

TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR

FOR YOUR EYES ONLY! BY JOANNE ROCKLIN

"However you introduce this story--as a model for journaling, as inspiration for poetry writing, or as an examination of adolescent thoughts--FOR YOUR EYES ONLY! will be a feast for your students' eyes...and their minds."

-The Mailbox BOOKBAG, The Teacher's Idea Magazine For Children's Literature,

"An unusual novel set in modern-day Los Angeles...the writing and situations are realistic and believable."

--*STARRED REVIEW, School Library Journal

STORY OUTLINE

When Mr. Moffat gets everyone in class to start keeping journals, Lucy pours out her heart to him in entries "For YOUR Eyes Only!" Meanwhile Andy, the class troublemaker, does nothing but draw exploding fighter planes in his journal.

Lucy writes about everything--the two major banes of her existence (Andy and her mother); her best friend, who maybe isn't such a good friend after all; her dad and his new wife; and Andy's mean stepfather. She tells Mr. Moffat about how she wants to write poems like the ones he puts on the blackboard every Monday. She even tells Mr. Moffat all about her Secret Love (except the truth about who he really is).

Then Andy starts writing, too, especially when those ducks come to live at the pool of his apartment complex. Andy has a secret, one that he can't hide any longer. A secret he'll have to find the courage to tell...or write.

STATEMENT FROM THE AUTHOR ABOUT THIS GUIDE

I hope this story will capture the imagination of readers as a "good read". I also feel that it can be used by teachers and others on several levels:

- (1) to encourage and model journal-keeping
- (2) to inspire poetry appreciation
- (3) to increase knowledge and confidence about the writing process.

*In this study guide immediately following I provide some general suggestions for the use of this book in all 3 areas. I also provide specific suggestions in these 3 areas (as well as in the area of critical thinking), corresponding to particular sections of the novel.

*In some sections, I have highlighted in bold several useful teaching techniques which can be applied broadly: **student poetry analysis; the writing process; revision tools.**

*Students can respond to questions and assignments in a notebook specifically for the

reading of *For YOUR Eyes Only!* and/or respond to the more self-reflective items in their personal journals.

*Please don't attempt to do all, or even most of the material presented!

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR THE USE OF FOR YOUR EYES ONLY!

JOURNAL-KEEPING

-When introducing the book, brainstorm with students different types of "journals", for eg. a travel log, a runner's journal, an exercise journal, recipe journal, doctor's transcripts, taped/audio transcripts, reader's journal, an "ideas-for -stories" journal, a journal to record feelings and/or daily events, etc.

-Study entries of famous diaries (i.e. those of Anne Frank and Benjamin Franklin). What was the purpose in writing these journals? Did they write the journals for others to read?

-Introduce the concept of journal-keeping during a crisis in one's life (eg. Zlata's Diary, a Bosnian girl's journal, and others). How does this activity help during that time?

-Ask students to think about what kind of journal they would like to keep. Would they show it to anyone? If so, to whom? Would they write in it everyday? What would be the purpose of their own journal?

-In this novel, Andy includes artwork in his journal. Does artwork belong in a journal entry? What other unique and individual entries are possible?

POETRY

-Tell the students that this novel begins each section with a poem written on the blackboard by the teacher each Monday morning.

Discuss: What is a poem? Have you ever written one, not for a school assignment?

-Read "I Hate Poetry" by Benita Little, *Language Arts*, Vol. 73, Dec. 1996

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which begins:

"My teacher says that poetry

Is just the things I say.

Well I say, I hate poetry.

Poetry don't interest me.

It's just for girls. It's boring.

It leaves me snoring.

But...

I really liked *Where the Sidewalk Ends* And all the poems we read about friends..."

-Ask the students their reactions to poetry. What do they hate? What do they love? Poetry often stirs up strong feelings, pro and con. This happens to the characters Lucy and Andy, in the novel. Why do they think poetry has this effect on people?

-Some educational researchers believe that negative feelings about poetry result from students believing there is a "right and wrong" meaning to the poem that they can't figure out for themselves.

-You may want to try the following method when introducing a new poem, so that students realize their abilities to read and understand poetry on their own. (However, I suggest more teacher-directed activities within each section.):

Student Poetry Analysis:

-Read the poem to the whole class.

-Have a class member read the poem again.

-Divide students into small groups.

-Each group chooses a reporter, who again reads the poem to that group.

-Group members take turns discussing their reactions to and understanding of the poem. Then group members each take turns discussing one or two lines of the poem.

