

The Bully: Novel Study

Pillar: Positive Social Environments
Division: III-IV
Grade Level: 9-10
Core Curriculum Connections: Language Arts

I. Rationale:

"A safe and caring school is an environment wherein all are accorded respect and dignity, and their safety and well-being are paramount considerations."

"Bullying is a relationship problem. It is the assertion of interpersonal power through aggression."

—Supporting Safe, Secure and Caring Schools in Alberta

"Alberta Education supports schools that are safe, caring, orderly, positive, productive, respectful and free from the fear of physical and emotional harm". Therefore, schools provide an ideal setting in which to teach children about bullying issues and behaviours and how to deal with them effectively. In this unit, a realistic novel, (*The Bully* by Paul Langan), is used to engage the students' interest, help them gain insight into why bullying occurs, and explore the role that all students can play in promoting a positive, safe, and caring social environment within their school.

II. Pillar Focus (Positive Social Environments):

The students will:

- Use the novel as a starting point for discussion and understanding of bullying behaviours and issues.
- Explore various aspects of bullying (drawing on their own experiences and characters' viewpoints) and demonstrate an understanding of the effects of bullying.
- Identify proactive ways to address the issue of bullying in their school communities.

III. Curriculum Outcomes: English Language Arts

ELA Grades 9	English 10-2
1.1 Discover and Explore Express ideas and develop understanding	1.1 Discover possibilities 1.1.1 Form tentative understandings, interpretations and positions
1.2 Clarify and Extend Consider others' ideas Combine ideas Extend understanding	1.2 Extend awareness 1.2.1 Consider new perspectives
2.1 Use Strategies and Cues Use prior knowledge Use comprehension strategies	2.1 Construct meaning from text and context 2.1.1 Discern and analyze context 2.1.2 Understand and interpret content

	2.1.3 Engage prior knowledge
2.2 Respond to Texts Experience various texts Construct meaning from texts Appreciate the artistry of texts	2.3 Respond to a variety of print and nonprint texts 2.3.1 Connect self, text, culture and milieu 2.3.2 Evaluate the verisimilitude, appropriateness and significance of print and nonprint texts
2.3 Understand Forms, Elements and Techniques Understand techniques and elements	4.1 Develop and present a variety of print and nonprint texts 4.1.1 Assess text creation context 4.1.2 Consider and address form, structure and medium 4.1.4 Use production, publication and presentation strategies and technologies consistent with context
4.1 Enhance and Improve Enhance artistry	
4.3 Present and Share Present information Enhance presentation Enhance presentation Demonstrate attentive listening and viewing	4.2 Improve thoughtfulness, effectiveness and correctness of communication 4.2.1 Enhance thought and understanding and support and detail 4.2.3 Consider and address matters of choice

IV. Materials

Classroom Materials:

- Copies of *The Bully* by Paul Langan (Townsend Press, 2002)
- Handouts included with this lesson:
 - T-chart
 - Character Map
 - Conflict Map
 - Resolution Map
- Sticky notes
- Journals

ii. Web Resources:

- [Bullying is Everyone's Problem: Do You Have the Courage to Stop It](#) (SACSC Resource for Senior High Students)
- [Literacy Connections: Readers' Theater](#) , [RT Tips: A Guide to Reader's Theater](#) , and [What is RT?](#)
- [Bullying Presentation](#) (SACSC power point)
- [Educator's Guide to Bullying](#)
- [National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center](#)

V. Procedure

Preparation:

Background information on Readers Theatre and how to implement it:

- [Literacy Connections: Readers' Theater](#)
- [RT Tips: A Guide to Reader's Theater](#)
- [What is RT?](#)

Background information on bullying in schools:

- [The Society for Safe and Caring Schools](#) – Resources and tips for teachers, parent, and youth.
- [Educator's Guide to Bullying](#)

