

Westing Game by Ellen Raskin (Published by Puffin Books)

Approved for use in Communication Arts, Grade 6

Summary

Old Sam Westing has died and has left behind an odd will. He's invited his 16 "heirs" to play a game, and the winner takes—or inherits—all. The clues? Words typed on pieces of paper towels. The players? The residents of a new apartment building. The solution? For the reader to discover. This novel is unusual, interesting, and engaging.

Connection to the Curriculum

This high-interest book can be used to teach theme, character development, conflict, resolution, and plot analysis. The plot is developed in a sophisticated style that will challenge readers and keep them guessing. This is a great text to help student engage with reading by making predictions. It can also foster great discussion, problem solving, and a wonderful examination of characters' feelings.

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.2- The students read fluently. 1.3- The students expand vocabulary. 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

Literature: 2.1- The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)

Reading:

1.4.9- The student identifies characteristics of narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.

1.4.13- The student generates and responds logically to literal, inferential, and critical thinking questions before, during, and after the reading of the text.

1.4.15- The student analyzes how text structure (sequence, problem-solution, comparison-contrast, description, cause-effect) help support comprehension of text.

1.4.16- The student compares and contrasts varying aspects (e.g., characters' traits and motives, themes, problem-solution, cause-effect relationships, ideas and concepts, procedures, viewpoints) in one or more appropriate-level texts.

1.4.17- The student explains cause-effect relationships in appropriate-level narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.

1.4.18- The student uses paraphrasing and organizational skills to summarize information (e.g., stated and main ideas, main events, important details) from appropriate-level narrative, expository, persuasive, and technical texts in logical order.

1.4.19- The student identifies the topic, main idea(s), supporting details, and theme(s) in texts across the content areas and from a variety of sources in appropriate-level texts.

1.4.20- The student identifies and describes the author's purpose (e.g., to inform, to give directions, to entertain) and basic techniques the author uses to achieve that purpose.

Literature:

2.1.3- The student identifies major and minor events related to the conflict in a story (e.g., crisis/turning moment, climax, resolution) and explains how one event gives rise to another.

2.1.4- The student understands aspects of theme (e.g. moral, lesson, meaning, message, author's ideas about the subject) and supports with implicit and/or explicit information from the text.

A Note on the Text

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

This mystery centers around the death of Old Sam Westing.

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:

To be completed during future curriculum development activities