-After 20 minutes, the group helps the reporter decide what will be reported back to the large group.

-Throughout, the teacher's role is to keep the discussions going, to provide the literal meaning of a word, or explain unfamiliar phrases, rather than to be the keeper of the final and perfect meaning of the poem. As a "fellow interpreter", the teacher may add aspects of the poem which were left out, or give a personal reaction.

This method has been found to increase confidence, motivation and independence of students with respect to their appreciation and reading of poetry. (See Dias, California English, in reading list.)

- Suggest that students choose a book of poetry, select 10 poems they prefer, photocopy them, and finally choose one favorite to share with the class.

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-April is National Poetry Month. Create a bulletin board with news about national poetry activities during this time, (and during other times, too)--conferences, workshops, media performances, events in bookstores, libraries, and schools. etc. Add your classroom activities to the board, to impress upon the students that they are a part of an ongoing, widespread celebration of poetry.

-Have students research the lives of the poets in the novel.

-If they could interview any of these poets (or another favorite) what would they like to ask? (eg. What inspires you? When do you write? Do you have a favorite poem?)

-Choose poems for your own Monday Morning Chalkboard, based on the needs, experiences and preferences of your students!

WRITING

-Discuss diary/journals as a fictional genre, as in the case of this novel. Introduce or have available other novels which use a diary format to tell a story, eg. Dear Mr. Henshaw and Letters from Rifke , Dear Baby, (see reading list for this guide).

-"Finding a voice means that you can get your own feeling into your own words and that your words have the feel of you about them", poet Seamus Henry has said. (cited in Hendry et al, 1993).

-Define and discuss the concepts of "point of view" and "voice".

The author writes in several "voices" in the novel. How are Lucy's and Andy's voices different? Lucy and Andy see the world differently when they are writing. How does the author let us know this?

-Although written in diary form, what makes this book a "story"?

Discuss the concepts of conflict and drama which make stories compelling.

Have students think about or anticipate problems Lucy and Andy experience, making the reader turn the page to find out what happens.

-Mention that the author has used elements of her own experience and fictionalized them in this book. For example, she herself used to write poetry, and also wrote jingles just as Lucy's little brothers do. The author lives in Los Angeles in an apartment, as Lucy does. She loves to cook, as Dylan does in the book. Ask students to think of and/or write about aspects of their own experience, and fictionalize them, i.e. change or add to that experience in their own writing.

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS CORRESPONDING TO SECTIONS OF THE NOVEL

Responses to all questions can be answered as a class, in small groups, or individually, perhaps in a notebook specifically for this purpose.

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The responses to the questions in the Writing sections can follow the steps of **the "writing process"**, based on the format as below.

Prewriting:

Read and discuss the assignment with the class.

Drafting:

Have students complete a rough draft of the assignment.

Sharing

Students are paired in order to read their drafts to one another. Authors request feedback on clarity, amount of detail and interest generated. Encourage positive and supportive feedback.

Revising

Students revise their drafts based on their partner's suggestions.

Editing

The same partners (or new ones) read each other's drafts, examining spelling, punctuation, grammar and word usage.

Publishing

Depending upon the assignment and the teacher's preference, the work may be published in booklets, newsletters, or for display.

pp. 1-6

MR. MOFFAT'S POEM:

Questions to Stimulate Critical Thinking:

Why do you think Lucy was so shocked at Mrs. Silverberg's accident?
Think of some adjectives which describe Andy so far. Give examples to support your description.

Journal Prompts

Is your journal for "someone's eyes only?" Why or why not?

Poetry Appreciation

At what spot in Mr. Moffat's poem do you expect to find the word "not"? Why do you think Mr. Moffat did not use that word?

"The words will stay forever": Where do you think they will stay? Writing
Write a welcome note to an imaginary substitute teacher for your class. **pp. 7-21:**

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EVE MERRIAM'S POEM, "METAPHOR"

Critical Thinking

Why do you think Mr. Moffat chose this particular poem? What are some problems Lucy is experiencing?

Why does Lucy think Mr. Moffat will be a good mentor?

Journal Prompts

Lucy writes about the "banes" of her existence. Can you relate to any of them? What are a few of yours?

Do you have a "mentor"? If you could pick any mentor in the world, who would that be? Why?

Poetry Appreciation

A metaphor compares two seemingly dissimilar things by telling us that one thing is another thing. A simile, on the other hand, uses the word "like" or "as". "The moon is a pie in the sky" is a metaphor. "The moon is like a pie in the sky" is a simile. Metaphors and similes help us see the world in new ways we often never forget.

