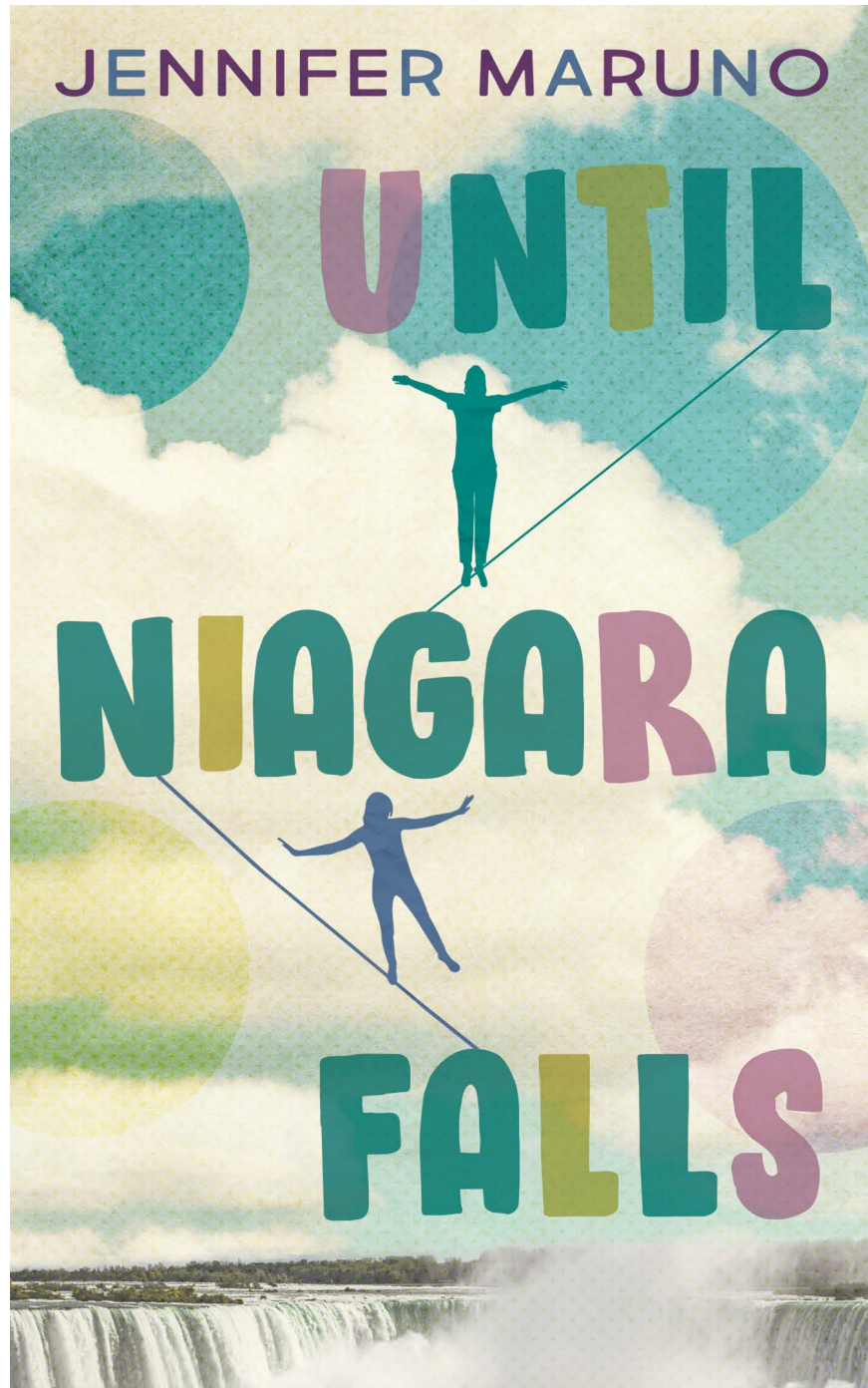


TEACHER'S GUIDE



JENNIFER MARUNO

UNTIL

NIAGARA

FALLS

By Christopher Buccella






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I OVERVIEW

SUMMARY

Until Niagara Falls is a nostalgic story about friendship, growing up, and the lifelong lessons learned along the way. The story follows the main character and narrator, Brenda, who is a carefree and happy preteen girl. Living in Niagara Falls in the 1960s with her grandmother and father, Brenda is a considerate and kind girl who enjoys reading, swimming, visiting the library, riding her bike, and playing with her dolls. Like most children her age, she has fears, though Brenda's fears seem to be unusual compared to her peers. Whether it's the dark, sleeping outside in a tent, or dog poop, Brenda doesn't like to step outside her comfort zone. She lives in a quiet part of town, with the roar of the falls heard in the distance. Her neighbour Harvey, who is known to have special needs, lives on his own and has lost a slew of dogs because he often forgets to lock his gate.

As the school year winds down and her class is assigned a final research project, Brenda becomes fascinated by The Great Blondin, the first person to walk across Niagara Falls on a tightrope. Throughout the story, we witness moments in Brenda's journey that mirror that of the great tightrope walker, putting the reader in her shoes as she navigates the ins and outs of new friendships. Her balancing act between being a good girl and being daring starts when she meets a new friend named Maureen, whom she is asked to walk home from school.

Maureen Sullivan is a recent transplant student from the big city who is still learning how to navigate her way around town. Maureen is Brenda's complete opposite — rough around the edges, a rule breaker and a risk-taker, street smart, rebellious, and determined. Brenda sees early on how different the two of them really are. While Brenda lives under the guidance, protection, and comfort of Gran and her dad, Maureen's parents have trouble supporting their large family. In addition, Maureen is mature for her age and sees Brenda as a baby because of her unwillingness to take risks and her childish interests. Maureen lives on the edge, hopping fences and backyards, scaling the fire escape at the library, and collecting empty bottles in the back alley. Each time, Brenda is reluctant to join in but pushes herself to be daring, like The Great Blondin was.

Although there are obvious differences between the girls, they strike up a friendship and are nearly inseparable throughout their summer break. They spend time together swimming at the local pool, riding their bikes to collect bottles for returns, and volunteering at the local library to help out Miss Logan, the librarian. Their daily adventures take them all around town, and one day at the local supermarket, Brenda finds a slogan contest hosted by a local pickle brand — the grand prize being a new bike and endless pickles. Brenda is keen to enter the contest, but Maureen seems to have reservations, making Brenda feel childish for being excited. When Brenda returns home, Gran helps her brainstorm ideas and finalize a slogan for her entry.

In early July, Amy, Brenda's cousin from Toronto, comes to visit. Brenda always looked up to Amy, but tensions rise between Brenda and Maureen after Amy's "cool attitude" toward Brenda results in Maureen and Amy picking

on Brenda and often leaving her out. Brenda shows the girls how great her fears are when she backs away from Biker Bob, Maureen's older brother, after he offers her a ride on his motorcycle. Egged on by the girls, Brenda accepts the ride, but upon her return, she discovers that Amy and Maureen have abandoned her. When Amy returns to Toronto, Brenda feels relieved that life is back to normal and she can have Maureen all to herself.

Although summer vacation certainly brings fun and games, Brenda and Maureen see some ups and downs in their relationship as they grow and discover together. Brenda catches Maureen taking her grandmother's bracelet after Maureen goes snooping through Gran's room, but Brenda reluctantly lets her try it on. However, Maureen continues to forget to return it. Brenda finds her to be untruthful, as Maureen finally says she has returned it, only for Brenda to discover that isn't true. This incident is Brenda's first glimpse into Maureen's dishonesty. In another instance, Maureen is allowed to stay over at Brenda's as long as she calls her mother to ask, which she tells Gran she has. In pondering the events that night, Brenda swears that Maureen didn't call her mother but had told Gran otherwise.

Another side of Maureen is revealed to Brenda after an incident at the library, when Brad and another local boy storm in, asking about a bicycle that was locked outside. Brad is adamant it's his and that it had been stolen last month. In the commotion of it all, Maureen slips out to move the bike into the shade, coming back just in time to find Brad's father demanding to know who had been in the library. Brenda is shocked when Maureen interrupts to check the library checkout cards, revealing that no one in the library could have taken the bike.

As Brenda's dad puts it, Maureen becomes a staple at Brenda's house and the more time they spend together, the rockier their relationship becomes. One night, Gran is eager to give Maureen some of her old clothes. Brenda's family goes to church every Sunday and dresses in their best clothes, something Maureen can relate to. One Saturday, Maureen is invited to church with the family. Gran had put together some special clothes just for Maureen, and for the first time we see Maureen showing affection toward someone. Gran will allow her to come to church, as long as she calls her mother to ask. Maureen tells Gran she made the call and that her mother was happy to hear she was going to church. Brenda's suspicions grow again that night, after she realizes that, once again, Maureen had not phoned her mother.

As the summer goes on, Maureen's demeanour changes; she grows bossier, judgmental, and nearly bullies Brenda, casting shame on her reactions and interests. Brenda tries to get away from Maureen as the two of them grow apart. Maureen follows Brenda everywhere, and Brenda doesn't know what to do about her failing friendship with Maureen. The CNE is a highlight for Brenda's summer, and her father is planning to take a day off of work for a trip into the big city. Brenda is excited to tell Maureen the news, but she shrugs it off and shares her disdain for living in Niagara Falls. Maureen's family moved around several times in Toronto before settling in Niagara Falls; this would be the first summer that Maureen would not attend the CNE. Brenda learns that Maureen's father is out of work and can't afford to take their family to the fair. The conversation around Maureen's father's unemployment sparks heated words after Brenda asks if Maureen's father is on "pogey," or unemployment insurance. Maureen becomes irate at Brenda's comments and storms off home in a fuss. No one has ever been so angry with Brenda before. That night at dinner, Brenda learns that she's not so different from Maureen, after her dad shares that he has been on pogey before, too.

