

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

Hoot

by Carl Hiassen

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ISBN 978-1-60389-804-1

Item No. 302552

Hoot

Notes

Hoot, an ecological mystery, will lead to lively classroom discussion about the environment, endangered species, urban development, and the power of the individual. A species of special concern in Florida, the burrowing owl is the focus of the novel. The protagonist must take on a large corporation in order to protect the fragile animal's shrinking habitat.

Hoot makes an ideal complement to lessons on research and expository writing, as well as persuasive writing and debate. Some enjoy supplementing a reading of the text with a screening of the film version of the novel, which not only entertains but also instructs students about the owls, their struggle to survive, and their unlikely heroes.

Born in Plantation, Florida in 1953, Carl Hiaasen studied journalism in college, landing a job as a newspaper reporter for the *Cocoa Today*. Later he moved to the *Miami Herald*, where he continues to work as a columnist. Having started writing at age six when his father gave him a typewriter, Hiaasen has always been interested in the environment and nature conservation.

All references come from the Random House edition of *Hoot*, copyright 2002.

Hoot

Objectives

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

1. identify the protagonist in the novel.
2. understand Hiaasen's use of suspense in the novel.
3. paraphrase sections of the novel to demonstrate understanding.
4. explain a character's motivation.
5. predict future events in the novel.
6. identify the difference between static and dynamic characters.
7. define verbal irony and identify examples in the novel.
8. define dramatic irony and identify examples in the novel.
9. define structural irony and identify examples in the novel.
10. make an inference based on events in the novel.
11. identify examples of similes and metaphors in the novel.
12. identify foreshadowing in the novel.
13. identify examples of personification and hyperbole in the novel.
14. define internal conflict and provide examples from the novel.
15. describe major characters.
16. explain how the protagonist and other major characters have changed over the course of the novel.

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Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. In the novel *Hoot*, Roy Eberhardt proves that one person can stand up to a powerful corporation for the sake of a species. In real life, do you believe it is possible for one person to make a difference in the world? Explain why or why not.
2. Among the novel's characters are a vice-principal, a police officer, a construction foreman, a bully, a corporate executive, an actress, and a teacher. Explain how Hiaasen uses pre-existing stereotypes to develop these characters. Also, which characters are not stereotypical?
3. Throughout the novel, Roy is uneasy about breaking the law to help the owls. Do you feel that Roy and Mullet Fingers are justified in breaking the law to accomplish their goal, or do you believe that breaking the law, for any reason, is wrong? Explain.
4. When Roy frames Dana as the construction lot vandal, Roy feels he is doing the citizens a favor by ridding them of a menacing bully. Do you agree? Do you feel it was right for Roy to set up Dana just because Dana was known as a troublemaker? Explain.
5. While *Hoot* would not be classified as a humor novel, it does have humorous sections. Paraphrase at least three instances of humor in the novel and explain the effect humor has on a story about habitat protection.
6. Contrast the roles flat characters, such as Miss Hennepin, with the roles of round characters, such as Roy.
7. Roy, Beatrice, and Mullet Fingers face many dangers, close calls, and frightening moments during their crusade to save the owls. Is there a cause for which you would do the same? Explain.
8. Trace Middle School is the tenth school that Roy has attended; he misses Montana and does not accept Florida as his home. Discuss how Roy tries to fit in at school. What finally makes him feel that he belongs in Florida? What other characters in the book feel alienated? What do you think schools could do to help new students like Roy feel welcome?
9. After Roy's fight with Dana, people at school treat him differently. Why does this upset Roy? Dana is clearly a bully in the novel, but does anyone bully him? Discuss the role of bullies in the novel.
10. In Chapter Thirteen, Roy's mother says, "Honey, sometimes you're going to be faced with situations where the line isn't clear between what's right and what's wrong. Your heart will tell you to do one thing, and your brain will tell you to do something different." Discuss instances in the novel where Roy's heart and his brain are in conflict. Is the conflict ever resolved? Explain.

Hoot

One

Vocabulary

airboat – a boat with an airplane propeller and a rudder
ambushed – attacked
cackled – laughed harshly
defaced – damaged
determined – firmly devoted
glimpse – a quick look
grief – criticism
gruffly – roughly or harshly
hoisted – lifted or raised
intent – a purpose or goal
malicious mischief – purposeful damage to property
monetary – having to do with money or cost
ordinarily – normally; usually
promoted – raised to a higher rank
scraggly – messy-looking; not neat
vacant – empty
vandalism – destruction or damage to property
vaulted – jumped
wiry – lean; muscular

1. Describe Roy, Dana Matherson, and the running boy.

2. Which character is the protagonist? How can you tell?

Six

Vocabulary

altercation – a run-in; fight
assertive – confident
commendable – worthy of praise
cowering – crouching down in fear
cringed – reacted in fear
detour – a different, usually longer, route
drowsy – sleepy
glumly – sadly; in a disappointed manner
illuminated – lit up
inevitable – unavoidable
jeopardy – trouble; danger of failing
kiosk – a small structure that houses merchandise
paternal – fatherly
perpetrators – criminals; people responsible for wrongdoing
prospect – possibility
slacken – decrease
truancy – skipping school
wake – a track or path of water that results from movement
weary – tired

1. Why does Roy not want to tell his parents about Mullet Fingers?

2. What does Mr. Eberhardt read in the paper, and why might that be a problem?

9. What happens when the reptile wrangler inspects the property?

10. Describe what happens to Roy while he is in the janitorial closet.

11. Chapter Nine contains several similes. Write down at least three of them, with page numbers.

Fourteen

Vocabulary

apprehension – fear
casualties – things or people that are lost
crusade – important mission
dilapidated – run-down
dilemma – a problem involving a difficult choice
exerting – putting forth an effort
hull – the body of a ship
mangroves – tropical trees
materialized – appeared
mischievous – irresponsibly playful
Neanderthal – caveman
ordeal – difficult situation
perilous – dangerous
perturbed – confused
ravages – destructive effects
receded – moved back
recon – a mission to gain information
regally – in a graceful manner
reluctance – unwillingness
salvage captains – captains who save a ship or its cargo in dangerous conditions
sanctuary – a safe place
seething – extremely agitated
snide – insulting
surge – a swell of water
sympathized – felt badly for
tactics – methods of achieving a goal
terrain – land; ground
triumphant – joyful
unison – at the same time

1. Why does Garrett call Roy on Saturday?
