



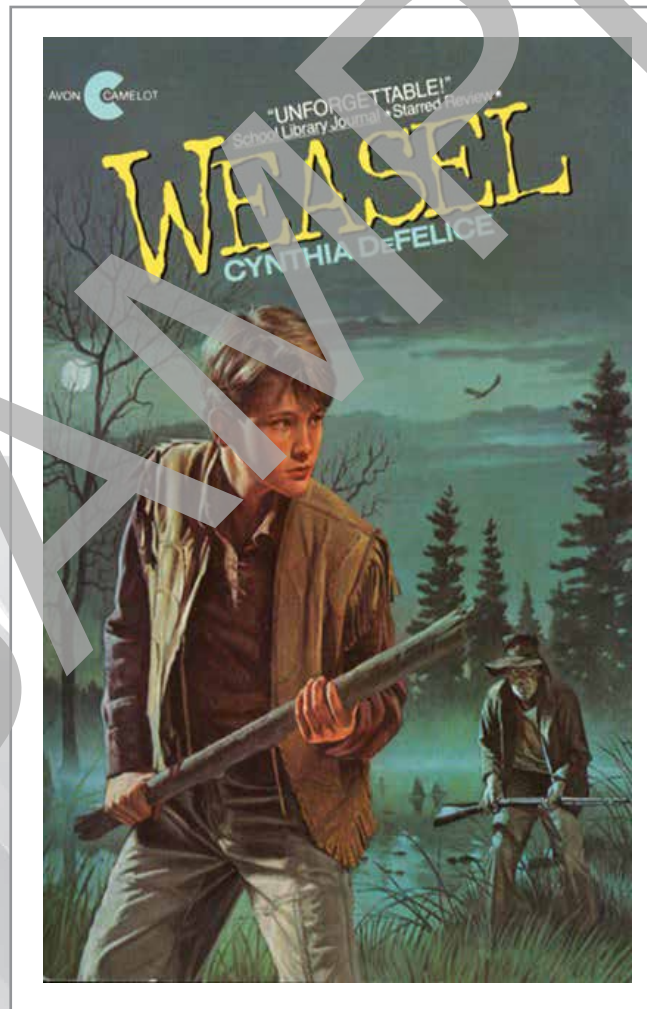
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Weasel

Cynthia C. DeFelice



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Weaseel

Cynthia C. DeFelice

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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Chapters contain: Vocabulary Words and Activities, Discussion Questions and Activities, Predictions, Supplementary Activities	
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Skills and Strategies

Literary Elements

Characterization, point of view, historical fiction genre, story elements, conflict, description

Thinking

Brainstorming, research

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, drama

Vocabulary

Word mapping, synonyms, antonyms

Comprehension

Predicting, inference, comparison/contrast

Writing

Journaling

Summary

Set on the Ohio frontier in 1839, Nathan tells the story of an encounter with a maniacal killer. When Nathan and his sister are taken by a stranger to his cabin where their father is ill, they learn that the man called Weasel, a former Indian fighter, noted for his brutality, who has killed or wounded people, white and Indian, has taken their father's rifle and left him to die in a trap. After being caught by Weasel, Nathan escapes, but broods bitterly because he didn't kill the man when he had a chance. Only later does he realize that if he had killed him he would have been as savage as Weasel himself.

About the Author

Cynthia C. DeFelice received a B.A. degree from William Smith College and an M.L.S. degree from Syracuse University. A former school media specialist, she is now a professional story teller, one-half of the Wild Washerwoman storytelling team that appears at schools, libraries, workshops, and festivals. She is the author of *The Strange Night Writing of Jessamine Colter*, a novel for older children. Cynthia DeFelice and her husband have two children and live in Geneva, New York.

