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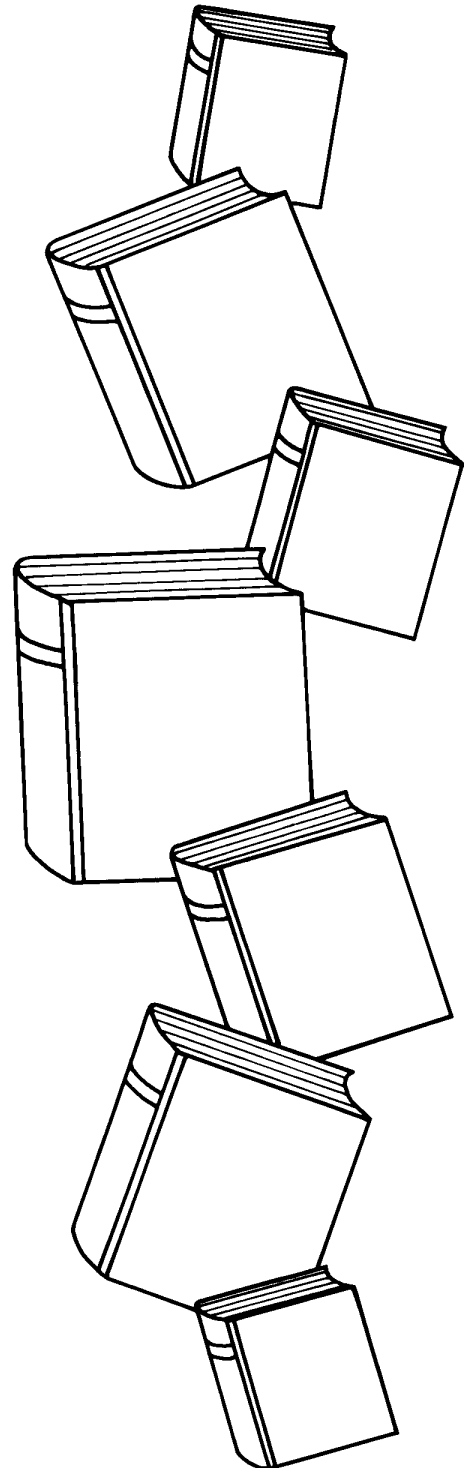
# Introduction

A good book can touch our lives like a good friend. Within its pages are words and characters that can inspire us to achieve our highest goals. We can turn to it for companionship, recreation, comfort and guidance. It can also give us a cherished story to hold in our hearts forever. In Literature Units, great care has been taken to select books that are sure to become good friends!

Teachers who use this unit will find the following features to supplement their own valuable ideas.

- Sample Lesson Plans
- Pre-Reading Activities
- A Biographical Sketch and Picture of the Author
- A Book Summary
- Vocabulary Lists and Suggested Vocabulary Activities
- Chapters grouped for study with each section including the following:
  - quizzes
  - hands-on projects
  - cooperative learning activities
  - cross-curricular connections
  - extensions into the reader’s own life
- Book Project Ideas
- Post-Reading Activities
- Research Activity
- Culminating Activities
- Three Different Options for Unit Tests
- Answer Key
- Bibliography of Related Reading

We are confident this unit will be a valuable addition to your planning, and we hope your students increase the circle of ‘friends’ they have in books as you use our ideas.



# Holes

by *Louis Sachar*

(*Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1998*)

(*available in CAN, Douglas & McIntyre*)

While walking home from school one day, Stanley Yelnats is hit over the head with a pair of sneakers that have fallen from an overpass. Stanley is stopped by the police and arrested. It turns out that the sneakers had been stolen from a homeless shelter where they were being auctioned off to raise money. As a result, Stanley is sent to a juvenile detention centre.

Camp Green Lake, located in the heat of West Texas, has no lake and is certainly not green. The camp is run by an evil warden. Camp routine requires each 'inmate' to dig a five feet wide by five feet deep hole everyday. The counsellors tell Stanley that digging builds character, but Stanley becomes suspicious when he is told to turn in anything 'interesting' that he digs up.

Stanley blames all his bad luck on his great-great grandfather, Elya Yelnats, who had forgotten a promise to carry an elderly gypsy to the top of a mountain. The gypsy, Madame Zeroni, had cursed Elya and his descendants.

While digging his required hole, Stanley finds a lipstick tube belonging to 'Kissin' Kate Barlow', a notorious outlaw. Miss Katherine Barlow, a schoolteacher in Green Lake 110 years ago, had rejected the advances of the wealthy Trout Walker and instead had fallen in love with an onion peddler named Sam (who happened to be black). When the townspeople found out about this love affair, Sam was killed and Katherine was run out of town. Her life destroyed, Katherine became 'Kissin' Kate Barlow' and began a robbing and killing spree that lasted twenty years. She eventually returned to Green Lake but died before Trout Walker could force her to reveal the location of the treasure she had amassed over the years.

Stanley agrees to teach one of the other boys, Zero, how to read. This gets both boys into trouble and causes Zero to run away from the camp. Stanley sets out to save Zero. The two boys try to find refuge at the top of a mountain called God's Thumb. Zero becomes ill and Stanley ends up carrying him to the top of the mountain. 'Zero', it turns out, is short for 'Zeroni' and Zero is Madame Zeroni's descendant; consequently, the curse is broken.

The boys build their strength by eating the healing onions planted years ago on God's Thumb by Sam the Onion Man. Zero confesses that he is the one who stole the sneakers from the homeless shelter. Stanley and Zero decide to return to camp to look for Kate Barlow's buried treasure. The boys return to the hole where the lipstick tube was found and dig through the night. They dig up a suitcase, which had belonged to the first Stanley Yelnats, but they are descended upon by deadly yellow-spotted lizards and are unable to move. The Warden, a descendant of Trout Walker, discovers the boys and waits for the lizards to finish them off so she can get the briefcase. Stanley's lawyer and the Texas Attorney General show up at the camp and rescue Stanley and Zero. The contents of the suitcase are valuable enough to help Stanley buy his family a home and for Zero to hire private detectives to find his mother, from whom he had been separated.

# Vocabulary Lists

On this page are vocabulary lists which correspond to each sectional grouping of chapters. Vocabulary activities can be found on page 9 of this book.

## Section 1 (Chapters 1–7)

perseverance	desolate	grimaced
gestured	expanse	stifling
expelling	excavated	preposterous
deftly	perimeter	forlorn
scarcity	juvenile	spigot

## Section 2 (Chapters 8–17)

predatory	scowled	paranoid
prey	fossilised	excess
upholstery	radiated	presumably
intensity	appropriate	etched
stationery	engraved	evict

## Section 3 (Chapters 18–28)

calloused	concoction	systematic
writhed	refuge	situated
defiance	condemned	precipice
venom	recede	increments
extraordinarily	penetrating	dread

## Section 4 (Chapters 29–39)

humid	jut	refuge
drenched	hesitated	fidgeting
horizon	feeble	lurched
delirious	investigation	mirage
depriving	cluster	protruding

## Section 5 (Chapters 40–50)

contritely	authenticated	pursuant
inexplicable	commotion	legitimate
distinctive	amid	evicted
adjacent	precarious	incarcerated
pronounced	jurisdiction	delirium