The Invention of Hugo Cabret

By

Brian Selznick

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed
The Invention of Hugo Cabret
By Brian Selznick

Table of Contents

Suggestions and Expectations ......................................................... 3
List of Skills .................................................................................. 4
Synopsis / Author Biography .......................................................... 5
Student Checklist ........................................................................... 6
Reproducible Student Booklet ......................................................... 7
Answer Key .................................................................................... 62

About the author: Nat Reed has been a member of the teaching profession for more than 30 years. He is presently a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program. 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 sixty seven page curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two chapters of The Invention of Hugo Cabret and is comprised of four different activities:

• Before You Read
• Vocabulary Building
• Comprehension Questions
• Language and Extension Activities

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.

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.

Students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A portfolio cover is included as well as a Student Checklist.

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include Paris, train stations, 1930’s, clocks and timepieces, honesty, courage, automatons/robots, early movies.

Additional icons provided by http://www.iconka.com
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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 foreshadowing.
7. Identify personification.
8. Use of singular / plural nouns
9. Listing compound words
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identification of root words
13. Identify/create similes

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. Identify the climax of the novel.
4. Five W’s Chart

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Protagonists and antagonists
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Comparing two Characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Write a letter to a friend
4. Complete an Observation Chart
5. Conduct an interview
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Create a KWS Chart

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a brochure
4. Design a cover for the novel
5. Design an Information Card
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Synopsis

Orphan, clock keeper, and thief, Hugo lives in the walls of a busy Paris train station, where his survival depends on secrets and anonymity. But when his world suddenly interlocks with an eccentric, bookish girl and a bitter old man who runs a toy booth in the station, Hugo's undercover life, and his most precious secret, are put in jeopardy. A cryptic drawing, a treasured notebook, a stolen key, a mechanical man, and a hidden message from Hugo's dead father form the backbone of this intricate, tender, and spellbinding mystery. [The Publisher]

Author Biography
Brian Selznick

Hello there. My name is Brian Selznick and I’m the author and illustrator of The Invention of Hugo Cabret. I was born in 1966 in New Jersey. I have a sister who is a teacher, a brother who is a brain surgeon. I studied at The Rhode Island School of Design and after I graduated from college I worked at Eeyore’s Books for Children in New York City. I learned all about children’s books from my boss Steve Geck who is now an editor of children’s books at Greenwillow.

My first book, The Houdini Box, which I both wrote and illustrated, was published in 1991 while I was still working at the bookstore. Since then, I have illustrated many books for children, including Frindle by Andrew Clements, The Doll People by Ann Martin and Laura Godwin, Amelia and Eleanor Go for a Ride by Pam Muñoz Ryan and The Dinosaurs of Waterhouse Hawkins by Barbara Kerley, which received a 2001 Caldecott Honor.

I have also written a few other books myself, including The Boy of a Thousand Faces, but The Invention of Hugo Cabret is by far the longest and most involved book I’ve ever worked on. I live in Brooklyn, New York, and San Diego, California.

http://www.theinventionofhugocabret.com/about_brian_bio.htm
The Invention of Hugo Cabret

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Student Checklist

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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade / Level</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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The Incredible Invention of Hugo Cabret

By Brian Selznick

Name: _______________________________
The Invention of Hugo Cabret
By Brian Selznick

PART I – Chapters 1 - 2

Before you read the chapters:

The protagonist in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of The Invention of Hugo Cabret is the very likeable boy, Hugo Cabret, who lives in a Paris railway station. 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 intriguing protagonist?

Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>agitated</th>
<th>reluctant</th>
<th>diligent</th>
<th>contents</th>
<th>accidentally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>expression</td>
<td>eventually</td>
<td>illuminate</td>
<td>abandon</td>
<td>accumulate</td>
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</table>

1. Jeremy was most _____________ to take the narrow path up the side of the cliff.
2. “Please do not ___________ me and my baby,” the young woman cried out pitifully.
3. Our last mayor suggested to the townspeople that they begin to ______________ food and water in case of a flood.
4. Chester became very ______________ when anyone went to close to the bonfire.
5. No one guessed that the _____________ of the deerskin satchel contained uncut diamonds.

6. Captain Jasper was most _________________ in his military responsibilities.

7. The kindergarten students _________________ let the gerbil escape from its cage.

8. It took more than forty candles to properly _________________ the cave.

9. Do you think that _____________ Canada’s population will be greater than that of the United States?

10. You could see that she felt a bit guilty by the sheepish _____________ on her face.

Questions

1. Write a brief synopsis of the events portrayed in the pictures at the beginning of Chapter One.

2. What clue is there in the first series of pictures that tell the reader that the setting of the novel is in the city of Paris, France.

3. What two people did Hugo see in the toy booth? Why was one of them agitated?
4. Describe the pictures that the old man found in Hugo’s notebook


5. Describe how Hugo reacted when the old man took his notebook.


6. Describe the atmosphere of the pictures at the beginning of Chapter Two.


7. What had been the original purpose of the secret apartments where Hugo lived?


8. What was Hugo’s job in the station?


9. Foreshadowing is a literary device where the author provides a hint as to what will happen later in the story. How might the description of Hugo seeing the Station inspector’s office and jail cell be an example of foreshadowing.


10. There were __________ clocks in the station.
Language Activities

A. The Eiffel Tower

One of the world’s most famous landmarks is the Eiffel Tower in Paris. The Eiffel Tower was built in 1889 and remains the tallest building in Paris – the second tallest in France. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, investigate additional facts about this famous landmark. Below record three fascinating facts from your research.


B. Alliteration

The author seems to enjoy using alliteration – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. An example from Chapter Two is “. . . waiting for any criminals caught in the station.”

Using your imagination, create your own examples of alliteration from the following topics. Each example must contain a minimum of three words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The roar of a tiger</th>
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<tr>
<td>The sound of a tornado</td>
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<tr>
<td>From your imagination</td>
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Extension Activities

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 two chapters of *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

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