

Novel·Ties



A Study Guide

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LEARNING LINKS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Synopsis	1
Background Information	2
Pre-Reading Activities	3
Roots; Harlem	4 - 5
Let's Hear It for First Grade!;	
Arithmetic Summer	6 - 7
Bad Boy; Mr. Irwin Lasher	8 - 10
I Am Not the Center of the Universe;	
A Writer Observes	11 - 12
Sonnets from the Portuguese: Heady Days at	
Stuyvesant High	13 - 15
The Garment Center; God and	
Dylan Thomas	16 - 17
Marks on Paper; The Stranger	18 - 20
Dr. Holiday; Being Black	21 - 22
1954; Sweet Sixteen; The Typist	23 - 25
Cloze Activity	26
Post-Reading Activities	27 - 28
Suggestions For Further Reading	29
Answer Key	30 - 32

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide consists of lessons to use in conjunction with the book *Bad Boy*. 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.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different book at its reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each book, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for guided reading by distributing the book and a folder to each student. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter or group of chapters; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

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 will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Preview the book by reading the title and the author's name and by looking at the illustrations on the cover. What do you think this book will be about? When do you think it takes place? What is its genre: mystery, biography, memoir, fiction, or nonfiction?
2. Have you read any other books by Walter Dean Myers? What do most of his books have in common? Where do they usually take place? Why do you think the author chooses this setting?
3. Read the Background Information about Harlem on page two of this study guide. Do some additional research to find out why Walter Dean Myers loved growing up in Harlem. Find pictures of Harlem in the 1920s and 1930s and today. Compare life in Harlem then with life there now. How might encroaching gentrification change the character of Harlem?
4. Read the Background Information about the WPA on page two of this study guide. Do some additional research to find out whether the program was considered to be successful. Find pictures of some of the WPA land and park projects and find pictures of some of the artwork that was funded by the WPA.
5. **Pair/Share:** Work with a partner to make a list of qualities a person should possess to become a writer, Then narrow your list to just three of the most important qualities. Compare your list of three with the lists that other partners have made. As you read this book, find out whether Walter Dean Myers displayed any of the qualities you listed.
6. **Literary Element—Setting:** The setting of a book refers to the time and place where the events occur. How do you think the setting of a book influences the events that take place? Why might one writer choose to write about the city, while another writes about the country? Do you think it is possible for a writer to write about a setting that he or she never experienced?
7. This memoir is organized in chronological order. It starts from Walter's very earliest years and then goes on in detail about his life until the age of seventeen. Create a timeline for Walter Dean Myers and record all of the significant events that occurred in each year of his life. Compare your timeline with that of others who have read the same book.
8. Keep a journal as you read this book. Make an entry that describes your thoughts and feelings as you complete each chapter.

Roots; Harlem (cont.)

Questions:

1. Why did Walter Dean Myers investigate his family history?
2. How did Walter's family history connect him to the time of the Civil War?
3. Why did Walter consider Florence as his mother, instead of Mary, his biological mother?
4. Why did Herbert and Florence move to New York?
5. What evidence showed that Walter was fond of his stepmother Florence?
6. What did Walter love about Harlem?
7. Why did Mama think she had to give up day work?
8. How did Walter learn to read?

Questions for Discussion:

1. From what you have read so far, do you think that Walter was a "Bad Boy"?
2. How would you assess Walter's early childhood? Do you think it was a happy time or a difficult time for him?
3. Why do you think Walter and his stepmother had such a strong connection?

Online Social Studies Connection:

Go online to search for "WPA slave interviews." You will find the texts of many interviews that were conducted by WPA journalists who spoke to elderly people who had once been slaves. Read a few of these interviews and compare their stories with the one that Walter Dean Myers included about his relative Lucas D. Dennis.

Writing Activity:

Write about your own early years. Tell something about the adults in your life and about the place where you lived.