

Airball: My Life in Briefs

by L. D. Harkrader

Annotation

The small Kansas town seventh-grade basketball team is losing games. In the meanwhile, the hometown hero's jersey will be retired at the last University of Kansas game of the season. Unless the boys start winning games, they will not be permitted to meet their hero and basketball star. Coach looks for creative ways to help the team improve and start winning games. One strategy he uses is taping up the gym windows and handing out invisible uniforms; consequently, the boys are playing in their briefs. Additionally, klutzy Kirby Nickel believes that the basketball hero is his father. Quirky characters and an interesting side story all add up to a quick, enjoyable read. (Grades 5-7) (AR 4.4)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.ldharkrader.com/>

Realia

Item: Old yearbooks (p. 40 PB)

Statement: "We snagged library passes during Social Studies the next day and combed through shelves of dusty yearbooks till we found the two from when Brett McGrew was in middle school." Kirby uses old yearbooks to look at his school's history. Join Kirby and his friends in their search by reading *Airball: My Life in Briefs*.

Food

Giant round meatloaf designed like a basketball, Goulash, Biscuits and gravy, Cake shaped like a Jayhawk

Challenging Words

combine	(p. 159 PB)	panhandle	(p. 171 PB)
discernible	(p. 149 PB)	pivoted	(p. 164 PB)
drafty	(p. 139 PB)	representative	(p. 179 PB)
evidence	(p. 135 PB)	scrawny	(p. 28 PB)
frustrating	(p. 153 PB)	scrimmage	(p. 117 PB)
hemorrhage	(p. 48 PB)	sidled	(p. 5 PB)
humiliation	(p. 80 PB)	skimpy	(p. 130 PB)
hunkered	(p. 101 PB)	splayed	(p. 61 PB)
meandered	(p. 8 PB)	superstitious	(p. 191 PB)
nonexistent	(p. 134 PB)	thundered	(p. 195 PB)

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- "Her eyebrows were two thick black crayon marks carefully drawn across the bald ridges above her eyes." (p. 53 PB)

Similes

- "Deep, low, and gurgling, like a water heater about to blow. I knew that growl. It was Coach Armstrong." (p. 3 PB)

- “I was still waiting for coach to crunch me like an empty pop can for walloping him with the basketball.” (p. 81 PB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “Bragger shrugged. ‘Basketball players eat the floor all the time.’” (p. 15 PB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Initiate a discussion on the behavior of the coach. Have students write a brief essay explaining if they think the coach was right in having his team practice in their undergarments. Do they think it made a difference in how the team played? Explain why or why not.

Fine Arts:

- Show students various uniforms from basketball teams (or other sports). Have students design new uniforms for the team, explaining why they chose the colors and/or images.

Language Arts:

- Direct students attention to the title of the book. Have students create their own book titles that use puns similar to that used in this title. One example might be *Bowling: My Life in the Gutter*.
- Compare *Airball* with the short story “The Emperor’s New Clothes” by Hans Christian Andersen. Using either a compare/contrast chart or Venn diagram, have students write a short essay describing their findings.

Mathematics:

- Divide class into small groups. Each group will choose a sport that uses percentages like basketball. Have students investigate how percentages are used in that sport. Have groups locate recent newspaper articles and calculate statistics based on box-scores for the team or player of their choice. Have groups share their work and then compare their results with reported percentages.

Physical Education:

- Have students locate 10 interesting facts or statistics about their favorite sport/team. Have students memorize the facts so they can share them without hesitation with anyone who asks just as Kirby did in the story. Instruct students to be prepared to justify why these are important to fans of that sport. Students might want to use www.factmonster.com, school/district purchased online resources, or books to gather their facts.

Science:

- Reread to students pages 97-98 in chapter 17. Have students investigate the science and technology Kirby mentions that would be needed to create true stealth suits. Have students decide whether they think it could happen in the next 20 years, why or why not?

Social Studies/Geography:

- Collaborate with library media specialist on a research project in which the students will choose a famous historical figure that they wish were related to them. Have students research the life of that person and complete a compare/contrast chart with their own life.
- Discuss local history with class. Then have students research their hometown to find out what it is known for. For instance, Stuckey is known as both the Basketball Capital of Kansas AND the Armpit of Kansas. Does their town have a slogan or a nickname that corresponds to current or historical events for which their town is known?
- Remind students that Kirby uses old yearbooks to look at his school’s history. Divide class into small groups and have each group use old yearbooks to create a scavenger hunt and share with another group.

All the Lovely Bad Ones

by Mary Downing Hahn

Annotation

Twelve-year-old Travis and his younger sister, Cory, must spend the summer with their grandmother at her Vermont bed-and-breakfast inn. The two mischievous children decide to scare the guests with some ghostly special effects. Unfortunately, the pair also provokes real ghosts: young boys who had lived there in the 1800s when the place was a county poorhouse. Additionally, Ada Jaggs, an evil and vengeful spirit, who was responsible for the children's deaths, also puts in an appearance. This fast-paced spooky thriller will have readers on the edge of their seats from first page to last. (Grades 4-7) (AR 4.5)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.childrensbookguild.org/hahn.html>

Realia

Items: Family tree, Metal box, Flashlight, Stuffed bear, Stone

Statement: Sometimes a joke is not funny. Unfortunately Cory and Travis find this out too late. Read *All the Lovely Bad Ones* to find out who is not happy about their latest prank in this chilling story of truths and consequences.

Food

Lemonade, Chocolate chip cookies, Iced tea, Peach cobbler á la mode, Chicken, Rice, Rolls, Salad, Blueberry pie, Hamburger

Challenging Words

catalyst	(p. 54 HB)	nauseated	(p. 168 HB)
exasperated	(p. 61 HB)	paranormal	(p. 73 HB)
facsimile	(p. 161 HB)	phenomenon	(p. 14 HB)
highfalutin	(p. 162 HB)	potent	(p. 46 HB)
hospitality	(p. 8 HB)	reluctance	(p. 43 HB)
impersonate	(p. 19 HB)	skeptic	(p. 60 HB)
impudent	(p. 8 HB)	stumbling	(p. 45 HB)
insensitivity	(p. 57 HB)	subspecies	(p. 55 HB)
insolence	(p. 100 HB)	taciturn	(p. 16 HB)
melancholy	(p. 53 HB)	trellis	(p. 3 HB)

Figurative Language

Similes

- "Sipping her iced tea, her expression as sour as a lemon, she regarded the four couples huddled around a table by the window." (p. 33 HB)
- "I plan to sleep like a log, I put in." (p. 26 HB)
- "The curtains blew out straight from the windows, and the clothing and torn pages rose from the floor and spun around like tiny tornadoes." (p. 70 HB)
- "Wind chimes clinked like someone laughing." (p. 22 HB)

- “Mr. Brewster entered the kitchen as quietly as a ghost himself and frowned at us all, even Mrs. Brewster.” (p. 49 HB)
- “The shadow children twittered like scared baby birds, and all three bad ones folded their arms tightly across their chests and looked grim.” (p. 139 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “The Jenningses talked Tracy’s ear off with tales of their day of shopping, the lovely lunch they’d eaten, the bargains they’d found.” (p. 25 HB)
- “We’ve got important matters to discuss, so sit still and be quiet or I’ll call Henry. He’ll fix your wagon.” (p. 139 HB)
- ““Trouble finds folks who look for it.” (p. 50 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Facilitate a discussion with students about how Corey and Travis could have spent their time more productively at the beginning of their vacation.
- Remind students about how Corey did not tell the Jennings the truth about seeing a ghost at her friend’s house. Have students write about the consequences of her actions and create an alternate ending to the story depicting what might have happened if Corey and Travis had not awakened the ghosts.

Language Arts:

- Explain how there are real people who do kind deeds each day. Share examples of such individuals. Divide your students into groups. Then have each group research a person who has dedicated their life to helping other people. Instruct each group to write a short play about their person.
- Introduce students to the work of William Wordsworth. Have them write and illustrate their own poems. Create a class book containing their work and place the book on display in the library media center.

Mathematics:

- Divide class into small groups. Give each group a catalog for ordering books and another for purchasing clothes or refer students to appropriate websites that provide catalogs. Have the groups make selections that fit a predetermined budget to replace Corey and Travis’ belongings.