What is the metaphor in this poem? Do you agree with it? Why or why not? Find some metaphors in other poems.

Writing

Lucy writes: "L.A. is an old bone in the sun." Finish this phrase: (My city) is _____.

Think of some other metaphors.

Think of some similes.

Lucy loves words. She thinks "gladiola" is beautiful because of the way it sounds. Choose some words from the dictionary that sound lovely to your ears. There are no right or wrong answers!

pp. 22-34

NANCY WILLARD'S POEM: "THE MARMALADE MAN MAKES A DANCE TO MEND US"

Critical Thinking

Why do you think Mr. Moffat chose Willard's poem? What problems is Lucy having with her writing? Why do you think Lucy is angry at her mother?

Why does Lucy hate the poem on the chalkboard?

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Journal Prompts

Do you have a "haven of privacy"? Describe it, or describe your ideal haven, if you could choose one.

Have you ever said something to someone you later regretted saying?

Poetry Appreciation

Read this poem aloud. How does the poet make it sound like a dance? What do you think the last line means?

Finish this sentence, using either nouns or adjectives: The Marmalade Man is.....(There are no right or wrong answers!)

Writing

Imagine you are having a conversation with a friend or a relative behind a closed door, as Lucy does in this section. Write down that dialogue.

Write a funny poem in which the rhymes don't make sense.

pp. 35-42_____

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS' POEM "THE RED WHEELBARROW"

Critical Thinking

Why do you think Mr. Moffat chose Williams' poem?

What did Mr. Moffat mean when he said "Better to feel something than nothing at all."

Do you agree?

Why does Lucy want Dylan to be her stepfather?

Why does she think Mr. Moffat would laugh if he found out about her Secret Love?

Journal Prompts

Are you ever hard on yourself as a writer? When? What makes you feel better?

Have you ever had "mixed feelings" about an experience: eg. feeling "happy and scared" at the same time? Describe that experience.

Poetry Appreciation

What makes a poem beautiful? Does it have to rhyme? Does a poem have to be about beautiful things? Find a poem you like which is not about something we usually think of as "beautiful". Why do you like it?

How does Williams make us really see this "picture" of a wheelbarrow in our minds?

What do you think the poet means when he says "so much depends upon"?

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Writing

Write your own "so much depends upon" poem. It can be about something "ordinary", but something which is beautiful to you--a person, a place, a pet. Help the reader see it the way you see it.

pp. 43-50_____

X.J. KENNEDY'S POEM

"EXPLODING GRAVY"

Critical Thinking

Why do you think Mr. Moffat chose Kennedy's poem?

Mr. Moffat encouraged his students to use all their senses when they observe. Then Lucy carefully observed a fight between Andy and the others. Why is she confused about "the truth" now?

Journal Prompts

Write about a time you were confused about the truth.

Poetry Appreciation

The poet X.J. Kennedy likes "sound effects" in his poems. Read "Exploding Gravy" aloud. Find all the things in this poem that make it interesting to the ear.

Find a silly poem you like. Share it with a friend.

Writing

Choose a partner. Take turns wearing a blindfold as you explore a particular place. Write down what you experience, then share your writing with your partner. How are your observations similar? Different?

pp. 51-59

RUSSELL HOBAN'S POEM

"OLD MAN OCEAN"

Critical Thinking

Why do you think Mr. Moffat chose Hoban's poem?

What personal problem does Lucy reveal to Mr. Moffat? Why do you think she is able to write about that problem to him?

Why does Lucy think Dylan will make "a great stepfather"?

What do you know about Andy, just by looking at his drawings?

Journal Prompts

Can you write when your surroundings are noisy? Describe your favorite place to write.

Draw something which describes your mood right now. Poetry Appreciation

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Sometimes poets write poems in which they are speaking to nonhumans and inanimate objects. Sometimes they even have a conversation with that thing, as in Russell Hoban's poem. Read the poem aloud. Which lines of the poem are the ocean's voice? How do you know?

Writing

Sometimes we learn about writing by imitating others.

Choose a short poem, story, or even a news article you enjoy. Try to imitate what you have read.

pp. 60-71

LILIAN MOORE'S POEM

"MESSAGE FROM A CATERPILLAR"

Critical Thinking

Why do you think Mr. Moffat chose this poem?

