Holes Novel Study

5th Grade

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## Table of Contents

**Tab 1: Introduction**
- Novel Summary
- About Louis Sachar
- Opening Activity
- Closing Activity
- Project
- Reading and Activities Outline

**Tab 2: Cross Curricular Activities**
- Math
- Science
- Art
- Music
- Social Studies
- Technology

**Tab 3: Comprehension Strategies**
- Visualization
- Recall
- Predicting
- Making Connections
- Summarizing
- Making Inferences
- Questioning
- Determining Importance

**Tab 4: Writing Connection**

**Tab 5: Organization:**
- Theme Web
- Poem Activity

**Tab 6: Vocabulary**
- Vocabulary Words and Definitions
- Word Work Activity

**Tab 7: Assessment**
- Summative Assessment
- Answer Key

**Tab 8: Bibliography**

**Tab 9: Additional Resources**
Summary of Holes

Stanley Yelnats comes from a long line of bad luck and all the blame falls on his
great-great grandfather from a curse placed on him years before Stanley was ever born.
Stanley’s great-great grandfather, Elya Yelnats, fled to the United States when the girl
he loved rejected him and forgets the promise he made to take Madame Zeroni to the
top of the mountain. After this chain of events, the curse is placed on him and the rest
of his family for the generations to come.

When bad luck falls on Stanley, he is sent to Camp Green Lake for the false
accusations of stealing a famous basketball player shoes and is sent to Camp Green
Lake. Camp Green Lake has more history than Stanley realizes at first. Originally, there
was an actual town and lake filled with a community of happy residents. Katherine
Barlow was the beloved school teacher, who falls in love with Sam, the
African-American onion seller. Sam would always help Katherine with the school house
but when word gets out that Sam kissed Katherine, the men in town set out to kill him.
Katherine and Sam try to escape in Sam’s boat, but Sam is shot out in the water. After
that, the town dried out and the residents had to move away to make money. Katherine
becomes an outlaw and is now known as Kissin' Kate Barlow. While an outlaw, she ends up robbing Stanley’s great-grandfather and burying the suitcase.

At Camp Green Lake, they are supposedly there to dig holes for character building. Stanley quickly realizes that they are not there just to dig holes but to find the money that Kissin’ Kate Barlow buried years before when he finds the lipstick with the initials ‘KB’ one day while digging. All of the boys are given names at the camp like Armpit or x-Ray and Stanley is deemed as Caveman. Stanley befriends one friend in particular whose name is Zero because he is notorious for nothing going on his head. He hardly speaks to anyone but Stanley and him establish a friendship through an agreement that Stanley will spend one hour a day teaching Zero to read if Zero will dig his hole for an hour a day. Little does Stanley know that Zero is actually the great-great grandson of Madame Zeroni. Eventually, Zero ends up running away from camp and Stanley follows after in search of him a day later. The two boys reach the top of the mountain and survive off of Sam’s old onions. When they attempt to go back to camp and right before they are caught by the Warden, the boys find the suitcase buried by Kate Barlow that she had robbed Stanley’s great-grandfather of many years before. Since Stanley’s name was on the suitcase and his lawyer was already at the camp, Stanley and Zero were able to leave camp and be reunited with their families. It finally seemed as if the curse of the Yelnats family was finally lifted.
Meet Louis Sachar

Louis Sachar was born in New York in 1954 and moved to California during his childhood. He first attended college at Antioch College in Ohio but had to return home after his father died during his freshman year. He finished college in California and it was on his college campus that he got the idea for his book, *Sideways Stories From Wayside School*. In this book, all of the characters were fellow classmates that he had during Elementary School! He married his wife, Carla, in 1985 and they have one daughter together. He works on his books every morning and never talks about his books until they are finished, but his wife and daughter are always the first to get to read them!
Opening the Study

When introducing *Holes* to students, each table group will be given a discussion question that pertains to one of the themes in the novel. The table groups will discuss their questions and provide an explanation for their answer. Students will also provide a prediction of what they think could happen in the book considering that the question relates to a theme in the book. For example, students could predict that there is a curse on one of the main characters that gives him bad luck because their question asks them about curses.