Lesson 1

1. As an introduction to the novel, read the poems: "[No One There](#)", "[Hatred](#)", and "[Nobody](#)" aloud to the students (written by real student victims of bullying). Discuss each poem focusing on the following elements:
 - the feelings and perspectives of the narrator(s)
 - possible situations/circumstances
 - tone and theme/message conveyed
 - Ask students to share similar personal experiences and feelings related to each poem.
2. Introduce the novel, "*The Bully*", and explain that the main character has something in common with the narrators in the poems you just read. Darrell is a 15 year old that has just moved and changed schools in the middle of the year and also becomes a victim of bullying in his new surroundings. Ask students if they have ever heard of the phrase, "*new kid on the block*". Allow students to reflect on the implications of being a "*new kid on the block*" and share their perspectives and ideas:
 - What does this phrase mean? Why do you think it was created?
 - Have any of you ever been a "new kid on the block"?
 - What challenges are involved with being the "new kid"?
 - Are there any advantages to being the "new kid on the block"?
3. After generating sufficient interest, have students read Chapter 1 silently or read it to them.
4. Next, have them discuss Darrell's thoughts and feelings about moving from Philadelphia to Los Angeles and starting at a new school.
5. Divide students into six teams (referred to as Teams A, B, C, D, E, and F) and distribute a [T-chart](#) to each group. In the topic line, have Teams A and B write 'Someone who is a Bully'; Teams C and D, 'Someone who is Bullied'; and Teams E and F, 'Someone who is a Bystander'. Give students time to brainstorm on their topics, coming up with at least five descriptions in each column ('Looks Like' and 'Sounds Like').
6. Next, have the groups share their ideas. Write each group's ideas on chart paper for classroom display and reference purposes.
7. With remaining time or as homework, have students go to the [Alberta Education: Safe and Caring Schools](#) and read through the bullying prevention information. Also, have student go to the Web site, "[Society for Safe and Caring Schools](#)" and read, "[Bullying is Everyone's Problem: Do you Have the Courage to Stop It?](#)" and [Bullying Tips for Students](#). Also let them know that this information will provide background for understanding and discussing the rest of the novel *The Bully*.

Lesson 2

1. The rest of the novel will be read in sections (Chapters 2–5, Chapters 6–8, and Chapters 9–12). Several reading strategies may be incorporated to study the text and its theme:
 - **Literary elements mapping** - analyse the literary elements of character, conflict, and resolution.
 - **T-charts** - expand on descriptions of bullying as learn more about personalities in the text.
 - **Journal writing** - write personal journal entries to reflect on their reading.
 - **Readers Theatre** - explore the text in greater depth to develop better reading fluency.

- ❖ Share rubric criteria with the students so that they know what is expected in terms of evaluation.
2. Have students read independently or partner read Chapters 2–5 of *The Bully*. (You might also read the first of these chapters aloud to the class.)
 3. Remind students to be on the lookout for scenes that focus on developing the plot and the characters for use in Readers Theatre performances. While they are reading, have students use sticky notes to mark various parts that they think would be interesting to 'act out.'
 4. After reading the chapters, have students work in their teams using the [Character Map](#) and [Conflict Map](#) handouts. For Chapters 2–5, students should focus on the characters of Darrell, Mom, Tyray, and Uncle Jason.
 5. Have Teams A and B share their maps. (Teams C and D will share in Session 3; E and F, in Lesson 4.)
 6. Still in teams, have students create new [T-charts](#) revolving around specific characters from the novel as follows:
 - The chart on someone who is a bully now describes Tyray and/or Rodney.
 - The chart on someone who is bullied now describes Darrell and/or Harold.
 - The chart on someone who is a bystander now describes Amberlynn.
 7. Once again, have students share their work and record their responses on chart paper. Discuss.
 8. At the end of class, have students write personal responses in their journals, allowing them to free write or to choose one of the following prompts:
 - Which character do you identify with the most and why?
 - Is there something that has happened to you that is similar to what has happened to Darrell? If so, write about it and tell what you did.
 - How would you feel and what would you do if you were:
 - Darrell?
 - Mom?
 - Tyray?
 - Uncle Jason?

This could be a homework assignment if necessary, but if there is still time left, you can invite volunteers who are comfortable doing so to share their journal responses.

9. Collect students' materials to be sure they are following directions and completing their written assignments as expected. You should also respond to their journals and model the type of response you would like them to make if necessary; however, do not mark these until the end of the unit.

Lesson 3

1. Have students read independently or partner read with a team member Chapters 6–8 of the novel. (or instead read the first of these chapters aloud to the class.)
2. Remind students to remain on the lookout and use sticky notes to mark scenes and lines they'd like to re-

enact for the class.

3. After reading Chapter 8, have students work in their teams to update and/or create new [Character Map](#) and [Conflict Map](#) handouts. New Character Maps could be completed for Rodney, Amberlynn, Harold, and Mr. Mitchell.
4. Have Teams C and D share their new maps and any additions they have made to their old ones.
5. As a group, add to the class chart information about the characters who are bullies, bullied, or bystanders.
 6. a. Provide students with time to reread and rehearse for Readers Theatre. Team A should choose a scene from Chapter 1, Team B from Chapter 2, and so on through Team F choosing from Chapter 6.
 - b. Remind students that the scene and dialogue should deal with bullying issues and character development. For example, in Chapter 6, the scene in the locker room would be a good one to demonstrate how bullies intimidate their victims.
 - c. Students should develop a script for acting out the scenes using the exact dialogue from the text or add dialogue or extend it to make it more descriptive and detailed. They do not have to memorize it, but can read from the text as necessary; the emphasis should be reading comprehension fluency.
7. Allocate the last few minutes of class time to journals, encouraging students to either free write about personal connections and reflections or to use a prompt instead:
 - How have various characters (Mr. Mitchell, Harold, Amberlynn) interacted with Darrell? Write about how you think these relationships may help Darrell.
 - If you were Darrell, what could you have done or said that might have helped in dealing with Tyray?
 - What friends and relationships have you had that are similar to Darrell's? How have these helped you in solving problems in your life?
 - Again, this could be a homework assignment if necessary, but if time still permits, volunteers can share their responses.
8. Collect and review students' materials as before.

