

**A Teaching Unit
For
The Watsons Go to
Birmingham ~ 1963**

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**Sample
Packet**



ELA Core Plans

Teacher-Written Standards-Based Lesson Plans



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This packet contains samples from our complete teaching unit for *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*. The table of contents in this sample packet will allow you to preview the activities and lessons available in our complete unit, which includes handouts for each chapter, tests, and answer keys. Download the complete [teaching unit for *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*](#) now, and use these standards-based lesson ideas and handouts year after year.

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The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963

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The highlighted chapters are free!

The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963

Chapter 1

Comprehension

1. Who is telling this story?
2. What do the Watsons name their car?
3. What happens to Byron while they are scraping ice off of the car window?

Meet the Watsons

In this first chapter, we are introduced to the members of the Watson family. Let's take a closer look at some of them. Complete the following chart for each of the following characters.

	Kenneth	Byron	Momma	Dad	Joetta
Two facts that you have learned about this person					
Two descriptive words that seem right for this person					
One or two quotes from the story so far that help show this character's personality					

Go back and read the beginning of chapter one. The opening of this novel uses a great deal of imagery to describe how cold it was. Using this author's style as an example, write your own description of a *hot* day. Use a separate sheet of paper. Begin with *It was one of those super-duper hot Saturdays.*

Comprehension

1. What is the Ultra-Glide?
2. Why does Dad insist on hiding his toothbrush?
3. What seems to be Kenneth's favorite song?
4. Why are the Watsons going to Alabama?
5. The kids have always heard stories about Grandma Sands. How can she be described?

“Yakety Yak”

Listen to the song “Yakety Yak” as you read the lyrics that your teacher provides.

1. Find the rhyme scheme used in the song.
2. What words describe the tone of this song?
3. What does “Yakety Yak” mean or refer to in this song?
4. What does the content of this song say about music during this time?

Disc jockey

In the 1960s, disk jockeys, also known as DJs, played a great role in the wit, humor and fun of the radio broadcasts. Most radio announcers spoke in clear, correct English, but some disc jockeys broke all the rules of on-air behavior and invented outrageous personalities for themselves. It was not uncommon for a disc jockey to create a rather long rhyme all about himself and just how good he was at playing records. In this chapter, Mr. Watson cannot help himself as he imitates a disc jockey. (page 114)

Create your own disc jockey rhyme.

Pretend that you are *the man with the plan who will make the records spin and people dance again...* Create a rhyme at least ten lines long. Use Mr. Watson's disc jockey rhyme as an example.

The Watsons Go to Birmingham

Test Chapters 6-10

1. When Byron thinks that he is going to have to sign a welfare list for groceries, he is _____.
 - a. afraid
 - b. proud
 - c. embarrassed
 - d. intimidated
2. Byron knocked a bird out of the sky with a _____.
 - a. cookie
 - b. rock
 - c. peanut
 - d. shoe
3. What can the reader infer about Byron after we learn that he made a little grave for the bird that he killed?
 - a. We learn that he knows a lot about birds.
 - b. We learn that he does have a softer side.
 - c. We learn that he is afraid of getting into trouble.
 - d. We learn that he is a round character.
4. True or false: Kenneth completely understands Byron and always knows why Byron does the things he does.
 - a. true
 - b. false

He was surprised we were there 'cause as soon as he saw us he turned around and tried to walk right back out. Both me and mama smelled a rat.

5. What type of figurative language is used in this passage?
 - a. idiom
 - b. metaphor
 - c. personification
 - d. simile
6. What is Momma's initial reaction to Byron's haircut?
 - a. She is proud of him for being responsible enough to get his own haircut.
 - b. She is shocked but happy with the result.
 - c. She is angry and very upset about his new haircut.
 - d. She is reminded of the time when she cut her own hair when she was a child.
7. What did Dad do to Byron when he saw Byron's hair?
 - a. He gave Byron \$20 for being responsible.
 - b. He took Byron to the neighbor's house to show him off.
 - c. He put Byron on restriction.
 - d. He shaved Byron's head.

We hope you enjoyed this free sample packet. Download the entire [teaching unit for *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*](#) now and you will have all of the handouts, activities, and tests listed in the table of contents. Everything is ready for you to teach! Use these lessons immediately and for years to come!

Also, check out our other resources. We have tons of resources for ELA teachers including [novel units](#), [short story lessons](#), [writing activities](#), and [Common-Core bell ringer activities](#). You can print free samples from all of these online teaching materials!

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