As they wrap up dinner, the sound of a truck is heard outside. Brenda's dad investigates and finds a pickle truck and a man looking for Brenda Barnhart. The slogan that Brenda had written for the pickle company was chosen for the final round, and the boxes of pickles are a token of congratulations. The next morning, Brenda is excited to share the news with Maureen, who hadn't shown up on her porch as per usual. Brenda heads to Maureen's with a jar of pickles in hand. Maureen is unimpressed with Brenda's news, shrugging her off and skipping out on volunteering that day.

Brenda leaves without her and, on her travels home from the library, runs into Judy. Their conversations lead to Brenda realizing how similar Judy is to her. Brenda sees a friend in Judy, and the two girls start spending time together in Maureen's absence. Brenda asks Judy to accompany her to the CNE in late August. Panic and fear set in when Brenda realizes that Maureen has still not returned the bracelet. In a gesture of bravery, Brenda heads to Maureen's house to confront her. Brenda demands the bracelet back, and Maureen says she had forgotten all about it. Mrs. Sullivan weighs in and demands that her daughter give the bracelet back. Brenda is relieved, clutching it in her hands and returning it safely home that morning.

Later that afternoon, Maureen arrives at Brenda's with a gift. Inside the box are two small puppies; the dogs at Biker Bob's shop had a litter, but Mrs. Sullivan isn't letting Maureen keep them. Gran hates pets, and Brenda knows there is no way of keeping them. As the girls sit holding the puppies, Maureen reminds Brenda about the CNE and her promise to take her along. Brenda is confused and says she never invited Maureen to the CNE. Maureen had already asked her mother and was given permission to go, so there is no way Brenda could back out now. The girls get into an argument after Brenda calls Maureen a liar. Maureen suggests that lying is something everyone does. The girls have a heated exchange of words, which ends with Maureen throwing her notebook at Brenda. In the heat of the moment, as Harvey sits outside, Brenda invites him to the CNE right in front of Maureen, who is irate. Maureen grabs the box with the puppies and heads home. Although Brenda does not see it, the difficult circumstances she has found herself in with Maureen are slowly transforming her from a naive child into a mature teenager.

After her falling out with Maureen, Brenda spends the remaining weeks of summer with Judy. In late August, Brenda, Harvey, Judy, and Brenda's dad all head to Toronto for their trip to the CNE. Brenda's dad and Harvey set off together, while the girls explore on their own. They eat foot-long hot dogs, ride the Ferris wheel, visit the midway, and share a laugh at the dog show, which is Harvey's favourite. They even have a chance to see the dogs after the show, and Harvey learns that keeping a dog in a cage isn't necessarily so bad for them after all. They end their trip sprawled out on the grass, watching the fireworks and listening to the bagpipes.

The last week of August marks the end of the summer and the beginning of another school year. Brenda and Judy are nearly inseparable since returning from the CNE, and the two are playing in the Kiwanis Club baseball tournament, despite Brenda's lack of interest or skill in the game. On their way over, the two girls run into Maureen and her two younger twin brothers, who stop Brenda and Judy in the street. The brothers repeat Maureen's questions, as she probes into the girls' adventures at the CNE, refusing to let the girls pass unless they pay a toll. Brenda isn't going to give up without a fight and demands that they be let through or else she will talk to their mother. Judy doesn't like the confrontation and asks Brenda to head back the other

way to avoid trouble, but Brenda isn't going to let Maureen win. Maureen finally lets the girls through, with the toll being a slap on the hand.

After the game, Brenda and Judy return to Brenda's house, and Gran tells Brenda that she needs to clean up for her *Niagara Falls Evening Review* interview. After suiting up in her Sunday best, she comes down to find a reporter and a man in a suit, who is holding on to a bright-green CCM bicycle. The man turns to Brenda and announces that she is the winner of the Krick's Pickles slogan-writing contest, chosen first out of five thousand entries. Brenda and her friends gather around her bicycle for her photo opportunity. Everyone gathers around, and the photographers tell Brenda how she is lucky to have so many friends — all there with her except for Maureen.

During the last week of summer, as Gran and Brenda sit on the porch cutting Brenda's picture from the newspaper to send to family, Brenda spots a tattered old cardboard box in front of Harvey's door. Harvey opens his door, surprised to see the box. Brenda runs over to see what is inside. To Harvey's delight, he finds a puppy inside the box. Gran rolls her eyes at the sight of another dog that may go missing and heads back into the house. A note is attached to the puppy that reads, "Always keep your back gate locked." Brenda recognizes the writing as well as the puppy and knows it was Maureen who left the gift for Harvey. Brenda is surprised because after all the times Maureen had poked fun at Harvey, here she was doing something nice for him. Brenda wonders if Maureen is changing.

Across the road in the bushes, Brenda spots Maureen spying. Brenda calls her over and asks if she wants to see the new bike she won. Brenda says that Gran wanted her to sell her old bike, but she liked it because of the basket, which made it easy to carry things around, like the empties. Despite Maureen seeming unimpressed, the two girls decide to go for a ride in the cool summer air. Brenda shows Maureen that she can ride her bike with no hands, just like *The Great Blondin*.

THEMES

Until Niagara Falls touches upon themes that include:

- Youth and exploration — moving to a new place and meeting new people
- The ups and downs of friendship — navigating as we learn about people
- Risk-taking and facing our fears — trying new things and admiring those who are fearless
- Family life: socio-economic standings — comparing and contrasting families
- Understanding and managing emotions — learning about honesty and feeling upset
- Disability awareness — understanding differences
- Personal growth and coming of age — life’s challenges help us find new horizons

Until Niagara Falls explores topics that may be sensitive for your audience, including flirting, course language, and parents using physical discipline. Be mindful that these may be issues that students are coming to discover in their growing maturity. As such, a number of lessons, discussions, and learning opportunities are present within the pages of the book as learning opportunities. In this coming-of-age story, your audience will come to relate to the trials and tribulations of growing up.

STUDENT READING STRATEGIES

A number of reading strategies can be employed during a novel study. In the event that your students have never completed a novel study, keep these student strategies in mind:

MONITORING COMPREHENSION

Students who can monitor their comprehension know when they understand what they read and when they do not. Comprehension monitoring includes:

- Being aware of what they understand
- Identifying what they do not understand
- Using appropriate strategies to resolve comprehension problems

THINKING ABOUT THINKING

Also known as metacognition. Good readers use this to think about and have control over their reading.

- Before: clarify purpose and preview the text
- During: monitor understanding, adjusting to fit difficulty levels and fix any comprehension problems
- After: check their understanding of what they read

GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

These tools have proven to be useful in so many classroom activities and are a valuable tool for many learning styles. They illustrate concepts and relationships between concepts in a text.

- Help focus on text structure, differences/similarities, themes, and meaning
- Provide tools they can use to examine and show relationships
- Help students write well-organized summaries

ASKING/ANSWERING QUESTIONS

These give students a purpose for reading and help focus attention on what they learn. They help students think actively as they read and encourage monitoring of comprehension, assisting them with reviewing content and relating what they have learned to what they know. There are several types of questions in this guide:

Right There: Found right in the text, and asks to find the one right answer located in a specific place as a word or a sentence in the passage.

Think and Search: Based on the recall of facts found directly in the text. Answers are typically found in more than one place, requiring students to “think” and “search” through the passage to find the answer.

Author and You: Questions require students to use what they already know, with what they have learned from reading the text. Understand and relate to prior knowledge before answering.

On Your Own: Answered based on prior knowledge and experiences. These answers aren’t found in the text and serve as reflection or as journal writing.

Generating Questions: By generating questions, students build awareness and learn to ask themselves questions that require information from different parts of the text.

Summarizing: Requires students to determine what is important and put it into their own words by identifying or generating main ideas, connecting the main or central ideas, and remembering what they read.

BEFORE YOU START

It's time to dive into *Until Niagara Falls* with your students. There are a number of activities you can host in class to encourage your students. We will follow five steps for this procedure: Preview, Identify, Predict, Summarize, and Connect.

PREVIEW

This gives students a chance to understand what is to come and helps elicit ideas and themes from the story.

Suitcase Symbolism: Bring in a suitcase or box and fill it with items from the story (jar of pickles, books, bathing suit, picture of Niagara Falls, bicycle helmet, picture of the CNE, and a bracelet).

Give students time to examine the objects and make inferences as to what the novel might be about.

Students will make deeper connections and activate their critical thinking skills as to how these might connect to the story.

IDENTIFY

Students focus on the author, title page, and publication date of the text.

Examine the front and back covers of the book, noting the front and back cover illustrations and the title.

Have students open the book and skim through the pages.

PREDICT

At this stage, students analyze the genre and organization of the text to predict the book's subject matter and possible plot lines.

Understanding text structure will help students with skills needed to generate original ideas about the novel before they start reading.

Flip through the chapters and look at the titles of each with your students. Illicit what they might mean or how they are connected.

SUMMARIZE

Have students take a moment to read the back cover blurb, or share a summary of your own with the class.

Students can record answers using W5H (Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How).

CONNECT

Allows students to personally connect with the topic or subject matter.

This is completed during the pre-reading, comprehension, and after reading activities.

AS YOU READ

As you read the novel with your students, use some of these strategies to help your students understand the story themes, main events, character traits, and important vocabulary.

This can be done in a number of ways: dedicate a wall in your class to record this information or use an online platform such as Padlet that will allow you to visualize information for your students, updating in real time and granting students access from home.

Keep in mind the following text elements to record as you read; this will be important for the after-reading activities:

PLOT/STORY SEQUENCE

Outline the plot of the story as you go. This can be done with graphic organizers (story sequencing), timelines/fishbone style visual, or cue cards.

MAIN EVENTS/SEQUENCING

Understanding the story arc/narrative is crucial for student understanding, sequencing events, and relating themes. Record these events using cue cards, fishbone diagrams, or an online timeline using Padlet.

