Novel·Ties

That Was Then, This is Now

S.E. HINTON

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 a specific novel consists of instructional material 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.

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 the author's name and by looking at the illustration on the cover. What do you think the book will be about? Where and when does it take place? Have you read any other books by the same author?

2. Read "About the Author" on page two of this study guide and do some additional research to learn more about her life. As you read the novel, think about the elements that make a novel for teen readers realistic. Also, try to determine why S.E. Hinton has been such a popular author for young adult readers since 1967 when she wrote her first novel.

3. **Cooperative Learning Activity:** Work with a group of your classmates to brainstorm those survival skills and attributes that a young person would need in an inner city urban environment. Appoint one person as recorder to list and categorize the results of your brainstorming activity. Compare your responses with those of other groups. As you read the book, determine whether the main characters were well-suited to survive in their environment.

4. Mark and Bryon, the two central characters in this novel, are close friends who feel as if they are brothers. Work with a partner to discuss how friends could reach this degree of closeness. What kinds of shared experiences might make friends accept one another as "family"? Conversely, how might such a close friendship unravel?

5. *That Was Then, This is Now* explores a turning point in the lives of young people on the brink of adulthood. What types of life decisions might a person in high school have to make? Why might these decisions be important to that individual's future?

6. Discuss with your classmates the importance of peer pressure and peer acceptance in the decisions that young people make. At what point does peer approval become more important than adult approval? Why does this happen? Under what circumstances can the need for peer approval be beneficial to a young person? Under what circumstances can it be harmful?

7. The narrator of the book has to make a choice between a cherished friendship and his own values and ethics. What do you think might enable him to make such a difficult decision? How might he feel after he has made his final choice?

8. The main character in the novel struggles with conflicting sets of values. What values, or beliefs, are most important to you? Why?

Chapter 1 (cont.)

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why did Bryon feel that Mark's ability to get away with things was a gift? In what way might this be a dangerous quality?
2. What do you think Bryon's guilt about his behavior revealed about him? How did his attitude differ from Mark's attitude?
3. Why do you suppose Bryon considered M&M to be weird? What set the younger boy apart from most of the other boys in the neighborhood?

Literary Devices:

I. *Allusion*—An allusion is a reference to a famous historical, mythological, religious, or literary person, event, or work. In this chapter, there is an allusion to Lord Byron, a nineteenth century poet. Based on the chapter, what can you assume about this historical figure? Should we take the comparison of Bryon and the well-known poet seriously?

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II. *Point of View*—Point of view in literature refers to the voice telling the story. It could be the author as narrator or one of the characters in the story.

From whose point of view is this story told?

_____

How does this point of view affect our understanding of the characters and events in the first chapter of the novel?

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Writing Activity:

Imagine that you are Bryon and Mark's teacher and write a letter to Mrs. Douglas expressing how you feel about the behavior and attitudes of the two boys. What concerns do you have about Bryon and Mark?