The five questions are:

- How important is it for people to feel like they fit in?
- Do you believe that fate controls our lives? What about curses?
- Would you lie to protect someone? Would it depend on who they were?
- Do you think that sometimes people can take advantage of power when it is given to them?
- Have you ever known anyone who was punished for something that he or she did not do? How did they react?

Students will record their explanations and predictions on sticky notes that they will post on their question. The questions and their responses will be posted at the front of the room to remind students of possible themes throughout the study.
Closing the Study

The day after the students have taken their summative assessment, the students will conclude the study by watching the movie *Holes*. Directly after taking their test, the students will be divided into their table groups to make a “Sploosh” recipe. The teacher will put them in the stove and let them sit for 24 hours. The next day, the students will be able to eat their Sploosh while they watch the movie. After the students watch the movie, they will be given a Venn Diagram where they will compare and contrast the movie and the book. The students will be expected to give three to four examples in each section.


**Book Project**

Students will choose 3 characters from *Holes* and create a facebook page for each character on a poster board or tri-fold. For each section of the tri-fold, students will choose one character and create a facebook page for the character. An example format is provided for students to reference when making their tri-fold.

Directions:

1. Choose 3 Characters for your project. I would recommend picking a character that really stuck out to you while reading and that you found interesting!

2. Draw a picture of your character for the characters profile picture and illustrate an important scene from the book where the character played a vital role for the cover photo.

3. In the “About Me” box, write the character’s name, hometown, and 2 or 3 things that they are interested about.

4. In the “Friends” box, choose 3-4 people that your character would be friends with and illustrate a miniature picture of them with their name.

5. In the “Favorite Quotations” box, choose 2 quotes that your character would like based off what you know about them. Only one of the quotes can be a quote from the novel.

6. In the “Status” box, write a sentence from the point of view of your character. This sentence will most likely have to do with something that they did that day.
7. In the “My Wall” box, write at least 2-3 posts that a friend of your character might post on their facebook wall. This will tell the viewer a lot about the relationship between the two characters!

8. Be Creative :)}
Math Activity

Standard: AL Mathematics 5th (24) Represent real-world and mathematical problems by graphing points in the first quadrant of the coordinate plane, and interpret coordinate values of points in the context of the situation. [5-G2]

Objective: Students will hide Kissin’ Kate Barlow’s lipstick, suitcase, and peaches by placing them on a graph and will locate where their opponent hid the items by searching graph coordinates.

Activity: Students will circle on their own four different points on the first graph. They will label one L (lipstick), S (suitcase), P (peaches), and Y(yellow-spotted lizard). Students will record the coordinates where they labeled the items. The players will take turn guessing coordinates and will mark the coordinates that they guess on their second graph. If a student guesses the correct coordinates for a hidden item, that person marks that they found that item on their sheet. The first person to find the lipstick, suitcase, and peaches wins the game! However, if a player guesses the coordinates where the yellow-spotted lizard is hiding then it is sudden death and their opponent wins.
Science Activity

Standard: AL Science 5th (4) Describe forms of energy, including chemical, heat, light, and mechanical.

• Identifying the transfer of energy by conduction, convection, and radiation

Examples:
- conduction—hot plate heating a pan,
- convection—space heater heating air,
- radiation—sun heating Earth’s surface

Objective: Students will demonstrate understanding of radiation by determining which color would be the best for the boys at Camp Green Lake to wear.

Activity: At Camp Green Lake, all of the boy’s where the same orange jumpsuit. Obviously, with the Texas sun bearing down on them they could get pretty hot pretty quick. Students will participate in a radiation experiment by comparing and contrast how fast black, white, and orange paper heats and cools. For the class, the teacher will have three bowls full of ice water and cover each one with a different color paper (black, orange, and white). The teacher will place the three bowls outside of the classroom and every five minutes, students will record the temperatures of each bowl. After twenty to thirty minutes, students will record their final temperatures and determine which color would be the best and worst for the boys to wear while they are digging holes. Then, they will write a letter to the Warden explaining and giving evidence as to why the color they chose is the best option for the boys to wear.
Art Activity

Standard: AL Arts Education (2) Apply variety and unity in the production of two- and three-dimensional works of art. Example: using Joan Miro’s Horse *Carnival of Harlequins* to create a circus, carnival, zoo painting, or diorama.