Why do you think Lucy likes Myra Cohn Livingston's poem? What else have we learned

about Andy from his diary entries? Do you think he enjoys doing them? Why or why not?

Journal Prompts

Write about a daydream you yourself have had.

Lucy feels jealous, watching Beatrice and Maria. Have you ever felt jealous for the same reason? When else have you felt jealous?

Do you ever feel as if you are "changing" and "growing wings", as in Lilian Moore's poem? Describe.

Poetry Appreciation

Sometimes poets use the voice of things that are not human. When they do that, it is as if they are putting on a "mask", pretending to be that thing. Explain how Lilian Moore's poem speaks in the voice of a caterpillar.

Writing a poem in your own "voice" means that your words sound like you. Lucy thinks her poem "I Wish" is in her own voice. Do you agree? Why or why not?
Who is Lucy talking to, in her poem?

Poets write about things they perceive and feelings they have. Often different readers see and perceive different things in the same poem. What "blue" do you "know" in Myra Cohn Livingston's poem on p. 67? Again, there are no "right" answers!

Writing

Write a "mask" poem, pretending to be something inanimate or nonhuman.

Write a poem in your own voice.

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BORING IS: (describe 15 things which bore you)

pp. 72-82

VALERIE WORTH'S POEM

"garbage"

Critical Thinking

Why do you think Mr. Moffat chose this poem? Why is Beatrice angry at Lucy?
Name all the things making Lucy feel "all alone".

Journal Prompts

Do you ever feel "all alone"? What do you do when you feel that way?

Do writers always feel like writing? When do you most feel like writing? When do you least feel like writing?

Poetry Appreciation

Valerie Worth's poem uses a surprising metaphor--comparing "garbage" to beautiful jewelry. Examine some ordinary objects from home and/or school. Can you see their likeness to jewels, in your imagination? How? Can you think of your own surprising metaphors for ordinary things?

Can you fall in love with a poem? Choose and share a poem that you love.

Writing

Valerie Worth likes to write small poems with short lines so that each word is noticed. Write your own small poem.

Observe somebody nearby. Describe their actions, minute by minute.

Write a poem or a paragraph describing things using all your senses, "up close and far away".

pp. 83-90

OCTAVIO PAZ' POEM

"PEATÓN"

Critical Thinking

Why do you think Mr. Moffat chose this poem?

What things "are the same, and not the same" at Lucy's father's house?

Does Andy like or not like keeping a journal? Support your opinion with examples from this section of the novel.

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Journal Prompts

Have you ever changed your opinion about a person or a situation?

What really changed--the person, the situation, or the way you yourself look at things?

Poetry Appreciation

Find a poem about a country or area you have never visited. What words and images are used to help you "see" the place as the poet sees it?

If you can read another language other than English, translate a poem in that language. Share your translation with your teacher, a friend, or the class.

Writing

Imagine you are twenty years older. You have not visited your neighborhood in a long, long time. What about your neighborhood is "the same, and not the same"?

pp. 91-107

OCTAVIO PAZ' POEM

TRANSLATED BY ELIOT WEINBERGER

"PEDESTRIAN"

Critical Thinking

What have Lucy and Andy learned about wood ducks? What "happily ever after" ending is Lucy wishing for?

Journal Prompts

Which do you prefer, writing by yourself, or writing in a group? Why?

Poetry Appreciation

How does Mr. Weinberger's translation differ from Group D's? Do you agree with Lucy's opinion on p. 100? Why or why not?

Draw a picture of this poem.

Draw a picture of one of your daydreams.

Writing

Imagine you are on a scientific expedition seeking new species. Now observe any animal or insect in its natural habitat. Choose a name for your "new" species. Record your observations clearly with words and drawings. Read your report to a partner, group, or the class without revealing what you have been observing.

pp. 108-115

LANGSTON HUGHES' POEM "APRIL RAIN SONG"

Critical Thinking

11

Why do you think Mr. Moffat chose this poem?

Lucy is observing people and places more closely. How have her views changed so far?

Journal Prompts

Have you ever "fallen out of hate" with a person or thing?

Poetry Appreciation

How do you think the rain is like "a lullaby"?

How does the poet use rhythm and rhyme to make the poem itself sound like "rain coming down", or a lullaby?

Creative Writing

Revision Tools: ((See Harper and Lane in the reading lists following, for expanded descriptions of these great revision tools!))

-Choose a piece of prose-writing you would like to revise, with a partner. Read your selections to one another.

