

Individual Learning Packet

**Teaching Unit**

**Tangerine**

by Edward Bloor

written by Kathryn Mitchell

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ISBN 978-1-60389-944-4  
Item No.302957

# Tangerine

## Note to Teacher

A complex story written by award-winning novelist Edward Bloor, *Tangerine* will lead to lively classroom discussions about racism, stereotypes, misjudgment, family roles, and the power of moral choices.

*Tangerine* makes an ideal complement to lessons on sports writing and narrative writing, as well as persuasive writing and debate. Set in Florida, the novel challenges racial and familial stereotypes against the backdrop of public school sports. The protagonist must choose between protecting his family and doing what is right.

All references come from the Harcourt edition of *Tangerine*, copyright 1997.

# Tangerine

## Objectives

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

1. identify the protagonist in the novel.
2. understand the author's use of suspense.
3. summarize sections of the novel to demonstrate understanding.
4. explain character motivation.
5. predict future events in the story.
6. understand the difference between static and dynamic characters.
7. define structural irony, and locate examples in the novel.
8. make inferences based on events in the novel.
9. identify examples of simile, metaphor, and personification in the novel.
10. identify the use of foreshadowing in the novel.
11. define internal and external conflict, and provide examples from the text.
12. explain how the protagonist and other major characters change over the course of the story.
13. describe the main characters.
14. define first-person, third-person limited, and third-person omniscient points of view, and explain how the use of a different point of view might affect the story.
15. identify myths in the novel.
16. describe the mood that is conveyed in various parts of the novel.
17. identify the climax of the story.
18. understand symbolism and identify how it is used in the novel.

# Tangerine

## Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Describe in detail each of the following characters: Paul, Erik, Theresa, Victor, Tino, Joey, Coach Bright, and Mr. Donnelly. Be sure to include physical and personality traits, as well as strengths and weaknesses, where appropriate.
2. Contrast Paul and Erik Fisher. Discuss both physical and personality differences. Provide specific examples from the novel.
3. How might the story have been different if Paul had spoken up about Erik's wrongdoings sooner?
4. How might the story be different if Bloor had used another point of view? Explain how the story might change if it were told in third-person.
5. Throughout the novel, Mrs. Fisher is characterized as a person who likes to be in control. How might this trait have inadvertently contributed to Erik's troubles?
6. Suspense and foreshadowing go hand in hand. In the Prologue, for example, Bloor uses Paul's sketchy memories of the past to create suspense, while at the same time, foreshadowing future events. Cite other areas of the novel where Bloor employs this technique, and explain how he accomplishes this.
7. At one point, Coach Bright tells her team, "We're in control of our own destiny." While she is referring specifically to the game against Lake Windsor, how could her words apply to other parts of the novel? Be specific.
8. What is the main conflict in the story? Is it internal or external? What secondary conflicts can you identify?
9. Where does the climax of the novel take place? What effect does this climax have on the conflict and the characters? (In what way does it cause the story to take a turn?)
10. What traits does Paul have that make him a good friend? Refer directly to the novel to provide examples of times when Paul acts as a friend.

# Tangerine

## Prologue

### VOCABULARY

**hysterically** – in a very upset manner  
**predator** – one who destroys or devours  
**receding** – growing smaller  
**snarling** – growling  
**swiveled** – turned

1. Paul's mother worries that she has not left her former home in good enough condition for the new owners. What does this suggest about her?

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2. List the members of the Fisher family.

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3. Where are the Fishers coming from? Where are they moving?

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4. Summarize the memory Paul has about the black metal mailbox.

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5. List one example each of a simile, a metaphor, and personification.

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**Monday, August 28**

## VOCABULARY

**abandoned** – empty  
**enthusiasm** – excitement  
**genuinely** – in a real, down-to-earth manner  
**impaired** – damaged  
**scowling** – having an angry facial expression  
**slouching** – stooping or bending; not standing up straight  
**suffocate** – to be prevented from breathing  
**torque** – force or power

1. Summarize Paul's memory of his first day of kindergarten.  
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\_\_\_\_\_
2. Paul says that he is "living proof that you shouldn't look at an eclipse or you'll go blind." What other myths does Paul reference during this section of the novel?  
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3. Joey feels bad for his brother, Mike, saying that Mike is "getting a bad break." Explain Mike's predicament.  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
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4. Paul describes Mrs. Hoffman as being "at the other end of the teacher food chain as Ms. Alvarez." What is the difference between Ms. Alvarez and Mrs. Hoffman?  
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**Friday, September 8, later**

## VOCABULARY

**diameter** – the distance across  
**rosary** – a string of beads used during prayer

1. Why does Paul get a “scared feeling in the pit of [his] stomach” as he arrives at Mike Costello’s viewing?

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2. What does Joey suggest when Paul tells him about not being able to play soccer?

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3. Why is Joey going to the carnival?

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4. While Joey’s explanation might be true, what could be another reason why his mother wants him to go to the carnival?

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5. Explain Paul’s thoughts about his response to Kerri Gardner’s comment. How might this event be an example of foreshadowing?

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**Wednesday, September 20**

## VOCABULARY

**accelerating** – speeding up  
**coward** – one who is afraid  
**ghoulish** – morbid or repulsive  
**mourning** – grieving  
**predator** – one who destroys or devours  
**previous** – earlier

1. Describe the conversation between Erik and Arthur that confuses Joey.  
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2. When Joey asks what Erik and Arthur are talking about, Paul first tells Joey to forget about it; however, Paul ends up telling him. What is Paul's explanation?  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Paul tells Joey the truth about Erik's remarks. What does this indicate about Paul's character?  
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4. How does Paul explain Erik and Arthur's behavior to Joey?  
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5. What explanation does Joey offer for trying to remove Mike's shoes that day?  
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7. Why did Luis not tell his parents about his hurt knee?

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8. What was Luis's position when he played soccer in school? Why did he hold this position?

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9. Why do you think Paul admits to Tino that he ratted him out for the carnival vandalism? How does Tino react?

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**Friday, December 1**

## VOCABULARY

**apparition** – a ghost  
**demonic** – evil  
**focal point** – the center of attention  
**mirage** – something that looks real but is not  
**pathetic** – deserving pity  
**prostrate** – lying down  
**pummeling** – beating  
**recede** – to decrease or move back  
**peripheral** – on the edge or side  
**spectacle** – a showy display

1. What arrives by truck to the Senior Awards Ceremony?

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2. What happens when Brian Baylor and the other guys try to push the trailer into the gym?

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3. Why does Paul help clean up the spilled dirt?

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4. What causes Paul to look “really confused”?

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