



Sharon Creech

Walk Two Moons

Overview

Thirteen-year-old Sal has lived her whole life in Bybanks, Kentucky, and she is not at all happy about moving to Ohio with her father. During a cross-country car trip with her eccentric grandparents to visit her mother in Idaho, Sal tells the story of her life in Ohio so far. Her tale is often funny, but it also reveals the wisdom Sal has gained through her experiences as the “new kid” and her reflections on missing her mother. This wisdom, however, does not fully prepare Sal or the reader for the surprise that waits at the end of the book. At that point, Sal’s journey has become a metaphor for her growth in terms of her identity and her ability to accept (and embrace) her new life.

As students read *Walk Two Moons*, the activities in this lesson help them develop the ability to read actively, write confidently, and respond articulately to the text. Students learn about writing techniques such as flashback and foreshadowing, examine mythology in Native American and other cultures, and share their personal reflections through class discussions and journal entries. Students have additional opportunities for research and writing related to the novel’s themes, particularly a young person’s need for identity as a member of a family, a community, and a group. This focus on self is balanced by another theme, the importance of empathy, as major characters come to realize that they can gain insight into their own lives by “walking two moons” in another person’s shoes.

Getting Started

Lesson Objectives

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate reading comprehension and the ability to apply effective reading strategies, such as making predictions, making inferences, comparing and contrasting, making connections, and determining main ideas and supporting details
- Write informal essays generated by close reading of the text, brainstorming sessions, and self-generated ideas
- Analyze nonfiction essays

- Write and prepare for publication a nonfiction essay that demonstrates understanding of subject matter, effectively organizes ideas, and correctly uses techniques including thesis statement, persuasion, and point of view
- Correctly identify the use and purpose of literary terms, such as setting, theme, foreshadowing, flashback, etc.



For more information on Sharon Creech, visit <http://www.ohioreadingroadtrip.org/creech.html>

Grade Level Indicators

In meeting the above lesson objectives, students will:

- A** Use the text to demonstrate reading comprehension strategies, including the ability to make predictions, compare and contrast, make inferences, and draw conclusions
- D** Identify and explain the writer's technique in describing characters, characters' interactions and conflicts, and how these interactions and conflicts affect the plot
- F** Identify the main and minor events of the plot, and explain how each incident leads to the next
- G** Generate writing ideas through discussions with others and from printed material, and keep a list of writing ideas
- H** Use available technology to compose text
- J** Write informational essays or reports (including research) that present a literal understanding of the topic; pose relevant and tightly drawn questions that engage the reader; provide a clear and accurate perspective on the subject; create an organizing structure appropriate to the purpose, audience, and context; support the main ideas with facts, details, examples, and explanations from sources; and document sources and include bibliographies
- K** Produce informal writings (e.g. journals, notes, and poems) for various purposes
- M** Compare and contrast important details about a topic using different sources of information, including books, magazines, newspapers, and online resources
- N** Persuade readers with writing that demonstrates the ability to identify an author's argument or viewpoint; assess the adequacy and accuracy of details; identify persuasive technique (e.g. bandwagon, testimonial, and emotional word repetition); identify examples of bias and stereotyping; identify and understand an author's purpose for writing (including to explain, entertain, persuade or inform); and identify intended audience

Reading Strategies

Determining Importance in a Text, Visualizing, Questioning before Reading, Making Connections, Thinking Aloud, Evaluating Texts

Time Required: 20 class periods or more

This lesson will require a minimum of 20 class periods (approximately 45 minutes each) to complete instruction. This estimate assumes that at least some reading and journal entry-writing will take place outside of class.

Activity	Pacing
Introduce the Novel: Making Predictions	45 minutes
Chapters 1-3: Setting, Plot	90 minutes
Name Research Project	45 minutes
Chapters 4-6: Reading Strategies	45 minutes
Expository Essay	90 minutes
Chapters 7-10: Making Connections	45 minutes
Chapters 11-14: Inferences and Predictions	45 minutes
Chapters 15-17: Foreshadowing and Predictions	90 minutes
Chapters 18-20: Figurative Language	90 minutes
Chapters 21-23: Personal Connections to Specific Passages	45 minutes
Chapters 24-27: Characterization, Myth of Pandora's Box	45 minutes
Chapters 28-33: Compare and Contrast, Confirm Earlier Predictions	45 minutes
Chapters 34-40: Inferences, Predictions	45 minutes
Chapters 41-44: Identifying and Discussing the Theme of Hope	90 minutes
Assessment	45 minutes

Materials Needed

- Student copies of *Walk Two Moons*
- Student copies of the Novel Glossary (found on page 191 of this Instructor's Guide)
- Chalkboard or whiteboard
- Large paper for charts
- Map of the United States (atlas, pull-down map, etc.)
- Samples of expository essays from newspapers, writing textbooks, etc.
- Overhead transparency of David Behrens's painting *Founding Fathers* (found at the end of this lesson) and an overhead projector
- Photocopies of the Discerning Theme handout (found at the end of this lesson)

Additional Resources

- (optional) *Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back* by Joseph Bruchac (Philomel Books, 1992, ISBN# 0399221417)
- (optional) Book that contains the meanings and origins of first names
- (optional) Materials for making posters
- (optional) *In the Beginning: Creation Stories from Around the World* by Virginia Hamilton (Harcourt, 1991, ISBN# 0152387420)
- (optional) *Pandora* by Robert Burleigh (Silver Whistle, 2002, ISBN# 0152021787)
- (optional) *The Ohio Reading Road Trip* Instructional DVD/videocassette, television monitor, DVD player or VCR
- (optional) Access to computers with word processing and printing capability
- (optional) Internet access

Prepare to Learn

Organize students in small groups, and have them discuss the quotation, “Never judge a man until you’ve walked two moons in his moccasins.” Allow five minutes of discussion after referring to the meaning of “two moons”: it takes approximately one month for the moon to complete its phases, so “two moons” is approximately two months. Students will probably suggest that the quotation means “Don’t judge people until you’ve been in their shoes.” They also are likely to identify the expression with Native American culture because of the word *moccasins*. Ask students to address why “two moons” is the length of time designated. Ask students what we can learn about a person in two months.