Science:

- Divide students into groups and have them research weather cold fronts. Find out which group can present their findings in the most creative ways by using formats such as posters, *PowerPoint* presentations, and digital stories.
- Teach students about the function of adrenaline in the human body. Have them write about a time when they felt the adrenaline increase within their own bodies.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Remind students about the places in Vermont and New York mentioned in the story. Display a map of the United States, New York, and Vermont. Locate each place on the appropriate map.
- Help students to plan their own vacation in Vermont. They should identify and describe appropriate restaurants and lodging, as well as interesting places to visit.
- Invite a speaker from the local historical society to share some interesting facts about your community.
- Invite a speaker from the local homeless shelter to do a presentation for the class. Ask the shelter personnel what items are needed for the shelter. Have your students implement a drive to collect the items.

Dragon Slippers

by Jessica Day George

Annotation

Her aunt devises a not-so-clever plot to bring riches to the family by dragging Creel out to the dragon's lair. Once there, the aunt is hoping that Creel will be rescued by the local prince, leading to marriage and a life of luxury for the family. Unexpectedly, Creel develops friendships with the dragons who send her on a journey through the kingdom with a pretty pair of seemingly ordinary slippers. The mysterious slippers begin to wreak havoc and it falls to Creel to save the kingdom and defend the dragons against certain doom. Adventure, humor, and unexpected events make this a must read fantasy. (Grades 5-8) (AR 5.7)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.jessicadaygeorge.com/>

Realia

Items: Blue slippers, Embroidered handkerchief

Statement: Creel was taught to sew exquisite embroidery by her mother. This talent comes in very handy as Creel tries to support herself after leaving her home. During her travels, Creel meets several dragons and is given a pair of beautiful blue slippers. Find out the secret of the blue slippers and join Creel and Luka in their adventures in *Dragon Slippers*.

Food

Venison, Brown bread, Cheese, Peaches, Apples, Tea, Cookies

Challenging Words

audacious	(p. 173 HB)	laconic	(p. 86 HB)
cajoling	(p. 32 HB)	mellifluous	(p. 37 HB)
craven	(p. 25 HB)	obligation	(p. 50 HB)
debatable	(p. 31 HB)	raucous	(p. 69 HB)
disgruntled	(p. 6 HB)	reminisce	(p. 40 HB)
disingenuous	(p. 174 HB)	ricocheted	(p. 33 HB)
eloquent	(p. 82 HB)	starvation	(p. 1 HB)
gauntleted	(p. 26 HB)	swains	(p. 6 HB)
histrionics	(p. 67 HB)	tapestry	(p. 15 HB)
impoverished	(p. 2 HB)	whittled	(p. 2 HB)

Figurative Language

Similes

- “My question was answered a heartbeat later, when a large pair of golden claws swooped down into my line of vision, wrapped themselves around me like a cage, and carried me off into the air.” (p. 34 HB)
- “The next morning, I awoke stiff and groggy, with hair like a bottlebrush and my gown sadly creased.” (p. 56 HB)
- “He looked like a little boy who had stolen a pie.” (p. 59 HB)

- “Shardas’s wingspan was so great that he glided through the air as smoothly as an eagle.” (p. 65 HB)
- “The stately woman turned her gaze from the princess, who was gasping like a hooked fish at this injustice, and addressed my employer.” (p. 103 HB)
- “I heard voices, horrible voices like rocks being ground together,’ Larkin moaned.” (p. 134 HB)
- “The gray silk gleamed and the panels of embroidery – perfectly shaped like gothic arches – glowed like jewels.” (p. 138 HB)
- “Trembling like a newborn foal, I looked from prince to king to duke.” (p. 212 HB)
- Additional similes are located on the following pages: 9, 36, 111, 133, 142, and 259.

Idioms and Expressions

- “He heaved an enormous sigh, even more bone-rattling than the ones he had emitted when I’d first arrived, and then he turned away.” (p. 21 HB)
- “He would laugh until his sides split to see me swooning like some lord’s delicate daughter.” (p. 35 HB)
- “She raked me up and down with her fierce eyes. ‘And mind your tongue, girl.’” (p. 91 HB)
- “Marta, though perhaps a bit of a flirt, seemed genuinely kind, while Larkin was striking more and more as a wet dishrag, as Hagen would have put it.” (p. 108 HB)
- “So, if it will put your mind at ease, you may take one of these tapestries.” (p. 263 HB)
- “Yes, so perhaps she doesn’t need a sash after all. No sense gilding the lily.” (p. 320 HB)
- Additional idioms and expressions are located on the following pages: 81, 91, 176, 195, and 203.

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Discuss with students the personality characteristics of the main characters in the story. Have students complete a chart comparing and contrasting the characters’ qualities. Ask students which character appealed to them the most and why?

Fine Arts:

- Review the sections of the story in which ballads were mentioned and performed. (For an example see page 63.) Have class listen to a selection of ballads. Divide class into small groups and have each one write a contemporary ballad to share with class.
- Share with class examples of medieval tapestries and embroidered clothing. Refer to tapestries and clothing in museums such as http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/tapm/hd_tapm.htm. Discuss the purposes of and the skills needed to complete these elaborate and time-consuming items. Have students use colored pencils to design their own tapestry or piece of clothing.

Language Arts:

- Initiate a discussion on stories that feature dragons. Share several examples with class. Ask students why they think these stories have traditionally been and remain popular. Are there similarities in the stories? Have students share their favorite stories.
- Share several epic poems with class. Discuss the characteristics and history of epic poems. Divide class into small groups and have them write an epic poem.

Science:

- Have students explain the role of an alchemist in past societies. Ask students to identify contemporary careers that are historically connected to this early career. Students can create a Venn diagram showing the similarities and differences in the various careers (e.g., pharmacist, chemist, physicist, etc.)
- Discuss with class the characteristics of fictional dragons. Have students research the real life Komodo Dragon. (See http://www.honolulu zoo.org/komodo_dragon.htm.) Have students complete a compare/contrast chart.

The Entertainer and the Dybbuk

by Sid Fleischman

Annotation

No, the ventriloquist, Freddie, wasn't dreaming. There really was a wisecracking dybbuk or Jewish spirit in the closet. The dybbuk explained that he had been a young child before the Nazis killed him along with many other children during World War II. Now three years later, the American ex-GI is touring Europe with his not very successful ventriloquist act. The young dybbuk, Avron, verbally spars with the ventriloquist and finally takes up residence inside Freddie. Together they form a winning and entertaining act in which Avron's wisecracks reap huge laughs. Mature readers will balance the harsh accounts of Nazi cruelty with the witty dialogue. (Grades 5-8) (AR 3.7)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.sidfleischman.com/>

Realia

Item: Ventriloquist's dummy or similar puppet (can be homemade)

Statement: "He'd carved the comic face in a prisoner-of-war camp in Poland." The Great Freddie is a bad ventriloquist until he gets possessed and the dybbuk has an audience to begin resolving issues from his former life in *The Entertainer and the Dybbuk*.

Food

Blintzes, Borscht (other kosher foods not mentioned by name)

Challenging Words

balmy	(p. 34 HB)	mortifying	(p. 159 HB)
bedbugs	(p. 9 HB)	phonograph	(p. 94 HB)
broadsides	(p. 123 HB)	presumably	(p. 76 HB)
cabaret	(p. 101 HB)	shlemiel	(p. 134 HB)
confounded	(p. 169 HB)	shtick	(p. 112 HB)
denominations	(p. 43 HB)	terrain	(p. 114 HB)
dybbuk	(p. 5 HB)	Typhus	(p. 143 HB)
funk	(p. 139 HB)	vermin	(p. 80 HB)
gullet	(p. 148 HB)	weevils	(p. 118 HB)
heckler	(p. 18 HB)	yarmulke	(p. 105 HB)

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- "Your old routine was so full of moth holes you could strain borscht." (pp. 30-31 HB)
- "Their hearts were tangles of vipers." (p. 80 HB)

Similes

- "You're painted up white as Caesar's ghost." (p. 4 HB)
- "They had drowned democracy like a kitten, invaded Poland and France and ignited World War II." (p. 6 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “But here I am, fit as a fiddle.” (p. 9 HB)
- “I’ll be a fish out of water,’ Freddie protested.” (p. 92 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Have students think about the expression of “An Eye for an Eye.” In the book, Avrom’s view on this changes from a need to kill for revenge to a more subtle, but still satisfying, vengeance. Have students put themselves in the shoes of a judge about to rule on the war criminal’s guilt. What punishment do they think he deserves? Have students explain their answers and be prepared to justify to class.
- Remind students that there are several characters aside from the Nazi criminal in the book that have a biased viewpoint about the Jewish people. Some of these include The Great Freddie (early on), Polly, Polly’s parents, and Polly’s uncle. Choose one of the characters and write a letter to them from Avrom Amos that identifies how the character is biased and provides help to them in overcoming their bigotry.