Using a beginning/middle/end system helps to group major events together and see how the story follows its course.

CHARACTERS/TRAITS

A story's characters provide rich details, insights, and learnings for students. As each new character is introduced, have students record their name, any background information, descriptive words, and character traits. Have them add to these as the story progresses.

This will be connected to the after-reading activities, so keeping track of characters and examples will help your students succeed.

READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

If your students are unfamiliar with a novel study, it is important to review reading comprehension strategies before you commence.

Before Reading:

- Use prior knowledge to think about the topic
- Make predictions about the probable meaning of the text
- Preview the text by skimming and scanning to get a sense of the overall meaning

During Reading:

- Monitor understanding by questioning, thinking about, and reflecting on the ideas and information in the text

After Reading:

- Reflect on the text's ideas and information
- Relate what they have read to their own experiences and knowledge
- Clarify their understanding of the text
- Extend their understanding in critical and creative ways

II PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

FACING OUR FEARS, PART 1

Purpose: To help students understand and reflect on their personal feelings and that having a wide range of feelings/fears is a normal part of life.

Objective: Students will identify a range of personal feelings centred around personal fears. Demonstrate healthy ways of redirecting these feelings as we grow and mature.

Materials:

- Poem “Life Doesn’t Frighten Me” by Maya Angelou: poemhunter.com/poem/life-doesn-t-frighten-me
- Student journals/notebooks/typed journals

INSTRUCTIONS

Explain that poetry is a way to show expression. We can understand poems if we read or hear it several times, analyze, and look closely at the meaning.

Introduce the concept of facing our fears and what it means to be afraid.

Share “Life Doesn’t Frighten Me” by Maya Angelou, either projected or shared with the class.

Read the poem out loud to the class once, showing fluency in reading.

Circulate the class and have students read a stanza of the poem. Stop to review any pressing vocabulary/questions.

Explain that understanding the message in the poem will help us better understand/share what our own fears are.

Think-Pair-Share: Have students work together to brainstorm the message, themes, and feelings of the poem.

- Have them note descriptive words
- Have them find two examples of feelings/fears and note
- Have the group decide on what they believe the message is

Re-Group: Have each pair/group present the message they found. Teachers will note these on the board to collect the classes dissection of the poem. As a class, note words that are important to the theme and message.

Ask students to think about what they are afraid of. Share a personal example with the students to help elicit discussion and build understanding between teacher and students.

Reflect: Have students reflect on what they're afraid of. Give students time to sit and think, letting them find a comfortable place to work in the classroom to dive deep into their feelings. Have them note their fear and why they are afraid of it in their notebooks. Students do not have to share with others, which should elicit more authentic answers.

CANADIAN DAREDEVILS

Purpose: To explore Canadians in our history who have stared danger in the face for the thrill of it.

Objective: Students will read and explore more about Canadian daredevils throughout our history.

Materials:

- Trading Card Template
- Information about The Great Blondin: ripleys.com/weird-news/great-blondin
- Sticky notes/cue cards
- Adhesive (tape/sticky tack)

INSTRUCTIONS

Ask students to think about the last lesson and reflect on their fears. Have them open their notebooks and reread their responses silently, adding any additional information.

Ask students if they know what a daredevil is. Elicit answers and ask if anyone knows of any famous daredevils.

Tell students that Canada has seen its share of brave people who have performed scary feats in order to entertain a crowd.

Introduce The Great Blondin, who you will hear about in the novel.

Share The Great Blondin Trading Card with the class (see Appendix). Using the provided online resource, have students fill out the information card about Blondin (either printed or through Google Drawings).

Divide students into groups and have them move around the room.

Distribute several sticky notes or cue cards to each group.

Present information to the class (board/screen) and share this link for students to explore on their devices: canadashistory.ca/explore/arts-culture-society/daredevils.

Group Read: After students have loaded the webpage, read the introduction together as a class. Have students alternate sentences, reading out loud. Stop to clarify any questions/vocabulary.

Assign each group a different type of daredevil. The group will use sticky notes or cue cards to mark down important/interesting information.

Explain to students that each group will be assigned one type of daredevil and will work collectively to record important information, just like with The Great Blondin Trading card, and note this information on their cue cards.

Circulate the room to check for understanding/answer questions.

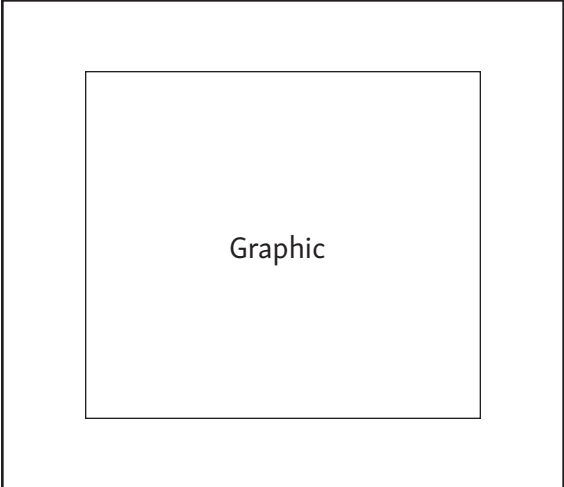
Collect the group and give each group time to ensure their notes are complete. Have each group come up and place their notes on the board, separating each by the headings.

Gallery walk with the class and have the groups retell information about their group of daredevils. Find similarities and differences between each type of performer.

- Ask if any students marked these activities as fears in the last lesson.
- Would any of them try some of these risky activities? Why or why not?
- Do they know anyone who they think might be up for trying one of these?
- Do they know of any modern day daredevils who might try their hand at one of these activities?

TRADING CARD TEMPLATE

1 Trading Card Template

Graphic	Birth Place	Birth: Death:
 <p>Graphic</p>	Early Life: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• #1• #2• #3 Interesting Facts: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• #1• #2• #3	
_____ (Name)		

FACTS ABOUT NIAGARA FALLS

Purpose: To build an understanding about the setting of the novel: Niagara Falls.

Objective: Students will read and explore more about Niagara Falls by completing independent reading/summary on this topic.

Materials:

- Top 10 List template
- Computers/tablets (online research)

INSTRUCTIONS

Ask students if anyone has been to Niagara Falls before. Illicit and brainstorm answers and note them for the class.

Tell students no matter how much/little they know about Niagara Falls, the Niagara Falls tourism board is looking for a list of the Top 10 Most Interesting Facts. They will do some quick reading/research and note interesting information they've found on the topic into their chart.

Engage students by allowing them to visit the following websites and complete the graphic organizer chart with their answers: konnecthq.com/niagara-falls, coolaboo.com/earth-science/niagara-falls. Using Kiddle (search engine) will generate information that is better suited for school-aged children: kids.kiddle.co/Niagara_Falls.

Synthesize answers by having groups finalize their lists. Move around the room and have them read aloud.

List/type the students responses on the screen (Google Documents).

Discussion: Come to a consensus as a class to decide what makes the list for their Top 10 Most Interesting Facts for Niagara Falls.

Ask students what they think good ways of presenting their list might be to make it look appealing to the tourism board (slideshow, decorated list, poster, etc.).

Create student choice: List the avenues for students to present the list. Pair students, let them pick their median, and have them work together to create a list for their groups responses.

NIAGARA FALLS RESEARCH

The Niagara Falls Tourism board is looking to revive its business by showcasing some of the best things Niagara Falls has to offer.

Your job is to explore the following websites below and compile a list for what you think are the 10 best things to do in Niagara Falls.

RESEARCH BANK

Start here:

konnecthq.com/niagara-falls

coolaboo.com/earth-science/niagara-falls

Then visit:

kids.kiddle.co/Niagara_Falls

Title: _____ (create an interesting title for your list)	
Number	Attraction/Fact/Thing to Do

WHAT MAKES A GREAT FRIEND?

Purpose: To explore the concepts of positive, healthy friendships and the links between healthy friendships and positive self-esteem.

Objective: Students will create criteria/checklist for what they feel makes a great friend.

Materials:

- ball/soft object (paper, tennis)
- 13 Essential Traits of a Great Friend
- checklist/criteria (student or teacher generated)

Tell students that this lesson is a discussion on friendships. Encourage students to participate frequently during the discussion, as their input on this topic is very important.

Share/present the guiding questions below, giving students time to think about what their answers are. You may wish to have them record their answers in their notebooks.

Guide the discussion. Feel free to use the following questions as reference:

- What is a friend?
- What kinds of things do you like doing with your friends?
- What can we do to start and keep good friendships?
- Why is it important to have good friends?
- How can we be good friends?

Round the room: Have students stand in a circle around the room. Tell students you're going to use the ball, and gently throw it to someone to share one quality of a great friend. They pass it off to someone else who will do the same. The teacher should note their responses on the board/screen.

Regroup and revise the list that the class created in the ball toss. Check for similarities/differences, check understanding, and build awareness and empathy amongst the class. Allow discussion to grow organically.

Writing in their notebooks, students will list the criteria they believe makes a great friend. This criteria is intended to be used by them to assess how their friend has demonstrated this action/characteristic/trait from the guiding questions.

- How can they promote positive relationships with their actions?
- What will they do to show their friend the same compassion/care/respect?

Allow the students time to reflect and note their answers. This should be used as a working document, and students can come back to before or as they read *Until Niagara Falls*.

GUIDING QUESTIONS: 13 ESSENTIAL TRAITS OF A GREAT FRIEND

Consider the following statements and reflect on your own behaviour. Use these as a guide for the checklist you will write later in this activity.

- I am trustworthy.
- I am honest.
- I am generally very dependable.
- I am loyal to the people I care about.
- I am easily able to trust others.
- I experience and express empathy for others.
- I am able to be non-judgmental.
- I am a good listener.
- I am supportive of others in their good times.
- I am supportive of others in their bad times.
- I am self-confident.
- I am usually able to see the humour in life.
- I am fun to be around and share positivity with others.

UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENCES

Harvey Wallis is Brenda's next-door neighbour, an individual who has special needs. He likes to tell the same silly jokes and talk about owning a dog. When we're introduced to Harvey's character, he is known by many as being a "retard." This topic rears its head a few times throughout the story, and especially through Maureen's view of him. The idea of groupthink and judging people on their abilities still exists today.

The teacher is encouraged to ensure students understand tolerance and differences that exist in others. This is a story that is set in the 1960s, and explaining to students the differences in a different era to our modern age is recommended, as is following up in the after-reading activities.

Purpose: To explore the topics of differences in the fabric of our society.

Objective: Students will participate in a non-verbal role-playing exercise, directed by the teacher.

Materials:

- Star stickers (six different colours)

INSTRUCTIONS

Engage students by telling them they must use body language (nodding or hand gestures) throughout the whole activity. They are to remain silent (no talking).

1. **Ask** students to close their eyes, and then the teacher will put a sticker on each forehead, one of six different colours. Most of the students get one of four different colours, and two of the students get stars from the remaining two colours. Every student should receive a sticker, but no student should be able to see their star. However, students can see everyone else's.
2. Students move around the room and find the group to which they belong based on the colour of their sticker.
3. Give students five minutes to move around and find their groups. Once they find their groups, have them sit and talk about what they have in common. Four groups are formed, with two students who do not belong to a group.
4. Observe how students are joining/helping.
5. **Wrap Up:** Challenge students to discuss how they found their groups without communicating verbally.
6. Discuss how friendships are formed based on what happened in the room.
7. Discuss the two students who did not belong anywhere and how they felt, and how differences can make people feel alienated.
8. **Student share:** Have those who were not grouped share their feelings.
9. Challenge students to brainstorm ways to accept the differences in others and enrich friendships with those differences.

III DURING-READING ACTIVITIES

CHARACTER FILES/STORY SEQUENCING

As you read, there are a number of activities from the after-reading activities that can be completed while you read. These include:

- Character profiles
- Story graphs
- Comparing and contrasting characters
- Text to Self, Text to World, Text to Text Organizer (Appendix)
- Word Maps, which can be used on an ad hoc basis (Appendix)

When completed, these activities will provide students with a map of the story, an outline of the main characters and their details, as well as comparing/contrasting Brenda and Maureen.

Character analysis can also be completed, and an example is provided on the following page. This can be used as a guide for each of the main characters in the story. Main characters to use with this chart include: Brenda, Maureen, Gran, and Harvey.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Character's name:
What does the character "say" and "do"? (Use examples from the text.) _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
How does the character change? (Use examples from the text.) _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
List positive and negative character traits. (Use examples from the text.) _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
How do others feel about this character? (Use examples from the text.) _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

The following questions can be used as guiding questions as you read, or they can be assigned to students at the end of each chapter to check for understanding.

Each chapter includes a vocabulary word to explore, as well as an extension activities for either individual or group instruction. Students can complete these in notebooks/journals as per the teacher's discretion.

CHAPTER 1: JUNE 1960 (P. 1-8)

VOCABULARY

Puddled (slang): gathering/bunching around (something)

QUESTIONS

1. Where and when does the story take place?
2. Who does the narrator choose for their research topic? Who were they and what do we learn about this person?
3. What grade do you think the narrator is in? How do you know?
4. What is the narrator's name? Do you think they are the main character in the story?
5. What is the name of the new girl in town? As they walk home, what does the narrator notice about this girl?
6. What point of view is this story written in? Provide an example of how you know.
7. List some of the things that the neighbourhood park has as the girls pass by.
8. As the girls walk up to the house, what does the narrator see? What does the mother warn the narrator about before she leaves?

EXTENSION

This activity can be connected to math (area/perimeter, coordinates, scale).

Give students graph paper. Practise by modelling a bird's-eye view of your school playground. Have students draw along and help with any challenges.

Provide students with a second piece of graph paper and pose the following:

1. Think about your local park. Draw a bird's-eye view like the example.
2. Describe what the park has now and what you would do to improve it.
3. Colour code your drawing.
4. Include your additions on your drawing by colouring them the same colour on your drawing.

CHAPTER 2: CHICKEN POX (P. 9–15)

VOCABULARY

Brusque (adjective): direct and rude speech/comment

QUESTIONS

1. What does Gran put on Brenda's chicken pox? What happened to the bumps?
2. As Brenda lays in bed, what does she think about?
3. What did she like most about the last weeks of the school year? What do you like most about the end of the school year?
4. Describe some of the dolls that Brenda has.
5. What does Gran say to Brenda when she sees the broken doll? What is Maureen's reason for it breaking?
6. What is the name of the map in Brenda's room? What types of places does she mark on it? What does Maureen think of her interest in these places?

EXTENSION

Do you know of any places around the world with strange names?

Invite students to research online cities around the world that have unusual or unique names.

Students can share their findings with peers.

CHAPTER 3: HARVEY (P. 16–24)

Note: This chapter includes offensive language (“retard”). Be mindful of your audience.

VOCABULARY

Lumber (verb): move in a slow and awkward way

QUESTIONS

1. What do we learn about Harvey from the outset of the chapter? Make a list.
2. Why does Harvey have trouble keeping dogs? Where does Harvey think the dogs run off to?
3. Why does Maureen only take out one book at a time from the library?
4. Why do you think Maureen’s mother puts water into the mustard and ketchup containers?
5. Gran sees a piece of string hanging from Harvey’s window. What does Brenda think about when she sees it? What does Maureen do?
6. Where does Gran go after lunch? What do the girls do after she leaves?
7. How does Brenda feel about what Maureen is doing in Gran’s room?
8. What does Brenda let Maureen wear?

EXTENSION

Brenda, Maureen, and Gran have a good laugh about Harvey and the hot dog on the string. Have you ever played a trick on someone? Have you ever laughed so hard it hurt? What happened? How did it feel?

CHAPTER 4: WATERMELON (P. 25–31)

VOCABULARY

Slogan (noun): a short and striking memorable phrase used in advertising

QUESTIONS

1. Where was Gran when Maureen arrived at Brenda's house?
2. What does Maureen do after she barged into the door?
3. What happens when Gran returns home? How does she react?
4. What was the watermelon for? When have we seen Gran do this before?
5. How does Gran punish Brenda?
6. Where did the girls go to get the watermelon?
7. What does Harvey do there?
8. Describe what do the girls see in the alley.
9. How does Maureen act in the store?
10. Brenda finds a special display in the store. What is it for? What does Maureen think of it? Will Maureen enter the contest?
11. What must each entry to the contest include? Can you think of any famous slogans?

EXTENSION

In this chapter, when the girls are in the store, Maureen remarks about the pickle contest. She says, "Who cares about rules?" (p. 30).

What does this tell us about Maureen's character? Give an example of something that has already happened in the story as evidence of her personality.

CHAPTER 5: QUICKSAND (P. 32–37)

VOCABULARY

Writhe (verb): twist and squirm, contortions of the body

QUESTIONS

1. You're a lifeguard at the local pool and you must list the swimming schedule for the pool. The pool opens at 9 a.m. and closes at 8 p.m. Lunch goes from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. Include: morning and afternoon, times and admission fees.
2. Describe Maureen's hair as the girls sat by the pool. What and where did it remind Brenda of? How does Brenda describe Maureen?
3. Compare how Maureen gets into the water versus Brenda.
4. What do you know about quicksand? What advice does Brenda give to us about quicksand?
5. Where did the girls go after the pool? How does Brenda describe walking around the benches?
6. What did Gran use to check the weather?
7. How does Mrs. Beck arrange her laundry? Use pictures and words.
8. What does Maureen say about grandparents? How does she feel about hers?
9. What does Brenda think about when Maureen shares her feelings?

EXTENSION

Find a local group home or elderly care facility and have students write encouraging letters to them. Brainstorm topics to include in the letters and model a structure for writing a letter.

CHAPTER 6: MISS LOGAN (P. 38–45)

VOCABULARY:

Clutch (verb): grasp something tightly

QUESTIONS

1. Who is Miss Logan? How is she described to us?
2. How does Maureen want to enter the library? Are they breaking the rules?
3. How does Brenda act? Is she brave? Who does this remind Brenda of?
4. Describe how Brenda feels when the girls head back down the fire escape.
5. Where does Maureen take Brenda? What do they find?
6. Where do the girls take the treasures that they find? How many items do the girls return?
7. What do the girls buy with the money they earned?
8. What does Gran help Brenda with?
9. List some of the slogans that Brenda thinks of with Gran. What does she finally decide on?
10. Do you think Brenda's slogan has a chance of winning?

EXTENSION

With students, brainstorm and list slogans that they know of. Pose examples of slogans to students and see if they recognize them.

Challenge students to re-create a slogan for one of their favourite brands and have them present their slogan to the class.

CHAPTER 7: COUSIN AMY (P. 46–53)

VOCABULARY

Geyser (noun): a hot spring where water boils and sends water spilling out

QUESTIONS

1. Who comes to visit Brenda, Gran, and her dad and what do we learn about her? How much older is she than Brenda? Where is she from and what is she wearing when she arrives?
2. What does Gran think about flip flops?
3. What reminds Brenda about The Great Blondin when she looks at her cousin? How does she compare herself to Amy?
4. What snacks does Gran bring the girls?
5. How does Amy eat her snack and what does she do with it?
6. What does Maureen do? Where has Brenda seen Maureen do this before?
7. We learn more about Maureen’s older siblings. What are their names and what do they do?
8. What do we learn about Maureen’s other siblings? What are their nicknames?
9. What nicknames does Maureen give to Brenda’s family and Harvey? Do you have a nickname?
10. What does Maureen do that she never does?
11. What does Maureen do that shocks Brenda?
12. What game does Amy and Maureen play on Brenda? How does Brenda feel? Have you heard of the “punch buggy” game before?
13. At the end of the chapter, Brenda shows some more bravery on the diving board. Describe how each girl jumped off the board.
14. How do the girls make Brenda feel? Who does Brenda compares herself to?