Reading Journals

Reading journal entries will complement instruction throughout this lesson. In addition to encouraging active reading, these entries will offer the opportunity to assess students’ understanding of concepts and reading comprehension. The entries then can help you determine what instruction needs to be repeated, as well as what concepts students have mastered. You might consider asking students to use vocabulary words from the novel in their journal entries. The journal entries can serve as springboards to other discussions: ask students to read portions of their entries or share ideas from the entries as a way to get the conversation started.

Reading Journal Entry 1

After building background knowledge, students will use the quotation and the book’s title and cover illustration to make predictions about the book. As these entries are shared with the class, record students’ predictions on paper. Then post the list in the room so that the items are easily accessible during reading, when students revisit and then confirm, discount, or adjust their predictions.



To further tie the idea of Native American customs or storytelling to this instruction, share with your class Joseph Bruchac’s picture book, “*Thirteen Moons on Turtle’s Back*” (Philomel Books, 1992, ISBN# 0399221417).

Before beginning the book, establish the purpose for reading. Explain that, after reading these chapters, students will discuss setting, plot, and character development. Emphasize that the book presents three different settings as its three plots develop.

Flashback

Although students are probably familiar with the use of *flashback* in film and television, they may not know the term. Define flashback as a scene that interrupts the events in a story to tell what has happened in the past, often to help the reader or viewer understand events in the present.

Then ask students to think of a movie or a television series that uses the technique of flashback. Explain that, because flashback is used in the novel, the setting (time and place) will occasionally change so that readers can understand the “back story.”

To further illustrate the multiple plot structure and the use of flashback in the novel, present a chart such as the one found here. It will be useful as a review until students have become comfortable with Creech’s storytelling style.

at least one year before	very recent past	present
Sal’s memories of Bybanks, the farm, and her mother	Story of Euclid with Phoebe and the lunatic	Sal tells her story to Gram and Gramps

Chapters 1-3

Read these chapters as a class, or have students read silently. Remind students that, after reading these chapters, they will discuss, compare, and contrast the settings presented.

Sal’s memories of events in Bybanks often interrupt the story that she tells Gram and Gramps as the three of them travel across the country. Ask students to revisit page 14, where the use of flashback is evident. Sal has begun the Euclid story when she is interrupted by Gram: “At this point in my story, Gram interrupted me to say...”

When students have finished reading and have been introduced to the concept of flashback and the framework for the story, have them use the chart on page 48 to compare and contrast the different settings in the novel. Ask them to predict how each setting might affect character development and plot. (This may be a small-group or a full-class activity.) For the novel’s road trip, students will need access to a map of the United States. Encourage students to find paper maps, rather than accessing sites that map the route for them.

While completing the road trip portion of the chart, students should predict which states Sal and her grandparents will travel through on their way to Lewiston, Idaho. Encourage students to list some landmarks or places



TEACHING TIP

Definitions for setting, plot, and character development can be found in the Relevant Literary Terms section which begins on page 185.



VOCABULARY

Chapters 1-3

bob
caboodle
dignified
elderly
heartily
peculiar
scads
suspend
tottery

Definitions for these words can be found in the Novel Glossary on page 191.

that Sal and her grandparents might visit on the journey. If students use a road atlas, they can use the map legend and keys to locate national parks.

Create a three-column chart with the headings shown. With the students, complete the chart with information from Chapters 1–3.

Discussion Question

- We know that Sal feels most at home in Bybanks. How might she react in the other settings? How might these settings contribute to changes in Sal?

Reading Journal Entry 2

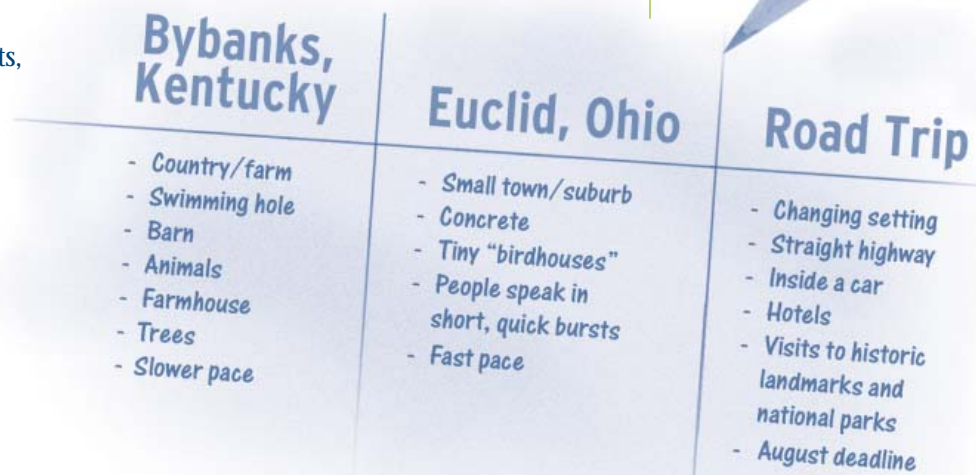
- Remind students that Sal feels most comfortable in the country and that she considers Bybanks, Kentucky, her home. Ask students to write predictions about how she will adjust to life in Euclid. Ask them to be as specific as possible, drawing from the reading and from class discussions.
- Ask students to list three words that describe Sal and then write three sentences about each word that explain these characterizations.