Fine Arts:

- Have students create their own ventriloquist dummy.
- Expand the above project by having the students write a script for their dummy speaking about a controversial topic using humor to make the topic easier to discuss.
- Show students several book covers and discuss the symbols, graphics, and words on each one. Then have students analyze the cover of *The Entertainer and the Dybbuk* for its use of lighting and color, as well as placement of images and words. Using their analysis, have students create an alternate cover for this book or a cover for another book of their choice. Remind students that a picture is worth a thousand words.

Foreign Languages:

- Inform students that they will be creating a foreign language glossary. To begin this project, have students select at least 20 different foreign language words used in the book. Students can use context clues or print/online dictionaries to define the words. Students can also illustrate or otherwise make their glossary both tied to the book and visually appealing.

Language Arts:

- Divide class into small teams that will compete to compile a list of as many similes as possible used in the book. (Hint: There are at least 9 before the 2nd chapter, including one before the first chapter.) See which team can find the most examples throughout the book.

Science:

- Have students explore the treatment of typhus or typhoid fever to better understand why Avrom was able to use a bottle of carbolic acid to avoid death for some time.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Research the Holocaust to provide background knowledge for the book. Topics include: concentration camps, SS, perpetrators of war crimes, etc. Some authoritative websites include:
 - <http://www.remember.org/>
 - <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/holo.html>
 - <http://www.ushmm.org/outreach/#>

First Light

by Rebecca Stead

Annotation

Peter, 12, has grown up with parents who are professional scientists. His father is a glaciologist and his mother is a genetic scientist. Peter is delighted when his dad decides to take the family to Greenland while he studies the effects of global warming. While out exploring, Peter accidentally meets Thea, 14, who lives in Gracehope, a secret utopian society under the Greenland ice. Join Peter and Thea in their quest for answers in this thought-provoking contemporary fantasy. (Grades 6-8) (AR 4.8)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.randomhouse.com/author/results.pperl?authorid=74019>

Realia

Items: Red notebook, Furs, Locket, Toy Volkswagen, Seven red bracelets

Statement: “What if this isn’t a map of the settlement at all? What if it’s a map of the tunnel?” What if? Read *First Light* to find out what the relationship between Peter and Thea is in spite of their two different worlds. Is there a tunnel or not?

Food

Foil wrapped chocolate eggs, Tea (a red tea, as if made from “rushberries”), Smoked fish on “crunchy” bread, Rice cakes, Brownies

Challenging Words

adept	(p. 258 PB)	glacier	(p. 7 PB)
ambergis	(p. 37 PB)	Inuit	(p. 19 PB)
annihilation	(p. 185 PB)	literal	(p. 108 PB)
apt	(p. 203 PB)	magma	(p. 200 PB)
artifact	(p. 6 PB)	middling	(p. 296 PB)
avert	(p. 230 PB)	mortar-pestle	(p. 48 PB)
benign	(p. 16 PB)	oblivion	(p. 236 PB)
berate	(p. 227 PB)	obscure	(p. 261 PB)
bereft	(p. 297 PB)	seer	(p. 268 PB)
cursory	(p. 195 PB)	tumultuous	(p. 228 PB)
discreet	(p. 10 PB)	vehement	(p. 185 PB)
fortnight	(p. 37 PB)	whelp	(p. 247 PB)
furtive	(p. 17 PB)		

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- “Peter let her pull him forward, just a step, and then the noise started up again, an arrow of sound that bounced around the frozen bowl in front of him.” (p. 168 PB)

Similes

- “His muscles began to twang with panic, like strings that someone was plucking hard.” (p. 96 PB)
- “He pulled off one glove and put his hand up to the ice that encased the ring – it was as smooth as polished marble, nothing like the rough crystalline stuff that covered the rest of the glacier.” (p. 96 PB)
- “He scanned the landscape in front of him. In the dim light he could make out hummocks of ice here and there along the high edge of the slope, like clusters of white sails or giant shark teeth.” (p. 168 PB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “Your mother is having a bad patch.” (p. 208 PB)
- “Warming the planet, melting the ice caps, and generally wreaking havoc with the balance of nature as it now exists.” (p. 11 PB)

Personification

- “He loved watching the street awaken at night.” (p. 15 PB)
- “The wind was moaning, with a little high-pitched scream thrown in every few seconds.” (p. 91 PB)

Curriculum Connections

Fine Arts:

- Refer students to page 203. Have them draw the “row of bracelets...twisting bands.”

Language Arts:

- Have students create a chart/diagram that shows the similarities and differences of what the bracelets meant to Mai, Thea, and Peter.
- Take class to the library media center to research the history of prejudice against Inuits.

Science/Social Studies/Geography

- Collaborate with the library media specialist to have students research Greenland and then write a proposal for an expedition there. Their journey may be inspired by and modeled after *First Light*, but it should be for a different purpose.
- Have students research how sled dogs are trained and how sled dogs work as a team.
- Additional science links and suggested topics are located at www.firstlightbook.com.

Found

by Margaret Peterson Haddix

Annotation

Six words in a letter change the lives of thirteen-year-old Jonah and his friend Chip – “You are one of the missing.” Both boys know they are adopted, but Jonah has never given it much thought until he and Chip start receiving mysterious letters. The boys and Jonah’s sister, Katherine, are plunged into a mystery involving a smuggling operation, the FBI, and an airplane that appears out of nowhere. After enjoying this page-turner, readers will eagerly look forward to the next book in this new series. (Grades 4-8) (AR 5)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.haddixbooks.com/home.html>

Realia

Items: Small airplane, FBI badge, and/or a letter with “YOU ARE ONE OF THE MISSING”

Statement: Jonah has always known that he was adopted and he’s never thought it was a big deal until he received a mysterious letter saying, “You are one of the missing.” Read *Found* to find out if Jonah and Chip discover why the FBI is involved in their adoption.

Food

Cincinnati chili, New Orleans jambalaya, Mexican tamales, New England clam chowder

Challenging Words

apprehension	(p. 42 HB)	inexplicably	(p. 74 HB)
bizarre	(p. 175 HB)	insinuations	(p. 2 HB)
bland	(p. 71 HB)	intriguing	(p. 114 HB)
clairvoyant	(p. 5 HB)	paranoia	(p. 171 HB)
clichés	(p. 116 HB)	paranoid	(p. 76 HB)
generic	(p. 146 HB)	protocol	(p. 164 HB)
genetics	(p. 53 HB)	substantial	(p. 68 HB)
hallucinations	(p. 169 HB)	tachyons	(p. 173 HB)
hyperventilating	(p. 125 HB)	taunted	(p. 27 HB)
impede	(p. 51 HB)	testimonial	(p. 75 HB)

