

**A Teaching Unit  
For  
*Small Steps*  
Louis Sachar**

**Sample**



**ELA Core Plans**

Teacher-Written Standards-Based Lesson Plans

# Sample Teaching Unit for *Small Steps*

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## Small Steps

### Chapter 3 ~ Discussion & Non-Fiction Analysis

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Comprehension

1. Is Armpit an only child? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who is Ginny McDonald? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Ginny was born with \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Discussion

**...A few neighborhood kids called her spaz, and retard, but most treated her with respect because she was a friend of Armpit's and because she was willing to answer their questions.**

What does the passage in the box reveal to us as the reader?

**About Armpit:** \_\_\_\_\_

**About Ginny:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Non-Fiction Analysis** – Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

The term cerebral palsy refers to any one of several neurological disorders that appear in infancy or early childhood. It permanently affects body movement and muscle coordination but does not worsen over time. Even though cerebral palsy affects muscle movement, it isn't caused by problems in the muscles or nerves. It is caused by abnormalities in parts of the brain that control muscle movements. The majority of children with cerebral palsy are born with it, although it may not be detected until months or years later. The early signs of cerebral palsy usually appear before a child reaches three years of age. The most common signs of cerebral palsy are a lack of muscle coordination when performing voluntary movements; stiff or tight muscles and exaggerated reflexes; walking with one foot or leg dragging; walking on the toes; a crouched gait; and muscle tone that is either too stiff or too floppy. A small number of children have cerebral palsy as the result of brain damage in the first few months or years of life, brain infections such as bacterial meningitis or viral encephalitis, or head injury from a motor vehicle accident, a fall, or child abuse.

#### ***National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke***

1. The author's purpose in writing this passage is to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. persuade the reader to watch carefully for signs of cerebral palsy
  - b. entertain the reader with a tale of cerebral palsy
  - c. describe the lifestyle of a child with cerebral palsy
  - d. inform the reader of what cerebral palsy is
2. What is the tone of the passage?
  - a. sarcastic
  - b. factual
  - c. pessimistic
  - d. satiric
3. In which of the following sources would this passage be located?
  - a. atlas
  - b. almanac
  - c. thesaurus
  - d. encyclopedia
4. What is the central idea of this passage?
  - a. Cerebral Palsy causes a lack of muscle coordination.
  - b. Some children have cerebral palsy as a result of early brain injury.
  - c. Cerebral palsy, which appears in one's early life, is a neurological disorder that affects muscle control and movement.
  - d. Cerebral palsy does not worsen over time.

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*Small Steps ~ Test One ~ Chapters 1 – 12*

1. After leaving Camp Green Lake, which of the following does Armpit do first?
  - a. He buys a house and moves into it with some friends.
  - b. He calls the mayor of Austin to ask for a job.
  - c. He moves into a halfway house.
  - d. He finds X-Ray.
2. Which other Camp Green Lake resident comes to invite Armpit to participate in a business adventure?
  - a. Stanley
  - b. Magnet
  - c. Zero
  - d. X-Ray

*A bell on the door jangled as X-Ray pushed it open. Armpit followed him inside.*

*Only a couple of tables were occupied, but it wasn't noon yet. A roll of brown paper towels stood in the center of every table, along with various bottles of hot sauce.*

3. What literary device is used in the passage?
  - a. flashback
  - b. imagery
  - c. figurative language
  - d. none of the above
4. What is Armpit's real name?
  - a. Adam
  - b. Barney
  - c. Stanley
  - d. Theodore
5. How did he get the nickname Armpit?
  - a. He refused to wear deodorant, and he had smelly armpits.
  - b. He used a lot of profanity, and his friends said he had a mouth like an armpit.
  - c. He was stung on the arm, and the pain of the sting caused him to complain about his armpit hurting.
  - d. His older brother use to pick him up under his armpits and toss him around.

*"Listen to me, Armpit," said Felix. "I bring you a breakfast taco, the least you can do is talk to me. If you're studying econ, then you should know. There's no such thing as a free lunch."*

6. What type of figurative language is used in this passage?
  - a. idiom
  - b. metaphor
  - c. personification
  - d. simile
7. Which of the following was the cause of Armpit being sent to Camp Green Lake?
  - a. popcorn
  - b. a cicada
  - c. a huge hole
  - d. shoes
8. Which word best describes the relationship between Armpit and Ginny?
  - a. hostile
  - b. supportive
  - c. one-sided
  - d. distant

*Small Steps*  
Chapter 17 ~ Allusion

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Comprehension**

1. After the concert, what does Kaira invite Ginny and Armpit to eat with her? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What happens to Cotton? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the hint that Ginny gives Kaira about Armpit's nickname? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Through Kaira's interactions with Armpit and Ginny in this chapter, we learn that Kaira can be \_\_\_\_\_ and often feels \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. playful, lonely      b. selfish, angry      c. sad, clever      d. timid, suspicious

**Allusion** - a literary device that provides a brief reference to a person, event, place, or phrase. The writer assumes the reader will recognize the reference. Allusions in writing help the reader to visualize what's happening by providing a mental picture. They are commonly made to the Bible, nursery rhymes, myths, famous fictional or historical characters or events, and Shakespeare. They can be used in both prose and poetry.

Here are some examples:

**A. *The insurance adjuster was as reliable as George Washington.***

The allusion in sentence A is to George Washington. The reader is expected to recognize the reference to George Washington and his honesty.

**B. *She was a Scrooge and never spent money on gifts for her friends or family.***

This allusion is to Scrooge, a character in *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. He was a stingy man who did not like to spend any money.

Read the following passage:

***"Don't tell me you've never heard of Janis Joplin?"  
He hadn't, but he didn't dare admit it now. "Maybe I have," he said***

Who or what is the allusion to in this passage? \_\_\_\_\_

- The allusion is made to \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. the Bible
  - b. a famous author
  - c. a famous singer
  - d. a myth

***She turned back to Armpit. "Have you heard of the Beatles?"  
"Shut up," he said.***

What is the allusion to in this passage? \_\_\_\_\_

- The allusion is made to \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. a famous play
  - b. a well-known species of bugs
  - c. a famous singing group
  - d. a political party

Even though you may have never heard of these two allusions, you can infer who they are. A lot of times when reading, you may come across an allusion that you don't know of, but you can always do some research to find out! Be on the lookout for more allusions throughout the novel.

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