Introductory Information and Activities

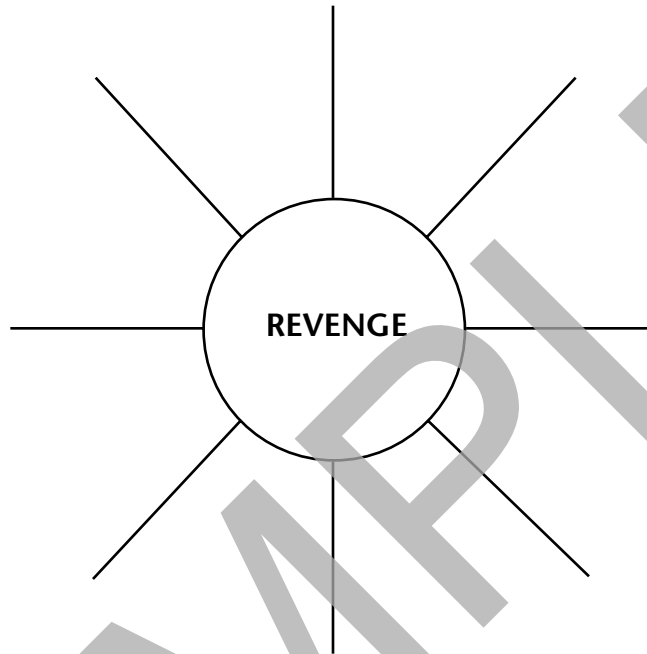
Instructions Prior to Reading

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 Activities

1. **Previewing:** Have students examine the title. What do you think the title means? Generate as many possibilities as you can.
2. **Look at the cover.** What significant things do you see? What does the boy's expression tell you about his feelings? Who do you think the man is in the background?
3. **Read the back cover.** Predicting is a very important part of reading. What do you learn about the characters? What is the setting? When and where do you think this novel takes place? What do you think the problem of the story is? Does the back cover make you want to read the book? Why or why not? What do you predict the story will be about?

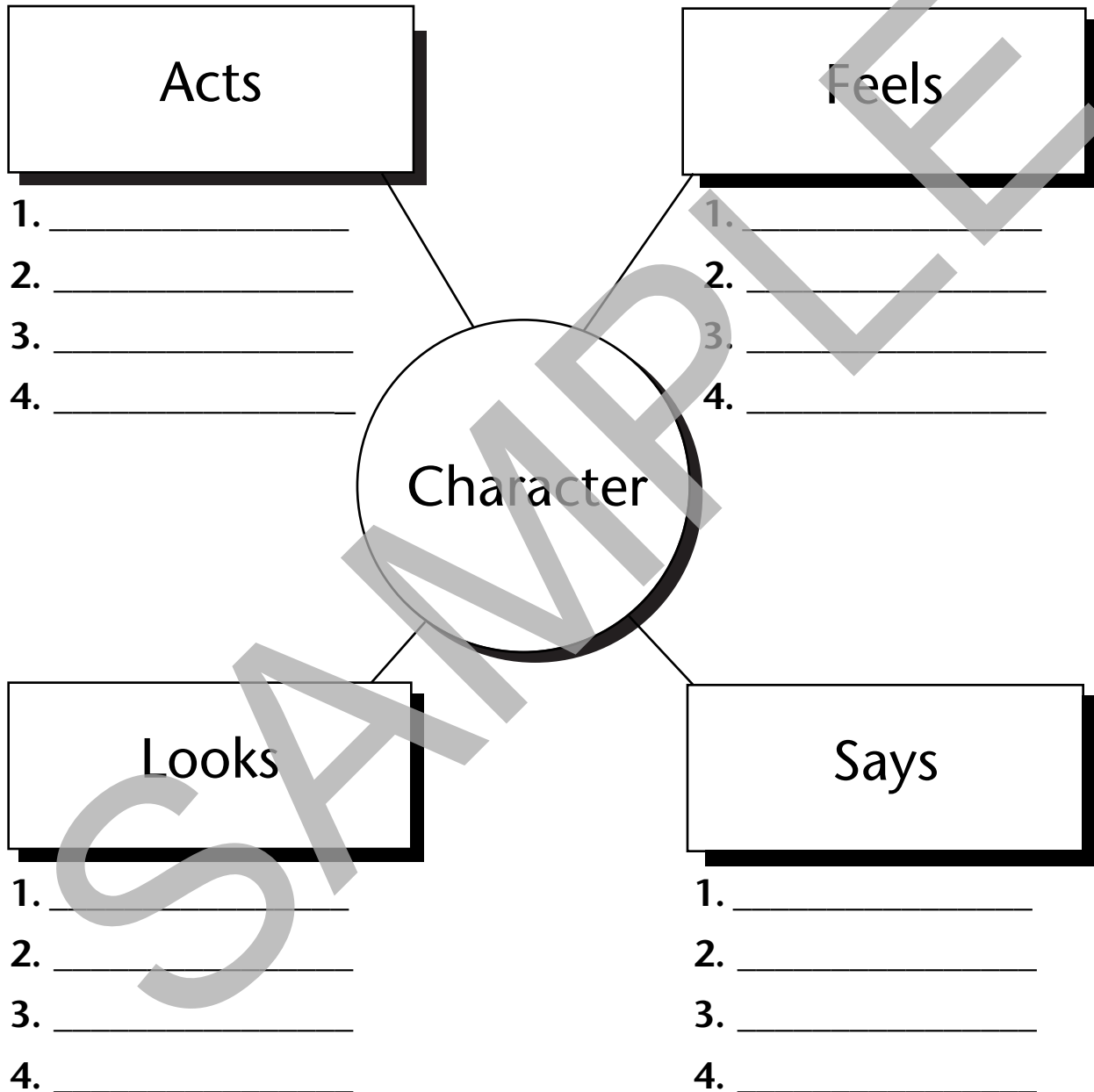
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4. Concept Map: Write the word “revenge” at the center of a large piece of paper, to be kept for later comparison with events in the book (or as a bulletin board display to be expanded as the story is read). Have students generate any ideas that come to mind when they hear the term, helping students organize them into categories such as “synonyms,” “antonyms,” people who have sought revenge, types of revenge, etc.



