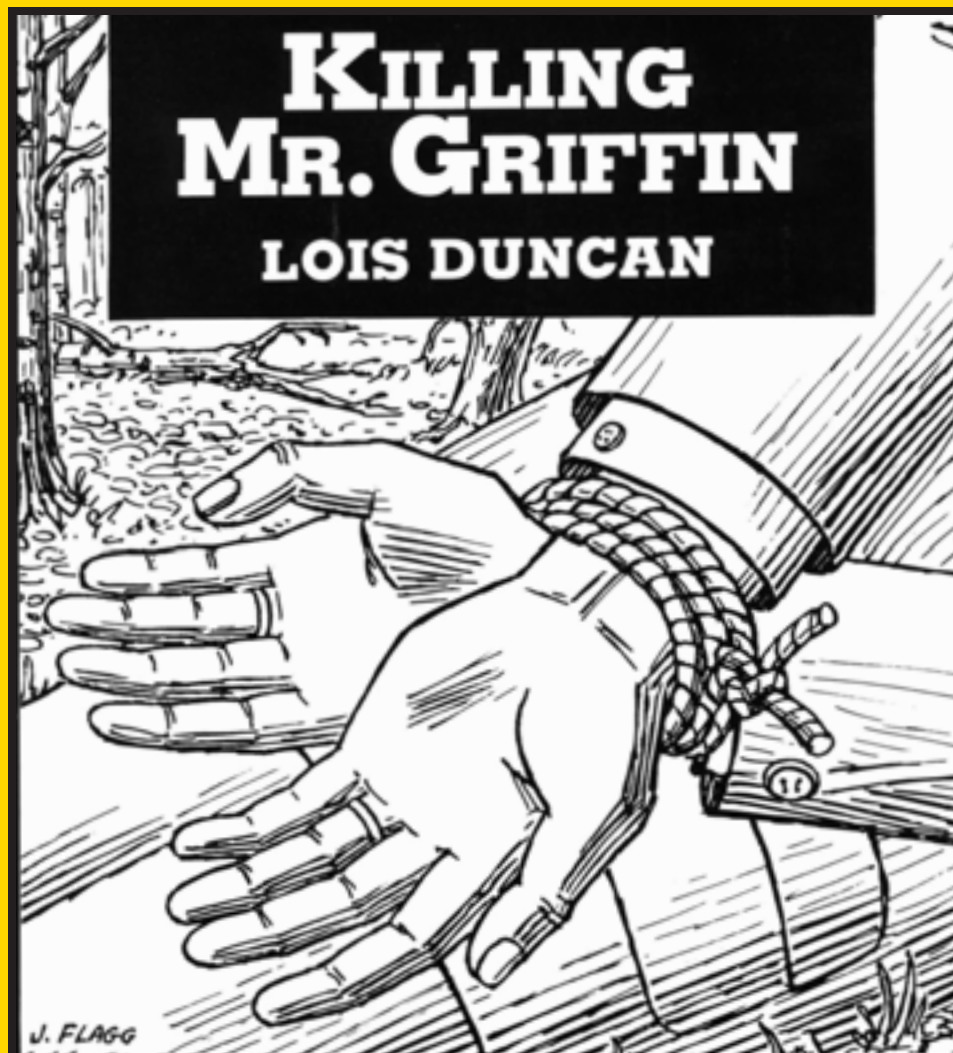


Novel•Ties



A Study Guide

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LEARNING LINKS

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide consists of instructional material to use in conjunction with the novel *Killing Mr. Griffin*. 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.

NOVEL-TIES are either for whole class instruction using a single title or for group instruction where each group uses a different novel appropriate to its reading level. Depending upon the amount of time allotted to it in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in two to four weeks.

The first step in using NOVEL-TIES is to distribute to each student a copy of the novel and a folder containing all of the duplicated worksheets. Begin instruction by selecting several pre-reading activities in order to set the stage for the reading ahead. Vocabulary exercises for each chapter always precede the reading so that new words will be reinforced in the context of the book. Use the questions on the chapter worksheets for class discussion or as written exercises.

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

1. Preview the book by reading the title and author's name and by looking at the illustration on the cover. What do you think the book will be about? Do you think it will be serious or humorous? Have you read any other books by the same author?
2. Teenagers are often influenced by their peers. Why do you think peer pressure seriously affects adolescents' behavior? How far would you go to be one of the group? Where would you draw the line?
3. In some states, the court holds parents responsible for the actions of their children. To what extent do you think that parents are responsible for infractions committed by their children? To what extent and at what age must children take responsibility for their own actions?
4. Have you read about psychopaths in books? Have you ever seen such a person portrayed on television or in the movies? Make a list of the characteristics these people have in common. As you read the novel, compare these characteristics with those possessed by Mark.
5. When people get into trouble, self-preservation often prevails over conscience. Rather than confessing to their transgressions, they cover them up. In what ways do you think society could do more to get people to do the right thing?
6. What do you consider to be the qualities of a good teacher? Use a chart, such as the one below, to list the elements you think make a good teacher. Then, as you read the novel, note how well Mr. Griffin lives up to the qualities you listed.

Good Teacher	Mr. Griffin

7. Obtain a map of New Mexico. As you read the novel, use it to find the various locations mentioned in the text.
8. Lois Duncan, the author of *Killing Mr. Griffin*, has been criticized for using what she calls "TV techniques" to capture the attention of young adult readers. What techniques used on television could be adapted to writing? Do you feel serious writers should utilize such techniques? Explain. As you read the novel, see if you can recognize what might be considered "TV techniques," and rate how successfully you feel they have been utilized.
9. **Cooperative Learning Activity:** Work with a small cooperative learning group to define the words "moral," "immoral," and "amoral." Discuss the implications of these words in relation to hypothetical actions. Then record an example of a moral action, an immoral action, and the conditions under which an act would be considered amoral. Compare your group's responses with those of other groups in your classroom. As you read *Killing Mr. Griffin*, judge whether the actions of various characters are moral, immoral, or amoral.

Chapters 1 – 3 (cont.)

Questions:

1. Why does Susan wish to live alone in a remote cabin?
2. How does Susan feel about David Ruggles? Why does Susan feel that nothing can come of her feelings?
3. How does Mr. Griffin anger David, Jeff Garrett, and Betsy Cline?
4. What plan does Mark Kinney propose to Jeff and Betsy? How do David and Susan fit into Mark's plan?
5. What signs reveal that Mark is a dangerous young man?
6. How does David's home life contrast with his life at school?
7. How does Mark convince David to agree to the plan?

Questions for Discussion:

1. What do you think Susan means when she says that too much of herself is exposed in her writing? Have you ever felt this way about your writing?
2. Why do you think that Mr. Griffin is so tough with his class? Do you feel that this makes him a bad teacher?
3. Do you think that sarcasm, of the kind Mr. Griffin used, is ever an effective form of constructive criticism?
4. Why do you think Mark is so effective in getting others to do as he wishes?
5. Do you think Susan and David should make their discontentment known to their families? Do you think this would improve their lives at home?

Literary Devices:

- I. *Hook*—A hook refers to an opening passage in a work of fiction that is sufficiently exciting or suspenseful to propel the reader into the book. What is the hook at the beginning of the book?

- II. *Flashback*—A flashback is a scene or series of scenes showing events that happened at an earlier time. There are several flashbacks in these chapters. Choose one, indicating when it begins and when it ends. What purpose does this flashback serve?