Research Activity: What's the Story Behind Your Name?

Students can begin to research the meanings of their names in class, but the remainder of this activity will be completed at home. The goal of this activity is for each student to conduct research (using both books and technology) while making a personal connection with the character in the text.

On page 7, Salamanca explains that she was supposed to be named “Seneca” which “was the name of the Indian tribe to which [her] great-great-grandmother belonged,” but her parents mistakenly named her “Salamanca.”

- What is the story behind your name? Are you named after a relative, a friend, or a film or music star? You might ask your parents how they chose your name.
- What does your name mean? Consult a book of baby names or the Internet to discover the meaning behind your name and the language from which it originates.
- Record your name's story in your journal. Be ready to share this entry with the class.



Bybanks, Kentucky	Euclid, Ohio	Road Trip
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Country/farm- Swimming hole- Barn- Animals- Farmhouse- Trees- Slower pace	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Small town/suburb- Concrete- Tiny “birdhouses”- People speak in short, quick bursts- Fast pace	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Changing setting- Straight highway- Inside a car- Hotels- Visits to historic landmarks and national parks- August deadline



Visit <http://www.ohioreadingroadtrip.org/creech.html> for links to sites devoted to the meaning and origin of first names.

Chapters 4-6

Building Reading Strategies

You will model the use of several reading strategies and encourage students to make their use of these strategies visible through class discussion. This technique will allow you to informally assess individual use of the reading strategies. It is important that students understand that these reading strategies work in combination to help them become better readers and see more deeply into a fiction or nonfiction text.

Define and post reading strategies on a bulletin board or chart paper to help students recognize and use the strategies in their daily reading.

Begin with the strategy of making connections and identifying details that are important to the text. List the major details learned while reading to this point:

- Sal is traveling to Lewiston, Idaho, in time for her mother's birthday.
- Sal and her grandparents have three reasons for taking the road trip (see the list on page 5 of the novel).
- As she is traveling with her grandparents, Sal tells the story of her move from Bybanks, Kentucky, in the country, to Euclid, Ohio, a small city (remind students that this technique is called *flashback*). Sal is not comfortable with the move because she considers herself a "country girl."
- In Euclid, Sal meets Phoebe Winterbottom and other classmates, all of whom seem very different from Sal.

You may wish to review students' comparison-and-contrast chart of the settings and briefly review the earlier discussion of how setting affects Sal.

Read this section of the novel aloud, and have students follow along. As you read, you should "think aloud" and encourage students to do the same when they are reading independently. Begin by establishing a purpose for reading by asking the question, "Why is this chapter titled _____?" Encourage students to make inferences and predictions based on what they have learned in previous chapters.

As you read aloud, interrupt yourself at several points. During these short pauses, demonstrate active reading by verbalizing questions or observations that indicate a deeper involvement with the text.

Your "think-aloud" reading for Chapter 4 might sound something like this:

- *Think-aloud question* (as you begin to read this chapter): Why is this chapter titled "That's What I'm Telling You"? (*Strategy: Questioning before reading*) Maybe it has to do with Sal's telling her story to Gram and Gramps. Or maybe it will be about someone trying to explain something to someone else. (*Strategy: Making inferences*)
- *Think-aloud question* (as you read pages 18–19): Why is Phoebe nervous about meeting Mrs. Partridge? (*Strategy: Questioning during reading*) Maybe she knows something that Sal doesn't, or maybe she has witnessed something that she has not yet told Sal. (*Strategy: Making inferences*)



Chapters 4-6

cadaver
diabolic
gnarled
muesli
prim
prudence

Definitions for these words
can be found in the Novel
Glossary on page 191.

- *Think-aloud observation* (as you read the top of page 19): The description of Mrs. Partridge’s laugh, “a wicked laugh that sounded as if it were bouncing off jagged rocks,” is quite vivid. I can just hear her laughing, and that may be part of what makes Phoebe nervous. (Strategy: *Visualizing*)

During and after reading each chapter, students should confirm, adjust, or discount their predictions. While you model this reading strategy, encourage students to share their thoughts as well.

The goal of the think-aloud exercise is for students to raise questions in their minds as they read. Continue reading Chapters 5–6, inviting students to share their strategies through “thinking aloud.” Remind them that speaking their thoughts is meant to prepare them to be more active in their silent reading. If students resist thinking aloud, you may prompt their thinking with the following discussion questions.

Discussion Questions

- Why is this chapter titled “A Damsel in Distress?”
- Have you ever met anyone like Gram and Gramps?
- What does Sal mean when she says, “*Rush, rush, rush* whispered the wind, the sky, the clouds, the trees. *Rush, rush, rush*”?
- Does the title “A Damsel in Distress” fit the chapter? If so, why? If not, what would be a more appropriate title?

