TeachersFirst READING TREKS

Whirligig

Teacher Guide

Access Reading Trek Map

Grade Level & Content Areas

Ages: 12+
Grades: 7–12 and Young Adult
Reading Level: 4.9
Lexile Measure: 760L
Guided Reading Level: Y

Content Areas: English/language arts, reading, literature, and social studies (including individual development, identity, geography, and science).

Synopsis of Book

Paul Fleischman takes readers on a journey of penance and redemption for seventeen-year-old Brent Bishop. In a drunken state, Brent attempts suicide and inadvertently claims the life of a high school senior who was active in her community. Instead of prison, the girl's mother requests that Brent travel to the four corners of the continental United States constructing whirligigs in Lea's memory. Each whirligig touches a stranger's life, and those stories are told in flash-forwards woven through the narrative. Brent finds redemption in his travels, but he never realizes the good he has done with his creations.

Standards

Common Core State Standards for 6–12

Reading: Literature

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Writing

- Text Types and Purposes
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Speaking and Listening

- Comprehension and Collaboration

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

- Theme 1: CULTURE
- Theme 3: PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS
- Theme: INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY
- Theme: POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE

National Core Arts Standards for Visual Arts

- CREATING
- RESPONDING

Next Generation Science Standards

- MOTION AND STABILITY: FORCES AND INTERACTIONS
- EARTH'S PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE

Social Justice Standards

- IDENTITY
- DIVERSITY
- JUSTICE

Using a TeachersFirst® Reading Trek to Explore This Book

TeachersFirst Reading Treks create a virtual field trip of resources about a piece of literature or a text using the My Maps feature of Google Maps. To motivate and enrich student reading, teachers and students can reference this visual collection of web resources and images as they relate to the contents of a book.

TeachersFirst has done the hard work for you! Use the activities in this teacher guide and the accompanying Reading Trek map as you and your students explore this book. And, if you feel inspired, you (or your students) can create your own Reading Trek about this or another book!

Using This Reading Trek in Class

Below is a list of ideas for how to use this Reading Trek in your educational setting.

Working with the Map:

1. Introduce the book to the whole class on an interactive whiteboard using the Reading Trek map, highlighting its various layers.
2. Check comprehension of the story using Quizizz (TeachersFirst review).
3. Digital connections through Facebook, LinkedIn, and others can bring one's karass—a network of both known and unknown individuals whose actions impact each other—into clear focus. Use Diagramo

(TeachersFirst review) to create a karass of peers and family members.

4. After researching the civil and criminal infractions with which Brent is charged, break into small groups to debate the deterrent methods of incarceration, restorative justice, retribution, restitution, and rehabilitation to better understand the criminal justice system.
5. After learning more about Paul Fleishman at ReadWriteThink (TeachersFirst review), read the excerpt "My House of Voices" and have students create a list of all the sounds in each area of their homes.
6. Share and teach the game of chess by having students tryout Chesskid (TeachersFirst review). The site includes how to play and free interactive games.
7. Take a virtual tour of a Greyhound bus and station.

Extension Activities:

1. Music and musical instruments are mentioned often in the text. Creative responses to music can be quite inspirational and soothing. Experience Paint with Music (TeachersFirst review). After creating brush strokes, generated sounds from a saxophone, trumpet, or violin will play. Students can create and recreate a variety of musical sound bites and share on social media.
2. Create a virtual scrapbook of the places along one leg of Brent's journey around the United States. Use this Greyhound Route Map to determine the cities along the route. Download free photos from Pixabay (TeachersFirst review) or Unsplash (TeachersFirst review) for use with Genial.ly (TeachersFirst review).
3. Visit the Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park and Gallery, displaying its artistic wind-powered creations. Older students can create an image of a whirligig that reflects their personality and label the parts that would move in the wind.
4. Using the example of the shoebox whirligig as inspiration, groups of students can help younger students understand motion by working with them to build similar contraptions.
5. Imagine you're planning a road trip where you're limited to taking only the items that would fit in a backpack. Create and prioritize the list, identify the mode of transportation and the type of overnight shelter accommodations, and determine a daily food plan. Create a video to share using Adobe Express Video Maker (TeachersFirst review).
6. Write an epilogue for Brent, his parents, or Lea's family members.

Helpful Resources

From TeachersFirst:

- TeachersFirst CurriConnects Book List - Maps
- TeachersFirst Review of Google My Maps
- OK2Ask: Engage & Inspire with Reading Treks

Other Resources:

- Paul Fleischman
- Paul Fleischman Biography
- Human Scale Chess Project
- The Match of the Human Chess Board
- Whirligig Jeopardy Game
- Quizlet Flashcards
- Whirligig Vocabulary List
- Bee Whirligig Plans