5. The students will keep a response journal. The students will divide their papers in half (vertically). On the left side, they will keep short summaries of what has happened in each section using their own words. On the right side, they will react to what they have read. Reactions include answers to such questions as, “How would I have felt in the character’s place? What is my opinion of what the character did? How does the character’s situation remind me of my own life?”
6. Have the students brainstorm associations with Indians and Native Americans. Jot ideas around the central word on a large sheet of paper. Help students “cluster” the ideas into categories.

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.



Chapter 10—Pages 49-54

Vocabulary

clench 50
midair 53

commence 50
loathing 53

plumb 52

mockery 52

Vocabulary Activity

Each student or cooperative group will make a poster, banner, or sign to advertise their word or words. The ad must show what the word means and how to pronounce it. The words will be displayed and should be signed by the artist(s).

Discussion Questions and Activities

1. How do you think Weasel got Nathan to his house? *(Answer is not given.)*
2. How does the author use humor in this chapter? *(Page 49, Even when Nathan was tied up in the miserable cabin, he added, "...Mama wouldn't think much of this cabin at all..." and proceeded to talk about the chinks and the lack of housekeeping. This breaks the tension and encourages the reader.)*
3. How had Nathan made Weasel shoot himself in his leg? *(Page 50, Nathan had thrown his stick at him.)* How was Weasel trying to doctor himself? *(by digging out the bullet with his knife)* What could Weasel cause by doing this? Why was Weasel drinking whiskey? *(Digging with the knife into his leg was very painful, so Weasel was using the whiskey as a painkiller.)*
4. What cruel jokes did Weasel tell? *(Page 51, "Didn't he tell you about it?" "Cat got your tongue, too?" Weasel is referring to the fact that he cut out the tongue of the stranger, Ezra Ketcham.)*
5. Why had Weasel and Ezra been sent to the territory? *(Page 52, The government had sent them to remove the redskins from the good lands or move them to another place.)* How did Weasel and Ezra change the interpretation of the government plans? *(Page 52, They removed the Indians by killing them.)*
6. How did Weasel and Ezra part company? What did they disagree about? *(Pages 52-53, Ezra began to defend the Indians. He thought it was wrong to drive the Indians off and kill them like animals. Ezra took an Indian bride and they were going to have a baby. Weasel killed the squaw and her baby and cut out Ezra's tongue.)*
7. How did Weasel get Pa's gun? *(Page 53, He found Pa stuck in a trap and a good rifle laying beside him so Weasel took the gun and left Pa in the trap.)*

Prediction

What will Weasel do with Nathan?

Supplementary Activity

Research the Shawnee Indians. Where did they live and hunt? What kind of homes did they have? How did they dress? How many Indians were there before they were removed from the settlers' lands? What happened to most of these Indians?