- Producing moving and stationary sculptures
  
  Examples: mobiles, totem poles, origami paper sculptures, clay coil or slab-built pottery.

Objective: Students will create a diorama that displays the setting of Camp Green Lake and include important aspects of the setting.

Activity: Students will have the option to work alone or in a group of 2. As a class, students will brainstorm a list of important parts of the setting that should be included in the diorama. The list will be written on chart paper and posted at the front of the room. The students will create the diorama using resources brought in from home and any classroom materials that are available.
**Music Activity**

Standard: AL Arts Education 5th Music (4) Improvise melodies in a major diatonic scale by singing or using a pitched instrument.

Objective: By their table groups, students will arrange a melody to the words of Stanley’s mother’s lullaby and then add two more lines.

Activity: The lullaby that Stanley’s mother used to sing to him will be written on chart paper and posted in the front of the classroom. Once the students have created a melody for the song, they will then create two more lines of the lullaby to add to their melody. Each table group will perform their improvised melodies to the class.
Social Studies/Geography Activity

Standard: AL Social Studies 5th (11) Identify causes of the Civil War, including states' rights and the issue of slavery.

Objective: Students will explain how the issues of slavery are still causing racial tensions today and also, how they have improved.

Activity: When Zero and Stanley begin to help each other by Stanley helping Zero learn to read and Zero digging parts of Stanley holes, the boys start to bother the two boys. Eventually, they start calling Zero Stanley’s “slave”. This is evidently an effect of the past issues of slavery. Stanley and Zero’s friendship also shows how some of those effects have passed though. In their journals, students will write why the boys would have called Zero Stanley’s slave and how we are still dealing with the consequences of slavery today. They will also write examples of ways that racial tensions have eased over the years.
Technology Activity


   Example: products--- digital story, podcast, digital artwork

Objective: Students will create a virtual poster via glogster.edu advertising Holes that incorporates all of the key elements of the novel.

Activity: Students will create an advertisement or virtual poster advertising Holes for the rest of the students in the school. When creating the virtual poster, students will refer to the attached checklist to ensure that they have included all the key elements of the novel and a few additional pieces to the poster. Students will include on the poster (either through text or images): the Title, setting, main characters, and a catch phrase that summarizes the book. When completed, the virtual posters will be displayed on a digital screen in the library for the school to see.
Comprehension Strategies

- **Visualization**: Students will close their eyes and listen to the teacher read the first chapter of *Holes*, which describes Camp Green Lake. The teacher will instruct them to image what she is reading in their minds. Then, she will read the chapter a second time and let students draw a quick sketch of what they think Camp Green Lake looks like as she reads. She will have them close their eyes one more time for her to read the chapter, considering that it is so short. Students will draw their final illustration of what they visualize Camp Green Lake to look like.

- **Recall**: There are chapter reading guides attached.

- **Predicting**: Prior to reading, students will be given a graphic organizer for predicting. The teacher will first model to the students what it looks like to predict by first doing a Think Aloud Mini-Lesson with a scenario and predicting what will happen next. The students will be expected to make a prediction on their graphic organizers by the end of each section of the reading guide. On the graphic organizer, students will record their prediction, clues from the story, if they were correct or not, and what actually happened. Each prediction will be on the same graphic organizer so that they can go back to it and record if their predictions were correct when they find out.