Figurative Language

Similes

- “*Beware! They’re coming back to get you,*” Jonah recited tonelessly. It took no effort to remember; he’d stared at the words for so long the night before that it seemed like they were imprinted on his eyeballs.” (p. 58 HB)
- “Jonah hoped that no one could tell that he felt like he was walking around in a bubble.” (p. 59 HB)
- “He was usually the calmest person in the family, mild-mannered, like a Clark Kent without secrets.” (p. 82 HB)
- “Katherine turned her head – maybe it would just look as if she’d heard an unusual birdcall and was trying to listen more closely.” (p. 248 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “It seemed like a no-brainer to Jonah.” (p. 24 HB)
- “‘Let me get this straight’ was the phrase that she always used with Jonah and Katherine when she thought they were stretching the truth a bit.” (p. 80 HB)
- “‘Okay,’ Jonah said quickly, because he could tell she was about to launch into the miracle story (*the call out of the blue . . . the week before Christmas . . . everything we ever wanted . . .*). (p. 48 HB)
- “‘Maybe that’s connected too,’ he said slowly. ‘My dad says they got a really sweet deal for this house.’” (p. 39 HB)
- “‘Look,’ she said. ‘It makes them mental, every time you bring up the adoption, or your birth parents, or anything like that. They start pussyfooting around and being so careful, like, ‘Now, Jonah . . .’ She’d dropped her voice an octave, in a pretty decent imitation of Dad.’” (p. 51 HB)
- “‘Very funny, Jeremy,’ Mr. Vincent said in a tone that didn’t sound amused. ‘Let’s stay within the realm of reality, shall we?’” (p. 60 HB)
- “When he’d climbed up the stairs to the first level of Chip’s house, he could hear a TV siren blaring from the family room. A woman—presumably Chip’s mom—said unhappily, ‘You always have to watch the blood-and-guts shows.’” (p. 115 HB)
- “Queen Jackson was telling Nila Holcomb, ‘That boy is just bad news.’” (p. 135 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Have students discuss whether they think it is the parent who gave birth to you or the parent who takes care of you that is the “real” parent.
- Have someone who is adopted talk to the class and describe their feelings about their adoption and whether they have or plan on looking for their birth parents.
- Discuss whether the students think adopted children should be told that they are adopted or not.

Health/Physical Education:

- Research with class the rules and history of basketball, using the Internet and a data projector. Have class play a game of basketball.

Language Arts:

- Initiate a discussion with the class about genres, focusing on science fiction. Have students define the genres and name at least one title for each one.
- Have the library media specialist present a book talk to the class featuring other science fiction titles.
- Read *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L’Engle. Have students compare and contrast this story with *Found*.

Mathematics:

- Have students research the speed of light and also the distance between Earth and Mars. Then have students calculate how long it would take to get from the Earth to Mars traveling at the speed of light.

Science:

- Take students to the library media center to research theoretical physics and tachyons. Initiate a discussion on what effect something traveling faster than the speed of light would have on aging, time, and space, etc.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Some cities mentioned in the story include the following: Winnetka, Illinois; Ann Arbor, Michigan; and Liston, Ohio. Have students locate the cities on a map and research information about them.

Gabriel's Horses

by Alison Hart

Annotation

Deep in Kentucky horse country during the Civil War, twelve-year-old Gabriel is a young slave who dreams of becoming a famous jockey, just like his father. Gabriel's dad is a free man who joins the Yankee army to earn enough money to buy his wife's freedom. In the meanwhile, Gabriel must work for a cruel new trainer and, eventually, he must use his bravery and cunning to save his beloved horses. In this thoughtful story, characters explore the many meanings of freedom, from emancipation to realizing a dream. Historical facts and gripping plot are cleverly blended in this fast-paced story. (Grades 5-8) (AR 4.6)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.childrensbookguild.org/hart.html>

Realia

Items: Picture or small bust of Abraham Lincoln, Map or book on Kentucky, Bag of glass marbles, Horse grooming comb (or a halter or rein) (borrowed from a tack shop)

Statement: "Freedom, honor, dreams, and duty, always seeing horses' beauty. With prayer and courage, Gabriel stood, as war came marching on." Kentucky was his home, horses his life. Will the slave boy save *Gabriel's Horses*?

Food

Johnnie Cakes, Hardtack, Civil War Biscuit

Challenging Words

buoyed	(p. 96 HB)	pommel	(p. 44 HB)
canter	(p. 12 HB)	portico	(p. 68 HB)
colic	(p. 33 HB)	procure	(p. 17 HB)
din	(p. 139 HB)	pungent	(p. 90 HB)
emancipation	(p. 147 HB)	renegade	(p. 54 HB)
flaxen	(p. 5 HB)	sabers	(p. 138 HB)
gelding	(p. 8 HB)	saunters	(p. 60 HB)
guffaw	(p. 119 HB)	sorrel	(p. 36 HB)
joshing	(p. 3 HB)	valise	(p. 23 HB)
paddock	(p. 108 HB)	vigilant	(p. 14 HB)

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- "Penny, you got four miles of race this noon. You best save your fire,' I scold as we jog through a break in the fence." (p. 32 HB)

Similes

- "Keep the cotton wading smooth,' Pa adds, his forehead as furrowed and brown as a plowed field." (p. 1 HB)
- "I collapse like an empty saddle bag." (p. 20 HB)

- “I miss all the first race ‘cause I’m too busy walking Tenpenny, who’s wound as tight as Pa’s pocket watch.” (p. 34 HB)
- “Feels like a stone in my craw.” (p. 64 HB)
- “Newmarket’s outside the fence, calling me like I’m a dog with no name.” (p. 64 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “I can’t move. Or speak. The sight of that whip has tied my tongue.” (p. 64 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Remind students that Gabriel’s father joined the Union Army to fight for what he believed in and to be able to unite his family as free people. Discuss the ramifications of this action. Are there modern day examples of this type of heroism?
- Discuss with students how Gabriel’s loyalty to the horses and his determination in the face of danger helped “save the day.” Ask students if they would have acted the same way and why?

Fine Arts:

- Remind students that horses were crucial to the Civil War. Show examples of statues in cities and towns across the South depicting famous Generals and their horses. Trivia: What does it mean if a statue faces north or south? (Hint: North – the general died in battle. South – the general survived the war.)
- Explain to students that photography was in its infancy during the Civil War period. Show class photographs from that time period using the Library of Congress Memory Project online.

Language Arts:

- Use the following writing prompt with class:
 - Staring Hungrily – on page 15. You read that Gabriel stared hungrily at the colorful glass marbles in the schoolyard he passed. Have you every seen something you wanted so badly that you hungered for it, but you knew you could never have it? Write about the first time you saw it and describe what it was and why you couldn’t have it.

Science:

- Have students research the anatomy of a horse, including muscle structure, skeleton, and gestation period.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Review with students the history of slavery in the United States and how it led to the Civil War.
- Have students use a blank map of the United States that has the state borders marked. Have students locate the Union and Confederate states. (Union states include: Maine, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan, Missouri, Minnesota, Kansas, and Maryland.) (Confederate states include: Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas.)
- Discuss the fact that Kentucky was a border state with many slave owners. Why were they Union?
- Begin a research project by discussing how economics played a large part in the division of the Union. Have students research and explain the differences in life in the North versus the South.
- Ask students to identify the causes that led to South Carolina’s secession from the Union. (Hint: the election of Lincoln.)
- Remind students that more Americans died in the Civil War than were killed in any other war – 600,000. Ask students how number compares to other major wars? WWI? WWII? Korean War? Vietnam War? War in Iraq?

Go Big or Go Home

By Will Hobbs

Annotation

Brady was enjoying the Perseid meteor shower when a meteorite blazed through the sky and ended up crashing through the roof of his Black Hills, South Dakota, home. The young astrophile is thrilled and names it Fred for “Far Roaming Earth Diver.” Brady quickly calls his cousin Quinn to share his “extremely insane” find. The two boys embark on bicycling, caving, and fishing adventures, including Brady somersaulting over a buffalo’s horns. Are these sudden abnormal physical feats by asthmatic Brady linked to Fred? Join the boys and their “extremophile” organisms in this contemporary, fast-moving adventure. (Grades 6-8) (AR 4.7)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.willhobbsauthor.com/>

Realia

Item: Rock that resembles description of Fred in the novel

Statement: The unexpected arrival of a rock from outer space changes Brady’s life and eventually makes his worst nightmare come true. Read about his adventures in *Go Big or Go Home*.

