

Reading ^{with} Relevance

Building Independent READERS and THINKERS

A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR

The Mighty Miss Malone

A novel by Christopher Paul Curtis



Recommended for:
Grade Levels
4th-6th

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!



The Mighty Miss Malone tells the story of a smart and feisty twelve-year-old named Deza Malone, and her family's resilient journey through the tough times and challenges of the Great Depression. We chose this novel for its thoughtful attention to some powerful social and emotional themes: poverty, racism, family, perseverance, and hope. Despite the book's setting in Depression-era America, the novel is deeply relevant for young readers today; this curriculum will help students build connections between Deza's inspiring life 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.
- Fifteen 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 2

pages 22-44

Vocabulary

epiphany (pg 23): n., a sudden realization

conversationalist (pg. 27): n., someone who is good at engaging in dialogue

lug (pg. 28): v., to carry something heavy

weary (pg. 34): adj., tired

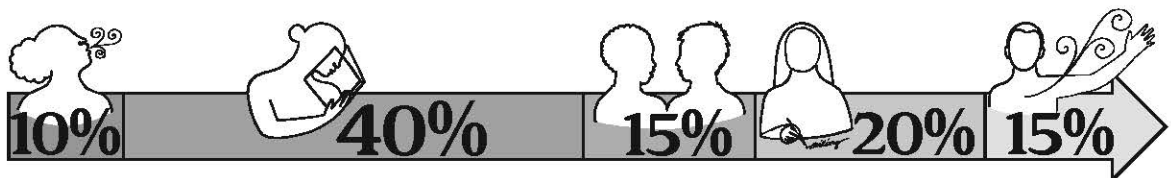
grandstanding (pg. 38): n., showing off

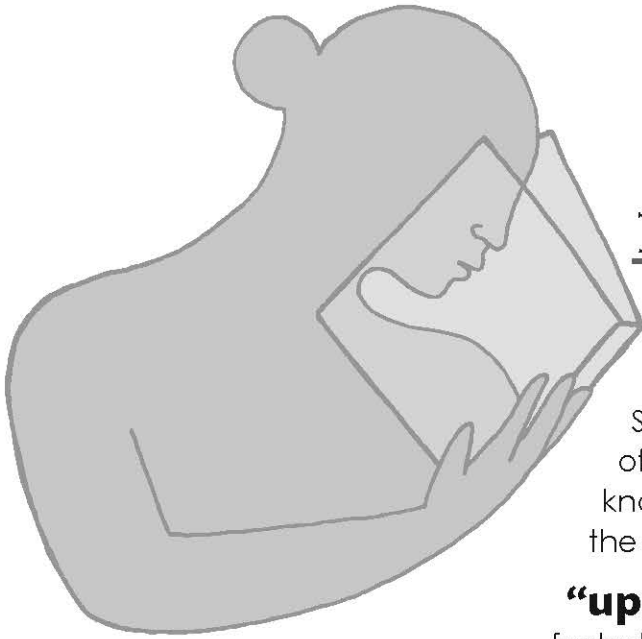
Today's Theme

The theme for today's session is **generosity**. Mrs. Needham sees Deza's tattered clothes, worn out shoes, and cavity-filled teeth, and decides to offer support by giving Deza new clothes and shoes. She even arranges for Deza to see a dentist! Mrs. Needham shows incredible generosity to her most promising student. What can we learn from Mrs. Needham's behavior? What are some ways we can show generosity to those less fortunate than us? Sometimes we may feel that we have to have extra money in order to be generous. But generosity can come in many forms! Work with your students to brainstorm a variety of ways they can show their generosity.

Session 1 Recap

In the first session, Deza introduces us to her whole family, which consists of her father, mother, and brother Jimmie. Deza works hard on the last essay of the year. The essay is about the most endearing and most annoying traits of all the members in her family. Deza realizes that one of her most annoying traits is that she talks too much sometimes. Also, Jimmie steals a pie, and Deza helps him return it.





