



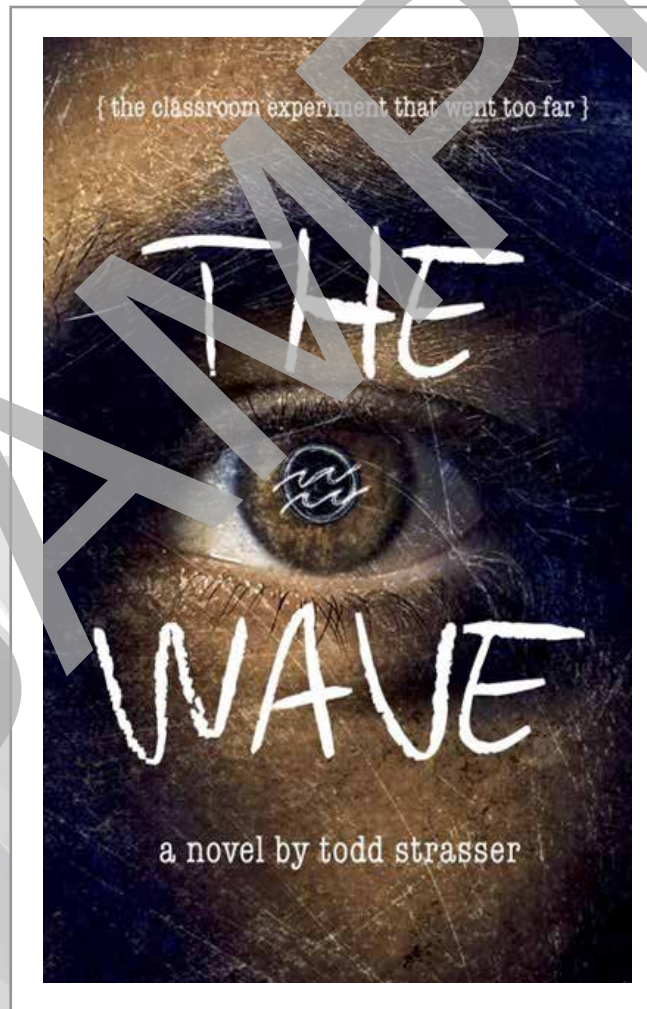
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 9-12**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# The Wave

Todd Strasser



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

# The Wave

Todd Strasser

## 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 978-1-50204-307-8**

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](mailto:sales@novelunits.com)

[novelunits.com](http://novelunits.com)

## Table of Contents

Summary .....	3
About the Author .....	3
Background of Novel.....	4
Initiating Activities.....	6
Seventeen Chapters.....	12
Chapters contain: Summary, Vocabulary, Discussion Questions, Supplementary Activities	
Post-reading Questions .....	24
Post-reading Activities.....	25
Final Assessment.....	27
Glossary.....	28

## Skills and Strategies

### Thinking

Comparing, evaluating,  
analyzing details

### Writing

Ads, directions

### Listening/Speaking

Participation in discussions,  
participation in dramatic  
activities, describing,  
defending opinions

### Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing,  
story mapping, cause/effect,  
inference, problem solving

### Vocabulary

Compound words, words in  
context

### Literary Elements

Character analysis, setting,  
plot, figurative language

---

**Genre:** Fiction, based on an actual classroom occurrence in Palo Alto, California, 1969

**Setting:** Gordon High School

**Point of View:** Third person omniscient

**Themes:** Power, control, group pressure

**Conflict:** Person vs. person; person vs. self; person vs. group pressure

## Summary

Students in Ben Ross's history class at Gordon High School are studying World War II and having difficulty understanding the heedless way in which many of the German people followed Hitler. In an effort to have students vicariously experience Hitler's manipulation of his people, Ross creates an experiment, The Wave. The experiment mushrooms and, within a week, governs the majority of the school with its motto: Strength Through Discipline, Strength Through Community, Strength Through Action. A few dissenting students recognize the danger in "The Wave" and attempt to stop the movement before it is too late.

*Note: The Wave was produced as a TV movie and can be ordered from Zenger Media (1-800-421-4246 or 1-310-839-2436, access@ZengerMedia.com).*

## About the Author

### Personal Information

Todd Strasser was born in New York City in 1950 and grew up in Roslyn Heights on Long Island. He attended the I.U. Willets Elementary School and the Wheatley School during his junior high and senior high years. After dropping out of New York University, he lived for a while on a commune in Virginia. He later lived in Europe, where he was a street musician. During this part of his life, he wrote some poetry and short fiction but did not become a published author. After returning to the United States, he attended Beloit College, studying literature and writing.

Strasser and his wife, Pamela, have two children. They live close to New York City.

### Career

After graduating from college, Strasser worked at the *Middletown Times Herald-Record* newspaper in Middletown, New York, for two years. He then worked as an advertising copywriter for Compton Advertising in New York City.