- **Making Connections**: At the end of each reading section, students will be given a text to text, text to self, and text to world worksheet. They will choose one of the sections or questions to answer in their journals.
• **Summarizing**- Students will complete this activity near the end of the study. Students will be given the option to summarize either the story of Elya Yelnats, Stanley Yelnats, or Katherine Barlow. They will be given a worksheet to complete that outlines the who, what they wanted, the problem, what they did to solve the problem, and result. The students will take their completion of the sections to create a paragraph summarizing one of the characters with an illustration.

• **Making Inferences**- After reading chapter 34, where Stanley finds Zero under the boat eating onions, students will stop to complete an anchor chart as a table group that combines what the text says and what they already know to infer where to boat and onions came from.

• **Questioning**- The students will participate in a mini-lesson before discussing the types of questions we ask. With a partner, students will create a questioning cube to use with their peers about the text. When the students have completed the questioning cubes, they will trade their cube with another partner group to do.

• **Determining Importance**- After the first section of the reading guide, students will write 3 things that they think were of importance from the first 7 chapters. Then, the teacher will lead the class in reading everyone's sticky notes and condensing the information down to a few important factors to take away.
Writing Connection

Writing Prompt: Before leaving for Camp Green Lake, Stanley’s mother gave him stationary so that he could write her letters telling her about all of the different activities and friends that he would make at camp! At a normal camp, Stanley may have participated in obstacle courses, swimming, rock climbing, etc. As we know, Camp Green Lake was far different from most camps. However, in his letters, Stanley led on that Camp Green Lake was just like any other camp. Pretend that you are in Stanley’s shoes and write a letter to your mother telling her about your day at camp. Maybe you don’t want to worry your mom so you keep pretending that you are at a normal camp or maybe you’ve had it and need to spill everything that is really going on at Camp Green Lake. The choice is yours but either way you need to be convincing!

Students will begin this process by brainstorming which direction they want to write their mother from and completing an idea web of what they will include in their letter. They will then write a draft and give it to a peer to review. Students will use the ARMS (add, remove, move, substitute) method for peer review. Once they have received feedback from their fellow classmate, students will make edits and write the final edition of their letter. Then, students will publish their final drafts by typing and printing them along with an illustration. Students will be given the rubric with which their letter will be graded at the beginning of the writing process so that they can reference it throughout all steps of the writing process.
Theme Web

“The One and Only Ivan” by Katherine Applegate

“Wonder” by R.J. Palacio

Friendship

“Charlotte’s Web” by E.B. White

“The Lion, the Witch & the Wardrobe” by C.S. Lewis
Poem

I am the Onion
When you peel back the layers,
will you like what you see?

I am the Onion
I may cause you tears,
but will you still like me?

I am the onion,
It’s dark in the ground,
will you dig me out?

I am the onion,
My roots, like feelings, grow deep,
but sometimes I scream and shout.

I am the onion
If I get dropped,
will you pick me off the floor?

I am the onion,
I am all these things
and so much more.

I am the onion.

After reading Chapter 41, students will do a quick write of how this poem relates to Zero and Stanley’s relationship.
### Holes Study Outline

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening Activity</td>
<td>Activity: Teacher reads aloud Ch. 1 and students do Visualization activity</td>
<td>Activity: Students complete Reading Guide for Chapters 1-7.</td>
<td>Activity: Introduction of Vocabulary Words and Word Work</td>
<td>Students read with partner chapter 13-17 and complete Reading Guide Questions</td>
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<td>Students Receive Novels</td>
<td>Students read ch. 2-7 individually and finish for homework</td>
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<td>Read aloud of Ch. 8-12</td>
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<td>Prediction</td>
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<td>Graphic Organizer</td>
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<td>FRIDAY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read aloud of Chapter 47-50 and complete Chapter Reading guide</td>
<td>Review for Summative Assessment with Questioning cube or Summarizing strategy</td>
<td>Summative Assessment</td>
<td>Closing Activity</td>
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Vocabulary Words

1. perseverance - the quality that allows someone to continue trying to do something even though it is difficult

2. desolate: devoid of inhabitants and visitors

3. Warden: an official who is in charge of a prison

4. forlorn: sad and lonely because of isolation or desertion

5. scarcity: being of short supply

6. evict: to force (someone) to leave a place

7. defiance: a refusal to obey something or someone

8. parched: dried out with heat

9. refuge: shelter or protection from danger or trouble

10. delirious: not able to think or speak clearly because of fever or other illness

11. feeble: markedly lacking in strength

12. destiny: a predetermined course of events often held to be an irresistible power or agency

13. unearthed: to find something in the ground by digging

14. jurisdiction: the power or right to make judgements about the law, to arrest and punish criminals, etc.