Food

Coffee, Smoothies, Gatorade, Nachos, Power bars, Fresh fish

Challenging Words

adrenaline	(p. 21 HB)	fretted	(p. 9 HB)
adversary	(p. 22 HB)	marauding	(p. 16 HB)
ambled	(p. 20 HB)	mauled	(p. 25 HB)
ballistic	(p. 16 HB)	ominous	(p. 65 HB)
behemoth	(p. 98 HB)	perimeter	(p. 16 HB)
catapult	(p. 23 HB)	premises	(p. 35 HB)
constellation	(p. 2 HB)	rendezvous	(p. 32 HB)
coroner	(p. 17 HB)	stupefied	(p. 3 HB)
dander	(p. 12 HB)	trump	(p. 8 HB)
demented	(p. 20 HB)		

Figurative Language

Similes

- “My eyes burn and my nose runs like a fire hose.” (pp. 12-13 HB)
- “As I was tying my shoes, I felt something I’d never felt before, a slight vibration running through me like a mild electric shock.” (p. 14 HB)
- “Dad turned red as a tomato.” (p. 34 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “I could hear her wheels turning.” (p. 14 HB)
- “Haven’t seen hide nor hair of him,” I reported.” (p. 15 HB)

- “Dealing with the Carvers was tricky, and we didn’t like to rattle their cage.” (pp. 15-16 HB)
- “The Carver boys came up with this kind of stuff just to get my goat.” (p. 17 HB)
- “I’ve never ridden the whole enchilada before,’ Uncle Jake said, ‘only the weekends on either side.’” (p. 32 HB)
- “He can’t stand it. He’s totally a fish out of water.” (p. 32 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Language Arts:

- Remind students that *Go Big or Go Home* is written from Brady’s point of view. Have students choose another character (e.g., Quinn, the professor, one of the Carvers, or even Attila) and one chapter of the novel. Students then rewrite the chapter from their chosen character’s point of view.

Science:

- Explain to students that they will be using the following web sites to research meteorites: <http://www.nineplanets.org/meteorites.html> and <http://www.meteorites.com/>. Have students collect information and pictures on meteorites and other space objects that enter the Earth’s atmosphere.
- Remind students that in the novel Brady became infected with bacteria from outer space. Explain to students that this idea is based on real science. Have students use the web sites below to research space bacteria found in objects from outer space.
 - http://www.scienceagogo.com/news/20010631230243data_trunc_sys.shtml
 - <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,745164,00.html>

Social Studies/Geography:

- Have students use the following web sites to learn about South Dakota, the Black Hills, and the Crazy Horse Memorial. Students will use the information to plan a week-long vacation in the area. They must include a daily itinerary, with details about the attractions they will visit and the landmarks mentioned in the book during their trips.
 - <http://www.crazyhorsememorial.org/>
 - <http://www.blackhillsbadlands.com/>

Hot, Sour, Salty, Sweet

by Sherri L. Smith

Annotation

According to Ana's social studies teacher, she has a "marvelously biracial, multicultural family." However, Ana's Chinese American and African American heritage do not always blend easily, particularly when all her grandparents are together for her eighth grade graduation. After the water main bursts during the graduation ceremony, Ana invites Jamie Tabata, the cutest boy in school, to her house for a home-cooked meal. Conflicts arise during the four hours in which the family has to prepare the meal. Eventually, Ana learns the value of family and her unique heritage in the blending of the hot, sour, salty, and sweet flavors. (Grades 6-8) (AR 3.9)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.sherrilsmith.com/>

Realia

Items: Graduation cap and gown, Pots and pans of any type, Wok, Sign and streamers, Red envelope

Statement: In *Hot, Sour, Salty, Sweet*, Ana discovers that while having a multicultural family can be challenging it is also what makes her family uniquely hers. Read to find out how Ana helps to blend this family together.

Food

Pot stickers, Gumbo, Fried rice, Plain rice, Lu bo gao, Fried chicken, and Cake

Challenging Words

admonishes	(p. 38 HB)	gouge	(p. 61 HB)
auspicious	(p. 28 HB)	imperiously	(p. 25 HB)
biased	(p. 18 HB)	mortarboard	(p. 4 HB)
bouillon	(p. 34 HB)	parchment	(p. 34 HB)
commemorative	(p. 43 HB)	salutatorian	(p. 2 HB)
diplomat	(p. 110 HB)	valedictorian	(p. 2 HB)

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- "The hallway turns into a shaken snow globe, white grains of rice flying through the air and showering down over everyone." (p. 67 HB)

Similes

- "And then, behind her, the roof of the gymnasium explodes. Or, rather, a geyser of water blows through the roof, shooting into the air like Old Faithful, three stories high." (p. 3 HB)
- "Her family, like the seven horsemen of the apocalypse, inexorably pushing their way toward her through the crowd." (p. 10 HB)
- "Nothing. I said you are big like a big ox. Like. It's a smilie." (p. 68 HB)
- "All the noise together sounds like a bad elementary school marching band." (p. 55 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- "She is tired, bone tired." (p. 30 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Review the story and have students identify examples of Nai Nai's stubbornness, Grandpa White's compassion, and Mr. Tabata's prejudice.

Fine Arts:

- Provide students with saxophone music, particularly jazz from New Orleans. Discuss Ana's connection to music through her school playing and the riverboat trip she will be taking with her grandparents.
- Provide an example of *American Gothic* by Grant Wood and discuss how this piece of art is used to describe the first impression Ana has of Jamie Tabata's parents. (p. 114 HB)

Foreign Languages: Chinese

- Have students create a list of the Chinese words they have learned from the story: Nai Nai, Ye Ye, mapo dofu, and Mai.

Language Arts:

- Have students research the different cultures mentioned in the story and create posters or computer-based presentations that illustrate the differences in these two cultures.
- Provide students with nonfiction stories about the food from these two cultures. You could use *Beyond Gumbo: Creole Fusion Food from the Atlantic Rim* by Jessica B. Harris and *The Fortune Cookie Chronicles: Adventures in the World of Chinese Food* by Jennifer Lee as examples of both the food and history of these two types of cuisine in America. Discuss with students the unique components of each food type and its history in our own culture.

Mathematics:

- Have students recreate the menu from this party. How much would a family spend to create a similar feast? Locate specialty stores in your area, use newspaper advertisements to determine food cost, and remember to include the number of persons being invited.
- Have students use recipes found in the recipe books under Language Arts and increase or decrease the recipes as needed to serve the appropriate number of guests.

Science:

- Have students investigate the differences in various types of rice (e.g., wild rice, long grain rice, jasmine rice, whole grain rice). Students should look at the color, texture, consistency, and cooking instructions. Compare/contrast both the uncooked and cooked rice. Which do they prefer to eat? Have students create a graph of the results.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Have students research the roles of each of these cultures in World War II. Discuss the role of the Chinese in the war. Investigate the participation of African Americans in World War II.
- Review United States history with students. Have students develop a comparison/contrast chart on the treatment of African Americans and Chinese Americans in the United States during the 20th century.

Into the Wild

by Sarah Beth Durst

Annotation

In days long ago, fairy tale characters escaped from their make-believe stories and entered the real world. The enchanted forest or the Wild now resides under Julie's bed. Twelve-year-old Julie and her mother, Rapunzel, want to contain the Wild and fear the consequences if it should escape. When the Wild is wished free, it takes over the town, entrapping townspeople as well as familiar story characters. Brave, but reluctant, Julie battles wicked witches, survives poisoned apples, and meets marriageable princes on her way to reach the heart of the Wild in order to free the town from the Wild's hold on reality. Wit and humor punctuate this fun, fractured tale. (Grades 5-7) (AR 4)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.sarahbethdurst.com/>

Realia

Items: Magic wand, Key

Statement: Julie ventures into the Wild to save her mother, grandmother, and brother. She uses a special key and a magic wand in this fast-paced fractured fairy tale. Read about Julie and the other fairy tale characters in *Into the Wild*.