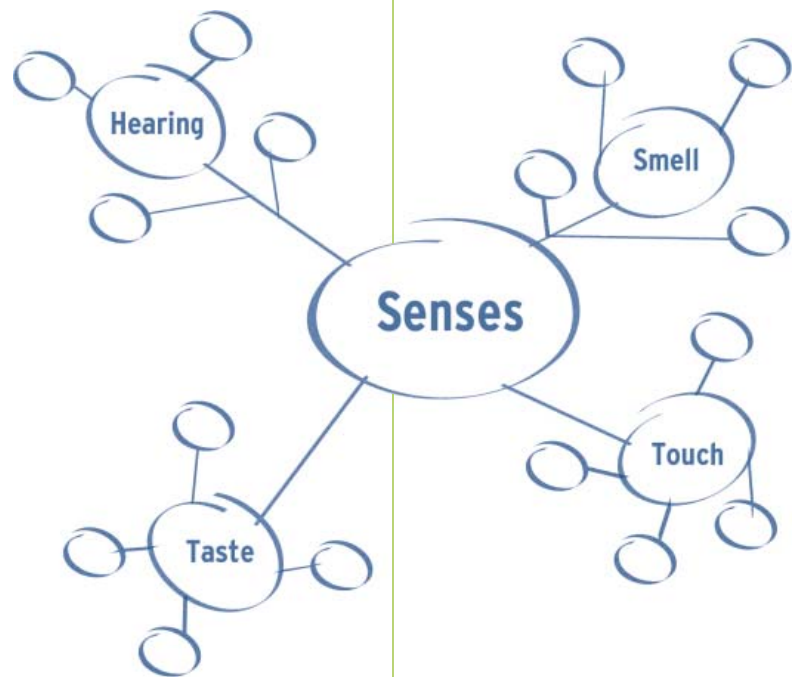
Chapter 6 Think-Aloud Activity

When you have modeled various reading strategies and practiced with the class, organize students in pairs or in small groups to read Chapter 6. Tell students to read the chapter aloud with their partners or group mates. Ask one student from each group or pair to record the discussion. Require each student to contribute one or two questions or comments (depending on the size of the group) for the group or pair “think-aloud.” You may need to guide some groups of students to raise and answer these questions:

- Why is this chapter titled “Blackberries”?
- What is confusing about Mrs. Winterbottom’s behavior?
- Why is the Winterbottom family so “stiff”? It seems that their “stiff” behavior makes Sal a little uncomfortable. Why?
- What do you think about Phoebe’s hypothesis regarding Mr. Cadaver’s absence?

Reading Journal Entry 3 (You may choose to assign this as homework.)

- On page 21, Mrs. Winterbottom mentions that she is making blackberry pie and she immediately notices that Sal's expression changes. Ask students to reread this section, write about why Sal's expression changes and describe what Sal's expression may have looked like to Mrs. Winterbottom.
- Later in Chapter 6, Sal retells a specific memory that is triggered by eating the blackberry pie. Ask students to reread this chapter, and write about how thinking about blackberry pie leads Sal to thinking about picking blackberries and then to a special memory about the relationship between her parents.
- Ask students to think of their own lives. What tastes, smells, and textures are connected with special memories? Have each student choose one memory that is triggered by a taste, a smell, or a texture, and write the memory in his or her journal. Remind students to begin their journal entry with the sense experience.
- You might recreate the following web on the board or use an overhead. Leave the sense of sight off the web so that students focus on the other senses for this activity. Allow students some time to brainstorm together. You might start by recalling the smells associated with a holiday dinner, or you could reminisce about the way it smelled when your cousin blew out the candles on her birthday cake. Students may associate the smell of a certain perfume with a particular relative. Allow time for gathering writing ideas, and stress the importance of recalling a story associated with the sense experience.



Understanding Expository Writing

This instruction will lead to an expository writing assignment. Understanding the elements of expository writing will enable students to complete their assignment and meet the goals of this type of writing. After this section of instruction, students will briefly return to a discussion of the novel, specifically Sal's statement about bravery, and then begin their writing on that topic.

Gather several samples of expository essays. You may be able to find essays of interest to students in writing textbooks, many of which include reprints of essays that appeared in newspapers and have stood the test of time. You might also select articles about current events from the newspaper. Students should work in groups to respond to the following items in preparation for writing an expository essay. Be sure that students write their responses.

- Identify the author’s purpose and the intended audience for the essay.
- What is the thesis of this essay?
- List the supporting details that the writer uses in developing his or her thesis.
- Does the writer use any emotionally charged words to sway the reader’s feelings? If so, list the words that the writer uses and explain how these words appeal to the reader’s emotions concerning the topic.
- Do you find any evidence that the writer is biased about this topic? Explain, using specific examples from the essay or article.
- Give examples of how the writer’s voice is clear in the essay. Identify sentences and words that the writer uses to contribute to his or her unique style and voice.



Links to many Ohio newspapers' websites can be found at <http://www.ohioreadingroadtrip.org/ohionewspapers.html>

Discussion Questions

- In Chapter 3, Sal says, “What I have since realized is that if people expect you to be brave, sometimes you pretend that you are, even when you are frightened down to your very bones” (page 14). What does she mean? Do you agree with her? Explain your answer.
- List roles or jobs in our society in which the person holding the position is generally thought of as being brave. (Examples: firefighters, police officers, and soldiers) Is being brave a requirement for these jobs?
- Can a person become brave over time, or is courage an inborn trait?
- Who is the bravest person you know? Give an example of his or her bravery.

Write Now!

Have each student write an expository essay exploring the idea of bravery. Tell students to use this title: “What It Means to Be Brave.” The final draft of each essay should have an introduction with a clear thesis statement. The body of the essay must be organized clearly and further develop the student’s thesis (personal definition of bravery) by presenting specific details. The conclusion brings the essay to a logical close, providing the reader with a sense that the student has fully explained his or her ideas regarding the definition of bravery. The essay should be revised, word processed, and prepared for classroom display. Determine the required length of the essay according to student capabilities. In most cases, four paragraphs should be sufficient (one each for introduction and conclusion, and two body paragraphs).

Tell students: Now that you have spent some time analyzing expository writing and the concept of bravery, develop a thesis for your essay. How do you define bravery? Your answer to this question should be a complete sentence. This sentence will become your thesis statement. Your introduction should grab your reader’s attention and present your thesis statement clearly.

The body of your essay should present ideas that clearly support your thesis and persuade your reader to agree with your point of view. You might use examples from your own experience or stories about the bravest people you

know. Finally, your conclusion should leave the reader with a final thought to ponder concerning your position on bravery.

