

***Steal Away Home* by Lois Ruby (Published by Simon and Schuster Books)**

Approved for use in Communication Arts, Grade 7

Summary

A twelve-year-old girl discovers a skeleton in a hidden room in her Lawrence, Kansas home. In her attempt to learn more about the skeleton, Dana discovers that her home was once a station on the Underground Railroad. The book moves back and forth between present day and the year 1856, giving a very readable description of life for a northern Quaker family and a runaway slave in Kansas after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

Connection to the Curriculum

Students in Blue Valley will have an immediate connection to the setting (Lawrence, Kansas), as they explore the effect of setting on a work. In addition, Ruby's use of alternating past and present settings every other chapter enables students to trace parallel story lines and analyze the plot structure. Students may also examine the genre of historical fiction and engage in research to separate the fact and fiction. The topic may also serve as an extension to their studies in history and students can discover the vital role their community played in the history of the United States.

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

Literature: 2.1- The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text. 2.2- The students understand the significance of literature and its contributions to various cultures.

Research: 4.1- The students use effective research practices.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)

Reading:

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

1.4.15- The student uses information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions.

1.4.24- The student uses evidence from text to support conclusions drawn from grade level reading.

Literature:

2.1.1- The student describes different aspects of major and minor characters (e.g., their physical traits, personality traits, feelings, actions, motives) and explains how those aspects influence characters' interactions with other characters and elements of the plot, including resolution of the major conflict.

2.1.2- The student identifies and describes the setting (e.g., environment, time of day or year, historical period, situation, place) and analyzes connections between the setting and other story elements (e.g., character, plot).

2.1.3- The student identifies major and minor elements of the plot (e.g., conflict, crisis/turning moment, climax, resolution, rising action, falling action, subplots, parallel episodes) and explains how these elements relate 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/explicit information from the text.

2.1.5- The student identifies the use of literary devices (e.g., foreshadowing, flashback, figurative language, irony, metaphor, tone/mood, symbolism).

2.2.8- The student compares and contrasts customs and ideas within literature representing a variety of cultures.

2.2.9- The student recognizes connections between cultures and experiences through a variety of texts.

Research:

4.1.1- The student forms and revises questions for investigations, including questions arising from readings, assignments, and units of study, in order to create a thesis.

4.1.3- The student distinguishes between accurate and inaccurate or misleading information.

A Note on the Text

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

The Quaker religion and Underground Railroad are topics addressed in this novel.

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:

To be completed during future curriculum development activities