CHAPTER 8: THE WIENER ROAST (P. 54–60)

VOCABULARY

Pelt (verb): to throw at someone; moving quickly

QUESTIONS

1. What date does Gran decide to host Brenda's birthday?
2. What does Brenda not like about having a summer birthday? Who were the guests at her birthday this year?
3. List the gifts that Brenda receives and who gives them to her.
4. How does Brenda's dad make the fire? Use pictures and words to show what you think it would have looked like.
5. What snacks does Brenda's dad bring out? What slogan does he share?
6. How do you think Brenda feels when Amy and Maureen tell her how they feel about the contest?
7. How does everyone cook their hot dogs?
8. What does Amy and Maureen do with their marshmallows? How does Brenda react? Why do you think she feels jealous? Should Brenda be more open to trying new things?
9. Describe Brenda's birthday cake. What does Gran use to make it? What colour is it?
10. How does the chapter end?

EXTENSION

Describe your perfect birthday cake. If you could get whatever you wanted, what would it be? Use the descriptive words below and write a paragraph about your perfect birthday cake.

- frosted
- decorated
- delicious
- light
- sweet
- soft
- chocolatey
- flavoured
- moist
- delightful
- icing
- fluffy

CHAPTER 9: BIKER BOB (P. 61-66)

VOCABULARY

Saunter (verb): to walk in a slow relaxed manner

Brylcreem (proper noun): a British brand of hair styling products for men

QUESTIONS

1. What does Brenda like to buy with her treat money? How does she save her snacks?
2. Where were the girls going when they saw Biker Bob? Why were they headed there?
3. Describe Biker Bob. Who does he look like? Have you heard this name before?
4. What do Amy and Maureen encourage Brenda to do?
5. What do the girls say that Brenda is training to be?
6. Would you get on the back of Biker Bob's motorcycle? Why or why not?
7. If Brenda brings home twice as many treats as usual, how many does she bring home?

EXTENSION

Journal Writing Topic: What would you buy if you were given \$5 to spend at the variety store?

Explore more about Elvis Presley, "King of Rock and Roll."

Watch the YouTube video: "Life and Career of Elvis Presley" (youtu.be/Y-8QuljQ7hE).

CHAPTER 10: SLUGS (P. 67–75)

VOCABULARY

Blackguard (noun/Scottish slang): rascal, troublemaker

Mulcting (verb): to take money from someone through tax

QUESTIONS

1. Who is Brenda going to meet? What does this person do for work?
2. Describe Clifton Hill.
3. What do you think Gran means by “all those blackguards mulcting gullible tourists”? Ask someone else what they think it means. Write it down.
4. Where were the girls supposed to meet Evelyn?
5. What was Brenda spending her allowance on this week?
6. What did the Lavender Lady sell?
7. What game did Brenda’s dad play that involved the Lavender Lady?
8. Why did Brenda not ask Evelyn for something? What manners does Brenda show?
9. What does Maureen do that surprises Brenda? Do you think Brenda expected Maureen to do this?
10. How much does the Coca-Cola man drop in front of the machine?
11. What is a slug?
12. What does Gran tell Brenda about right and wrong?
13. What does Brenda compare this situation to?
14. Who does Brenda see at the Dairy Cone? Is she older than Brenda? How do you think they were in the same class? Who did the girl research for her project?

EXTENSION

Guide a class discussion about Niagara Falls/Clifton Hill.

1. Have you been to Niagara Falls?
2. Have you been to Clifton Hill? If so, what did you see?
3. Do you know anything about Niagara Falls?

Have your students explore Clifton Hill via the Clifton Hill official website.

Virtual Tour: cliftonhill.com/explore/maps/interactive-map

Photos: topofcliftonhill.com/image-gallery

CHAPTER 11: THE TENT (P. 76–82)

VOCABULARY

Exasperation (noun): feeling of intense irritation or annoyance

QUESTIONS

1. What do you think Maureen means when she says, “Your tent is just like a little tropical island”? Compare with what you imagine a tropical island is like.
2. What did the girls take out with them to the tent?
3. Using a list, describe the sleeping situation at the Sullivan house.
4. What did Brenda witness when she looked back at her time at Maureen’s house?
5. The girls leave the tent toward Maureen’s house. We learn that Evelyn has lied to Mrs. Sullivan. Have we seen Maureen lie before? Where?
6. What does Maureen call Brenda on their way over to the Sullivans? Why does she say this to Brenda? Have you felt like this before? Have you made someone feel this way?
7. Does Brenda stand up for herself against Maureen? What does she do?
8. Do you think Brenda is someone who worries? How might we know?
9. What is your reaction to the events at the end of the chapter between Evelyn and Mrs. Sullivan? Why do you think Mrs. Sullivan acted this way?

CHAPTER 12: BIRDSONG (P. 83–90)

VOCABULARY

Clematis (noun): a climbing plant with white, pink, and purple flowers

Green thumb (idiom): someone who is good at gardening

QUESTIONS

1. What are the rules of the card game?
2. Why is snap a good game for Harvey?
3. What does Gran mean when she says, “Those who have a great nose think everyone speaks of it”? Who is she speaking about? Who is this person?
4. List the steps that Brenda’s dad takes with the rosebush. What do you think the glass jar does for the rosebush?
5. Brenda isn’t sure what Gran means when she says, “Mrs. Vicary spent all of her time in her arbour thinking about the roses of yesterday.” What do you think this means?
6. What does Maureen do to show Brenda what it means when someone is flirting?
7. What is the name of the bird that Mrs. Vicary thinks she hears?
8. Brenda’s dad said the bird must have sat in some mustard. What does that mean?
9. What happens at Maureen’s house with the laundry chore?
10. What do we learn about Gran’s bracelet? Do you think Maureen is being honest here?
11. How do the girls play a trick on Mrs. Vicary?
12. What does “tying the knot mean”? What type of men are the girls going to marry?
13. Why do you think Maureen always likes to make trouble? How does she make trouble at the dinner table? Where have we seen her make trouble before?

EXTENSION

In this chapter, we meet Mrs. Vicary, the neighbour, who has a green thumb. Brenda’s dad uses a glass jar to protect the rosebush and create a greenhouse. Before students re-pot their herbs, they can decorate or paint them for an easy art activity.

A great extension activity would be starting seeds with your students. Herbs are easy to germinate and can be taken home and enjoyed by all.

Materials: (all can be found at local garden/major hardware stores)

- Peat moss seed starters
- Plastic greenhouse
- Seeds — basil, rosemary, chives
- Soil
- Small clay pots

Instructions:

1. Soak peat moss pelts in water. Open them up.
2. Place a few seeds inside and cover with remaining dirt inside the pod.
3. Place inside a plastic greenhouse and leave it in a window.
4. Water gently when dry. Seeds should start germinating within 5 days.
5. When sprouts have formed (8–10 days), place inside a small pot and top with soil.

CHAPTER 13: THE BIKE (P. 91-97)

VOCABULARY

Funambulist (noun): a tightrope walker

QUESTIONS

1. How does Maureen make her way over to Brenda's house?
2. What is the process of taking out a book at the library? How is this different from how you take a book out from the library?
3. What jobs were the girls given that day at the library?
4. Describe the boys who come into the library. Why are they upset?
5. What does Brenda know about one of the boys after looking at the library card?
6. Who is Brad? What does everyone know him as?
7. Where did Maureen go? How does Maureen act when the boy's father comes in? Why do you think Brenda is surprised by this?
8. What lie does Maureen tell? Where do you think Maureen learned this behaviour?
9. Why is Maureen keeping her bike in Brenda's garage?

CHAPTER 14: CHURCH CLOTHES (P. 98–108)

VOCABULARY

Flabbergast (verb): greatly surprised; astonished

QUESTIONS

1. What is the name of the lake that Brenda’s dad mentions at the table? Do you remember the map that Brenda is going to add to? Re-tell what it is.
2. Why did the family have to get up early the next morning?
3. What did Gran overhear the girls talking about earlier in the week? What did Gran do for Maureen? Describe what she gave her.
4. What were the conditions that Gran had for Maureen? Why do you think Gran did this?
5. Put yourself in Maureen’s shoes. How would you feel if you were gifted new clothes? How do you think Maureen feels here?
6. What are some of the things that Maureen is keeping at Brenda’s house?
7. What does Brenda’s dad mean when he tells Maureen that she is “becoming a regular fixture around here”?
8. Why can’t Brenda sleep? What does she hear Gran and her dad talking about?
9. What does Brenda look out for when Gran is talking to the minister? Where did we see this before?
10. We know that Gran is from Scotland, and the church announces a trip to visit. Where is your family from? What are your parents’ country of birth? Your grandparents’?
11. What happens at the end of the chapter? Do we find out if Maureen has lied to Brenda again?

EXTENSION

There are a few instances in the novel where the kids and adults are playing cards.

What card games do you know how to play? Can you explain the instructions to a fellow classmate? Write them down and prepare to share.

Set up some activity time for your class to play some card games. Have students share the rules to their game and play with classmates.

Challenge students to create their own card game and rules using a standard deck of cards.

CHAPTER 15: POGEY (P. 109–16)

VOCABULARY

Pogey (noun/Canadian slang): unemployment/welfare benefits

QUESTIONS

1. Why does Brenda decide not to share her discovery about the candies to Maureen?
2. Why does Maureen hate living in Niagara Falls?
3. How many times did Maureen move before she came to Niagara Falls? What does Brenda compare the Sullivans to?
4. What are Harvey's jobs?
5. What does Brenda say to Maureen that upsets her? How does this make Brenda feel?
6. What does *pogey* mean? What does Brenda learn about her father? Do you think this helped her understand why Maureen was upset?
7. What showed up at Brenda's door that night?