Strasser sold his first novel, *Angel Dust Blues*, in 1978. With the money he earned from the book, he started a fortune cookie company, with which he supplemented his writing income for twelve years. His early writing featured a number of books for teenagers and young adults and, beginning with his

---

## Attribute Web

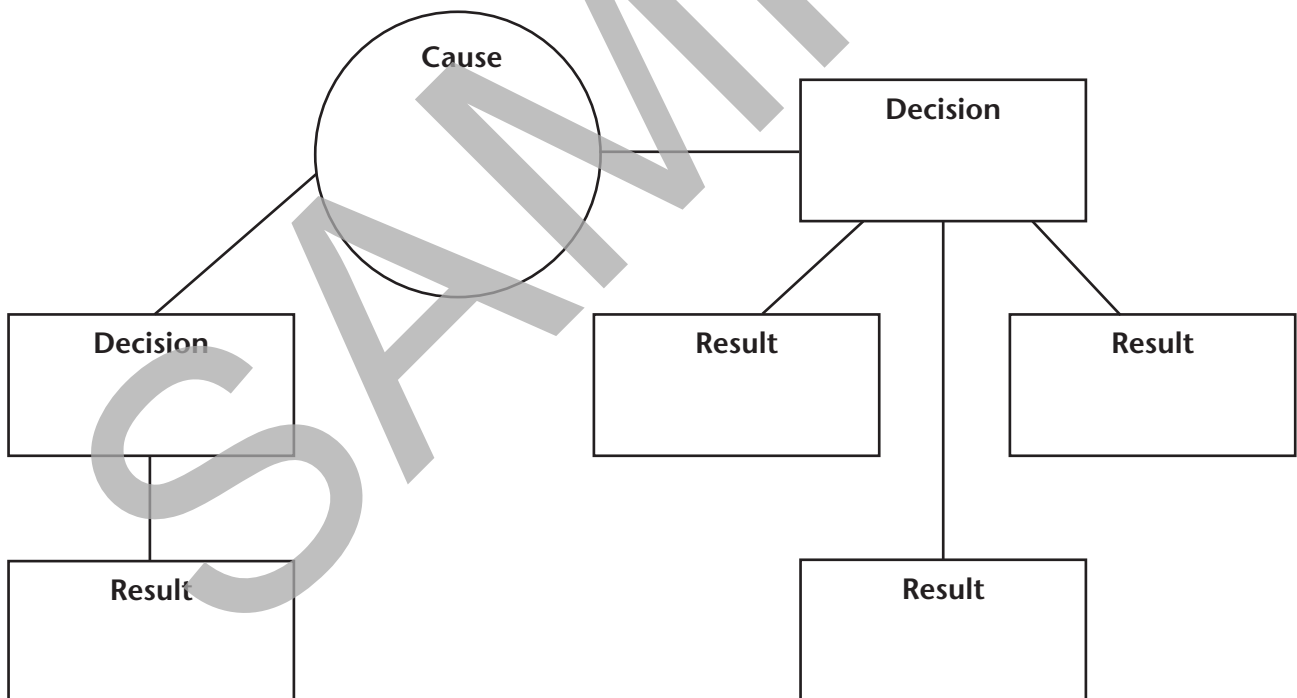
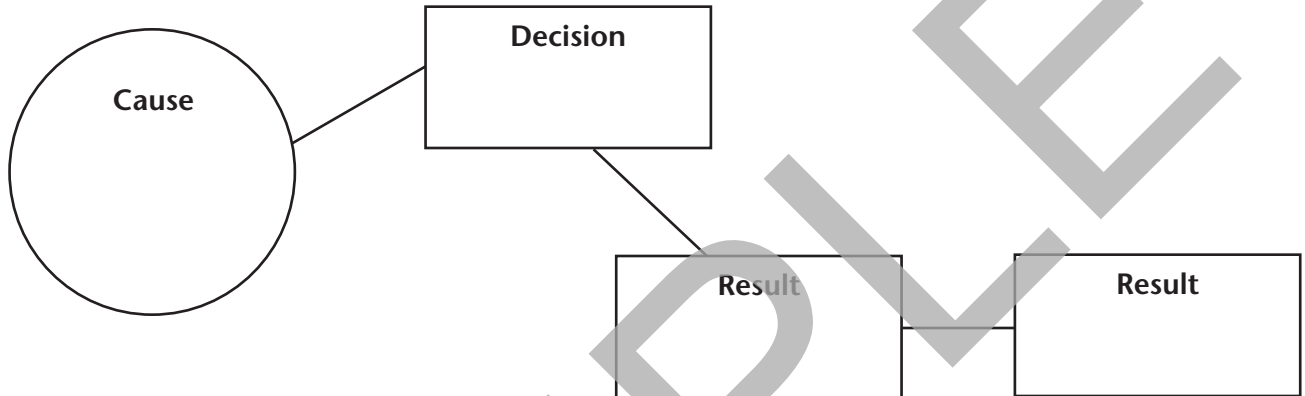
**Directions:** Select a character from the book to tell about using the blocks below.

