

REPRODUCIBLE

TEACHER'S or BOOK CLUB GUIDE

For Bird Face Book One
8 Notes to a Nobody



Anonymous sticky-notes, a scheming bully, and a ruined summer send fourteen-year-old Wendy down a trail of secrets and self-discovery.

Wendy Robichaud doesn't care one bit about being popular like her good-looking classmates Tookie and the Sticks—until Brainiac bully John-Monster schemes against her, and someone leaves anonymous sticky-note messages all over school. Even the best friend she's always counted on, Jennifer, is hiding something and pulling away. But the Spring Program, abandoned puppies, and high school track team tryouts don't leave much time to play detective. When secrets and failed dreams kick off the summer after eighth grade, who will be around to support Wendy as high school starts in the fall?

Using humor and offering hope, this story delicately addresses issues of bullying, eating disorders, imperfect families, and teen suicide.

CAST OF TEEN CHARACTERS:

Wendy (Point-of-View character)
Jennifer
John-Monster
Tookie
David
Alice
Gayle

LANGUAGE ARTS:

VOCABULARY:

Agony
Anonymous
Anorexia
Assessment
Behemoth
Bulimia
Cajun
Cargo
Clench
Clique
Consequence
Contemporary
Crawfish
Décor
Deformity
Devious
Dismal
Dominance
Earnest
Eerie
Exclusive
Exude
Fiction
Focus
Fury
Gladiator
Hideous

Immutable
Linger
Loom
Mardi Gras
Maximize
Meander
Misinterpret
Momentum
Monotone
Monstrosity
Murmur
Oblivious
Overhaul
Overwhelm
Plod
Plummet
Plywood
Portrait
Precision
Pummel
Purse (verb)
Rally
Random
Response
Roman numeral
Rubik's Cube
Rummage
Safari
Salvage
Sarcasm
Scrawny
Script
Sinister
Snarl
Sneer
Snicker
Soothe
Spectacle
Sulk
Surrey
Symbiotic
Symphony
Syndrome
Theme
Visualize
Wit

ACTIVITIES & DISCUSSION:

1. Bird Face is a work of contemporary fiction. What does that mean?
2. What is the first sentence you can find that is not really a complete sentence? Do you think the author knows that it isn't? Why would an author write in such a way, and do you think it's okay to occasionally use an incomplete sentence?
3. Find a sentence constructed of two independent clauses. Explain why this sentence qualifies.
4. Find a sentence constructed of one independent clause and one dependent clause. Explain why this sentence qualifies.
5. Find your favorite description of a person, place, or thing in the book. Why do you like that description?
6. Find a place in the story that employs humor or sarcasm to get a point across. Do you think the character appropriately uses humor or sarcasm in that instance? If not, why not? If you like it, why do you like it?
7. Who did Wendy formally invite, in writing, to the Spring Program? Write a formal letter inviting a family member or friend to an event of yours, either real or imaginary. Include all of the components of a formal letter: Your address, the date, the recipient's address, a salutation, the body of the letter, the complimentary closing, and your signature. Write a draft of the letter and then rewrite neatly in ink.
8. Besides being a religious symbol, what was the significance of Wendy's crucifix? Why do you think she hid it at the beginning of the story but wore it proudly at the end?
9. Identify a theme that runs throughout the story. (Examples: Friendship is important. Finding or being a good friend sometimes requires work. We may be stronger, more powerful, and more capable than we think we are. Everyone needs to feel loved and appreciated. Our actions and choices have consequences.)
10. Jot down three words to describe each of these characters you meet in the beginning of the story: Wendy, Mom, Jennifer, John-Monster, Tookie, David. At the end of the story, choose three words to describe those same characters. Discuss. (Ask students to compare, looking for antonyms and synonyms.)

VISUAL ARTS:

VINCENT VAN GOGH and POST- IMPRESSIONISM:

1. Visit <http://www.vangoghgallery.com/influences/post-impressionists.html> or find a book about Van Gogh, Wendy's favorite artist.
2. Do you like any of the paintings shown? Which one, and why? If you don't like any of them, why not?
3. What is post-impressionism?
4. Do you like a particular artist or type of art, whether famous or not? What kind of painting or drawing do you like to look at, and why? (Encourage students to regard realistic, cartoon, abstract, advertising, poster, book cover art and other types.)
5. Which colors could Wendy mix together when she needed to create brown paint?

6. If you are not interested in 2-dimensional art (drawings and paintings), do you like 3-dimensional art or sculpture? Have you seen a wall sculpture or statue that you like? If so, what was it, and where?

7. What type of material was the parrot statue in Wendy's house made of?

PERFORMING ARTS:

BROADWAY MUSICAL:

OKLAHOMA! :

1. Search online for clips from the musical Wendy's school produced for the Spring Program. Select several lines a the song you find. Write them down and explain their meaning.
2. Select a piece of dialogue from one of the characters. Does the language sound like English but different from the way you speak? What is that called when a way of speaking a language is particular to a specific region? [dialect] Write down the piece of dialogue in correct English with proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
3. Describe the costumes of the performers in the clip you viewed. Which time and type of place do they represent?

BALLET:

1. Search print or online sources and write a paragraph about the history of ballet.
2. Name at least one famous ballet and describe what the story is about.
3. Name a famous male ballet dancer or a ballerina. Which country is he or she from?

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA:

1. What is a symphony orchestra?
2. Have you ever attended a performance by a symphony orchestra, either student or adult? What did you enjoy or not enjoy about it?
3. Search online for a music clip from a piece of classical music. What is the name of the piece and who is the composer? Do you like it, and why or why not? When did the composer live?

