



TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Wolf Rider

Avi

READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Wolf Rider

Avi

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 978-1-50204-337-5

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Skills and Strategies

Comprehension

Prediction, cause/effect,
sequencing, drawing inferences

Literary Elements

Genre, allusions, plot, theme,
point of view, figurative
language, character analysis,
story mapping

Writing

Exaggeration, essay, narrative,
creative writing

Critical Thinking

Evaluation, compare/contrast,
supporting details, summarization

Listening/Speaking

Oral report, debate, discussion

Vocabulary

Glossary, definitions, synonyms/
antonyms, context clues

Across the Curriculum

Social Sciences—crime
investigation, dating violence;
Social Studies—current events,
geography, history;
Psychology—grief; Art—
landscape, portraiture,
graphic novel

Genre: mystery fiction

Setting: Madison State College; Madison, Wisconsin

Point of View: third person

Themes: fear, manipulation, father-son relationship, truthfulness

Conflict: person vs. person, person vs. society, person vs. self

Style: narrative

Tone: urgent, suspenseful

Date of First Publication: 1986

Summary

Andy Zadinski is spending time with his friend, Paul, when the telephone rings. A male caller, who identifies himself as Zeke, informs Andy that he has just murdered Nina Klemmer. Haunted by Zeke's graphic description of the crime, Andy reports the conversation to the police, who think the call is a prank and do not follow up. Deciding that he must rectify the situation himself, Andy locates Nina Klemmer alive on the college campus where his father teaches. Andy warns Nina that she is in danger from Zeke, but the coed thinks that Andy is stalking her himself. Andy's father and the police repeatedly tell Andy that Zeke's call was a prank and warn Andy to forget the entire incident. Andy is convinced that the call was real, however, and he continues searching for Zeke. Andy eventually discovers Zeke is really Dr. Phil Lucas, a math professor that works with his father, and Andy tries to expose Dr. Lucas. After a confrontation, Andy jumps out of Dr. Lucas's car just before it goes over a cliff and Dr. Lucas dies.

About the Author

Born Edward Irving Wortis in New York in 1937, "Avi" was nicknamed by his twin sister when they were about a year old. Avi has been known by this name ever since. Avi liked to doodle and draw as a child but had difficulties in school, due to what was later diagnosed as dysgraphia. This impairment causes reversals of letters and misspellings in one's writing. Having dysgraphia, however, did not discourage Avi from writing. A tutor taught him the basics in writing the summer before his senior year in high school and encouraged his creativity. Avi also credits his family's love of reading as the foundation for his writing ability.

Avi attended Antioch University and later the University of Wisconsin in Madison, avoiding English classes and enrolling in playwriting classes. He worked a variety of odd jobs before securing a position in the theater collection of the New York Public Library. He earned his M.A. in Library Science by going to night school at Columbia University. Avi worked as a librarian for 25 years.

A friend who was writing a children's book asked Avi to illustrate it. The publisher, impressed with Avi's drawings, invited Avi to illustrate other children's books. Then Avi wrote his first book, *Things That Sometimes Happen*, which was rejected by six publishers before it was accepted. Avi continued writing and became a very successful author with works that include *Something Upstairs: A Tale of Ghosts*, *S.O.R. Losers*, *Nothing But the Truth*, *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*, and *Crispin: The Cross of Lead* (winner of the 2003 Newbery Medal).

Part One

Andy receives a phone call while he and his friend Paul are relaxing at home. A man who identifies himself as Zeke tells Andy that he has just killed college student Nina Klemmer because she rebuffed his advances. Andy reports the call to the police, who think that it was only a prank. When Andy visits his father's office at Madison State College, he is shocked to find Nina Klemmer's name in the college phone book. Andy locates Nina at her job at the library and realizes that she looks exactly as Zeke described her.

Vocabulary

recognize
blotched
persistent
hesitation
exhausted
frustrated
din
shuddered
homicides
vaguely
agitated
assurance
sophisticated
partially
threadbare