15. legitimate: real, accepted, or official
“Holes” Summative Test

Name: ___________________________  Date:____________

Multiple Choice:

1. What was the first artifact Stanley found while digging holes at Camp Green Lake?
   a. buried treasure
   b. a suitcase
   c. a yellow-spotted lizard
   d. a lipstick tube

2. What was Stanley’s nickname at camp?
   a. Armpit
   b. X-ray
   c. Caveman
   d. Zero

3. Who does Stanley’s family say is the cause of their bad luck?
   a. Madame Zeroni
   b. Stanley’s great-great-grandfather
   c. Stanley’s mother
   d. They don’t think that they have bad luck.

4. What is Stanley’s father’s profession?
a. Inventor
b. Bank Teller
c. Camp Counselor
d. Teacher

5. Who was not allowed to attend classes at the schoolhouse in Green Lake?
   a. Kate Barlow
   b. Trout Walker
c. Elya Yelnats
d. Sam

6. Where did Stanley and Zero head after their escape from Camp Green Lake?
   a. Devil’s Peak
   b. God’s thumb
   c. Cold Mountain
d. Philadelphia

7. Which of the following two things were named Mary Lou?
   a. a dog and cat
   b. Trout’s wife and boat
   c. Trout’s wife and a donkey
d. a donkey and a boat
8. Why did the Warden say that they dug holes at Camp Green Lake?
   a. to build character
   b. to teach them how to dig
   c. to irrigate the land
   d. to help them lose weight

9. What was the actual reason that the Warden wanted for the boys to dig holes?
   a. to build character and help them become better
   b. to be miserable
   c. to find artifacts from the time when there was water at the camp
   d. to find the money Kate Barlow stole.

10. What did Camp Green Like ultimately become once it was closed down?
    a. an actual lake
    b. a resort
    c. A girl scout camp
    d. none of the above

True/False:

11. ______ Zero’s first name was Kevin.
12. ______ Kate Barlow died from the bite of a Yellow-Spotted Lizard.

13. ______ Stanley’s last name was his first name spelt backwards.

14. ______ Stanley was the one that stole Clyde “Sweet Feet” Livingston’s shoes.

15. ______ Stanley got a day off from digging when he finds a fossil.

Vocabulary:

16. _____ Perseverance   a. the quality that allows someone continue trying to do something even though it is difficult.

17. _____ Desolate   b. being of short supply

18. _____ Forlorn   c. dried out with head

19. _____ Scarcity   d. shelter from danger/trouble

20. _____ Parched e. lonely because of isolation

21. _____ Refuge   f. devoid of inhabitants or visitors

22. _____ Delirious   g. lacking in strength

23. _____ unearthed   i. power to make decisions about the law

24. _____ Feeble   j. not able to speak or think clearly

25. _____ Jurisdiction k. to find something in the ground by digging

Short Answer:

26. In what ways are Zero and Stanley connected to each other?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
27. Why does Stanley no longer see the shoes hitting him on the head as a curse, but destiny?

Essay:

What is the purpose of this quotation from the book: "A short while later bother boys fell asleep. Behind them the sky had turned dark, and for the first time in over a hundred years, a drop of rain fell into the empty lake."
Answer Key
1. D
2. C
3. B
4. A
5. D
6. B
7. D
8. A
9. D
10. C
11. False
12. True
13. True
14. False
15. False
16. A
17. F
18. E
19. B
20. C
21. D
22. J
23. K
24. G
25. I
26. Answers may vary.
27. Answers may vary.
28. Answers may vary.