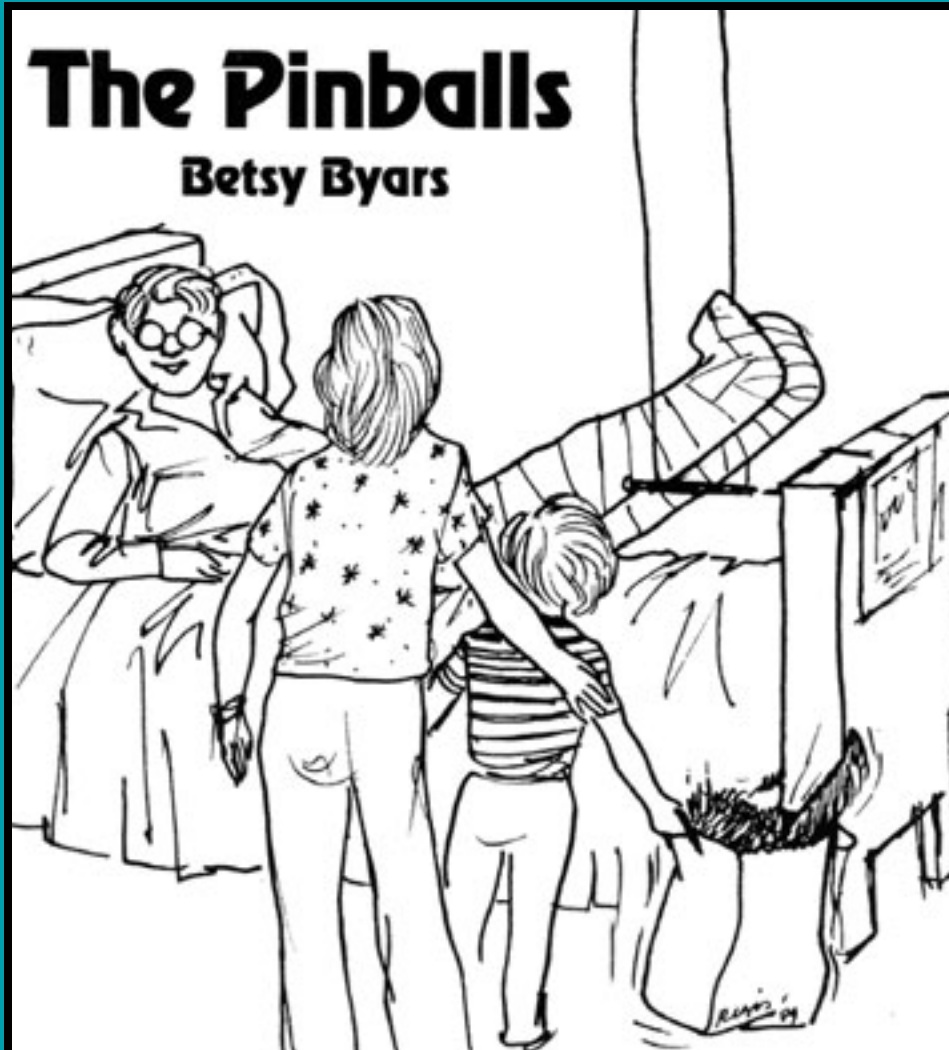


Novel·Ties



A Study Guide

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LEARNING LINKS

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide to use in conjunction with a specific novel consists of lessons for guided reading. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel on its reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for reading development by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits, formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques, will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Preview the book by reading the author's name and the title and by looking at the picture on the cover of the book. What do you think the book will be about? Where and when do you think it takes place? Have you read any other books by the same author?
2. Read the Background Information about foster care and adoption on page two of this study guide and do some additional research to answer the following questions:
 - For what reasons might a child be placed in foster care?
 - Why might a child be put up for adoption? Do you think that each of these reasons is acceptable?
 - Under what circumstances would you approve of foster care or adoptive placement for a child?
3. Do some research to find out about the legal qualifications for adoption and foster care in your state. Then discuss with your classmates whether these laws are too strict or too lenient. Also, discuss ways you think these laws could be improved.
4. What are the positive and negative effects a child may experience upon being placed in a foster home? What are the qualities that would make a foster home a positive experience?
5. Why might an adult couple care for foster children? Why wouldn't they adopt children instead?
6. Discuss the issue of child abuse and bring in newspaper and magazine articles that deal with the topic. What are the psychological as well as physical effects of abuse? Why do abused children often mature into abusive adults? What do you think might end the cycle of abused children becoming abusive parents?
7. Courts face a dilemma when weighing the need to separate children from their parents against keeping them close to their natural families. Why do some judges return children to parents who are suspected of abuse rather than place them in an institution or under foster care? Under what circumstances do you think the courts should remove children from their families? Under what circumstances should they be returned to their families?
8. Do you think people who have been severely mistreated as children can rise above their backgrounds to a worthwhile future? Or are people always products of their past experiences?
9. Read the Background Information on pinball machines on page two of this study guide. As you read the book, determine why the children call themselves pinballs.

Chapters 1 – 4 (cont.)

4. What was unusual about Thomas J's behavior? Why did he behave this way? What positive personality traits did he possess?
5. Why did a social worker meet with Carlie at the Masons' house?
6. Why was Thomas J placed in foster care? How was the reason for his placement at the Masons' house different from that of Carlie and Harvey?

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why do you think Harvey would not reveal to Carlie the real reason his legs were in casts?
2. Do you think that children with parents like Harvey's should be separated from them permanently or temporarily?
3. Why do you think Carlie behaved in such a tough manner and was so nasty to Mrs. Mason, Harvey, and Thomas J?

Literary Device: Simile

A simile is a comparison between two unlike objects using the words "like" or "as." For example:

Someone had left him [Thomas J] in front of a farmhouse like he was an unwanted puppy.

What was being compared? _____

What is the effect of this comparison? _____

Find two other examples of similes. Write them in the spaces below.
