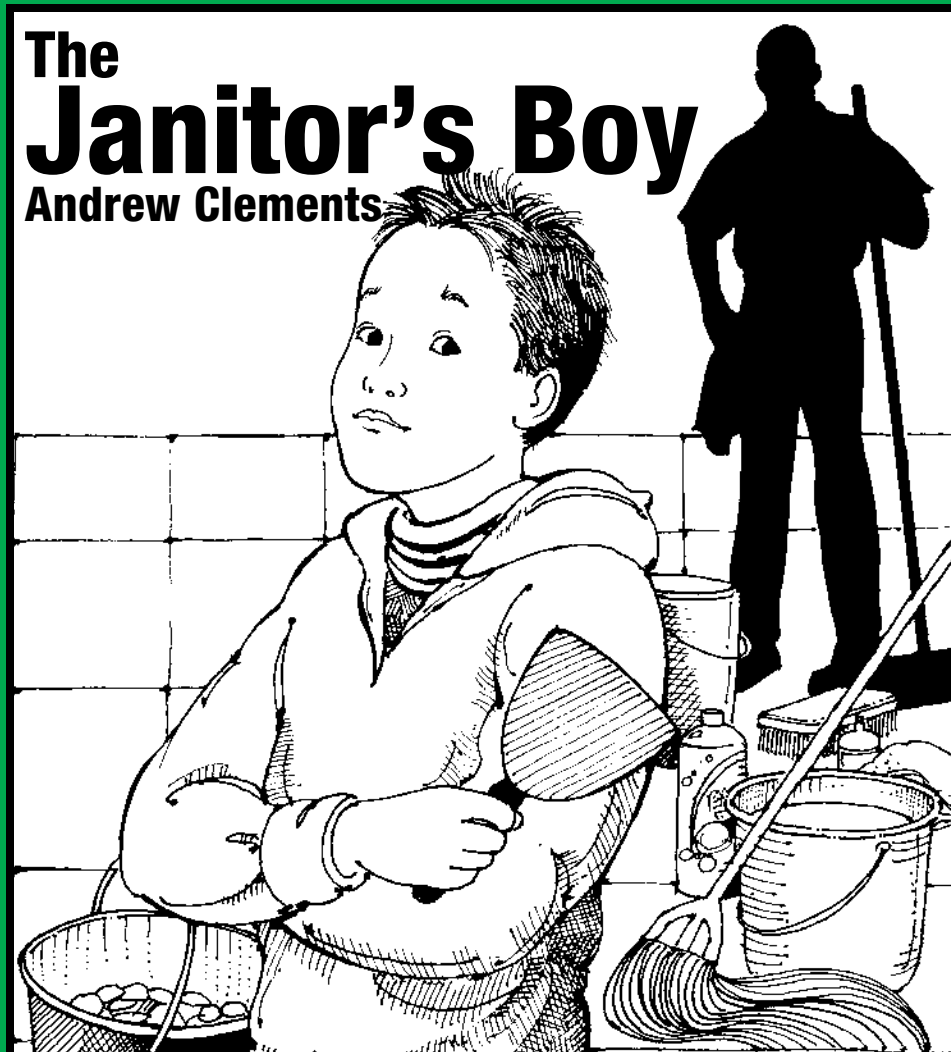


# Novel·Ties



## The **Janitor's Boy** Andrew Clements

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 Janitor's Boy* 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

**Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** is a term for certain severe psychological consequences of exposure to stressful events, such as battle, that the person experiences as highly traumatic. Such events involve actual or threatened death or serious physical injury. The presence of a PTSD response to an event varies in intensity, duration, and the individual person involved.

PTSD may be triggered by a single external factor or by a group of factors. Its symptoms can include nightmares, flashbacks, emotional detachment, insomnia, avoidance of reminders, extreme distress when exposed to the reminders, loss of appetite, irritability, hypervigilance, memory loss, excessive startle response, clinical depression, anxiety, and a variety of addictions.

There have been many reports of military veterans suffering from PTSD-like symptoms for well over one hundred years. Veterans of the Civil War who suffered emotional problems were diagnosed as being afflicted with “soldier’s heart”; shell shock was a term used to describe the condition of veterans of World War I who seemed emotionally disturbed; and World War II veterans were classified as suffering from “battle fatigue” or “combat fatigue.”

The practice of providing compensation for veterans with PTSD is under review in the United States. Some veteran advocates express concern that this investigation could result in a reduction of benefits to veterans who have served and currently serve in Iraq and the Persian Gulf.

## Pre-Reading Questions and Activities (cont.)

8. Andrew Clements, the author of *The Janitor's Boy*, said the following about writing:

Sometimes kids ask how I've been able to write so many books. The answer is simple: one word at a time . . . You don't have to do everything at once. You don't even have to know how every story is going to end. You just have to take that next step, look for that next idea, write that next word.\*

How well do you think this system would work for your writing? What are the advantages? What are the disadvantages? Think about some other books you have read. Do you think they were written this way?

8. In the Anticipation Guide that follows, write *T* in the "Before Reading" column if you think the statement is true. Write *F* if you think the statement is false. After you complete the book, mark your answers again in the "After Reading" column to see if any of your opinions have changed.

Statements	Before Reading	After Reading
1. Good children never do bad things.		
2. A person's job defines him or her.		
3. Parents should punish bad behavior in their children.		
4. Children have a right to be angry with parents who embarrass them in front of their peers.		
5. Someone can cause you pain without meaning to do so.		
6. Most fathers want their sons to be just like them.		
7. Sons are closer to their fathers than to their mothers.		

\*From the author's website: <http://andrewclements.com>