CHAPTER 16: CLUES (P. 117–24)

VOCABULARY

Tuft (noun): a collection of threads of grass or hair that are growing together at their base

QUESTIONS

1. What do you think it means to “double ride” on a bicycle? What is Brenda reminded of when she thinks about having to double ride with Brenda up the hill?
2. Describe what Brenda sees when she enters Maureen’s house. How do you think this was different from Brenda’s house?
3. Do you think Maureen forgives Brenda when she gifts her the jar of pickles? Would you accept Brenda’s apology?
4. What lie does Brenda tell Miss Logan?
5. Brenda meets Steve out by the bike racks. What does Steve say he would be good at?
6. When Brenda rides home, what does she try to do? What happens? Do you think Brenda is getting braver?
7. Brenda gets involved with some games in the park. Does she consider herself a good soccer player? What position is she assigned in the game? What does she compare her face to when she gets hit by the ball?
8. Who scores the goal against Brenda? Where have we seen this person before?
9. What does Brenda see in Judy? What type of mind does Brenda say Judy has? Do you think Judy is different from Maureen?

EXTENSION

Journal Reflection: At the end of the chapter, Maureen and Judy meet one another. We see that they are similar.

Think about one of your friends and write a paragraph about this friend, including examples of how you are alike.

CHAPTER 17: PUPPIES (P. 125–34)

VOCABULARY

Grimace (noun): ugly and twisted expression on a person's face in disgust or pain

QUESTIONS

1. Why does Brenda go over to Maureen's? Is Brenda showing more bravery?
2. What does Mrs. Sullivan tell Brenda about the bracelet? What does Brenda say back to her under her breath?
3. What does Brenda do with the bracelet when she gets home?
4. What does Maureen bring over to Brenda's house?
5. Where did we see the Lavender Lady earlier in the novel?
6. What is inside the box? Where did they come from?
7. Why is Maureen's mother happy that she spends time at Brenda's house?
8. The girls get into another fight. What happens?
9. Why do you think Brenda invited Harvey to the CNE in front of Maureen? How would you feel if you were Maureen?
10. What reason does Brenda give Gran about inviting Henry to the CNE?

EXTENSION

Reflection: In this chapter, the girls get into another fight. Brenda calls Maureen a liar.

Have you ever told a lie? What happened and why did you feel like you had to lie? Has someone ever lied to you?

CHAPTER 18: THE EXHIBITION (P. 135–41)

VOCABULARY

Enchanted (verb): fill someone with great delight; to charm someone

QUESTIONS

1. What does Gran think about the CNE?
2. How much did Brenda's dad pay for admission to the CNE?
3. How often did Judy and Brenda have to check in with Brenda's dad?
4. What did the girls get to eat? Where did they eat it?
5. What show did everyone go to see? Who do you think enjoys the show the most? Why?
6. What does Harvey think about the dogs in cages? What does Brenda tell him about this?
7. Who plays the bagpipes at the fireworks? Why would Gran have liked this?

EXTENSION

Journal Reflection: Have you ever been to the CNE, a fair, or an amusement park? Write about your experience there. Think about what you saw, who you went with, what you ate, and some of the highlights of your time there.

CHAPTER 19: PICK A PICKLE (P. 142–51)

VOCABULARY

Clutch (verb): grasp (something) tightly

QUESTIONS

1. What was in the way when Judy and Brenda were riding to the park? Who was there?
2. How does Brenda think that Harvey had ended up there?
3. What does Maureen do when she sees Brenda? How does Judy feel?
4. How does Brenda feel as she is talking to Maureen? Is Brenda standing up for herself?
5. What does Brenda do to get through the barricade?
6. When Brenda gets home from the game, what does she find at home? Who is at her house?
7. What did Brenda win? What prizes was she given? How many entries were there for the contest?
8. Who were the people present for the newspaper photo? What does the photographer say to Brenda?
9. When Gran and Brenda are cutting out the photos, who does Brenda notice is missing?
10. What does Gran tell Brenda to do with her old bike? What does she decide to do with it?
11. What does Brenda see Maureen doing at Harvey's house? How does Harvey react?
12. What does the note say that is attached to the box? Why was Harvey given this advice? What does Brenda remind Harvey of?
13. At the end of the chapter, Brenda shows Maureen what she can do on her bike. What does she show her?
14. Do you think Brenda would have shown this bravery when she first met Maureen?

IV AFTER-READING ACTIVITIES

PLOT STRUCTURE: STORY GRAPH

The story graph works as a straightforward line graph, where events appear chronologically as they do in the text. Students record the sub-elements of plot, such as exposition, rising action, conflict, and resolution.

On the x-axis are the various plot events. The y-axis represents excitement, marking the more important events higher on the plot.

Students should plot at least eight points on the graph. Mark each of these with a letter. This gives the teacher the opportunity to judge how students feel about the story, and their take on the importance of events.

Once students plot their graph, have them write a description for each of these events, matching them to the letters.

Example events include: Brenda and Maureen's meeting, cousin Amy's arrival, summer events, the pickle contest, conflicts between the girls, and the CNE.

DESCRIBING THE SETTING/TIME

A story's setting refers not only to the physical location, but also to the time the action takes place. It is the *where* and the *when* of the story.

The Setting Graphic Organizer allows students to note numerous elements from this story and its setting in the 1960s. This activity should be completed during or after reading, and students can note this information as they read.

Setting Graphic Organizer

Location:	Sights:	Places in the Story:	Colours:
Location Map:		Year:	Time/Weather:
		Additional Information:	

CHARACTER PROFILE

The novel is written from Brenda's perspective and follows two girls who build a friendship but are seemingly different in many ways. These differences come up often during the story as the two girls grow and learn together.

Looking at Brenda and Maureen, students can complete character profiles during or after they read. This is a great opportunity for students to provide character descriptions using examples from the story. This can also be completed during reading.

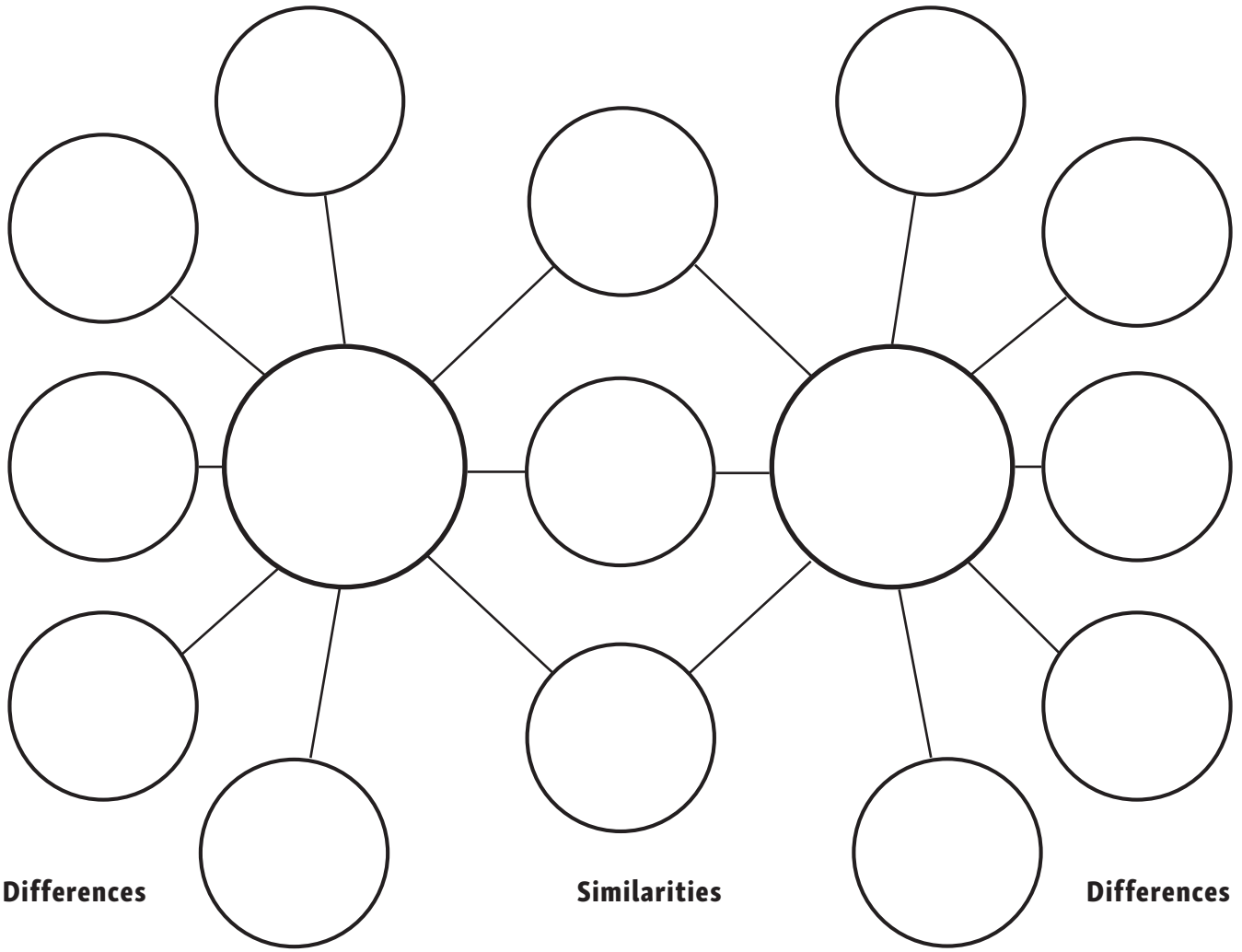
CHARACTER PROFILE ORGANIZER

Character name:	
Appearance: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Character traits: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Personality: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Actions: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
What are some things that this character does in the story? _____ _____ _____ _____	
How do they change/grow? _____ _____ _____ _____	

COMPARING AND CONTRASTING CHARACTERS

The ups and downs of Brenda and Maureen’s relationship help students understand the meaning of friendships, being open-minded, and the traits the characters possess. There are numerous opportunities for self-reflection in this story, as we see two contrasting characters.

