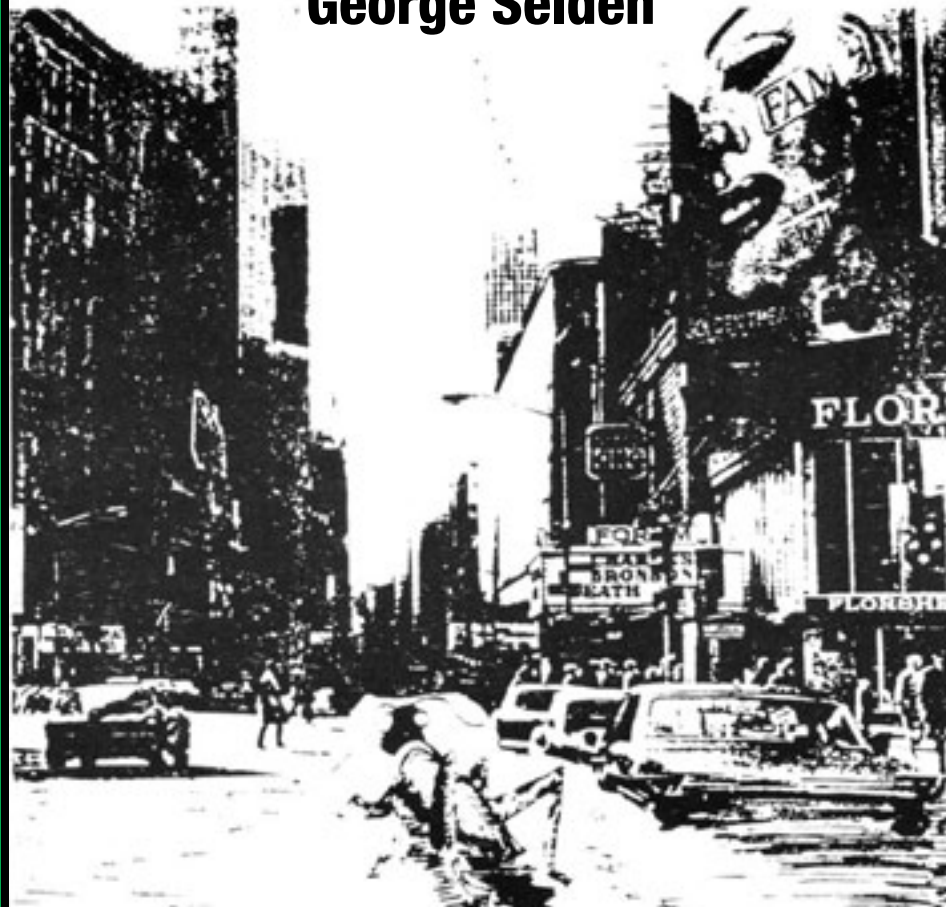


Novel·Ties

The Cricket in Times Square **George Selden**



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 *The Cricket in Times Square* 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.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Preview the book by reading the title and the author's name and by looking at the illustration on the cover. What do you think the book will be about? Where is Times Square? How might a cricket end up there? Do you think this book will be realistic or a fantasy? Will it be serious or funny?
2. Look at the illustrations in the book and then find the copyright date opposite the Table of Contents. What do you know about the time when this story was written? Why do you think this book has been popular for so long?
3. Have you ever heard of George Selden? Among other books, he has written a sequel to this one, *Tucker's Countryside*. Similarly, Garth Williams has illustrated *Charlotte's Web* and *Stuart Little*. What do all of these books have in common?
4. Have you ever adopted an outdoor pet? How did you care for the pet? What were the benefits and problems of having the pet? How did the animal like its new home? How did your parents like the pet? What finally happened to the pet?
5. **Science Connection:** Do some research to learn about crickets. Find out about their habits, their life cycles, how they chirp, and how other cultures (particularly, the Chinese) view them. As you read the book compare your facts about crickets to the actions of the cricket in the story.
6. **Cooperative Learning Activity:** Work in a small cooperative group with one student taking notes. Discuss how you would behave if you were a mouse, cat, cricket, bird, dog, or other animal and found yourself in a busy city subway station.
 - How could you live?
 - What might you eat?
 - What dangers would you try to avoid?
 - Who might help you?
 - How would you entertain yourself?
7. **Music Connection:** Listen to recordings of the music that you will find mentioned in the story: "Blue Danube Waltz," Italian folk songs, South American rhumbas, "Come Back to Sorrento," symphonies, musical comedies, violin concertos, hymns ("Rock of Ages," "The Rosary," "A Mighty Fortress is Our God"), Irish jigs, and opera (*Aida*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*). Listen to some of the music before you read the book, and then listen to the specific works of music after the chapter in which each appears.
8. Consider two different character types which you will find in the book—the city slicker and the country bumpkin. Look for the ways in which the characters in the book conform to one of these character types.
9. **Social Studies Connection:** Obtain a street map of New York City and find the places as they are mentioned in the story. Then go online to find pictures of these places such as Times Square and Chinatown. Display these pictures on your class bulletin board.

Chapter 1 (cont.)

Questions for Discussion:

1. If Mario were in your class, do you think he would be a friend of yours?
2. What sounds do you think Tucker would not recognize?
3. How do you think Tucker feels about living in New York City?

Literary Devices:

- I. *Anthropomorphism*—Anthropomorphism in literature is a device in which an author gives human qualities to an animal, plant, or material object. George Selden has given Tucker Mouse many human qualities.

What does Tucker do that only humans can do?

What personality traits does Tucker have that seem human?

Why do you think the author uses the device of anthropomorphism in this story?

- II. *Hook*—A hook in literature refers to an opening passage of a book in which an author tries to grab the reader’s attention. What is the hook at the beginning of this book?

What questions does it arouse in the reader’s mind?

Are these questions answered in Chapter One?
