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INTRODUCTION

Read through the Common Core Standards for “Reading: Literature,” and you will find that the work expected of students is expressed using such academic terminology as *describe*, *determine*, *develop*, *support*, and *cite*. Requirements such as these cannot be met via the comprehension-question worksheets and culminating quizzes that have long been the staples of literature guides designed for classroom use. The primary objective of those traditional activities was to make sure that students were keeping track of what was happening in the section of the novel that they had just read. Very little rigor and synthesis was asked of students—and usually none until the entire novel was read.

From a teacher’s standpoint, this style of classroom analysis misses multiple opportunities to delve deeply into the details that make a specific piece of literature a classic; from a student’s standpoint, this way to reflect on literature is monotonous and inflexible, and it fails to nurture the momentum experienced when one is invested in a compelling work of art. That is why the guides in the *Rigorous Reading* series aim to do much more: they aim to transform the reading of a great novel into a journey of discovery for students.

Instead of merely asking students what happened in any given section, this resource asks questions that require closer reading and deeper analysis—questions such as, “Why did the author choose to include this information?” and “How does this information further the plot or offer more insight into the themes, characters, settings, etc.?” And instead of waiting until the end of the novel to put the pieces of the puzzle in place, students will learn to add to and alter their understanding of the novel *as they are reading it*. The various activities in this resource systematically prompt students to consider and appreciate the many ingredients the author has combined to form the novel as a whole.

A CUSTOM RESOURCE

This in-depth guide has been written specifically for Kate DiCamillo's *Because of Winn-Dixie*. The lessons and activities have been structured and scaffolded to maximize the experience of reading and teaching this novel.

To prepare your students for their reading of *Because of Winn-Dixie*, utilize the **novel information** and **pre-reading activities** included on pages 7–9 of this guide. Included in this section is information about the book and its author, along with activities designed to acclimate students to the themes and/or concepts present in the book they are about to read.

This resource provides activities that help foster comprehension and reinforce knowledge of literary elements as students read *Because of Winn-Dixie*. These **section activities** allow students the opportunity to process short sections of the novel individually, laying a strong foundation for their ability to engage more deeply with the chapters to come. For each section of the novel, students will complete individual and collaborative activities that encourage close reading, referencing textual evidence, and drawing their own conclusions about the text.

Additionally, this resource provides students with another avenue through which they can reflect on recurring literary elements, while also connecting personally with the novel. Each student maintains his or her own **Interactive Novel Log**, using it as a way to consider and then reconsider various aspects of the novel.

Upon completion of the entire novel, students can synthesize their ideas about the novel by completing several individual and/or collaborative **post-reading activities** (pages 56–73). This section of the resource includes such larger assignments as group projects and essay assignments.

On pages 74–75, **vocabulary** lists are provided for each section of the novel, along with suggestions for ways to teach vocabulary during reading and after completing the novel.

At the end of this guide, an **answer key** is provided for activities that require specific answers, and a list identifies how each activity correlates to **Common Core State Standards**.

Key Notes

For a description of Interactive Novel Logs and how to use them in your classroom, see page 5 of this guide.

An ideal way to use this resource would be to follow the complete lesson plan given on page 6 of this guide.

The use of multiple texts can help build and extend knowledge about a theme or topic. It can also illustrate the similarities and differences in how multiple authors approach similar content or how an individual author approaches multiple novels. See the bottom of page 7 for suggestions about using *Because of Winn-Dixie* as part of a text set.

When teaching other novels in your classroom, consider using the specific ideas and also the general approach presented in this resource. Ask students to mine small sections of a novel for clues to theme and characterization. Examine the craft, structure, and purpose of select passages. Explore inferences and encourage connections.

This guide is designed for use in grades 3–6, and the standards correlations on pages 78–80 reflect this range. This leveling has been determined through the consideration of various educational metrics. However, teacher discretion should be used to determine if the novel and guide are appropriate for lower or higher grades, as well.

KEEPING NOVEL LOGS

Great works of literature are complex texts, and complex texts are multilayered. They enrich and reveal as they go along. Successful readers are those who “go along” with the novel, too. Interactive Novel Logs give students a place and a space to record their thoughts and observations as they journey through the book. After each section of the novel is read, students use their Interactive Novel Logs to track the introduction and development of such literary elements as plot, setting, theme, characterization, craft, and structure, while also choosing their own ways to connect the novel to their own life experiences.

