

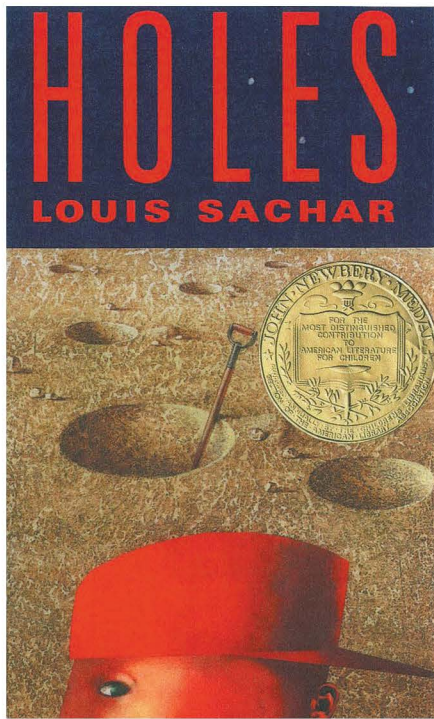
# Reading <sup>with</sup> Relevance

Building INDEPENDENT READERS and THINKERS

A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR

*Holes*

A novel by Louis Sachar



Recommended for:  
Grade Levels  
6th-8th

# A tool to inspire change

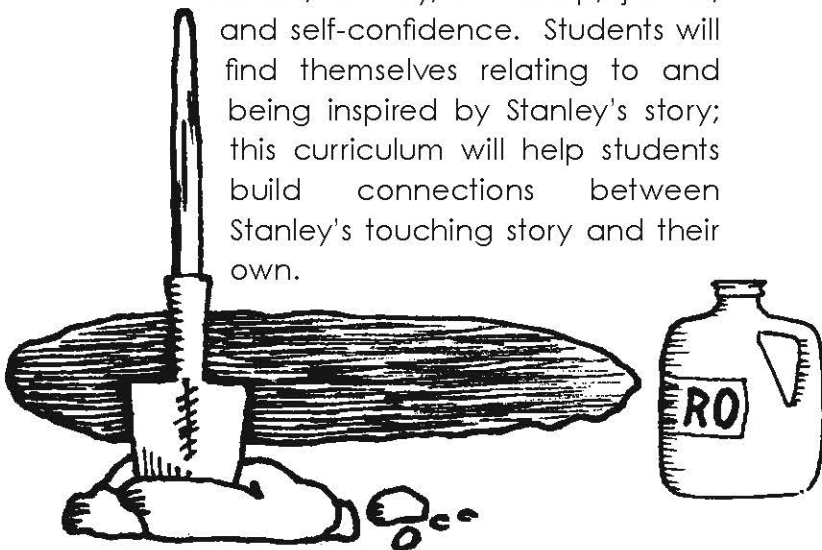
This literacy curriculum is constructed around a content-rich novel that builds students' literacy skills and supports their character development and self-confidence. Students are motivated to read because they relate to the strong, diverse, and resilient characters featured in our selected novels and because each session gives them the opportunity to connect what they've read to their own lives.

Developed, field-tested, and refined in our own tutoring and mentoring programs, this Common Core Standards curriculum has inspired persistently low-performing students to engage with literature, make meaning in their lives, and improve their English language arts skills. Now, *Reading with Relevance* is available to help you dig deep into the social, emotional, and academic needs of your students, whether in your classroom, after-school program, or youth development agency!

## Why Holes

*Holes* tells the story of teenager Stanley Yelnats IV, and his journey of self-discovery and acceptance at the Camp Green Lake correctional facility for boys. We chose this novel for its thoughtful attention to some powerful social and emotional themes:

racism, destiny, friendship, justice, and self-confidence. Students will find themselves relating to and being inspired by Stanley's story; this curriculum will help students build connections between Stanley's touching story and their own.



### This teacher's guide includes:

- A facilitator's guide with tips and resources for implementing the curriculum.
- A map of Common Core Standards addressed through this program.
- Sixteen individual lesson plans, including vocabulary, discussion questions, journal prompts, extension activities, and all handouts.
- Two assessments to monitor student progress throughout the program.
- Regular checkpoints to help teachers assess their students' progress on ELA standards.
- A culminating essay-writing unit.
- An appendix with additional teaching resources and activities to continue exploring this novel.