SOCIAL STUDIES:

LOUISIANA:

1. Find Louisiana on a map of the United States. Which states surround it?
2. What is the name of the body of water south of Louisiana?
3. Which major river runs through the state and empties into that body of water? Is most of the state located on the east or west side of that river? In which northern state does that river begin?
4. When was the Louisiana Purchase made? Which approximate states did it include? Who was President of the United States at that time?
5. One of the projects in Wendy's Louisiana history class was about the Battle of New Orleans. When was this battle fought and against which country? Who was President of the U.S. at that time?

CAJUNS:

1. Which of Wendy's parents was of Cajun ancestry?
2. Where did Cajuns come from? Locate that region on a map of North America.
3. What is the word "Cajun" derived from? (What is it a short form of?)
4. Which language did they speak?
5. When did they arrive in Louisiana?

SOCIAL CONVENTIONS:

1. Which form of communication does Wendy prefer?
2. Which people in Wendy's life wrote letters to her?
3. Have you ever received a handwritten letter? Do you prefer that to an email, text message, or a phone call?
4. Which characters withheld information about themselves from Wendy? Which ones were close enough relationships that you think they should have told Wendy their secrets?
5. How did Wendy feel about receiving anonymous sticky-note messages? How would you feel about receiving them? Would you have tried harder to find out who wrote them? What would you have done?
6. Who wrote the sticky-note messages? Why do you think he/she communicated in that way? Should that person have communicated with Wendy in another way? How?
7. Have you ever helped an elderly neighbor who needed help? Did the neighbor ask you or did you offer first? Did you seek your parent's permission first or did you tell him/her about it afterward? Were you offered anything from the neighbor in return for helping?

ECONOMICS:

1. What can you do if you don't have money for something you need or want?
2. What skills or possessions do you currently have that can help you earn money?
3. What skills do you feel capable of learning?
4. Who can teach you skills that you would like to learn?
5. Think of a place where you would be interested in working as soon as you are old enough. Can you volunteer in any way to learn the skills that you may need for that job? How would you feel about not receiving any pay while helping someone else or learning a new skill?

DOMESTICATION OF ANIMALS:

1. When do anthropologists say that man domesticated the wild animal that became what we now call a dog? What species of animal do they believe it was?
2. Why do you think that animal was willing to become friends with humans?
3. What is our responsibility to dogs and other domesticated animals that humans have as pets?

MATHEMATICS:

ACTIVITIES:

1. Demonstrate the math that Wendy used to determine whether she would have enough time after school each day to care for the puppies.
2. Select one of the products from Wendy's drugstore list. Search print or online advertisements for two different prices for any brand of that type of product.

- Name the brand and the prices. What is the difference in those prices? If Wendy receives five dollars per week as allowance, what percentage of her allowance will the lower-priced item require? The higher-priced item?
3. If Wendy ran a mile, how many yards is that? How many feet?

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY:

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of recycling did Wendy's mother do? Do you think she helped the environment? Why or why not? If you think she did help, what resources did she save?
2. What kept the blouse in place in Jennifer's closet when Wendy knocked the hanger out of the blouse?
3. Wendy used paint to create her stage prop and scenery designs. What are color pigments? What are some places in nature where they come from?
4. What is plywood? How is it made? Besides the way it was used in the story, how else is plywood used?
5. What are some of the other ways we use or appreciate science being used in our everyday lives? (For example: weather reports, food recipes, production of synthetic fabrics for clothing and shoes)

HEALTH:

DEPRESSION and SUICIDE:

This is a video produced by teens about teens and depression and suicide:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rx_HmFGTO8U

EATING DISORDERS:

http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelings/eating_disorders.html#

ALCOHOLISM:

Al-Anon Ala-Teen website:

<http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/how-will-alateen-help-me>

BULLYING:

Character Counts! Anti-bullying workshops:

http://charactercounts.org/training/inservice_bullying.html?gclid=CNmFht-T568CFZNV7AodpjW4zQ

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry:

http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/bullying

QUESTIONS:

1. Find a paragraph that shows Wendy's reaction to something she experiences, sees, or hears. What do you think of her reaction? Do you think it is healthy for her to express

- herself when she is angry or she disagrees? Would you react the same way or differently? Explain.
2. Find an instance in the story where you think Wendy misinterpreted something that happened. Why do you think that? Have you ever misinterpreted something someone said or did? Explain.
 3. Who does Wendy confide in when she has a problem she cannot handle well on her own? Do you think she receives good advice? Who do you confide in, and why? Have you always followed that person's advice? Why or why not?
 4. Have you ever tried out for a team sport but were not accepted at first try? How did it make you feel? What would you say to a friend if that happened to him/her? Have you or a friend ever tried out for a team sport and made it on the second try?
 5. What are some health benefits of playing team sports or participating in other types of sports activities? Name a sport activity that you can do alone.
 6. Which sport was Wendy interested in? Why?
 7. Have you ever known someone with an eating disorder? What were his or her symptoms? Did you notice and recognize them?
 8. Have you ever known someone who attempted suicide?
 9. Have you ever been bullied or witnessed someone being bullied? What kind of bullying was it? How did you feel? What did you do?
 10. Have you seen someone drink alcohol to excess? Without naming anyone, was it an adult or a teen? Did you feel uncomfortable being around that person when he/she drank alcohol? If you thought that person was abusing alcohol, would you tell a trusted parent, relative, friend, pastor, or doctor? Why or why not?
 11. What are some of the health benefits of owning and caring for a pet? What are some of the responsibilities?
 12. Have you ever been asked to keep a secret that you were reluctant to keep? If so, why? Which kinds of secrets should be kept and which kinds should not?

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