Food

Lentils, Quiche, Submarine sandwich, Porridge

Challenging Words

apparently	(p. 11 HB)	influx	(p. 16 HB)
blanched	(p. 17 HB)	interfering	(p. 234 HB)
concocted	(p. 130 HB)	malicious	(p. 141 HB)
gawked	(p. 78 HB)	penetrate	(p. 229 HB)
hibernate	(p. 12 HB)	persuaded	(p. 14 HB)
hysterical	(p. 64 HB)	plummet	(p. 57 HB)
illuminate	(p. 56 HB)	roiling	(p. 132 HB)
imprisoned	(p. 163 HB)	sauntered	(p. 127 HB)
inception	(p. 151 HB)	unprecedented	(p. 105 HB)
indestructible	(p. 21 HB)	wheeling	(p. 32 HB)

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- “‘She was our light,’ he said. ‘Our beacon in the tower.” (p. 233 HB)

Similes

- “Lately, it felt like shouting across the Grand Canyon to even try to talk to her.” (p. 15 HB)
- “She had a face as wrinkled as a walnut and her hair as frizzed as a gone-to-seed dandelion.” (p. 17 HB)

- “As soon as the rear of the helicopter crossed over the invisible line between ordinary street and the Wild, it happened: the Wild, like some kind of gigantic octopus, flung thick vines into the air – the crowd gasped – Julie couldn’t breathe.” (pp. 52-53 HB)
- “Look at the size of his hands. He could crush her like an ant.” (p. 147 HB)
- “She didn’t have butter-yellow hair or skin as plastic smooth as Barbie’s.” (p. 163 HB)
- “The rocks rose into the air as if lifted by invisible giants.” (p. 227 HB)
- “The understanding felt like a wave, and Julie wanted to cry.” (p. 237 HB)
- Additional similes are located on the following pages: 4, 5, 7, 11, 42, 43, 49, 72, 77, 83, 89, 99, 137, 149, 154, 158, 190, 195, 203, 204, 235, 247, and 251.

Idioms and Expressions

- “Once upon a time, it had been an entire sneaker.” (p. 3 HB)
- “Oops, my bad,” Mary said.” (p. 17 HB)
- “I wasn’t serious. Sheesh. It wouldn’t kill you to lighten up a little.” (p. 29 HB)
- “She could just ask her, point-blank, about the Wild, about their family history, about Dad . . . and she could keep asking until Mom answered, instead of letting her mom avoid the questions like usual.” (p. 30 HB)
- “She thinks she is so high and mighty,” Julie said.” (p. 139 HB)
- Additional idioms and expressions are located on the following pages: 66, 114, and 175.

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Remind students that Julie had unusual old family friends. Have students share ‘characters’ in their families either as relatives of family friends. How do these people positively add to their families’ stories?
- Discuss with students the danger of the Wild. (Refer students to pages 38-41.) Expand the discussion by asking the students to define and explain ‘free will.’

Fine Arts:

- Share fairy tale books that have beautiful illustrations in them (e.g., *Classic Fairy Tales* illustrated by Scott Gustafson or *The Golden Book of Fairy Tales* illustrated by Adrienne Segur). Then have students select one of the tales and create original illustrations.

Language Arts:

- Explain to students that this book is an example of a fractured fairy tale. Read to class other examples (e.g., *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith or refer to *Twice Upon a Time: A Guide to Fractured, Altered, and Retold Folk and Fairy Tales* by Catharine R. Bomhold and Terri E. Elder). Have students choose one of the tales referenced in *Into the Wild* and have them write their version of the story.
- Have students list tales that are set in a forest or woods and the characters featured in those tales (e.g., Hansel and Gretel and Little Red Riding Hood). Divide class into small groups and have each group write an original tale set in a forest or woods. (Suggest to students that the woods or forest could be located on another planet or imaginary world.)

Science

- Discuss with students how the Wild works. What makes it grow and on what nutrients does it depend? Have students compare this imaginary woods environment to a real forest ecosystem.

La Línea

by Ann Jaramillo

Annotation

After seven long years, Miguel's parents send word that it is time for him to cross *la línea* and join them in California. On one hand, Miguel is sad to leave his grandmother and their home in Mexico, but on the other hand, he is excited about finally reuniting with his parents. When fifteen-year-old Miguel leaves his home, he is unaware that his thirteen-year-old sister Elena is following him. The grueling trip proves dangerous; they are robbed, face dehydration, and encounter unscrupulous men. Readers will root for these brave, resourceful teenagers as they face the harsh realities of their journey. (Grades 5-8) (AR 4.3)

Author on the Internet

<http://us.macmillan.com/author/annjaramillo>

Realia

Items: Mexican Flag, Canteen, Gold medallion, Freight train model

Statement: Imagine you are separated from your parents by hundreds of miles, imagine you must illegally enter a foreign country. Imagine your younger sister foils your plans by tagging along with you! Now your very lives are at stake! These are the events that face Miguel and Elena as they attempt to leave their Mexico homeland for America. Follow their thrilling and suspenseful journey when you read *La Línea* by Ann Jaramillo.

Food

Tortillas, Chips and salsa, Black beans and rice, Water

Challenging Words

admonished	(p. 22 HB)	liability	(p. 43 HB)
cartels	(p. 51 HB)	notaries	(p. 45 HB)
coyote	(p. 15 HB)	omen	(p. 64 HB)
crevice	(p. 7 HB)	pliable	(p. 87 HB)
exasperated	(p. 11 HB)	portico	(p. 52 HB)
fugitives	(p. 58 HB)	pungent	(p. 5 HB)
gorge	(p. 8 HB)	quizzically	(p. 86 HB)
holster	(p. 44 HB)	quota	(p. 75 HB)
incompetence	(p. 75 HB)	rancid	(p. 55 HB)
irrational	(p. 91 HB)	stamina	(p. 92 HB)

Figurative Language

Similes

- “The words were like little drops of water to a person dying of thirst – enough to give hope; not enough to make a difference.” (p. 5 HB)
- “The words I needed to say felt like mud in my mouth.” (p. 6 HB)
- “We hated him because he smelled like old onions and picked on Chuy for no good reason.” (p. 7 HB)

- “When he came up for air, he shook his dark, thin hair like a dog, spraying water all over the three of us.” (p. 8 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “Papá had let me down before.” (p. 9 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Discuss with students the characters in the story. Have students compare/contrast the character traits of Miguel and Elena. Which character showed greater courage, responsibility, perseverance? Have students cite specific examples from the story to defend their ideas.

Fine Arts:

- Present to students representative examples of the music and dances (e.g., salsa) of Mexico. Additionally refer students to www.addicted2salsa.com.
- Share with students the art of prominent Mexican artists (e.g., Frida Kahlo) and view examples of their art. (Use web sites such as <http://www.fridakahlo.com/> to share art examples.)

Foreign Languages:

- Have students compare/contrast the celebrations of a quinceaneras and a sweet sixteen party.
- Organize students into small groups. Have each group create a dictionary of Spanish terms learned through reading this book. Students may include illustrations along with the definition.

Language Arts:

- Review with students the plot and events of the story. Then have students create a daily journal entry for one of the characters beginning before the siblings make their escape to their arrival in America.
- Have students write a letter to Abuela from America or to Mamá/Papá upon Elena’s return to Mexico.
- Collaborate with the library media specialist to have students research Mexican cuisine. Then have students create a cookbook with authentic Mexican recipes.
- Divide class into small groups. Have each group interview family members or staff members with different ethnic backgrounds about their entry into the United States. Publish a class newsletter with their stories.

Mathematics:

- Refer students to a map of North America. Have students use the map legend to calculate the mileage from various Mexican destinations to American cities.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Take class to the library media center to research statistics regarding illegal immigration, including which countries have the highest rate of illegal entry.
- Divide class into two teams. Have teams debate immigration policies of different politicians.
- Have students research the current issues facing immigrants, as well as the different policies for various countries.
- Explore the following web sites for additional lessons:
 - <http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/lessons/20030226wednesday.html>
 - http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/01/0123_030123_border.html
 - http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/newamericans/newamericans/mexican_intro.html

The Misadventures of Maude March

by Audrey Coulombis

Annotation

Sallie March, 11, loves to read Western adventure dime novels. At the beginning of this tale, she has no idea that she and her lady-like sister will soon be living a wild-west story themselves! After their guardian Aunt Ruthie is shot by a stray bullet, the sisters temporarily live with the Reverend Peasley and his family who promptly take advantage of the hardworking girls. After several worrisome events, the girls disguise themselves as boys, take two horses, and strike out for Independence, MO, to find their uncle. Along the way, sweet Maude becomes Mad Maude March, a “wanted woman.” These strong female characters will keep readers moving quickly through the adventure-filled pages. (Grades 5-8) (AR 5.1)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.audreycoulombis.com/>

Realia

Items: Quilt, Pocket compass, Saddle blanket, Potato peeler

Statement: “...it would be another hour or two at least before I knew for sure what direction we were headed in, I had to get a look at my compass.” Read about where Maude and Sallie are going and what they are getting themselves into in *The Misadventures of Maude March*.