- After students draft their essays, you may wish to hold either peer writing conferences in small group format (for more advanced students) or student/teacher writing conferences.
- Students should revise drafts and word process final drafts.
- *Optional:* To make the writing process more meaningful, have students present their essays to their classmates or submit them for publication in the school newspaper.

Chapters 7-10

Before students read, refer them to the list of reading strategies posted in the classroom. Encourage students to apply these strategies as they read every day.

Reading Journal Entry 4

In this journal entry, students will practice making connections across the text to make inferences through confirming, discounting, and making new predictions based on their reading. Students must refer to specific information from the novel for satisfactory completion of this journal entry.

- Ask students to make inferences about the identity of the boy who knocks on Phoebe's door and asks for Mrs. Winterbottom, then predict what he wants.
- Ask students if they can confirm any of their pre-reading predictions that were made on the basis of the quote "Don't judge a man until you've walked two moons in his moccasins." If so, ask them to list their predictions and explain them. Ask students: What does the character do or say? Are Sal and Phoebe guilty of pre-judging others? If so, name those others and say how or why they have been pre-judged.
- Ask students if they can discount any of their predictions because the development of character and plot does not support them.

Compare and Contrast Families

At the beginning of Chapter 9, Phoebe says, "Mary Lou's family is not nearly as civilized as ours." Ask students to scan Chapter 9 for details about the Finneys' home life and behavior. Then ask them to re-read Chapter 6 to find details about the Winterbottoms' home life and behavior.

Ask students to characterize both families by making inferences about the things that are important to them. You may want to make a Venn diagram to record students' findings. Then draw their attention to page 48. Ask students to explain Sal's theory about why Phoebe says the Finneys' behavior is "embarrassing." Then ask them: *Do you think Sal has a good point? Why or why not?*



You may wish to use the Ohio Graduation Test's 6-point writing rubric to evaluate students' essays. This rubric can be found on page 183.



Chapters 7-10

civilized
hankering
kosher
mussed
pandemonium
pastrami
shrapnel

Definitions for these words can be found in the Novel Glossary on page 191.

Chapters 11-14

Ask students to make inferences and predictions based on their reading. Tell students to pay particular attention to language and word choice in Chapter 14.

Reading Journal Entry 5

For this journal entry, allow students to choose one of the following.

- After Phoebe and Sal see the “lunatic” at the drug store, Ben points out that perhaps they shouldn’t call the boy a lunatic. Ask students to write about why Ben might say this, using passages from the text to support their answers.
- Ask students to predict problems the journals may cause. Say: *Has anything that you have written caused trouble? Explain.*
- Phoebe suggests that Mrs. Cadaver has murdered her husband and has buried him in her backyard. Ask students to re-read Chapter 14 and explain why Mrs. Cadaver seems suspicious. Say: *Do you think that she is capable of murder? Explain.*

Chapters 15-17

Before students read these chapters, discuss and define *foreshadowing*, the use of hints or clues to suggest what will happen later in a story. You may wish to explain foreshadowing by discussing scary movies. When the climax of the movie occurs, often viewers recall things that happened early in the movie that they now understand were clues. Encourage students to discuss scenes from movies in which foreshadowing is used.

Explain that, in addition to the events in the plot, characters’ words and actions may also foreshadow things to come. Point out that, while we can use foreshadowing to predict events to come in a story, we can only confirm the foreshadowing *after* the event occurs.

Reading Journal Entry 6

Consider each of the following situations from Chapter 17, and predict what it may foreshadow. Tell students that each situation foreshadows something different. Ask students to write a one-paragraph prediction based on each situation. Remind them to be specific and, if possible, to include details from earlier sections of the novel.

- “‘What would you do if Mrs. Cadaver chopped up your father? Would you go live with your mother?’”
- “‘It surprised me when she said that, reminding me that I had told Phoebe nothing about my mother. ‘Yes, I suppose I would go live with her.’ That was impossible and I knew it, but for some reason I could not tell Phoebe that, so I lied.”
- “‘...the day before my mother left. I did not know that it was to be her last day home. Several times that day, my mother asked me to walk up in the fields with her. It was drizzling outside, and I was cleaning out



Chapters 11-14

agenda
anonymous
malevolent
rhododendron
skeptical

Definitions for these words can be found in the Novel Glossary on page 191 of this Instructor’s Guide.



Visit <http://www.ohioreadingroadtrip.org/creech.html> for an activity that asks students to read nonfiction essays that address the debate surrounding team names and mascots that take their names from Native American cultures.

my desk, and I just did not feel like going. ‘Maybe later,’ I kept saying. When she asked me for about the tenth time, I said, ‘No! I don’t want to go. Why do you keep asking me?’ I don’t know why I did that. I didn’t mean anything by it, but that was one of the last memories she had of me, and I wished I could take it back.”

Although students may predict that Sal’s mother is very ill, the best prediction is that the reader will learn Sal’s mother has died. Evidence: Sal says that it would be impossible to live with her mother. Sal also says that telling her mother “No!” was one of the last memories her mother had of her. Earlier in the book, other events foreshadow this prediction: (page 5) “Gram and Gramps wanted to see Momma who was resting peacefully in Lewiston, Idaho.”; (page 74) Sal smokes the peace pipe and says, “. . . a tiny stream of smoke curled out into the air, and when I saw that, for some reason I was reminded of my mother. . . my brain was saying, ‘There goes your mother,’ and I watched the trail of smoke disappear into the air.” Students may also cite the moments when Sal says that she does not feel like explaining where her mother is; it is just too painful for her.

Ask students what predictions they can make about Mrs. Winterbottom. Here are two passages that students will likely cite.