# Session 3

pages 41-54

## Vocabulary

**sprawled** (pg 43): v.,  
spread out in different  
directions

**radiated** (pg 45): v., sent  
out rays; glowed

**scowled** (pg 46): v.,  
frowned from displeasure

**intensity** (pg 47): n., a  
high level of something

**remarkable** (pg 54): adj.,  
unusual or striking; worthy of  
notice

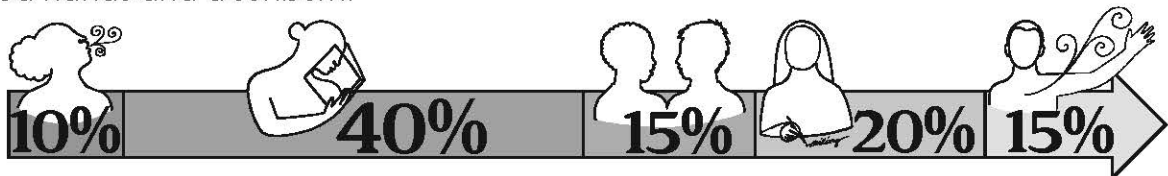
**smug** (pg 54): adj.,  
irritatingly pleased with  
oneself

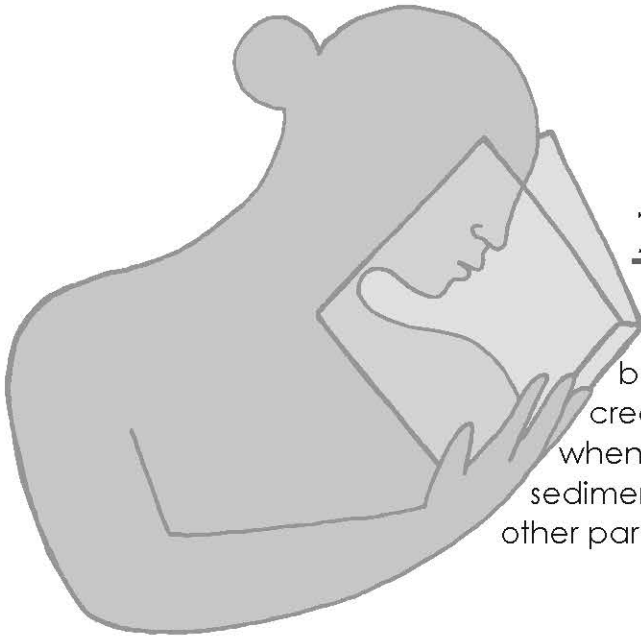
## Today's Theme

The theme for today is **inclusion**. Stanley's work at Camp Green Lake is hard, but he seems to be making friends and feeling more included. The other boys give Stanley a nickname, and he feels like part of the group. You can talk to students about how it feels to be an outsider, or to be excluded, and how Stanley feels once he feels like a part of a team. Have them consider how they have felt when they have been left out and how they can help others feel included in this very class session and elsewhere.

## Session 2 Recap

We learn that Stanley was bullied at school. On the way home from school one day, shoes fell from the sky and hit him on the head, and Stanley was arrested for stealing these shoes. At Camp Greenlake, Stanley digs his first hole: it's scorching hot and the dirt is rock hard! We also hear part of the story of Stanley's great-great grandfather, Elya, and his desire to marry a young woman named Myra, who is beautiful but thoughtless and silly. Elya seeks the advice of Madame Zeroni, who tells him to carry a pig up a mountain to drink from a special river every day until it's time to ask for the girl's hand in marriage. Then Elya must take Madame Zeroni up the mountain to let her drink from the river, and if he doesn't, his family will be cursed. When Elya decides against marrying Myra, he takes a boat to America and forgets to take Madame Zeroni up the mountain. Meanwhile, Stanley finishes his hole and goes back to the compound with blistered hands and a sunburn.





## During Reading

**fossils** (pg 51): Fossils are the remains or traces of animals or other organisms (plants, bugs, etc.) from the long past. Fossils can be created in many ways, but the most common is when something is covered with several layers of sedimentary rock (created by water, minerals, dust and other particles) over several thousands of years.



## Discussion Questions

- How does Stanley earn the nickname "the Caveman"? How does he feel about this?
- Why didn't Stanley tell the truth about Camp Green Lake in his letter home to his mother?
- Do you think Stanley was right to lie in his letter home?
- Why is it more important to Stanley for X-ray to think Stanley is a good guy than to have a day off? What would you do if you were Stanley?
- Why do you think Stanley imagined his friends beating up Derrick from school?
- Why do you think the boys always line up for water in the same order?
- Do you believe in curses? Why or why not?

# Journal Prompt

## INCLUSION

- Stanley gets a new nickname and feels included in the group.

**Why do you think it's so important for Stanley to feel included?**

- » Think of a group (friends, family, a team) that you belong to—how does it feel to “belong”?
- » Why do you think it's important for people to feel like they are part of a group?
- » How do you feel when you are excluded from belonging?

## LEADERSHIP

- Although he is not the biggest or the strongest boy in Group D, X-Ray is the team leader.

**What are important qualities to have in a good leader?**

- » Do you think X-Ray is a good leader? Why or why not?
- » Do you think one of the other boys in the group might make a better leader? Why?
- » Have you ever been the leader of a group? Would you want to be?

## Checkpoint

- Students should start each journal entry by introducing the topic of their writing.

- » Construct a clear topic sentence.
- » For example, “Today, I am going to write about \_\_\_\_\_.”