As students read, have them record examples of what we learn about Brenda and Maureen as they spend their summer together and grow as friends. Graphic organizers to consider include a Venn diagram or a cluster web, as shown below.



MATCHING THEMES

Purpose: The novel explores a number of themes that are listed in the first section of this guide. The teacher can choose any number of the following themes to explore. In this activity, students are looking for examples of where these themes are present in the novel.

Objective: The teacher can choose any number of the following themes to explore. As you're reading, take note of these and have students mark examples in their book.

Materials:

- Cue cards
- Adhesive (tape/sticky tack)

INSTRUCTIONS

List themes and place them in different places around the classroom.

- Youth and exploration
- The ups and downs of friendship
- Risk taking and facing our fears
- Family life: socio-economic standings
- Understanding and managing our emotions
- Disability awareness
- Personal growth
- Coming of age

Provide students with cue cards. Have them work individually or in pairs, and list examples from the notations taken during reading.

Ask students to try and find one example of each to start. They should include page numbers to back up their evidence.

Students then place their cards under each example as they are placed around the room.

Culminate and gather the class to complete a gallery walk. Move around the room and have students discuss the collective findings under each theme.

Follow up with questions, including:

1. What similarities do we see in these examples?
2. Do these similarities mean that we feel these are important?
3. Is there anything missing?

SYMBOLS/MEANINGS

There are examples in the story of objects/items that play an important role in the story. Think about the following items and find examples to answer the questions in each column.

Where do we see this?	What does it mean?	What lesson can it teach us?
Dogs		
Bicycles		
Gran's bracelet		
Pickles		

FACING FEARS, PART 2

Think about the situations in the story where Brenda showed her fear. How did she feel? What did she do or what was the outcome?

Situation	How did Brenda feel?	Outcome

V EXTENDING ACTIVITIES

PICK A PART

This activity works best with pairs.

Each student has a copy of the story. The various story elements are written on pieces of card: character profile, setting, mood, and event.

Students take turns picking out a card, making sure their partner doesn't see.

They must then read a brief excerpt from the story that corresponds to that element. Their partner must attempt to identify the element.

When their partner has successfully identified the story element, switch roles and try again.

CHARACTER INSTAGRAM

The Character Instagram activity allows students to create their own “life magazine,” including pictures, words, and hashtags. Although this story takes place in the 1960s, this gives the students an opportunity to place this story in the present and embody the characters from their perspective from the twenty-first century.

For this assignment, students create a fictitious Instagram account for either Brenda or Maureen. Students can use Google Slides or PowerPoint to draft their example, or it can be drawn by hand.

Provide students with the following guiding questions and criteria.

CHARACTER INSTAGRAM ACTIVITY

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. What kind of content would this character post?
2. How would this character explain each post?
3. What kind of language would this character use?
4. Who would this character follow on Instagram?
5. Who would follow this character on Instagram?
6. Who is friends with this character? (Think of others from the book.)
7. Who is related to this character?
8. What are key events and issues from the story that might appear on this character's Instagram feed?

CRITERIA

The character's Instagram page should include:

- The character's profile
- A profile picture
- 4+ posts from the character
- Each post must include a relevant caption that relates to the story
- Each post must contain 2–3 relevant comments from followers
- An explanation of how the Instagram account connects to the book (written separately)

THEN AND NOW

Until Niagara Falls is set in the early 1960s, at a time when life seemed simpler, though the ups and downs of friendships have stayed the same.

This activity allows students and teachers to compare life in the 1960s to that of present day, whether it is the activities kids play, the cost of goods, or the interests of the characters, there are numerous opportunities to find differences in life between these two time periods.

The teacher can guide the students through this activity, marking examples from the book and how these compare to life today.

A sample organizer is provided on the following page.

THEN AND NOW: COMPARING TIME PERIODS

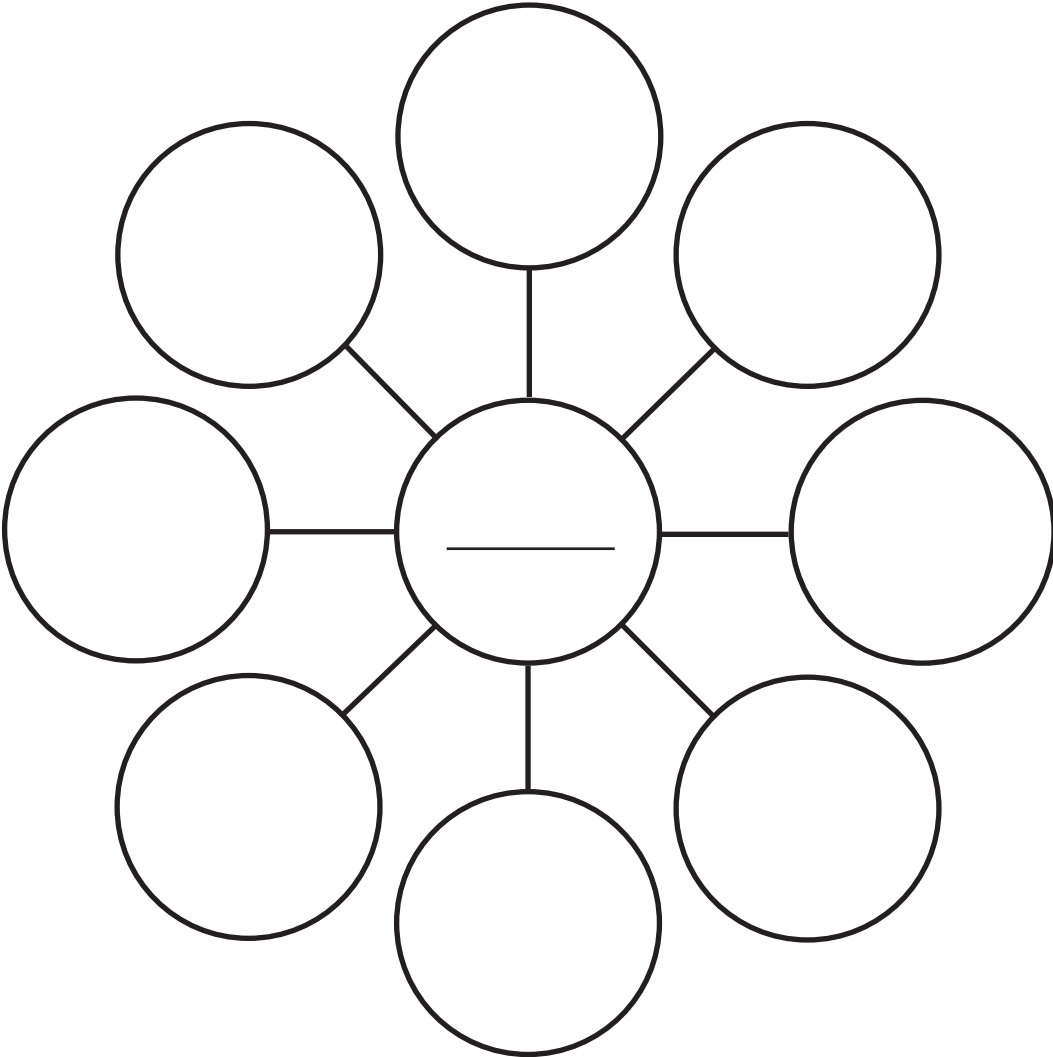
Until Niagara Falls takes place in the early 1960s. There are many examples in the story of how life was different, as well as opportunities for readers to interpret what we read.

Then (1960s)	Now (2020s)