Discussion Questions

1. Is it realistic that a murderer would call a stranger to confess his crime? What do you, as a reader, believe about Zeke? *(In real life, people do make confessions whether they are truthful or just for attention and reaction. Andy's situation therefore seems believable. Answers will vary. It is odd that Zeke called a stranger instead of the police. This might confirm that Zeke did not truly commit any crime. His call could be a hoax, since the reader discovers that Nina is alive. Or, perhaps Zeke is boasting about a crime he wishes to accomplish. Nevertheless, the narrator clearly wants the reader to sympathize with Andy, since he is left feeling queasy and cold and is determined to get help.)*
2. Why might Zeke know personal details about Nina? Why is this significant? *(Zeke claims to have been rebuffed by Nina, so he knows her personally. Answers will vary. This fact is significant since many murderers carefully choose their victims; the most obvious suspects are people close to the victim. Using specific details might indicate Zeke is obsessed with Nina, a college student. Offering information about her clothes and car could demonstrate that Zeke has been stalking her.)*
3. Based on your knowledge of Zeke, guess at his identity. *(Answers will vary. Clues come from what Zeke reveals about himself. Zeke says Nina is a college student but that he is not. He is from a mountainous region. He enjoys dancing. He claims to be scared and to fear jail. He says Nina needed to be punished for rejecting him and that sometimes he feels as if he is someone else. Zeke's revelations about his vulnerabilities are perhaps pathological or psychological, since he never communicates remorse for his actions. Refer to these observations when students later learn Zeke's identity.)*
4. How does the police officer's comment, "Don't worry, son. It's a full moon, Friday night, and welfare checks just out. Forget it" (p. 10), foreshadow his response to Andy's report? *(The officer makes a dismissive comment which implies that crazy, unexplainable things happen when the moon is full. The officer's lack of a serious response foreshadows his refusal to document Andy's suspicions about Zeke.)*
5. Evaluate how Mrs. Zadinski's death affected Andy and his father. *(Mrs. Zadinski's death cast a pall over Andy and his father's lives. Since her death, Mr. Zadinski no longer laughs or tells jokes and seems very forlorn. The house is quiet, as if its inhabitants are in mourning. Andy and his father have become sad and depressed. They also spend more time alone than they did before Mrs. Zadinski's death.)*

6. Compare the act of “crying wolf” to Dr. Zadinski’s comment to Andy: “Be careful. They’ll think you made the call up” (p. 19). *(Dr. Zadinski warns Andy not to make up or embellish stories to gain attention, as the shepherd boy does in the fable, “The Boy Who Cried Wolf.” Dr. Zadinski is warning Andy that there are consequences to lying.)*
7. What does Andy expect the police to do? Is he being reasonable? *(Andy expects the police to take Zeke’s call seriously and file a report. Answers will vary about the reasonableness of Andy’s expectations. Some students will think the police should have automatically filed a report based on the serious nature of Andy’s information. Other students will feel that without evidence, the reported call is unverifiable and a report should not be filed.)*
8. What action did Andy most likely hope the police would take after making his report? Predict how Nina might have reacted if alerted by the police. *(Answers will vary. Andy probably hoped the police would locate and visit Nina to alert her. The police might have asked Nina if she suspected anyone of wanting to harm her. After learning of Zeke’s threat, Nina might have asked the police for advice regarding protection. She would most likely become careful and more aware of her surroundings.)*
9. Assess how Andy feels after finding Nina Klemmer’s name in the college phone book and seeing her in person. *(Finding Nina’s name in the college phone book proves her existence. Andy realizes Nina fits the exact description Zeke provided. To Andy, this suggests Zeke has been watching Nina carefully and that she may really be in danger.)*
10. Relate why Andy would not lie about a person’s death. *(Andy realizes how the deaths of his uncle, dog, grandparents, and especially his mother have affected his life. By experiencing the loss of people he loved, Andy understands the grief and emotional trauma associated with death: “To Andy, talk of death was never—ever—a joke” [p. 28].)*

Supplementary Activities

1. Social Sciences: Research the relationship between crimes and the lunar cycle. Share your findings during a class discussion. How does your research relate to the police officer’s comments in this section of the novel?
2. Geography: What type of map would be best for studying the elevation and natural features of Wisconsin? In small groups, evaluate the advantages of various kinds of maps. View the maps [online](#), and create a list evaluating each type.
3. Literary Analysis: Begin using the Character Analysis Blocks on page 23 of this guide. Continue to fill in your chart as you read the novel.
4. Plot Analysis: Begin the Story Map on page 24 of this guide. Continue to fill in your chart as you read the novel.

Character Analysis Blocks

Directions: Select a character from the novel to describe using the blocks below.

<i>Who is the character?</i>			
<i>What does the character do?</i>		<i>Why does s/he do it?</i>	
<i>What, if anything, is significant about the character's name?</i>	<i>What is the nature of this character's actions? (reactive, active, important, consequential, secondary)</i>	<i>What is the significance of the novel'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 novel? Who?</i>	<i>Do you know anyone similar to this character?</i>

Story Map

Title

Setting, Characters, Problem, Solution

Series of Events