## Extension Activity

At Camp Green Lake, the boys like to give each other nicknames, and each of these nicknames says something about the boys. Have students use the “What's in a Name?” handout to think about some of the nicknames in the story and what they tell us about the characters. Then have them create a nickname for themselves and explain what it shows others about them.

### Materials:

- » What's In A Name? Handout

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



Why does Stanley get this nickname?

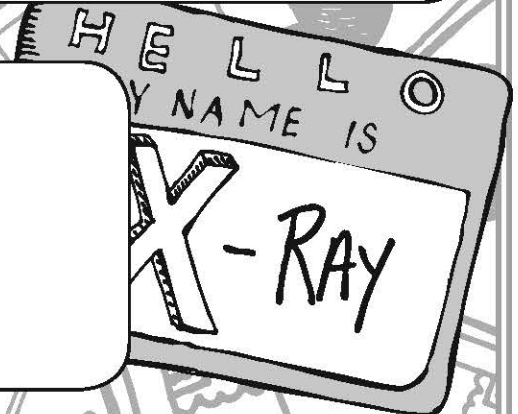
What does this nickname tell you about how the other boys see Stanley?

What might be a better nickname for Stanley?

What is X-Ray's real name?

How did he get his nickname?

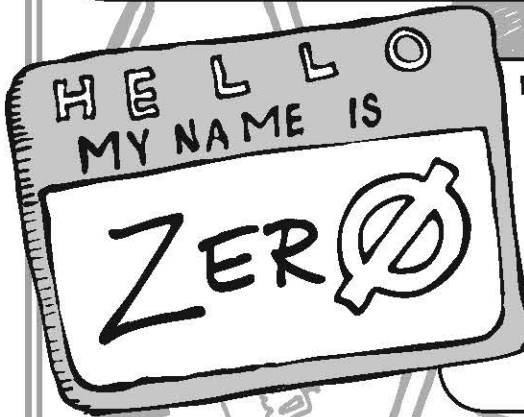
Why is his nickname ironic?



Why does Zero have this nickname?

How do you think he feels about his nickname?

From what you know about Zero, what might be a better nickname for him?



What does this nickname mean to you?

What good qualities about you inspired this nickname?

What does it tell other people about you?



At Camp Green Lake, the boys like to give each other nicknames, and each of these nicknames says something about the boys. Think about some of the nicknames in the book so far, and consider what you think they tell us about the boys. Then create your own nickname—if you have a nickname already, think about a new one you might choose for yourself. What does this new nickname tell us about you?

## What's In A Name?

# Appendix

## *Additional Activities*

### Contents

Hamburger Essay Template .....	84
Final Essay Outline .....	85
Six Traits Writing Rubric .....	86
Editing Tool .....	87
Stealing the Debate .....	88
Real Life Connector .....	89
Movie vs Book Compare & Contrast .....	90
Holes Math .....	91
Expository Article:	
<i>Living in Jim Crow America</i> .....	92
Vocabulary Comprehension Activity .....	94
Answer Key .....	95
Student Evaluation .....	96
Teacher Reflection.....	98
About Us.....	99



# About Us

## MOVING FORWARD<sup>™</sup>

### I N S T I T U T E

### Get to Know MFI

**Moving Forward Institute** is a nonprofit publisher of social justice educational materials. The organization was created by the founders and staff of Moving Forward Education, a multi-generational tutoring and mentoring organization aimed at fostering academic and emotional success for underserved students in California. Since our founding in 2003, MFE has provided tutoring and mentoring services to thousands of students and has trained hundreds of young adults to enter careers in the educational field. This reading curriculum was developed by our leadership team and its advisory group, including credentialed teachers and college professors. This program has been successfully facilitated throughout California by achieving powerful and measurable results for students and schools. To learn more about our organization, or our research and data, please contact us today.

### Our Purpose

*At Moving Forward Institute, we know that students can be successful learners when their social and emotional needs are met.*

*We empower educators to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of their students by using culturally-relevant and gender-responsive reading curricula.*

### Training and Professional Development Services

*While lesson plans are designed to be easily facilitated by classroom teachers and after-school staff alike, our in-person training and professional development services will ensure fully effective implementation of the literacy curricula.*

*Additionally, we offer technical support, classroom observation, and program evaluation services to help your program be successful. Contact us for more information about these services!*

### Contact Us

*Contact us today to learn more about how the Moving Forward Institute can support your students and staff!*

**Online:** [www.movingforwardinstitute.org](http://www.movingforwardinstitute.org)  
**By Email:** [info@movingforwardinstitute.org](mailto:info@movingforwardinstitute.org)  
**By Phone:** 510-658-4475  
**By Mail:** 1425 Park Ave  
Emeryville, CA 94608

### If your students liked *Holes* . . .

*...they might love some of our other book selections! We suggest that you check out Walk Two Moons, Estrella's Quinceñera, or The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian. Please visit our website today to browse our full selection of socially and emotionally rich novel-based curricula!*