



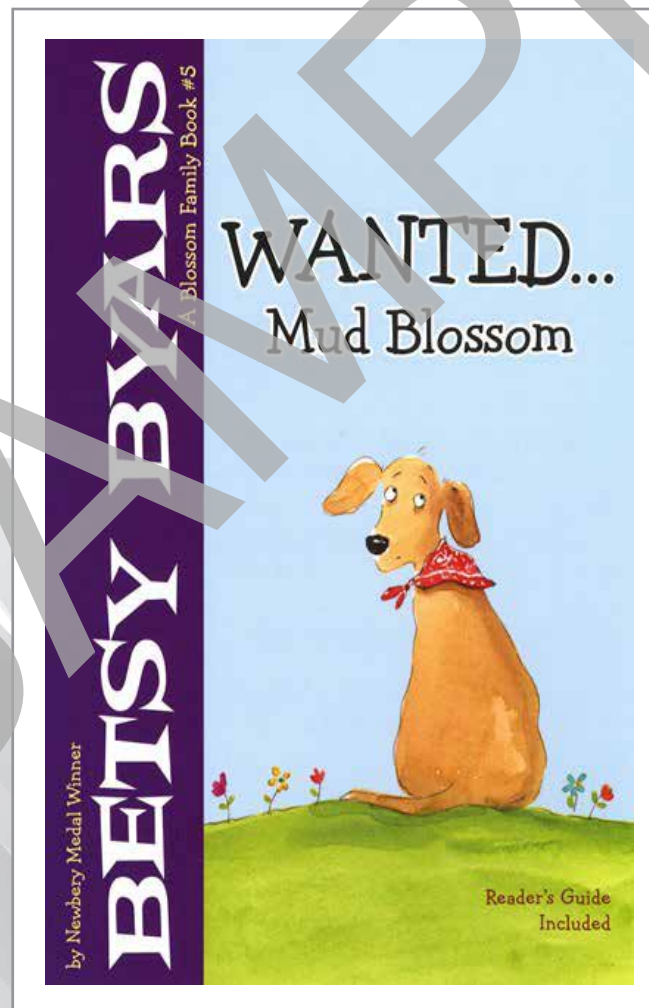
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 3-5

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

WANTED ... Mud Blossom

Betsy Byars



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

WANTED ...

Mud Blossom

Betsy Byars

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 978-1-50204-300-9

Copyright infringement is a violation of Federal Law.

© 2020 by Novel Units, Inc., St. Louis, MO. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any way or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without prior written permission from Novel Units, Inc.

Reproduction of any part of this publication for an entire school or for a school system, by for-profit institutions and tutoring centers, or for commercial sale is strictly prohibited.

Novel Units is a registered trademark of Conn Education.

Printed in the United States of America.

To order, contact your
local school supply store, or:

Toll-Free Fax: 877.716.7272

Phone: 888.650.4224

3901 Union Blvd., Suite 155

St. Louis, MO 63115

sales@novelunits.com

novelunits.com

Table of Contents

Summary	3
About the Author	3
Introductory Information and Activities	4
Twenty-Five Chapters	12
Each section contains Vocabulary words and Activities, Discussion Questions, Predictions, and Supplementary Activities	
Post-reading Extension Activities	32
Teacher Information	37
Bibliography.....	39

Skills and Strategies

Writing

Limerick, story about a pet,
jingle

Vocabulary

Antonyms/synonyms

Thinking

Brainstorming, classifying
and categorizing, evaluating,
comparing and contrasting

Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing,
inference

Listening/Speaking

Participation in discussions,
drama

Literary Elements

Character, setting, plot,
personification, simile

Summary

Introduced in Byars' book, *The Not-Just-Anybody Family*, the members of the Blossom Family cope with new problems in their lives. The school hamster that Junior has brought home for the weekend disappears, and all of the evidence points to Mud Blossom as the culprit. Mad Mary's cane and bag are found, but she is missing. Everyone knows that Mary would not voluntarily be parted from her most prized possessions. Where is Junior's best friend, just when he needs her so badly?