During Reading

“the best-laid schemes of mice and men gang aft a-gley...” (pg. 37):

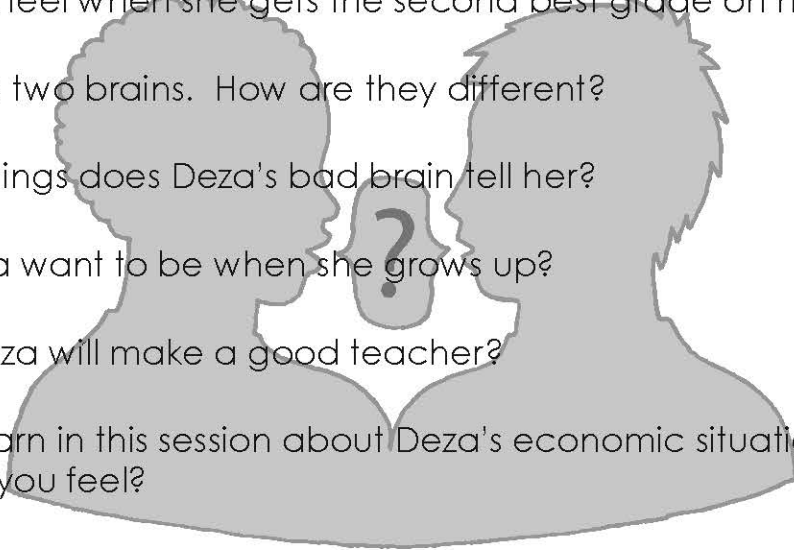
A line from “To a Mouse,” a poem by Scottish poet Robert Burns. Burns was a poet of the Romantic movement who became known as the national poet of Scotland during the 1700s.

“up on your p’s and q’s” (pg. 38): slang for behaving properly at all times

gingham dress (pg. 42): a dress made of a lightweight cloth with a checkered pattern of white and another color

Discussion Questions

- Do you think Jimmie should have gotten a harsher or lighter punishment for stealing the pie?
- How does Deza feel when she gets the second best grade on her essay?
- Describe Deza's two brains. How are they different?
- What kinds of things does Deza's bad brain tell her?
- What does Deza want to be when she grows up?
- Do you think Deza will make a good teacher?
- What do you learn in this session about Deza's economic situation? How does this make you feel?
- What does Mrs. Needham try to teach Deza about communication?



Journal Prompt

TWO BRAINS

- Deza talks about how she has two brains: a good brain and a bad brain. She says her bad brain, "is always looking to start trouble, to hurt someone or break something."

What advice do you have for Deza for when her bad brain tries to take control?

- » What might happen if Deza listened to her other brain instead?
- » Do you have two brains? Write about a time when you had two ideas about how to handle something in your life.

GENEROSITY

- Mrs. Needham is incredibly generous to Deza. She gives Deza new clothes and shoes because Deza really needs them.

What are some ways you can show generosity? Try to be as specific as possible.

- » What do you think about Deza's reaction to Mrs. Needham's generosity?
- » Why is being generous important?
- » How might the world be different if everyone was as generous as Mrs. Needham?



Extension Activity

Deza has big dreams! She wants to be a teacher when she grows up, and reading a lot is part of how she is preparing for her dream to come true. In this activity, students will use the "Dream Big" handout to explore their dreams and think through how to prepare for them.

Materials:

- » Dream Big Handout

Name: _____

When I grow up I want to be:

This is appealing to me because:

In order to reach that goal, I have to...

I'll also have to...

One more thing I can do is...

One challenge I might face is:

One thing I can start doing now is:

Deza has big dreams! She wants to be a teacher when she grows up, and reading a lot is part of how she is preparing for her dream to come true. Use this handout to think through what you want to be when you grow up, and what you might do right now to prepare for this dream.

Dream Big

Appendix

Additional Activities

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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!

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If your students liked *The Mighty Miss Malone*. . .

...they might love some of our other book selections! We suggest that you check out Walk Two Moons, Inside Out & Back Again, or Bud, Not Buddy. Please visit our website today to browse our full selection of socially and emotionally rich novel-based curricula!