Materials needed for each student:

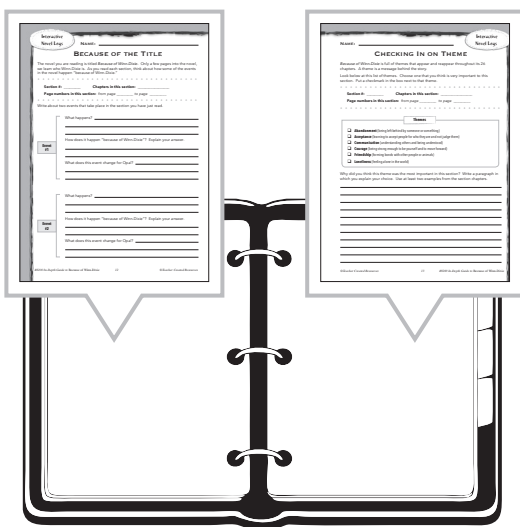
- ✦ a three-ring binder or presentation folder
- ✦ a blank sheet of plain paper with holes punched for title page
- ✦ two or three sheets of blank lined paper for Table of Contents
- ✦ several extra sheets of paper (both lined and plain) for student’s responses to the “Ideas for Your Interactive Log” prompts at the end of each section

Key Notes

One Interactive Novel Log can be kept for multiple novels, in which case a larger three-ring binder will be needed. If it will be used only for the activities included in this guide for *Because of Winn-Dixie*, a ½-inch binder or presentation folder will be adequate.

Assembling the Interactive Novel Log:

1. On the plain paper, allow students to design and decorate their own title page. Have them write “Interactive Novel Log” and “*Because of Winn-Dixie*” in the middle of the page. They should include their name and grade at the bottom.
2. Add blank lined paper for the Table of Contents. Have students write “Table of Contents” at the top. They will add to this list as they create new pages.



3. Before reading each section of the novel, photocopy and distribute new copies of the Interactive Novel Log worksheets (pages 10–15). Directions for completing these activities can be found in the “Teacher Instructions” that begin Section I.
4. For the final activity in each section, photocopy and distribute the “Section Log-In” page for the section. Follow the directions given. Students select one or more of the four topics in the “Ideas for Your Interactive Log” section and create an Interactive Novel Log page that responds to that topic.

5. After the class has completed the entire novel and the post-reading activities, you may have students include the “My Book Rating” worksheet (page 73) as a final entry in their Interactive Novel Logs.

NAME: _____

SETTING THE TONE

Most of Chapter 5 involves a scene that takes place in a church. After reading this scene, what would you say is the tone? Is it funny, silly, sad, serious, or something else?

Use your answer to complete the chart below. The column on the left lists four elements that the author combined to create this chapter. For each of these elements, explain how it contributed to the tone of Chapter 5.

Element	How It Contributed to the Tone
<p>Plot (the events that happen)</p>	
<p>Setting (the place where the events happen)</p>	
<p>Characterization (the people and animals in the story)</p>	
<p>Voice (the tone of the narrator who is telling the story)</p>	

In your opinion, which of these elements — Plot, Setting, Characterization, or Voice — was the most important for the setting the tone of this scene? Check the box next to your answer, and then explain your choice on the lines below.

Plot
 Setting
 Characterization
 Voice

Section VI
Chapters 20–23

NAME(S): _____

WORDS OF WISDOM

In this section, Gloria gives Opal some advice and offers her views on the world. With a partner, discuss Gloria's words and how they fit in with the themes and events of the novel. Begin by deciding who will be Speaker #1 and who will be Speaker #2.

Speaker #1's Name: _____ **Speaker #2's Name:** _____

Speaker #1

Think about the following quote from Gloria Dump: *"I believe, sometimes, that the whole world has an aching heart."*

- ✦ Tell your partner how this quote fits in with this scene from the novel and also with the novel as a whole. Which characters or situations from the novel show the meaning of this quote?

Speaker #2

- ✦ Listen to your partner's words. Tell him or her if you agree or disagree with them, and explain your opinion.
- ✦ Add any information that you feel your partner left out when answering this question.

Now switch roles.

Speaker #2

Think about the following quote from Gloria Dump: *"There ain't no way you can hold onto something that wants to go."*

- ✦ Tell your partner how this quote fits in with this scene from the novel and also with the novel as a whole. Which characters or situations from the novel show the meaning of this quote?

Speaker #1

- ✦ Listen to your partner's words. Tell him or her if you agree or disagree with them, and explain your opinion.
- ✦ Add any information that you feel your partner left out when answering this question.

Next, work together.

After you have discussed Gloria's words, talk about this quote from Sweetie Pie Thomas: *"That dog ain't lost. That dog's too smart to get lost."* Do you agree with what Sweetie Pie says? As a group, give your answer and explain it.

NAME: _____

ALL ABOUT OPAL

Early in the novel, Opal asks her father to name 10 things about her mama. Imagine that Opal's mama calls the Preacher one day and wants to know 10 things about Opal. What should he tell her? Make a list of the 10 most important things to know about Opal.

Things to Know About India Opal Buloni

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Near the end of the novel, Opal realizes that knowing 10 things about a person doesn't really help you get to know the real person. See if you agree with that.

✦ Why would your list of 10 things really help someone know who Opal is?

✦ Why would your list not be enough to help someone really know who Opal is?