Primary Characters

Alex [Pap] Blossom: Former Rodeo Star; father of the now-deceased Cotton Blossom

Mud Blossom: Pap's faithful dog and devoted companion

Vicki Blossom: Widow of Pap's son, Cotton; Rodeo Circuit Performer

Maggie Blossom: oldest child and only daughter of Vicki and Cotton Blossom

Vern Blossom: oldest son of Vicki and Cotton Blossom

Junior Blossom: youngest son of Vicki and Cotton Blossom

About the Author

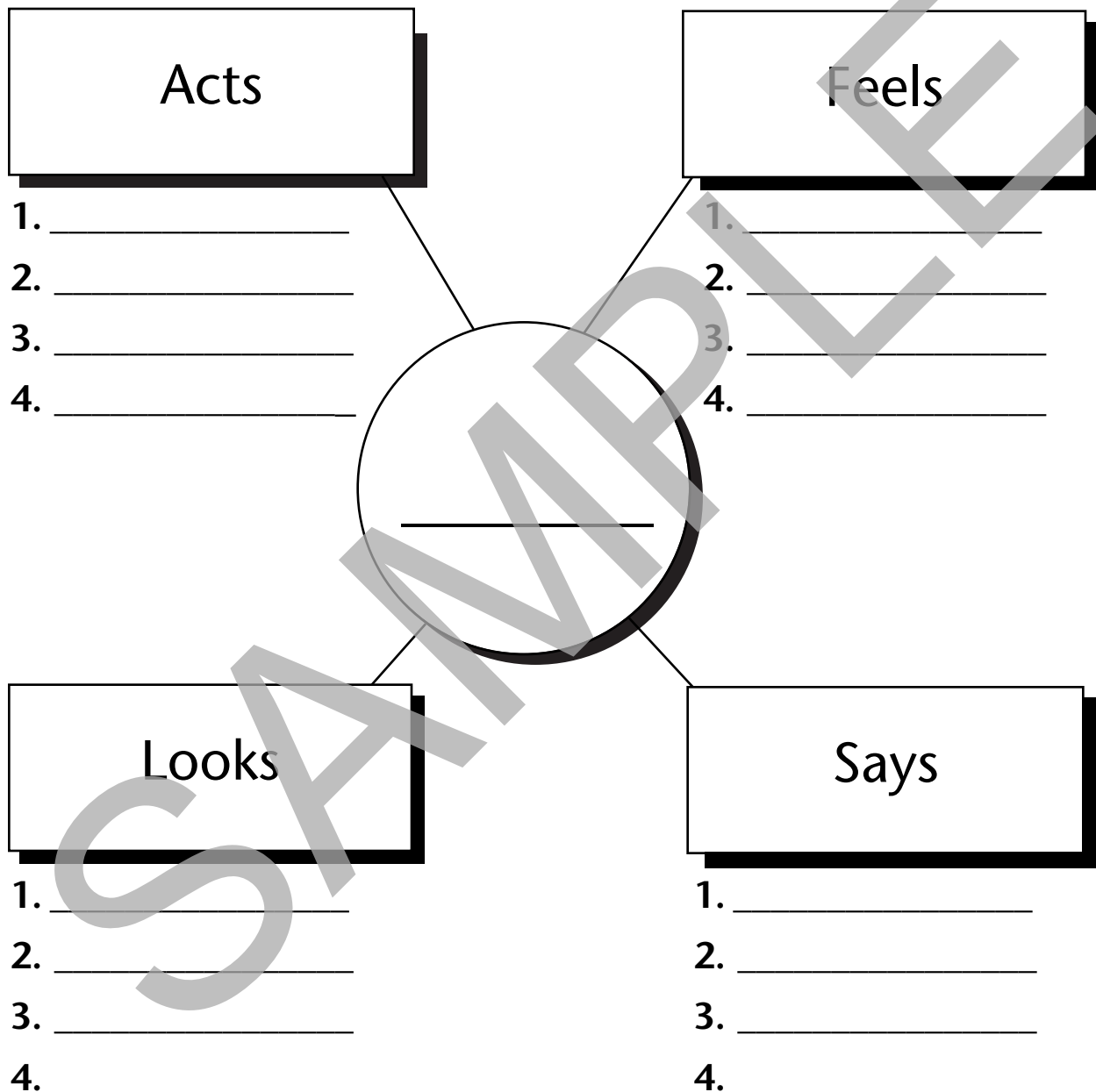
Betsy Cromer Byars was born August 7, 1928, in Charlotte, North Carolina. She married Edward Ford Byars, a professor of engineering, on June 24, 1950. They have four children, Laurie, Betsy Ann, Nan, and Guy. She attended Furman University, 1946-1948; Queens College, B.A. in 1950.

Byars had a happy childhood. Her father worked at a small cotton mill and brought home free cloth, enabling Byars to learn to sew at an early age. When she went to college, she majored in math, for that is what her father wanted her to do and what her sister had done before her. However, calculus was the determining factor that made her go to her father to tell him that she would not be a mathematician. She switched her major to English, and married after graduation so that her only writing during the next few years included letters and shopping lists. When her husband went back to school to study for his doctorate, Byars started her creative writing. His doctorate completed, Byars and her family moved to West Virginia where her children's novels were written.

Byars was awarded the Newbery Medal for *The Summer of the Swans* in 1971. Her books have been translated into nine languages, and many have been dramatized on national television. She has said, "There is no activity in my life which has brought me more pleasure than my writing."

Attribute Web

The attribute web below will help you gather clues the author provides about a character in the novel. 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.



The diagram is an attribute web. It consists of a central circle with a horizontal line inside. Four lines radiate from the circle to four rectangular boxes arranged in a square pattern. The boxes are labeled 'Acts' (top-left), 'Feels' (top-right), 'Looks' (bottom-left), and 'Says' (bottom-right). Each box has a list of four numbered lines for notes.

