Surviving the Applewhites

By

Stephanie S. Tolan

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed
Surviving the Applewhites

By Stephanie S. Tolan

Table of Contents

Suggestions and Expectations .................................................. 3

List of Skills ............................................................................ 4

Synopsis / Author Biography .................................................... 5

Student Checklist ..................................................................... 6

Reproducible Student Booklet ................................................... 7

Answer Key .............................................................................. 71

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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 three chapters of *Surviving the Applewhites* and is comprised of five of the following different activities:

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

**Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)**

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 the importance of family and community, acceptance, teamwork and determination, 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

Jake Semple is notorious. Rumor has it he burned down his old school and got kicked out of every school in his home state.

Only one place will take him in now, and that's a home school run by the Applewhites, a chaotic and hilarious family of artists. The only one who doesn't fit the Applewhite mold is E.D. - a smart, sensible girl who immediately clashes with the unruly Jake.

Jake thinks surviving this one will be a breeze... but is he really as tough or as bad as he seems? [Courtesy of the publisher]

Author Biography

Stephanie S. Tolan

Stephanie S. Tolan is the author of more than 25 books for young readers, including Listen! Which won the Christopher Award... Her New York Times bestselling novel Surviving The Applewhites received a Newbery Honor and was named a Smithsonian Magazine Notable Book for Children...

Readers can revisit the eccentric Applewhite family in Tolan’s newest novel, Applewhites At Wit’s End.

Tolan lives on a little lake in a big woods in Charlotte, North Carolina, with her husband (Bob), two dogs (Coyote and Samantha), two fish, and plenty of outdoor creatures. You can visit her online at www.stephanietolan.com

[Biography courtesy of the publisher]
Surviving the Applewhites
By Stephanie S. Tolan

Student Checklist

Student Name: ________________________________________

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade/Level</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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Surviving the Applewhites

By Stephanie S. Tolan

Name: ____________________________
Surviving the Applewhites
By Stephanie S. Tolan

Chapters 1-3

Before you read the chapters:

The protagonist in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. One of the two main characters of Surviving the Applewhites is Jake Semple, a boy who has already been kicked out of every school in his home state. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. Who would you say is your most favorite character ever? What made you select this character?

Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pathological</th>
<th>tendency</th>
<th>impression</th>
<th>quaint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>traumatic</td>
<td>hostile</td>
<td>recluse</td>
<td>spontaneity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I had the distinct ___________ that his aunt was very lazy.

2. Being in a car accident is a very ___________ event.

3. My cousin is a ___________ liar.

4. Our acting coach had to rely on the ___________ of the cast for success.

5. His van has an unfortunate ___________ to pull to the right.

6. We stayed in a very ___________ and rustic cottage.

7. The Toronto Blue Jays received a very ___________ reception in Texas.

8. My grandfather became quite a ___________ toward the end of his life.
1. Describe the **setting** of the story at the beginning of Chapter One.

2. Describe your first impression of Jake Semple.

3. Who was the only member of the Applewhite family who voted against letting Jake join them?

4. From which character's point of view are the following chapters written in?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 1</th>
<th>Chapter 2</th>
<th>Chapter 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5. Most readers would probably consider the Applewhite family to be quite unusual. Would you concur with this assessment? Why or why not?

6. How was E.D.'s personality different than the rest of the Applewhites?
7. What issue caused Randolph Applewhite to withdraw his three oldest children from the local school district?

8. What does the author mean by *The Creative Academy wasn't so much a home school as an unschool*?

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**Language Activities**

**A. Edith Wharton**

E.D. was named after her mother’s favorite writer, *Edith Wharton*. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, research three fascinating facts about this famous writer and record them below. You may consider such facts as her personal life, accomplishments, etc.

1. 

2. 

3. 

B. **Character Match**

Match the name of each character on the left with the proper description on the right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHARACTER</th>
<th>Correct Answer</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E.D. Applewhite</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Jake's grandfather.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jake Semple</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>Novelist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aunt Lucille</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>Four years old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Dugan</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>Had his/her own social worker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randolph Applewhite</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>Breathtaking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cordelia Applewhite</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>The clan's patriarch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sybil Jameson</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>A recluse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zedediah Applewhite</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>Almost 13 years old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destiny Applewhite</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>The father of the Applewhite children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hal Applewhite</td>
<td>j</td>
<td>A poet.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. **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 three chapters of *Surviving the Applewhites*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Anagram</th>
<th>Clue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>least</td>
<td>Stories.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>state</td>
<td>Savor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>silver</td>
<td>Vital organs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>words</td>
<td>An ancient weapon.</td>
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<tr>
<td>table</td>
<td>A sheep's sound.</td>
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<tr>
<td>tear</td>
<td>Price.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>eager</td>
<td>In accord with someone.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Now find two additional words from the first three chapters which have interesting anagrams to see if you can stump a classmate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Anagram</th>
<th>Clue</th>
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D. A Quatrain Poem Celebrates Creativity.

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 quatrain is the first four lines of the critically-acclaimed poem, *The Artsy Type*, written by the famous poet, Atrocious Halitosis.

*It's fun to be the artsy type,*
*To dance and sew and paint,*
*I'm talented and oh so bright,*
*But humble I sure ain't.*

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 own quatrain 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 three chapters of our novel (like *creativity* or *juvenile delinquents*).

### The Quatrain Poem

Now create your own Quatrain Poem. 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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Extension Activities

1. **Storyboard**

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

<p>| | |</p>
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<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Cartography

The Applewhite family have a very interesting collection of buildings on their property. E.D. Lists the following structures: the main house, eight cottages, a goat shed, toolshed and a barn. As the story unfolds we get some idea of the arrangement of these buildings, but for now use your imagination to create a map of the Applewhite property, indicating all of these buildings as well as the highway passing in front of the property, plus the main driveway.