- “Mrs. Winterbottom was trying to rise above some awful sadness she was feeling, but Prudence couldn’t see that. Prudence had her own agenda, just as I had had my own agenda that day my mother wanted me to walk with her. I couldn’t see my own mother’s sadness.” (page 104)
- “As I walked home, I thought about the message. *In the course of a lifetime, what does it matter?* I said it over and over. I wondered about the mysterious messenger, and I wondered about all the things in the course of a lifetime that would not matter. I did not think cheerleading tryouts would matter, but I was not so sure about yelling at your mother. I was certain, however, that if your mother left, it would be something that mattered in the whole long course of your lifetime.” (page 106)

The most believable prediction is that Mrs. Winterbottom will leave her family. Evidence from this chapter indicates that Sal attaches Mrs. Winterbottom’s sadness to the sadness that Sal had seen in her own mother. Sal’s final sentence above is also evidence connecting a mother’s leaving with the new mysterious message. Other evidence includes Sal’s having dinner with the Winterbottoms and noticing that Mrs. Winterbottom sighs and glances at her plate (Chapter 6). Another indication appears in Chapter 2, page 9, the last sentence: “And that is how I happened to suspend my tree prayers and tell them about Phoebe Winterbottom, her disappearing mother, and the lunatic.”

Chapters 18–20

Before students read this section, ask them to share the predictions that they made in their last journal entries. Tell students to read to confirm or discount their predictions or make new ones.



For an activity that gives students the opportunity to perform reader’s theater, visit <http://www.ohioreadingroadtrip.org/creech.html>



Chapters 18–20

canopy
colossal

Definitions for these words can be found in the Novel Glossary on page 191.

In addition to reading to confirm predictions, ask students to pay close attention to Creech’s use of figurative language. After reading, students should review some lines from the beginning of the book to examine simile and metaphor.

Reading Journal Entry 7

You may wish to assign one or more of these prompts.

- Ask students to write about the degree to which predictions they made in previous journal entries came true.
- Ask students to compare Sal’s mother’s disappearance with Mrs. Winterbottom’s disappearance, describing some of the similarities leading to each departure.
- Ask students to explain why Phoebe thinks that her mother has been kidnapped by the lunatic.

Chapters 21-24

Tell students that, as they read, they should note situations Sal describes using specific “feeling words” such as *sad*, *joyful*, *confused*, *angry*, etc.

Reading Journal Entry 8

Guide students to write about their personal feelings about the character of their choice and that character’s situation. You might suggest that students place themselves in the character’s position (walk in their moccasins) and write about the emotions the character is feeling at a given moment. Require students to begin by using such feeling words as *surprised*, *sad*, *angry*, *relieved*, or *frustrated* in writing their responses. Then ask students to explain their feelings. Ask students: *How can you relate to the character? Do the character’s emotions or situation remind you of something you have experienced?* After students write, discuss their responses.

Discussion Questions

- A new mysterious message arrives on Phoebe’s porch: “You can’t keep the birds of sadness from flying over your head, but you can keep them from nesting in your hair.” What do you think this quote means? Does it relate to any of the characters? Explain.
- What is your response to Chapter 23? Explain your feelings. You might relate your response to predictions you made earlier during the Chapter 6 think-aloud activity.

Reading Journal Entry 9

- Ask students to choose two of the following passages, then return to the designated page, and re-read the passage in context. Students should then write their personal responses to the event or to the character’s situation.
- Page 130: “...I noticed that inside each was a distinct design. At first it seemed that every one was different. There was a cross, a dark scribble, an eye, a mouth, a window. There was one with a teardrop inside that I thought must be Phoebe’s.”



TEACHING TIP

To review the definitions and usage of similes and metaphors, turn to the Relevant Literary Terms section on page 185.



VOCABULARY

Chapters 21-24

adhesive
amnesia
lentil
malingering

Definitions for these words can be found in the Novel Glossary on page 191.



TECHNOLOGY LINK

For an activity that gives students the opportunity to perform reader’s theater, visit <http://www.ohioreadingroadtrip.org/creech.html>

- Page 130: “The duplicate designs were: a circle with a large maple leaf in the center, the tips of the leaf touching the sides of the circle. One of the maple leaf circles was mine. The other’s was Ben’s.”
- Page 132: “My mother is missing, and my father hands me a dictionary’...She looked up *malingering* and read the definition: ‘To pretend to be ill in order to escape duty or work.’ She slammed the book shut. ‘I am *not* malingering.’”
- Page 139: “Mr. Winterbottom tapped his fork against his knife. Then he stood up, took Phoebe’s arm, and said, ‘Follow me.’... ‘If your mother had been kidnapped by a lunatic, would she have had time to prepare all these meals? Would she have been able to say, ‘Excuse me, Mr. Lunatic, while I prepare ten or twenty meals for my family to eat while I am kidnapped?’”
- Page 141: “A person isn’t a bird. You can’t cage a person.”
- Page 151: “I picked up another rock and sailed it across the gorge, and this one, too, hit the opposite wall and fell down and down and down. It was not a river. It was a hole. What did I expect?”

Chapters 25-27

Discussion Question

- What kind of person is Phoebe Winterbottom? Do you like her? What causes her to behave as she does?

While Phoebe presents the general story of *Pandora’s Box* in her speech, she exaggerates some details. Before students write their journal entries, share another version of *Pandora’s Box* or a simple summary of the myth and have students compare and contrast that version with Phoebe’s. Be sure that students understand the definition of *myth*, a traditional story created to explain or make sense of something in our world. Characters in myths include gods, heroes, and mortals. Students should draw the conclusion that the purpose of the myth is to explain the origin of the first woman as well as to explain the existence of evil in the world and, more importantly, of hope.

