Rules

By

Cynthia Lord

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed
About the author: Nat Reed has been a member of the teaching profession for more than 30 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, please visit the websites www.reedpublications.org and www.novelstudies.org.
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Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two chapters of *Rules* and is comprised of five of the following different activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language Activities
- Extension Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)</th>
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| Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5, makes reference to:
  a) determining the meaning of words and phrases... including figurative language;
  b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
  c) compare and contrast two characters;
  d) determine how characters... respond to challenges;
  e) drawing inferences from the text;
  f) determining a theme of a story... and many others. |

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking. Students will also be expected to provide clear answers to questions and well-constructed explanations. It is critical as well that students be able to relate events and the feelings of characters to their own lives and experiences and describe their own interpretation of a particular passage.

A strength of the unit is that students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A portfolio cover is included (p.7) so that students may organize their work and keep it all in one place. A Student Checklist is also included (p.6) so that a record of completed work may be recorded.

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include family and friendship, peer pressure, abilities and disabilities, loyalty, personal growth.
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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words / phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homonyms
3. Identifying / creating alliteration
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify personification.
7. Identify anagrams
8. Listing compound words
9. Identifying parts of speech
10. Identify/create similes
11. Identification of root words

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a time line of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Complete Five W's Chart
4. Identify cliffhangers
5. Identify the climax of the novel.
6. Complete a Story Pyramid

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist/antagonist
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Compare characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Create a poem
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Chart
9. Complete a KWS Chart
10. Create a friendly letter.

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip
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Synopsis

Twelve-year-old Catherine just wants a normal life. Which is near impossible when you have a brother with autism and a family that revolves around his disability. She's spent years trying to teach David the rules from “a peach is not a funny-looking apple” to “keep your pants on in public” - in order to head off David's embarrassing behaviors.

But the summer Catherine meets Jason, a surprising, new sort-of friend, and Kristi, the potential next-door friend she's always wished for; it's her own shocking behavior that turns everything upside down and forces her to ask: What is normal?  [The Publisher]

A complete synopsis and other helpful reviews can be found online at such sites as the following: http://www.bookrags.com/studyguide-rules/#gsc.tab=0

Author Biography
Cynthia Lord

Cynthia Lord’s life as a writer began at age four with a song collaboration with her sister. Lord says that she was a day dreamer and very shy. Her favorite books when she was very young included Fantastic Mr. Fox and Winnie-the-Pooh. In college Lord had some short stories published, and even won a contest with one. After college Lord got married and became a teacher. As her children grew up, she returned to writing fiction. Cynthia Lord lives in an old house with her husband, John, and her children, Julia and Gregory. Gregory has autism. David in the book, Rules, was inspired by her son, Gregory.

Adapted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cynthia_Lord
## Rules
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### Student Checklist

**Student Name:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade/Level</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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Name: ____________________________
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Chapters 1-2
(Follow the rules – Don't run down the clinic hallway)

Before you read the chapter:

The protagonist in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of Rules is twelve-year-old Catherine who is about to embark on a summer she will never forget. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. What do you think makes for an especially interesting protagonist?

Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>advisory</th>
<th>crude</th>
<th>realtor</th>
<th>conversation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>autism</td>
<td>complicated</td>
<td>fidget</td>
<td>occupational</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Ralph was always interrupting our __________ by making silly noises.
2. I never expected that the puzzle would be so __________.
3. I expect my role in the mayor's office will be of an __________ nature.
4. My mother works as a __________ for a large and successful company.
5. The movie wasn't even half over when I noticed that David was beginning to ________.
6. Experts believe that __________ presents itself during the first three years of a person's life.
7. I think that she will benefit from the help of an __________ therapist.
8. My aunt did not appreciate Charlie's __________ sense of humor.
### Questions

1. What is the **setting** of the story at the beginning of Chapter One?

2. Why do you think that the video store is David's favorite place?

3. Catherine says, *sometimes I can change how I feel about something by drawing it.* Why do you think this the case with Catherine?

4. What did Catherine find exciting about having new neighbors moving in next door?

5. How do you think Catherine's parents could have been more understanding when it came to Catherine's responsibilities regarding her brother?

6. What did Catherine do in the waiting room that upset Jason? Why do you think this upset him?
7. How do you think Jason feels about his therapist? Why does he feel this way?

8. Why does Catherine use rules to help her brother?

9. Catherine's role as the guardian of her little brother is not an easy one. What would be three character attributes that Catherine would value in being able to fulfill her responsibilities? The first attribute has been given.

1. patience

2.

3.

10. Catherine endures a very humiliating experience in Chapter Two. The actor, Pierce Brosnan, once said, *Oh, humiliation is poisonous. It's one of the deepest pains of being human.* Why do you think humiliation is such a difficult experience for most people?

Good to Know ~ Autism

Kids with autism often can't make connections that other kids make easily. For example, when people smile, you know they feel happy or friendly; when people look mad, you can tell by their face or their voice. But many kids who have autism spectrum disorders have trouble understanding what emotions look like and what another person is thinking. They might act in a way that seems unusual, and it can be hard to understand why they're doing it. ~ From this helpful website: [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)
A. **Anagrams**

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word *WAS* can also form the word *SAW*. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:

a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in the first two chapters of *Rules*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Anagram</th>
<th>Clue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rules</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fishermen love these.</td>
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<tr>
<td>stare</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sob.</td>
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<tr>
<td>board</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wide.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fingers</td>
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<td>Edges.</td>
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<tr>
<td>smile</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fruits.</td>
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<td>peach</td>
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<td>Inexpensive.</td>
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<td>throw</td>
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<td>Value.</td>
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Now find **three** additional words from the first two chapters which have interesting anagrams to see if you can stump a classmate.

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<thead>
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<th>Word</th>
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<th>Clue</th>
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B. Even Shakespeare liked to write Quatrain Poems.

The quatrain is a popular form of rhymed verse. It is a poem of four lines, is usually light and can be humorous. The following famous quatrain was written by the great writer, William Shakespeare, and is taken from Sonnet 18.

*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.*

Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of A – B – A – B. Other rhyming schemes include: AABB, AAAA, AABA, ABBA, ABBB, and AAAB.

Your task is to write your ownquatrain poem. You may choose a rhyming scheme that fits with your own personal creation. The theme should have something to do with the themes established in the first two chapters of our novel.

### The Quatrain Poem

Now create your own Quatrain Poem on a subject of your choice. Your poem must follow the format of a quatrain poem described above (and must rhyme).

**Title:** ______________________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line 1</th>
<th>Line 2</th>
<th>Line 3</th>
<th>Line 4</th>
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C. Exaggeration

Exaggeration in a literary device defined as a statement that represents something as better or worse than it really is. We find an example of this in Chapter One: Dad's always late. (Surely he must have been on time for something in his life.)

Think of an exaggerated way of describing the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A wailing bagpipe</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Croak of a toad.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>An awkward swan dive.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A mosquito's sting.</td>
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D. Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human. Here's an example from Chapter Two: Mom's question hangs in the air.

Describe how Mom's question is personified in this example.

Create your own example of personification.

As you continue to read through the novel be on the lookout for other examples of this literary device. If you should find one, come back to this question and enter it below.
Extension Activity

Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A story-board can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel. Complete the story-board below illustrating the events described in the first two chapters of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

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<td>4</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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