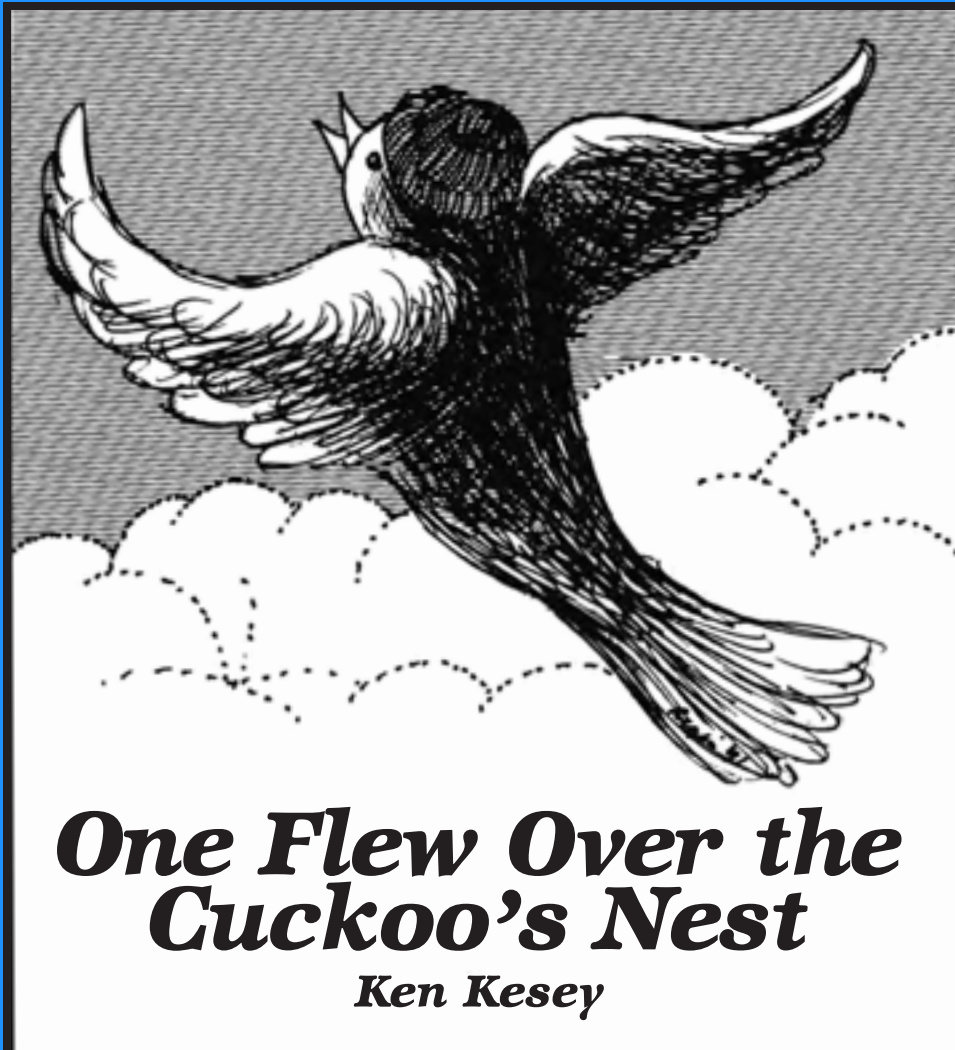


# Novel·Ties



## A Study Guide

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**LEARNING LINKS**

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## For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide consists of instructional material to use in conjunction with the novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

NOVEL-TIES are either for whole class instruction using a single title or for group instruction where each group uses a different novel appropriate to its reading level. Depending upon the amount of time allotted to it in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in two to four weeks.

The first step in using NOVEL-TIES is to distribute to each student a copy of the novel and a folder containing all of the duplicated worksheets. Begin instruction by selecting several pre-reading activities in order to set the stage for the reading ahead. Vocabulary exercises for each chapter always precede the reading so that new words will be reinforced in the context of the book. Use the questions on the chapter worksheets for class discussion or as written exercises.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

## AUTHOR INFORMATION

Ken Kesey was born on September 17, 1935, in La Junta, Colorado. He grew up in Springfield, Oregon, where he learned how to fish, swim, run, wrestle, and raft under the direction of his father, Fred Kesey. In May 1956, Kesey married his high school sweetheart, (Norma) Faye Haxby. In 1957, he received his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Oregon.

It wasn't until 1958, when Kesey became a graduate student at Stanford University, that he began to develop into the almost mythical leader of the counterculture "hippie" set. There Kesey met Vic Lovell, a graduate student of psychology, who was doing experiments with psychomimetic drugs—powerful drugs that altered consciousness and sometimes induced temporary psychoses. Kesey agreed to be a paid subject in a series of drug experiments. One day he received a drug that produced in him a synergism of the senses so that if he heard something, he could magically “see” that something, “feel” the textured form of that something, and understand without effort the essence of that something. The drug was LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide - 25). Kesey even wrote some sections of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* under the influence of LSD and peyote in an effort to understand the fragmented personalities and altered perceptions of his narrator, Chief Bromden. Deep into the drug culture of the 1960s, Kesey faced many charges of drug possession and even fled to Mexico to avoid imprisonment.

*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Kesey's first novel, was published in 1962. In 1970 Dale Wasserman used the novel as a basis for his play. Five years later, United Artists released the film version starring Jack Nicholson.

## PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. With a small group of classmates, discuss the concept of mental illness. In your discussion, consider questions such as the following:
  - What constitutes mental illness? For what types of behavior, if any, should people be institutionalized?
  - What basic rights, if any, should be denied to someone exhibiting mental illness? What rights should never be taken from an individual no matter how severe the illness?
2. In *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* you will read about certain controversial treatments administered to the mentally ill, such as shock treatment and lobotomy. Read the Background Information on page two of this study guide and do additional research on these and other treatments used to combat mental illness. What are contemporary trends in the assessment and treatment of the mentally ill? Which of these have proven most effective? To what extent are shock treatment and psychosurgery still practiced?
3. There are some who believe that society operates through conformity by denying the essential individuality of human beings. To what extent is conformity necessary to a society? When does such conformity become a danger to individual rights? How do you think society should deal with a dissenting voice?
4. Discuss the meaning of the following quotation from Lord Acton: "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." For what different kinds of individuals might this be true? In what way might a health care professional fall into this category?
5. Although a big man, the narrator of this novel feels that society has made him "small" by treating him as though he were "invisible." What experiences in your life have made you feel small? What did you do to maintain your stature and self-confidence?
6. In descending order of importance, list the qualities you believe a literary hero should possess. As you read the novel, see how well Randle Patrick McMurphy measures up to each of these qualities.
7. In descending order of importance, list the qualities you believe a literary villain should possess. As you read the novel, see how well Nurse Ratched measures up to each of these qualities.
8. Look at the Glossary of Psychological Terms on page four of this study guide. Become familiar with the terms and refer back to them as you read the book.