Reading Journal Entry 10

The night after Phoebe gives her report on Pandora, Sal thinks about hope in that myth. Ask students to carefully re-read Sal’s thoughts on pages 174–176. In their journal entries, ask students to explain how the theme of hope is established in *Walk Two Moons*. Ask students: *How is it true for Sal? How is it true for Phoebe? Is hope important in your own life? Explain.*

Chapters 28-30

Discussion Questions

- Why do you think the characters respond as they do to the poem, “The Tide Rises, The Tide Falls”? What inferences can you make about Megan’s personal experience as compared to Sal’s personal experience? What about Ben’s response to the poem?



Chapters 25-27

glum
impulse
optimistic
unadulterated

Definitions for these words can be found in the Novel Glossary on page 191.



Pandora’s box offers a link to a mini lesson on mythology. You might choose to have students research various creation myths from other cultures (be sure to include Native Americans) and present these myths to the rest of the class.



Chapters 28-30

careening
partition

Definitions for these words can be found in the Novel Glossary on page 191.

- At the end of Chapter 29, Phoebe says, “Mom loves me, and she would not leave me without any explanation.” Her father begins to cry. Why does he cry? Explain.

Reading Journal Entry 11

At the beginning of Chapter 30, Sal says, “In spite of all her cholesterol-madness and her annoying comments, there was something about Phoebe that was like a magnet. I was drawn to her. I was pretty sure that underneath all that odd behavior was someone who was frightened. And, in a strange way, she was like another version of me—she acted out the way I sometimes felt.” Say to students: *Sal has become close to Phoebe because she sees herself in Phoebe. Think about your closest friends. In your journal, answer these questions: How did you meet one another? Do you think that you are a lot alike? Do you see yourselves in one another? Explain and give examples to support your response.*

Chapters 31-33

Before students read, ask them to refer to Entry 5 in their reading journals. Have students share their predictions concerning the problems the characters’ journals would cause. Record these predictions on the board or on chart paper. Allow students to adjust, eliminate, or add to the predictions on the basis of information gained from the novel.

Discussion Questions

- In Chapter 31, Mr. Birkway begins to share some of the journals with the class. What is his purpose in doing so?
- Do you agree that Mr. Birkway should have apologized for sharing the journals? Explain.

Reading Journal Entry 12

You may wish to assign one or both of these writing prompts.

- Another message appears on Phoebe’s porch the day after Sal and Phoebe break into Mrs. Cadaver’s house. The message is, “We never know the worth of water until the well is dry.” Ask students to write what this quote means and how it relates to the characters in the novel.
- After learning the truth about Margaret Cadaver’s husband’s death, Sal allows herself to “walk” in Margaret’s “moccasins.” Ask students to re-read pages 220–221 and then explain how each of the mysterious messages helps Sal understand Margaret Cadaver’s perspective. Ask students: *What does Sal realize by placing herself in Margaret’s position?*

Chapters 34-40

Before students read, ask them to predict what Sal and Phoebe will do, now that Sal has drawn the conclusion that the lunatic is Sergeant Bickle’s son. Ask students what plan they think Sal and Phoebe have devised and what the results of the plan might be.



For an activity that allows students to conduct research about Native American leaders, visit <http://www.ohioreadingroadtrip.org/creech.html>

You can also find a color transparency of David Behrens’s painting, *The Founding Fathers*, an artistic response to Mount Rushmore, at the end of this lesson.



Chapters 31-33

nonchalant
rummaged

Definitions for these words can be found in the Novel Glossary on page 191.



Chapters 34-40

percolate
psychiatric

Definitions for these words can be found in the Novel Glossary on page 191.

Read Chapters 34–36. Allow time for students to respond at the end of Chapter 36. Some may try to confirm predictions. Because students are eager to keep reading, pausing here should produce lively discussions.

Reading Journal Entry 13

Use these prompts for journal writing that will prepare students to read the rest of the book.

- Ask students to revisit their fifth journal entry to find the inference they made about Ben and the word *lunatic*. After reading Chapter 37, have students explain why Ben prefers to not use the word.
- Ask students to write about how the Winterbottom family might change over the course of the next year. Ask: *Why do you think these changes will occur? Be specific.*
- Ask students to think about everything that has happened in the book so far. Then read the two passages below, and ask students to write predictions about Sal, Margaret Cadaver, Gram, and Gramps.

“I went to see Margaret Cadaver, and we had a long talk, and that’s when I found out how she met my father. It was painful to talk with her, and I even cried in front of her, but afterward I understood why my father liked to be with her.” (page 254)

“Gram closed her eyes for the next hour as Gramps drove toward Coeur d’Alene, he and I listened to her rattly breathing. I watched her lying there so still, so calm. ‘Gramps,’ I whispered. ‘She looks a little gray, doesn’t she?’

‘Yes she does chickabiddy, yes she does.’ He stepped on the gas and we raced toward Coeur d’Alene.” (page 255)

Chapters 41-44

To avoid revealing the story’s ending, do not have students who have read ahead share their predictions. To establish purpose for reading, tell students that they will finish the book today and that they will respond in full-class discussion and in their reading journals.

Post-Reading Discussion

After they finish the novel, allow students to respond. Encourage students to articulate their feelings. This discussion will present an opportunity to identify and elaborate on theme in the novel, an important part of the final assessment for this lesson. Start by defining theme: the universal message of a piece of literature. Theme expresses something about the human condition.

- Through class discussion, present the theme of hope, as it is established through Phoebe’s *Pandora’s Box* presentation. Review this section of the novel (pages 171–174). At the end of this chapter, Sal says, “On the night after Phoebe had given her Pandora report, I thought about the Hope in Pandora’s box. Maybe when everything seemed sad and miserable, Phoebe and I could both hope that something might start to go right.”



A link to a live webcam at Old Faithful is available at <http://www.ohioreadingroadtrip.org/creech.html> This page refreshes every 30 seconds and has links to more information about the geyser. Patient viewers can see Old Faithful erupt.