Food

Biscuits with black currant jelly, Hard peppermint candies, Cornbread with canned beans, Canned peaches, Black licorice

Challenging Words

almanac	(p. 156 HB)	hollow	(p. 141 HB)
arrears	(p. 11 HB)	keening	(p. 235 HB)
bole	(p. 175 HB)	plaintive	(p. 41 HB)
chide	(p. 223 HB)	qualm	(p. 223 HB)
cordial	(p. 232 HB)	recompense	(p. 97 HB)
foray	(p. 65 HB)	resolve	(p. 168 HB)
grimace	(p. 200 HB)	suitable	(p. 17 HB)
hardtack	(p. 275 HB)	untoward	(p. 93 HB)

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- “It seemed we were forever wading through a sea of grass that might just about be forded when the wind would change direction and another sea would wash in.” (p. 248 HB)

Similes

- “She yelped and jumped up off the settee like it was a hot stovetop.” (p. 20 HB)
- “Mrs. Peasley’s mouth was drawn up like a drawstring purse, but she loosened it just enough to say, ‘Mr. Wilburn will be joining us after services tomorrow.’” (p. 37 HB)
- “They looked like they were playing king and queen.” (p. 38 HB)

- “The one good thing I learned, as that rider came at us like a howler wind and disappeared nearly that fast again, Goldie wasn’t nervous.” (p. 47 HB)
- “Her carpetbag had been turned to and from in front of the woodstove, smelling like a dead cat, till it could be felt to be dry inside and out.” (p. 96 HB)
- “I figured it was enough one of us was as nervous and jerky as a turkey two days before Thanksgiving.” (p. 122 HB)
- “Her white hair stood around her head like a messy bird’s nest.” (p. 164 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “But he made a better showing the second time around.” (p. 18 HB)
- “The next afternoon, after Aunt Ruthie’s funeral, we sat in the Peasley’s parlor and allowed the church ladies to make us feel better with such remarks as ‘I am saddened to hear that your Aunt Ruthie was in such dire straits.’” (p. 19 HB)
- “He also cleared Aunt Ruthie’s pantry on Maude’s say-so” (p. 23 HB)
- “Those Peasleys would rue the day they asked me to wax the pews.” (p. 38 HB)
- “They can’t have the church ladies wondering if, between the two of us giving her a hand, Mrs. Peasley has to do anything at all.” (p. 36 HB)
- “It’s hard enough to get a marriage off on the right foot without a live-in relative to muddy the waters.” (p. 37 HB)
- “She settled his hash.” (p. 86 HB)
- “I worried he would leave us flat, the way he did after the boot shop.” (p. 148 HB)

Onomatopoeia

- “We were nearly all the sound we could hear; there was the wind , the creak of a branch, and the crunch and squeak of our boots in the snow.” (p. 181 HB)

Personification

- “Not all cities sleep.” (p. 91 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Ask students if they agree with Sallie that, despite the bank robbery, “The best part of Marion had not been changed; he was still a man to look up to.” Have students defend their answers with proof from the novel.

Science/Social Studies:

- Reread to students Marion’s advice for Maude’s sore throat on page 147. Have students research and write (in their own words – perhaps even in an authentic Western voice of yesteryear) the directions for six Nineteenth Century home remedies.
- Organize class into small groups and distribute a compass to each group. Review use of compass by taking the class out the front door of the school and have each group determine the facing direction of the school. Expand this activity by having each group create a directional map to a specific place on the school grounds and share the map with another group. Have the first group check to see if the second group reaches the correct location.
- Have students make a simple compass using directions from the following web site:
 - http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/for_fun/MakeyourownCompass.pdf

Explore the following web site for additional activities: www.randomhouse.com/kids/maudemarch. (The site is kid-friendly with lots of activities and sound effects.)

Runaway

By Wendelin Van Draanen

Annotation

Life for Holly has never been easy. Now she has run away from an abusive foster home and faces a daily struggle for survival as a homeless person. In the past, a compassionate teacher had given Holly a journal in which to document her life. Holly knows that words can't fix her life or give her a family, but she consistently writes her poetry and story in the journal. Mature readers will root for Holly as she navigates dangerous streets on her way to finding an "ordinary" life. (Grades 7-9) (AR 4.7)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780375835223&view=tg>

Realia

Item: Writing journal

Statement: In *Runaway*, Holly uses the journal given to her by a teacher to keep a diary of her life on the road. Read *Runaway* to follow Holly's life story.

Item: Plastic garbage bag

Statement: Holly believes that a plastic garbage bag is the one essential item she needs when she runs away. Find out why by reading *Runaway*.

Food

Three bean salad, Spam, Blackberries, Pea soup, Kentucky Fried Chicken

Challenging Words

adornment	(p. 111 HB)	loath	(p. 53 HB)
anonymous	(p. 128 HB)	luxurious	(p. 12 HB)
catapulted	(p. 41 HB)	mangy	(p. 111 HB)
cinquain	(p. 2 HB)	paranoid	(p. 104 HB)
decoy	(p. 134 HB)	ritzy	(p. 112 HB)
deranged	(p. 105 HB)	romanticized	(p. 33 HB)
duped	(p. 171 HB)	shakedown	(p. 154 HB)
frolic	(p. 104 HB)	skittish	(p. 13 HB)
limerick	(p. 9 HB)	timbre	(p. 5 HB)

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- "And I can't believe your stupid 'Life is poetry' statement." (p. 5 HB)
- "It turns a train from a ferocious iron beast to a ferocious iron beast with a song in its heart." (p. 39 HB)

Similes

- "They made me feel like a mouse begging for crumbs." (p. 48 HB)
- "They feel like road rash splashed with Tabasco sauce." (p. 118 HB)

- “So I would drop my voice and say, ‘I found a cave. It had an opening, black and narrow, like a wedge of rich chocolate cake.” (p. 139 HB)
- “I was holding it high, with my arms up, strong and wide, the setting sun floating like a maraschino cherry in my great blue water world.” (p. 144 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “And now here I am, safe and sound, on a mountain of potatoes, getting a free ride west.” (p. 42 HB)
- “If she touches it, she’s dead meat, you hear me?” (p. 126 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Remind students that thousands of teenagers run away each year in the United States. Have students visit the Stand Up For Kids website at <http://www.standupforkids.org> and the Children’s Home Society website at <http://www.chsfl.org/homelessrunaway.php>, as well as other resources for local runaway statistics and assistance organizations. As part of character education, have students work in groups to come up with a plan to help Holly while she was on the road. Have students consider the following questions: At what point in her journey would you like to have had the opportunity to help Holly? Was there a time when someone had the opportunity to help her, but did not? What would you say to Holly and what resources would you offer her to help her be safe?

Language Arts:

- Explain to students that they will be involved in the following journal activity:
 - Holly used her writing journal as a diary of her life on the road. Another famous diary is *Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl*. Read excerpts from Anne Frank’s diary. Have students complete a two column note graphic organizer comparing Anne Frank’s Diary to Holly’s writing in *Runaway*.
- Recommend the following books to students who are *Runaway* fans:
 - *The Pictures of Hollis Wood* by Patricia Reilly Giff
 - *One True Friend* by Joyce Hansen
 - *Home and Other Big Fat Lies* by Jill Wolfson

Social Studies/Geography:

- Remind students that Holly’s goal is to get to the Pacific Ocean. She tries to hop a train in a town called Aaronville, but the state in which this city is located is not identified in the text. Have students use clues in the novel (e.g., maps and train schedules, etc.) to decide in what state Holly’s journey began.

Schooled

by Gordon Korman

Annotation

Growing up knowing only one person – your hippie grandmother – has serious disadvantages, particularly if you have grown up on a farm commune and have never gone to public school. Now at the age of thirteen, his grandmother Rain has fallen out of a tree, broken her hip, and is hospitalized. Cap (short for Capricorn) must live with the guidance counselor and her cranky sixteen-year-old daughter. For Cap, who has never watched television or eaten a pizza, attending middle school is a strange and alien experience. Cap's rollercoaster ride in school goes from outcast to class president to beloved. This smart, funny, contemporary story told from multiple characters' points of view will spark lively discussions on school culture. (Grades 5-8) (AR 4.9)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.gordonkorman.com/>

Realia

Items: Tie-dyed clothes, Peace signs, School bus (picture or toy), Pretend checks

Statement: As if middle school isn't scary enough, Capricorn Anderson has to learn to figure out not only middle school, but also the 21st century. See how Cap learns to navigate the world of middle school after being raised on a 60's inspired compound his whole life in *Schooled* by Gordon Korman.

