

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

Holes

by Louis Sachar

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Item No. 201273

Holes

Note to the Teacher

Holes interweaves the story of Stanley Yelnats, a wrongly convicted juvenile delinquent sentenced to dig holes for eighteen months, with legends of his ancestors to create a coming-of-age story in which Stanley and his new friend Zero overcome injustice and uncover the secrets of Camp Green Lake. A Newbery Award-winning novel, *Holes* addresses universal themes such as friendship, courage, and self-discovery while maintaining a sense of humor appropriate for its young protagonist.

One of the characters, Sam, the onion man, is referred to as “Negro.” While the term is offensive to most people today, “Negro” is used only in flashbacks that take place “one hundred and ten years ago” and was commonly used during that time period.

All references come from the Yearling Newbery edition of *Holes*, copyright 1998.

Holes

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. infer meanings about characters and events when the meanings are not explicitly stated.
2. cite incidents from the text to illustrate that this is a coming-of-age story for both Stanley and Zero.
3. explain how the subplots intertwine with the main plotline and discuss how this merging of the plotlines contributes to the following motifs in the story:
 - the value of friendship
 - the definition of courage
 - the impact of love, hate, and prejudice
 - the role of destiny
 - the importance of God in Stanley's life
4. discuss the significance of names in this story, including the nicknames the boys use and Stanley's palindromic name.
5. identify the use of the following literary devices:
 - metaphor
 - simile
 - palindrome
 - hyperbole
 - pun
 - flashback
 - foreshadowing
 - allusion
6. cite incidents from the text that support the following themes:
 - Love and hate have the power to affect a person's life.
 - Through perseverance and hard work, people can achieve their goals.
7. identify instances of verbal irony in the story.
8. discuss the significance of the novel's title as it relates to Stanley's life.
9. compare the roles of the female characters in the story and connect them to an underlying prejudice in society.
10. define a legend and discuss whether the story of Kate Barlow is a legend.

Holes

Part One – You Are Entering Camp Green Lake

Chapter 1

1. Find an example of irony in this chapter.

2. In what sense does the Warden of Camp Green Lake “own the shade”?

3. What is the worst thing that can happen to a camper at Camp Green Lake?

Chapter 2

1. Why does Stanley Yelnats go to Camp Green Lake?

9. Myra tells Elya and Igor that she will marry whoever guesses the number she is thinking of between one and ten. Igor guesses ten. Why does Elya refuse to guess a number?

10. Why does Elya feel terrible when he realizes he has forgotten to carry Madame Zeroni up the mountain?

11. Why does Elya search for Madame Zeroni's son in America?

12. Why does Elya's wife change the words to the pig lullaby?

13. Why does Stanley think Zigzag is the "weirdest dude" he has ever seen?

14. Zero's hole is a perfect circle. He does not remove one clod of dirt more than is necessary to complete the job. What does the quality of this hole suggest to the reader about Zero's personality?

2. What evidence is there that the Warden is a cruel person?

Chapter 15

VOCABULARY

paranoid – extremely suspicious to the point of feeling persecuted

1. Why does X-Ray refuse to talk to Stanley about the gold tube?

2. At the end of the chapter, Stanley looks out across the lake, toward the spot where he found the gold tube. “He dug the hole into his memory.” Why does Stanley want to remember where he had been digging?

Chapter 16

1. What is the significance of the following passage?

The Warden greeted the boys at breakfast the next morning and went with them to the holes. Four dug in the holes, and three tended to the wheelbarrows. ‘Glad you’re here, X-Ray,’ she said to him. ‘We need your sharp eyes.’

Chapter 23

1. This chapter is an example of digression; the story of Stanley's life at Camp Green Lake is interrupted by a seemingly unrelated story. Describe the setting for this chapter. Why might the author include this chapter about Katherine Barlow at this point in the novel?

2. Why does Miss Katherine Barlow receive a special prize at the Fourth of July picnic? For what reasons is she well liked in the community?

3. Find an example of a simile in this chapter.

4. What does the author tell the reader about Trout Walker that defines him as a disreputable character in the reader's mind?

3. What does Stanley have for lunch?

Chapter 34

VOCABULARY

mirage – an optical illusion

1. Find a passage in this chapter that illustrates that Stanley has a logical mind.

2. What is the significance of the name Mary Lou painted on the end of the boat?

3. Why is Stanley frightened when he realizes something alive is under the boat?

Chapter 35

1. One of the motifs of this story is the strength of Stanley and Zero's friendship. In what way(s) do both boys demonstrate their friendship for each other in this chapter?