<i>Who is the character?</i>			
<i>What did the character do?</i>		<i>Why did s/he do it?</i>	
<i>Why is the character's name well chosen?</i>	<i>What is the nature of this character's actions? (reactive, active, important, consequential, secondary)</i>	<i>What is the significance of the book's time and place to the character?</i>	
<i>What is unusual or important about the character?</i>	<i>How does the character change in the story?</i>	<i>Does the character remind you of another character from another book? Who?</i>	<i>Do you know anyone similar to this character?</i>

---

## Cause/Effect Chart

**Directions:** Make a flow chart to show decisions a character made, the decisions (s)he could have made, and the result(s) of each. (Use your imagination to speculate on the results of decisions the character could have made.)



---

## Chapter One, pp. 7-14

This chapter gives the setting of the novel, introduces the primary characters, and establishes their degree of popularity and their academic motivation. Ben Ross, high school history teacher, reflects upon the universal attitudes of his students.

### Vocabulary

perpetual (7)  
dexterity (10)

shard (8)  
charismatic (10)

befuddled (10),  
naive (11)

inept (10)  
lackadaisical (12)

### Discussion Questions

1. Discuss Ben Ross's reputation as a teacher and what this reveals about him. Ask students how they would react to a teacher like Ross. *(pp. 10-11, After two years, Ross is gaining a growing reputation as an outstanding teacher. His students feel his intensity is "contagious." His colleagues are divided in their opinion of him. Some are impressed with his energy, dedication, and creativity. Others are skeptical and think he is naive and overzealous; some dislike the way he dresses; others are jealous.)*
2. Discuss the universality of Ben Ross's concerns about his students. *(p. 12, This is reflected in his concern about the students' lackadaisical attitude about getting to class on time and his difficulty in getting them to do homework.)*

### Supplementary Activities

1. Universality: Compare Gordon High School's student attitudes toward school with that in your school.
2. Begin a classroom characterization chart for the primary characters. List identifying physical, mental, and personality characteristics for each one. Continue chart as reading progresses.

## Chapter Two, pp. 15-22

The action takes place in Ben Ross's classroom. He shows a film depicting World War II Nazi atrocities in death camps. The students show mixed reactions. It becomes obvious that other students harass Robert Billings.

### Vocabulary

atrocities (15)  
psychopath (16)  
quintessential (21)

emaciated (15)  
stench (17)

menial (15)  
heinous (17)

espoused (16)  
permeated (17)

### Discussion Questions

1. Discuss what the film reveals about Nazi concentration camps and your students' prior knowledge of these events. *(pp. 15-16, Note the depiction of the inhumane cruelty by the Nazis: emaciated human skeletons, death camps, other prisoners stacking the dead bodies like stove wood.)*

- 
- Note and discuss the key statement, referring to Nazi atrocities: (p. 16, "How on God's earth could anyone make anyone else do something like that?" Responses will vary.)
  - Discuss the contrasting student reaction to the film. (p. 17, Most look stunned; Laurie and Amy are obviously upset; some immediately begin to fool around; Robert Billings is asleep.)
  - Discuss students' opinion about the apathy of the German people toward the Nazi atrocities. (pp. 18-19, They feel it is almost unbelievable and can't understand how the German people could have allowed the slaughter; they think the Germans should have known about it and fought back. The students feel they would never be swayed.)
  - Prediction:** Will Ross be able to influence Robert Billings?

### Supplementary Activities

- Introduce the word *genocide* and its synonyms: wholesale destruction, annihilation, holocaust, extermination. As a word-study extension, discuss the following words: homicide (killing of a human being); patricide or parricide (parents); fratricide (brother or sister); regicide (king or ruler); infanticide (newborn child).
- Analyze the figures of speech: (p. 15) metaphor—inmates of concentration camps: skeletons covered with skin; (p. 16) simile—bodies laid out like stove wood
- Analyze apathy of citizens in a country and its effect on the leaders, the country, and the people.
- Ask students to bring to class pictures showing the horror of Nazi death camps.

### Chapter Three, pp. 23-30

Students continue their quiet harassment of Robert. Laurie and David discuss the film. This chapter reveals David's hopes of becoming a computer engineer and the underlying competition between Laurie and Amy.

### Vocabulary

facetiously (28)

### Discussion Questions

- Analyze the metaphor about Robert Billings, "Gordon High's very own Untouchable." Discuss the caste system in India and whether or not our society has its own form of caste system. (p. 23, Responses will vary. Students pick on Robert, he seems to be unconcerned about school, and he exhibits strange behavior. Point out levels of caste system; relate to society's treatment of those who are different.)
- Contrast Laurie and David's reaction to the film about Hitler. (pp. 24, 27, Laurie: internalizes events; bothered by what she sees; concerned; upset. David: thinks the events were horrible but says it happened a long time ago and is over now; believes society has learned its lesson from history and it will never happen again.)