Food

Soy nuts, Plums, Tofu, Cafeteria food

Challenging Words

adulation	(p. 118 HB)	genuine	(p. 29 HB)
anonymous	(p. 70 HB)	kamikaze	(p. 137 HB)
audible	(p. 131 HB)	lamented	(p. 84 HB)
autonomous	(p. 31 HB)	manipulator	(p. 126 HB)
berserk	(p. 66 HB)	obnoxious	(p. 179 HB)
bewildered	(p. 16 HB)	philanthropy	(p. 122 HB)
cesspool	(p. 40 HB)	psychedelic	(p. 42 HB)
constituents	(p. 36 HB)	sentimentality	(p. 112 HB)
contortion	(p. 55 HB)	Sitar	(p. 11 HB)
Foucault pendulum	(p. 6 HB)	trajectory	(p. 34 HB)

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- "It was hard enough for him to come out of total isolation at Garland without having to be dropped into the snake pit that was middle school" (p. 46 HB)
- "People fought, shrieked, threw things at one another, and tormented the hapless driver. It was an insane asylum on wheels." (p. 54 HB)
- "I was allowed to live because the pack was in full cry after him." (p. 71 HB)

- “Authority is a power trip.” (p. 84 HB)

Similes

- “It was like a stone pressing down on my chest.” (p. 21 HB)
- “He looked like a weeping willow in soggy sandals. (p. 48 HB)
- “Even her shelf in the bathroom was a wondrous sight – a skyline of bottles, tubes, and jars of all shapes and hues.” (p. 91 HB)
- “My hair was standing up straight in all directions – a huge sphere of blond fuzz surrounding me like a giant halo.” (p. 92 HB)
- “So there I was, waving my arms and hopping around like a turkey amped up on Mountain Dew, when the planted foot was kicked out from under me.” (p. 114 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “Whatever the reason, our assistant principal never took Cap aside and explained to him that someone was yanking his chain.” (p. 39 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Initiate a discussion on bullying. Ask students how they deal with bullying in their school. Compile their ideas and display on a bulletin board.
- Investigate some of the causes and consequences of bullying with the class. This can be connected to an entire unit on bullying. Refer to resources available from <http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/kids/>.

Fine Arts:

- Immerse students in all things from the 1960’s. Investigate the music and art of the ‘60’s; how was it influenced by the culture during that time? What common themes do the students see in both art and music?
- Have students create tie-dyed articles of clothing.

Language Arts:

- Discuss with students the characteristics of an idiom. Brainstorm with students about current idioms. Have students research common idioms from the 1960’s and compare the two lists.
- Research literature that was popular in the 1960’s. Do the students detect any common themes?

Mathematics:

- Have students create a theme and organize a “dance.” Have students work in teams to prepare a budget, menu, music, decorations, and activities.
- Discuss with students the concepts behind checks/debit cards. Pose questions such as the following: Where does the money come from? How does the banking system work? What happens when you spend money you don’t have? Have students work with bogus accounts; develop budgets for spending, etc.

Science:

- Discuss with students uses of a Foucault pendulum. Have students research the following questions: How it is made? Who invented it? What is the formula for its use?
- Have students create their own communal garden and try to grow the vegetables organically.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Research with students the cultural climate of the 1960’s. What was occurring in politics? How did American’s feel about the Vietnam war? What role did young people play in the peace movement and why?

Wing Nut

by Mary Jane Auch

Annotation

Grady's mechanic dad died seven years ago when Grady was only five-years-old. Since then 12-year-old Grady and his mom have been bouncing from one shaky work/living situation to another. On the road again, their duct taped junker dies near a small town. Lila must again find work and a place for them to live. Luckily a local, elderly man needs a temporary cook and housekeeper. As Grady quickly learns, the older man is a "nut" about purple martin birds and also has car mechanic knowledge. These three strong characters team up to deliver a heartwarming, upbeat story. (Grades 5-8) (AR 4.4)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.auchbooks.com/>

Realia

Item: Toy red Corvette car

Statement: Grady received a toy Corvette car painted bright candy-apple red from his father shortly before his dad dies. Since then, Grady and his mom have traveled from one town to the other looking for work and a place to live. Follow their journey to find a new home in *Wing Nut* by Mary Jane Auch.

Food

Mashed potatoes, Meat loaf, Peach pie, Salisbury steak, French fries, Brussels sprouts

Challenging Words

announcement	(p. 113 HB)	guarantee	(p. 45 HB)
catapult	(p. 227 HB)	hypnotized	(p. 44 HB)
compensate	(p. 225 HB)	ignorant	(p. 125 HB)
contagious	(p. 133 HB)	permanent	(p. 47 HB)
demonstrate	(p. 52 HB)	pivoted	(p. 18 HB)
deposited	(p. 9 HB)	predicament	(p. 35 HB)
dubious	(p. 100 HB)	propaganda	(p. 63 HB)
eavesdropping	(p. 39 HB)	regulations	(p. 123 HB)
exaggeration	(p. 100 HB)	shouldered	(p. 38 HB)
fetching	(p. 117 HB)	spectators	(p. 227 HB)

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- "Then he looked at Lila from under that lock of Elvis hair. The trouble tattoo had turned into a flashing neon sign." (p. 45 HB)

Similes

- "With her fish-white skin, Grady thought she looked like a greeting card for the Fourth of July." (p. 35 HB)
- "The first day he stepped into a new school, it was like diving into a tank of freezing water." (p. 49 HB)

- “It looked like red hair that had faded, like an old blanket that had been washed so many times, most of the color had come out of it.” (p. 52 HB)
- “Lila looked like a little kid all set to open a big pile of birthday presents.” (p. 59 HB)
- “There was a map of the United States on the screen that looked like somebody had spilled grape syrup on it.” (p. 107 HB)
- “The wig nut I just dropped. It has two little projections on it that look like wings.” (p. 122 HB)
- Additional similes are located on the following pages: 5, 7, 8, 13, 15, 24, 88, 111, 130, 134, 136, and 137.

Idioms and Expressions

- “That seemed like a bad omen – another sunward path.” (p. 24 HB)
- “You don’t get nothin’ for free, Mom. There’s always a catch.” (p. 26 HB)
- “Okay. I catch your drift.” (p. 36 HB)
- “You think I’ve taken leave of my senses?” Charlie asked.” (p. 55 HB)
- “If they could earn them enough money to get a set of wheels, they could move on to someplace more exciting.” (p. 58 HB)
- “Charlie gave him a thumbs-up sign.” (p. 176 HB)
- Additional idioms and expressions are located on the following pages: 23, 48, 54, 74, 89, and 151.

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Read to class the first paragraph on page 122 that states “Sometimes a person has to do things he doesn’t like because they need doing.” Discuss this quote and ask students how it relates to their lives. Ask students if they agree with Charlie.
- Remind students that Grady had experienced and witnessed the aggressive behavior of school bullies. Discuss with students why some students are bullies and what actions can be taken to stop this negative behavior.

Fine Arts:

- Share with class paintings of birds from artists such as John James Audubon and other contemporary artists. Have students choose one type of bird and have them draw or paint the bird in its natural setting. Use the following Internet sites for images or check out books from the library:
 - <http://www.audubon.org/>
 - <http://fineartamerica.com/paintings/tag/birds>
 - http://www.birdsbirdsbirds.co.uk/acatalog/original_bird_paintings_by_wildlife_artist.html
 - <http://www.paintingsofwildlife.com/birds.html>

Language Arts:

- Remind students that Grady’s favorite book was *The Great Gilly Hopkins* by Katherine Paterson. Share this book with students and ask them if they each have a favorite book. Make a class list of favorite student books. Continue this activity by having class conduct a grade level or school wide survey on other students’ favorite books.

Science:

- Have students research Purple Martin birds using the following Internet sites:
 - <http://purplemartin.org/main/mgt.html>
 - <http://www.purplemartin.net/>
 - <http://purplemartin.org/>

Have students keep track of the migration of the birds on a map and/or chart. Discuss with students the need for human interference in protecting these birds, as well as other species.