, done individually, or finished as a group project.

One type of character attribute web uses these divisions:

- How a character acts and feels. (How does the character feel in this picture? How would you feel if this happened to you? How do you think the character feels?)
- How a character looks. (Close your eyes and picture the character. Describe him to me.)
- Where a character lives. (Where and when does the character live?)
- How others feel about the character. (How does another specific character feel about our character?)

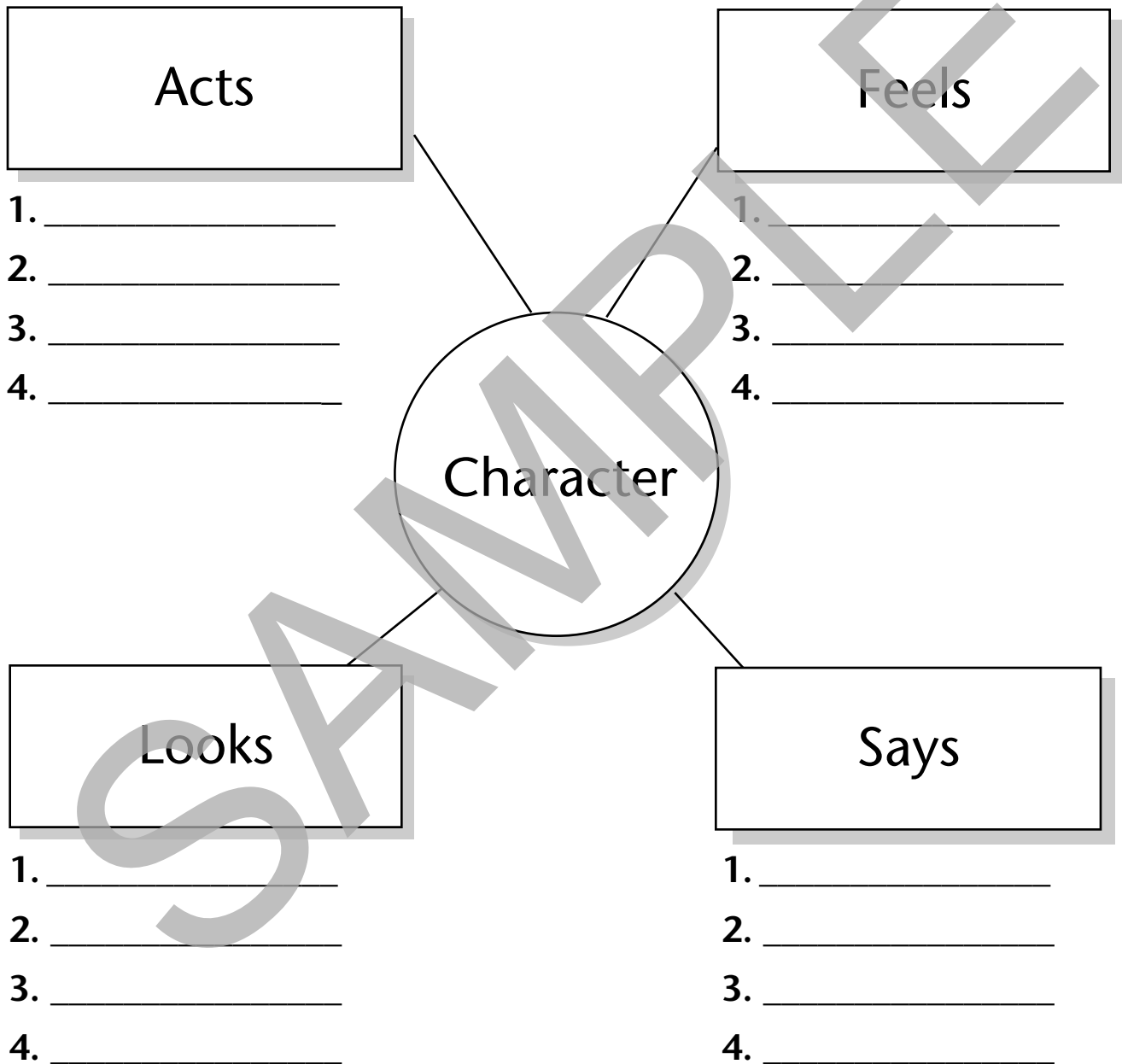
In group discussion about the student attribute webs and specific characters, the teacher can ask for backup proof from the novel. You can also include inferential thinking.

Attribute webs need not be confined to characters. They may also be used to organize information about a concept, object or place.

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## 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.



*Robin Hood*  
*Little John*  
*Will Stutely*

*Reynold Greenleaf*  
*Eric of Lincoln*  
*Sheriff of Nottingham*

*Midge the Miller's son*  
*Allan-a-Dale*  
*King Henry*

\* Names from Ann McGovern's *Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest*. (See Bibliography.) (See Postreading Activity #1.)

2. Helen loses sight of Tuck in the fog, and encounters a man in the park. (pages 24-26 ) What do you think of Helen's decision to walk in the park on this day? Why isn't Tuck with her? Do you think that the man would have approached her if Tuck had been kept on a leash? Discuss. (See Postreading Activity #2.)

**Postreading Activities:**

1. The names have it! Materials needed for this activity: construction paper, scissors, and a crayon or pencil. Fold a strip of paper in half, crosswise. Beginning at the folded edge, write or print the name on the paper. Cut out the name. (See illustration.) Open the paper and see the design created. Glue or tape onto a sheet of contrasting color, and display. (See Supplementary Activity, What's In A Name.)



2. Invite a local police official, counselor, psychologist, and/or other person available to you to speak to the children about the park incident, and preventive measures that might be taken.
3. Do some research. Obtain the crime statistics for your community. How does your community rate? Interview local officials for statistical information. Compare that to other communities in your area.
4. Give some advice to Helen. Imagine that the account of her encounter in the park has been reported in the local paper. Write her a letter in response to that report.