Lesson 4

1. Have students continue reading the remainder of the novel.
2. In addition to updating Character Map and Conflict Map handouts, distribute [Resolution Map](#) handouts to the teams and allow time to work on these.
3. Have the final two teams share their work on the maps.
4. Invite new information that could be added to the class T-chart, then move on to discuss and create a new T-chart on what bullying prevention looks like and sounds like. Mr. Mitchell could be a minor character here, with Darrell then becoming the focus.
5. Give students time to reread and rehearse for Readers Theatre performances, this time selecting new scenes from the second half of the novel. Team A should now choose a scene from Chapter 7, Team B

from Chapter 8, and so on through Team F choosing from Chapter 12.

6. For the journal writing activity, sample prompts for the last chapters might include:
 - What are some of the things Darrell learned from wrestling that you feel helped him in dealing with the bullies and his other relationships?
 - If you participate in sports or other activities, how do these help you in your daily life? Be sure to make comparisons with yourself and Darrell.
 - What would you have done the same as and differently than Darrell in this last part of the novel?
7. Collect and review students' work.

Lesson 5

1. Give students final script development and rehearsal time for the two scenes they will be performing for Readers Theatre.

Lesson 6

1. As a culmination of the work they've done in reading *'The Bully'* and analyzing the issues at hand, have the teams take turns performing their scenes for the class.

If possible, in the interest of awareness building, have them perform for a larger audience. (Of course, if you have arranged for this, you will want to have told them this in lesson 2.) Performing for a wider audience could also be done as an extension.

2. Have students write a final journal entry reflecting on what they learned from this experience and the impact it has on their relationships in and out of school.

VI. Extensions and Variations:

- Students can work in their teams or with a partner to create (their choice) a poem, rap, song, poster, slogan, artwork, or cheer against bullying. These can then be shared with the class and displayed on a bulletin board to support a positive social environment and promote positive interactions within the class. These do not have to be formally assessed, but are meant to be a creative and personally relevant way to demonstrate their understanding of bullying and its effects.
- Students can write their own scripts for various scenes in the novel, creating two outcomes—the original one and an alternative. They can then perform them for the class.
- Students can do further research on the topic of bullying or violence in schools and create presentations to share with other classes in the school.

VII. Assessment Ideas:

- Assess students' participation in teams and whole-class activities and discussions through observation. (Sample rubric: [Class Discussion Rubric](#))
- Compare the original group T-charts with the final class versions, and reflect on your students' use of T-charts to summarize information about the characters in relation to bullying.

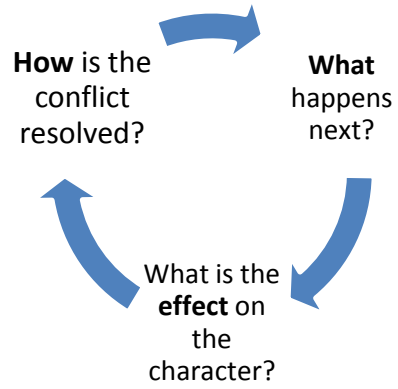
- Have students compile information from their Character, Conflict and Resolution maps to design a "Literary Elements Map" that reflects their understanding of the main character, plot development, and conclusion.
 - Assess Readers Theatre participation and performance by considering if students select appropriate scenes to act out (scenes that have dialogue or events relevant to the theme of bullying) and by observing if their performances are fluent, expressive, and reflect comprehension. For assessment, you may also use the [Readers Theatre Evaluation](#) form.
 - For journal entries, ask the following questions during assessment:
 - ✓ Are the entries reflective of an understanding of the text?
 - ✓ Do students make personal connections that are relevant to the text and the discussions?
 - ✓ The online [Journals-Rubric](#) form offers additional relevant criteria.
- ❖ See the next pages for student handouts.

Conflict Map

Name: _____

What is the Conflict?	Why does the conflict occur?	What are some solutions?

Resolution Map



How?

Next?

Effect?

The form consists of a large rectangular box containing three large blue arrows pointing to the right. Each arrow has a circular label on its left side: 'How?' for the first, 'Next?' for the second, and 'Effect?' for the third. Inside each arrow, there are several horizontal lines for writing.

T - Chart

Topic: _____

Looks Like	Sounds Like

Character Map

What does the character say (words)?

What does the character do (actions)?

Character's Name:

What does the character think about (thoughts)?

What does the narrator say about the character?

What do other characters say about this character?
