

Novel•Ties

Finding Buck McHenry

Alfred Slote



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 the novel *Finding Buck McHenry* 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 at its own 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.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Baseball Card Collecting

The first baseball cards, issued from 1869 through the 1930s, were packaged as a bonus with other products such as tobacco, candy, or gum in order to boost sales. During World War II, the production of baseball cards came to a halt because of a paper shortage. The Bowman Gum Company resumed baseball card production in 1948 and continued until 1955. Currently there are four companies licensed to produce cards of Major League players: Topps, whose product is Bazooka Bubble Gum, Fleer, Donruss/Playoff, and Upper Deck. Each company produces a large number of different sets each year.

When people begin collecting baseball cards, they usually go to a local store and pick up a pack of cards of whatever brand and set interests them. Eventually, a collector will begin to concentrate on particular goals for his or her collection. Collectors may be able to purchase cards in a hobby shop, a pharmacy, or a grocery store. An increasingly popular way to buy cards is through the Internet. Collectors can participate in online auctions or find a website for a dealer on the Internet. One of the best ways to build a collection is through trading with other collectors.

Negro Leagues

The first all-black professional baseball team was organized in 1885. The team consisted of a group of waiters from New York's Argyle Hotel, who played to entertain hotel guests. For several years prior to this, African Americans had played on amateur teams, and a few exceptional players played in the minor and major leagues. In 1887, however, a white Hall of Fame player named Cap Anson refused to play a game against a team that featured a black pitcher. Anson was such a popular figure that the rest of baseball followed his example, and African Americans could no longer play on major or minor league teams. Consequently, African Americans formed all-black teams and leagues in order to continue playing the game.

The first successful Negro League, the Negro National League, was organized in 1920 by Andrew "Rube" Foster and several team owners. This league consisted of eight teams, with Foster becoming the league's president. Another league, the Eastern Colored League, was formed in 1923 and included the best teams in the East. Both leagues eventually folded, but others emerged and the Negro Leagues continued.

Baseball Positions

1. **Pitcher.** The basic role of the pitcher is to throw the ball to the plate in a way that is difficult for a batter to hit. The pitcher also fields ground balls and bunts that come up the middle of the diamond. This position requires good throwing speed, accuracy, and control.
2. **Catcher.** This player must catch, or at least block, all pitches to prevent base runners from advancing. Since catchers can see all the action on the field, they are often team leaders. The catcher does the following: keeps track of the count on the batter and the number of outs; tags out runners trying to score; backs up first base on all plays where a runner is not at risk to score; catches pop-ups in foul territory. This player must be tough with quick reflexes and a strong arm.
3. **First Base.** This player fields balls hit toward first base and catches balls from other players in order to retire the batter. The person at first base must be alert, accurate, and strong.
4. **Second Base.** This position fields ground balls hit toward second base and catches balls to get runners out at second. This player can start a double play by stepping on second base, fielding the throw from the shortstop, and throwing to first base to retire both the batter and the runner on first. The player at second must be quick, alert, and have good fielding skills.
5. **Third Base.** This position catches balls to retire runners heading for third base. The player at third must be able to catch fly balls. This person should have good reflexes and a strong arm to be able to throw to first base.
6. **Shortstop.** The shortstop helps cover the left infield area plus second base if the player at second is needed to field balls heading for right field. The shortstop, who has more ground to cover than any other infield player, must be fast, agile, and have a strong throwing arm.
7. **Left Fielder.** This player catches balls hit back into left field and, if needed, throws to a base or to an infield player. This position requires good fielding and catching skills.
8. **Center Fielder.** This player catches balls hit back into center field and, if needed, throws to a base or to an infield player. Like the shortstop, this position covers a large area and will probably catch the most fly balls. The center fielder must have a strong arm, speed, and the ability to lead the outfield.
9. **Right Fielder.** This player catches balls hit back into right field and, if needed, throws to a base or to an infield player. This position requires good fielding and catching skills as well as a strong arm.