VI APPENDIX: ACTIVITY GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

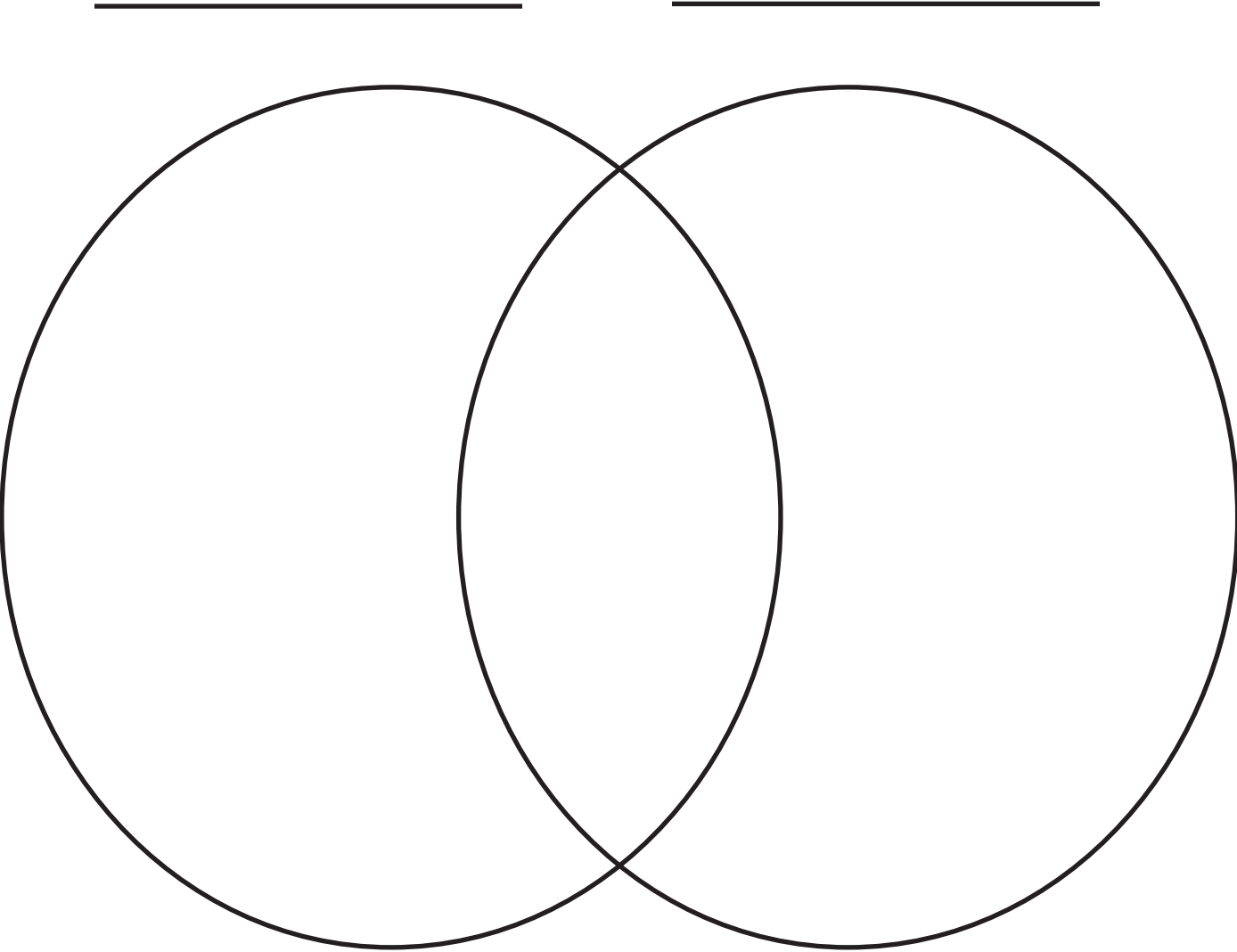
CONCEPT WEB

3 Concept Web



VENN DIAGRAM

4 Venn Diagram



“REMINDS ME OF ...” CHART

When I Read ...	It Reminds Me of ...

TEXT TO SELF, TEXT TO WORLD, TEXT TO TEXT ORGANIZER

Text to Self	Text to World	Text to Text
Now I Know	Now I Know	Now I Know

WORD MAP 1

5 Word Map 1

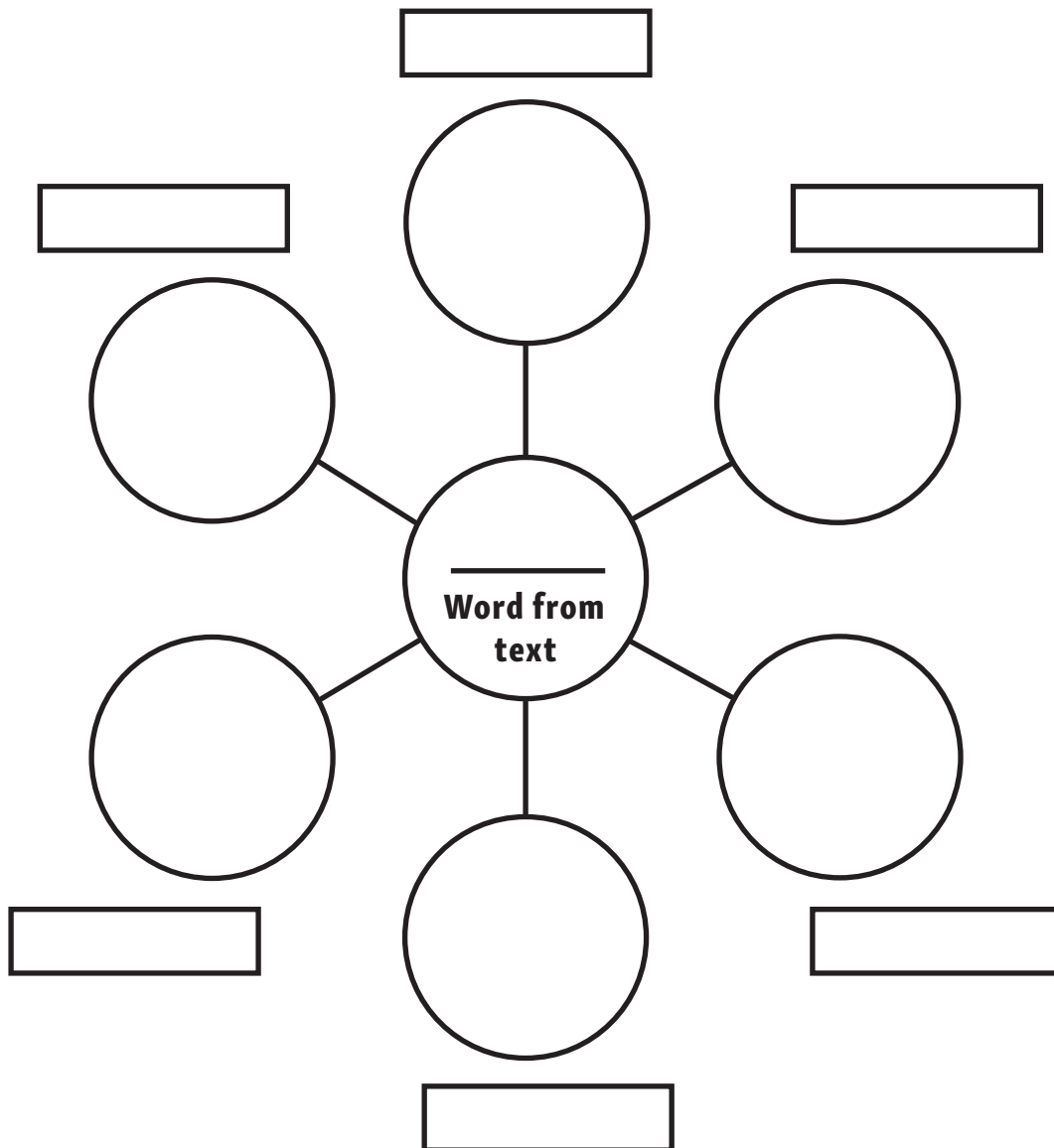
Definition and Synonym:	Antonym:
Use it:	Sketch it:

Word:

WORD MAP 2

Find words from the text that are meaningful and list them here. As you are reading, find other words or examples that match the selected vocabulary.

6 Word Map 2



VII ONTARIO CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

ENGLISH: GRADES 5-7 CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

Reading

Overall Expectations

1. Read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of literary, graphic, and informational texts, using a range of strategies to construct meaning.
2. Recognize a variety of text forms, text features, and stylistic elements and demonstrate understanding of how they help communicate meaning.
3. Use knowledge of words and cueing systems to read fluently.
4. Reflect on and identify their strengths as readers, areas for improvement, and the strategies they found most helpful before, during, and after reading.

Applies to: Facing Our Fears; Canadian Daredevils; Facts about Niagara Falls; Understanding Difference; Character Files/Story Sequencing; Comprehension Questions; Plot Structure: Story Graph; Character Profile; Comparing and Contrasting Characters; Matching Themes; Symbols/Meanings

Specific Expectations

1. Generate ideas about more challenging topics and identify those most appropriate for the purpose.
2. Gather information to support ideas for writing, using a variety of strategies and a wide range of print and electronic resources.
3. Sort and classify ideas and information for their writing in a variety of ways that allow them to manipulate information and see different combinations and relationships.

Applies to: Facing Our Fears; What Makes a Great Friend?; Canadian Daredevils; Facts about Niagara Falls; Plot Structure: Story Graph; Describing the Setting/Time; Symbols/Meanings; Then and Now; Matching Themes; Comprehension Questions

ENGLISH: GRADES 5-7 CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

Writing

Overall Expectations

1. Generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience.

2. Draft and revise their writing, using a variety of informational, literary, and graphic forms and stylistic elements appropriate for the purpose and audience.

Applies to: Pre-Reading Activities; During-Reading Activities; Letter Writing (Chapter 5: Quicksand); After-Reading Activities; Extending Activities

ENGLISH: GRADES 6-7 CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

Writing

Specific Expectations

1. Identify their point of view and other possible points of view, evaluate other points of view, and find ways to acknowledge other points of view.

Applies to: Facing Our Fears; What Makes a Great Friend?; Understanding Differences; Pick a Part; Character Instagram

ENGLISH: GRADES 5-7 CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

Media Literacy

Overall Expectations

1. Demonstrate an understanding of a variety of media texts.
2. Identify some media forms and explain how the conventions and techniques associated with them are used to create meaning.
3. Create a variety of media texts for different purposes and audiences, using appropriate forms, conventions, and techniques.
4. Reflect on and identify their strengths as media interpreters and creators, areas for improvement, and the strategies they found most helpful in understanding and creating media texts.

Applies to: Canadian Daredevils; Facts about Niagara Falls; Comprehension Questions (Chapters 2, 9, 10); Character Instagram

MATHEMATICS: GRADES 5-7 CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

Geometric and Spatial Reasoning/Measurement

Overall Expectations

1. Describe and represent shape, location, and movement by applying geometric properties and spatial relationships in order to navigate the world around them.
2. Compare, estimate, and determine measurements in various contexts.

Applies to: Comprehension Questions (Chapter 1); Plot Structure: Story Graph

Data Management

Overall Expectations

1. Data Literacy: manage, analyze, and use data to make convincing arguments and informed decisions, in various contexts drawn from real life.

Applies to: Plot Structure: Story Graph

SCIENCE: GRADE 6 CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

Understanding Life Systems: Biodiversity

Overall Expectations

1. Demonstrate an understanding of biodiversity, its contributions to the stability of natural systems, and its benefits to humans.

Applies to: Comprehension Questions (Chapter 12)