Chapters 41-44 grotesque

A definition for this word can be found in the Novel Glossary on page 191.

- Ask students in what ways hope is a driving force for the characters in the novel. Some students may respond that the novel is without hope because the ending is sad. Encourage students to explore this idea. How does hope keep both Phoebe and Sal going? How does Sharon Creech incorporate hope for the reader in the final chapter of the novel?
- To demonstrate the universality of hope, ask students to think about how this concept is important in their own lives or in the lives of others. Encourage students to share these stories with the class.

After they finish the novel, have students revisit predictions they made while reading. Ask them to analyze Creech’s writing style and her use of foreshadowing, which allows the reader to experience Sal’s grief and her journey to acceptance.

This is a good place to introduce the concept of the metaphorical journey that Sharon Creech uses in the novel. Through discussion, guide students to discover the journey metaphor. Tell students: *In the novel, Sal rides in a car with her grandparents across the country. She takes a real—a physical—journey. But she also takes an internal, more private journey. What do I mean by an internal, or private, journey?*

Students may struggle with this, but with prompting and questioning, they will discover that the internal journey is a journey to Sal’s accepting her mother’s death. It took Sal time to grieve. Without taking the trip to Lewiston to see her mother’s grave and without traveling in her mother’s footsteps, Sal could not believe that her mother was dead. Both journeys are necessary for Sal to come to terms with reality.

Assessment

The final assessment for the *Walk Two Moons* lesson is in two parts. Part one is an objective test during which students will demonstrate their ability to make inferences, make predictions, draw conclusions, and correctly identify terms learned throughout the lesson. Part two of the assessment requires students to identify theme in the novel by analyzing one of the mysterious messages left by Mrs. Partridge.



TEACHING TIP

Photocopy and distribute the chart found on the following page. Ask students to complete the chart as you review important ideas from the novel.

Answers for the matching and multiple choice portions of the test:

- | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|------|
| 1. f | 2. c | 3. g | 4. d |
| 5. a | 6. e | 7. b | 8. h |
| 9. b | 10. c | 11. a | |

Name _____ Date _____

Discerning Theme:
Sharon Creech
Walk Two Moons

Character:	Desire/ Goal:	Problem/ Obstacle:	Advocate/ Support:	Outcome:	Universal Meaning:
Salamanca					
Phoebe					
Gramps					
Mrs. Winterbottom					
Margaret Cadaver					
Sal's father (John Hiddle)					

Name _____ Date _____

Sharon Creech

Walk Two Moons

Directions: Match each term with its definition by writing the letter of the definition on the line.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1. ___ Simile | a. The time and place of a story |
| 2. ___ Theme | b. Tells a story with character development, conflict, and plot development |
| 3. ___ Flashback | c. The universal message of a piece of literature |
| 4. ___ Metaphor | d. Figure of speech in which two unlike things are compared by saying that one thing is the other |
| 5. ___ Setting | e. The use of hints or clues to suggest what will happen later in the story |
| 6. ___ Foreshadowing | f. Figure of speech in which two unlike things are compared using the words <i>like</i> or <i>as</i> |
| 7. ___ Narrative Writing | g. Scene that interrupts the events in a story to tell what has happened in the past |
| 8. ___ Thesis | h. The main idea of an expository essay |

Directions: Choose the best answer for each of the following questions about the characters in *Walk Two Moons*.

9. ___ At the end of the novel, Sal says that she and her father did not need to bring her mother's body back to Bybanks "... because she is in the trees, the barn, the fields." However, "Gramps needs Gram in Bybanks . . ." because "He needs to walk out to that aspen grove to see his gooseberry."

According to these statements, which statement below is the most logical conclusion that the reader may draw?

- a. It was too difficult to bring Sal's mother's body back to Bybanks.
- b. Sal and Gramps deal with loss differently.
- c. Gram preferred to be buried in the aspen grove.

Walk Two Moons Test, continued

10. ___ Why is Sal is drawn to Phoebe?
- a. When Sal is with Phoebe, she feels as though she is with her friends in Bybanks.
 - b. Phoebe will help Sal become popular at her new school in Euclid.
 - c. Sal sees herself in Phoebe because Phoebe acts out the way that Sal sometimes feels.
11. ___ From your knowledge of Phoebe, which prediction is most logical?

When Phoebe visits Sal in Bybanks, Phoebe will:

- a. share a dramatic tale about riding in the car with Mr. Birkway all the way from Euclid, Ohio, to Bybanks, Kentucky.
- b. gladly join Sal in the swimming hole and play with lizards, spiders, and snakes.
- c. be extremely quiet and shy.

Essay: Follow the directions step by step to write your essay portion of the assessment.

1. Choose one of the messages left by Mrs. Partridge:

“Don’t judge a man until you’ve walked two moons in his moccasins.”

“Everyone has his own agenda.”

“In the course of a lifetime, what does it matter?”

“You can’t keep the birds of sadness from flying over your head, but you can keep them from nesting in your hair.”

“You never know the worth of water until the well is dry.”

2. In an essay of 3–5 paragraphs, complete the following:
- a. In the first paragraph of your essay, paraphrase the message you chose (explain what it means in your own words).
 - b. Next, explain how the message relates to the characters and plot in *Walk Two Moons*. Be specific. For example, if you choose to discuss how the quote relates to Phoebe, be sure to describe specific incidents from the novel that illustrate your point.
 - c. Finally, explain how the message relates to all people. Be sure to explain your responses fully. Use examples from your own experience, from people you know, and from stories that you have heard to support your interpretation of the message.

After you have analyzed the quote and connected it to a single character and to all people, write a concluding paragraph that states the novel’s theme according to your analysis of the quote. In other words, after reading *Walk Two Moons*, what is the main message that Sharon Creech might hope to leave with readers?