Help one another using the following Revision Tools:

(1) Questions:

Each partner asks questions about the piece which were not answered by the author's piece. The author tries to answer those questions in the revision. (eg. "How did the girl in your story feel when her friends laughed at her?")

(2) Snapshots:

The author is asked to take a "snapshot" at certain places in the story, i.e. to give more detail to a scene, as if that person or place or thing was "zoomed in on" as if in a snapshot.

(3) Thoughtshots

The author is asked to indicate what the characters are thinking and feeling.

(4) Exploding a Moment

Each partner finds the "exciting moments" in the other's story. The author is asked to take the time to slow down and describe an exciting moment, including the time before, during and after that moment.

(5) Making a Scene

The author is asked to add dialogue and description. to expand a scene, if it is felt necessary by the editor.

pp. 116-125

JOSO'S HAIKU

TRANSLATED BY HARRY BEHN

Critical Thinking

Why do you think Mr. Moffat chose this poem?

Why do you think Gabriela showed Mr. Moffat her poem?

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Lucy says the haiku on the chalkboard "says more than I thought seventeen syllables could say." How does her own haiku to her mother say more than seventeen syllables? What do you think she has learned about her mother, and love?

Journal Prompts

Describe a disappointment you have experienced.

Describe something (or someone) in your life that is "beautiful in its own way."

Poetry Appreciation

Traditionally, a Japanese haiku concentrates on one thing in nature, during a particular season of the year. It is written in the present time and represents one single moment. Although a haiku is short, it should make the reader see a bigger picture than those described by the mere seventeen syllables (for example, a scene before and after the moment described by the haiku).

What "more" do those seventeen syllables in Joso's haiku say to you?

Writing

Write your own haiku.

pp. 126-135

LANGSTON HUGHES' POEM

"POEM"

Critical Thinking

Why do you think Mr. Moffat chose this poem?

Why was Andy angry at his father?

Why do you think Andy wanted to tell only Mr. Moffat what happened? Why did Lucy tell Mr. Moffat even though she promised not to?

Journal Prompts

Have you ever broken a promise? If so, why?

When, if ever, do you think it is alright to break a promise?

Poetry Appreciation

Imagine you are Mr. Moffat. Choose poems you think he would give to Beatrice, Gabriela, Andy, and yourself. Why did you choose those particular poems?

Writing

Write a letter to Andy.

p 136

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS' POEM

"PIED BEAUTY"

Critical Thinking

13

Why do you think Mr. Moffat chose this poem to give to Lucy?

What did Lucy mean when she wrote, "Everything is a poem if you see its own freckled self!"

Journal Prompts

How do you think you yourself are unique?

Poetry Appreciation

In this poem, Gerard Manley Hopkins is celebrating "all things counter, original, spare, strange", i.e. everything which is unique and beautiful in its own way, even the poet's language used in this poem.

Find a poem you think is beautiful, mainly because it describes something so clearly.

Perhaps the poem makes you see something in a new way. Share that poem.

Writing

Write a letter to Lucy.

AFTER READING THE NOVEL

Journal-Writing

Do you have new ideas or plans for journal-writing after reading this book? If you do, what are they?

Poetry-Appreciation

Have you new ideas/feelings about poetry after reading this book? Share them with your class, or record them in your journal.

Writing

Write a poem, or two or three!

Write an entry in a journal from the point of view of a character in the novel other than Lucy or Andy.

Write a paragraph or two describing a possible sequel to For YOUR Eyes Only!

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READING LISTS

TEACHER RESOURCES

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POETRY

(in addition to poets' works already presented in *For YOUR Eyes Only!*)

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Janezko, Paul, compiled by. *The Place My Words are Looking For*. New York: Bradbury Press, 1990.

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Little, Benita. "I Hate Poetry". *Language Arts*. Vol. 73, Dec., 1996.

Schertle, Alice. *Advice for a Frog*. New York: Lothrop Lee & Shepard, 1995.

NOVELS (In journal or letter Form)

Blos, Joan. *A Gathering of Days: A New England Girl's Journal 1830-1832*. New York: Aladdin, 1990.

Cleary, Beverly. *Dear Mr. Henshaw*. New York: Morrow, 1983. Fitzhugh, Louise. *Harriet the Spy*. Trophy, 1990.

Hesse, Karen. *Letters from Rifka*. New York: Holt, 1992.

Johnston, Julie. *Adam and Eve and Pinch Me*. New York: Puffin, 1995. Little, Jean. *Hey World, Here I Am!* New York: Harper and Row, 1994.

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