Acts

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Feels

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Looks

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Says

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Chapter Seven “The Cage”—Pages 39-45

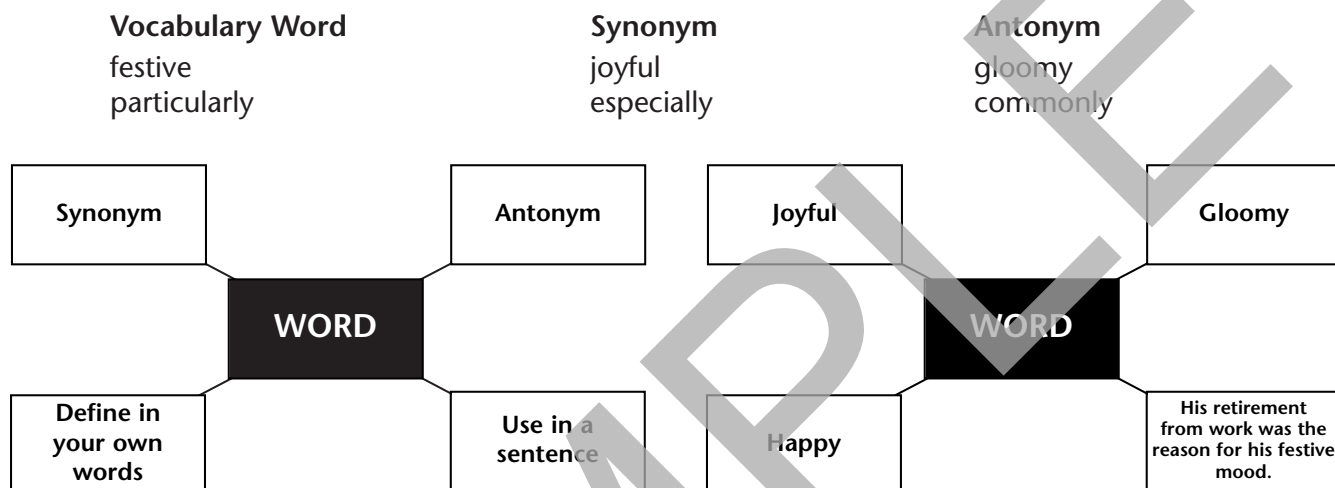
Vocabulary

festive (42)

particularly (44)

Vocabulary Activity

List a synonym and an antonym and make a word map for each of the two vocabulary words.



Discussion Questions

1. What is Junior bringing home from school on Friday afternoon? (*Pages 39-40, Junior is bringing the class hamster home for the weekend.*) Why do you think that Junior has been chosen as the first child in his class to care for the hamster? (*Opinion—answers will vary.*) Discuss.
2. What is the special thing that Junior has made for Scooty, the hamster? (*Pages 40 & 42, Junior has made a tunnel with secret rooms for the hamster. Page 49, It is outside and covered with boards.*) What is your opinion about this tunnel? Why?

Supplementary Activities

1. Do some research. Find out about hamsters.
2. Make a class pet survey. Graph the results of the survey and make summary statements.
3. Invite a hamster owner to bring a hamster into class and to explain about the care of the pet. Invite other pet owners to do the same thing.
4. Write and illustrate a story about an unusual pet, real or imaginary. See Supplementary Activities, Pet Dough.
5. Junior has gone off and left Scooty in the tunnel. Make a prediction. What do you think will happen to the hamster?

Chapter Eight “Police Call”—Pages 46-52

Vocabulary

harassing (48) woefully (48)

Vocabulary Activity

List as many synonyms and antonyms as you can for the vocabulary word *woefully*. For example:

Woefully

Some Synonyms

sorrowfully
mournfully
dolefully
sadly
unhappily
wretchedly

Some Antonyms

fortunately
gladly
happily
cheerfully
contentedly

Use one word from each list in a sentence.

Discussion Questions

1. Why are Vern and Michael afraid of Mad Mary? (*Page 47, Vern and Michael went into Mary's cave without her permission.*) What is your opinion of the action of Vern and Michael? Discuss.
2. What does Mad Mary say to Vern and Michael when she finds them in her cave? (*Page 47, Mad Mary tells the boys that she cooks and eats kids that trespass in her cave.*) Do the boys believe her? (No) Why do you think Mad Mary tells the boys that she will cook and eat them? What do you think that you would do in her situation? Discuss.
3. What frightened Mary when she was a child? (*Page 51, A stain in the ceiling of her bedroom frightened Mary.*) Now that she is older, what has Mary decided that the shape has become? (*Page 52, Mary decides that the shape is the angel of death.*) Reread the paragraph near the bottom of the page on 51 that starts, “It wasn’t...” How does that description make you feel? Discuss personal reactions.

Supplementary Activities

1. Make a straw painting. To do this kind of a painting you will need newspaper, colored construction paper, tempera paint, and drinking straws, each straw cut into two or three pieces. Cover the work surface with newspaper. Place a blob of paint on the paper. Hold the end of a drinking straw at an angle near, but not touching, the paint and blow briskly. The paint will spread in jagged lines. Move the straw to another area where paint has collected, and blow again. Repeat the procedure until enough designs have been made to fill the sheet. Allow to dry. Add colored chalk accents, if desired.