

Holes

Activity Sheets

by Steve Padget

**Activities based on a reading of the novel 'Holes'
by Louis Sacher**

Liverpool reads...

Holes Activity Sheets

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Here are eleven activity sheets based on themes and ideas from 'Holes'. They do not represent a scheme of work in themselves, but they could be used as adjuncts to a scheme already being taught. You might find them useful as extension exercises for example. Each sheet is a stand-alone exercise aimed at developing a specific writing type. One or two of them might provide material for a starter if made into OHTs. Further ideas about using 'Holes' in the classroom can be found at these sites:

www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes3/

From here type Holes in the purple search box to access Delia Higgins' scheme of work.

www.leics.gov.uk

Link to a scheme written by twenty colleagues at the NATE conference 2002. Designed with year 8 pupils in mind and addressing the Framework Objectives through creative responses and good practice.

www.englishandmedia.co.uk/publications/catagories/ks3fiction.html

Go to 'on-line teaching notes' for five very good files including a fully worked medium term plan aimed at year 8 pupils. Other schemes can be found at:

www.teachit.co.uk

www.englishteaching.co.uk

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Sheet 1

The Setting

Reading Task

Re-read the first chapter of the novel and think carefully about the picture you get in your mind of the setting of the story.

Writing Task

Write a clear and detailed description of Camp Green Lake as we see it at the opening of the novel. You should mention the scenery, the weather, the wild life and any other detail you feel is important.

Key words and phrases

barren, desolate, inhospitable, hot, not much shade, uncomfortable, wasteland, rattlesnakes, scorpions, yel-

Writing Frame

Green Lake is a strange name for this place because....

The first thing that you notice is....

Then you see there are no....

Then you feel the heat....

What makes the biggest impression on the reader is....

When you have written your first draft swap with a partner, read each other's and make sure you have included all the important points. You should then redraft your paragraph and you may want to include some of your partner's suggestions.

Sheet 2

Three stories woven together

This novel has three stories woven together and these stories touch at various points making us realise how many of the characters are in some ways interconnected.

Complete the grid to show where the links are:

Character	Link	Character
Mme Zeroni		Zero
Mme Zeroni		Elya Yelnats
	Robbed but not killed	
Katherine Barlow		Zero survives
Zero		Stanley IV
	The Treasure in the suitcase	
Stanley I's survival		Stanley IV's and Zero's survival
	Foot odour	
Trout Walker		Warden Walker
Sam		Stanley and Zero's shelter

How many more links of your own can you make?

Sheet 3

The Yelnats Family Tree

Every family has a history and this can be drawn by means of a family tree. Here is the male line of the Yelnats family starting with Elya in Latvia:

In the boxes write as much as you can about each of the male members of the Yelnats family. Do this in note form.

Elya

--

Stanley I

--

Stanley II

--

Stanley III

--

Stanley IV

--

Sheet 4

Good deeds, bad deeds

Bad deeds from the past

- Elya forgets his promise to Mme Zeroni and is 'cursed for all eternity'
- The Green Lake school house is burnt down
- Trout Walker kills Sam

These are evil deeds. The lake dries and the town dies because of them.

What effect does this have on Kate Barlow?

Good deeds in the present

Stanley is full of good deeds waiting to happen and it is his action that breaks the curse of the Yelnats' (if there ever was one) and the curse that has surrounded Green Lake for the past century, (if there ever was one).

Look at these things that Stanley did and write underneath the effect that they had:

Teaches Zero to read
Carries Zero up the hill
Shares the fortune with Zero

Sheet 5a

Nick-names (part I)

Most of the characters in this story hide behind nick-names. The names tell us something about them, some kind of attribute that the character has. Some of these are ironic (Sweet Feet; Caveman; X-Ray), some are descriptive, (Twitch, Zig-Zag, Barf Bag, Armpit)

Complete this table

Nick-name	Real name	How did the nick name arise?
Kissin' Kate		
Caveman		
X Ray		
Armpit		
Zig-zag		
Squid		
Magnet		
Zero		
Twitch		
Mr Sir		
Mom		
Barf-bag		
Trout		
Sweet Feet		

Sheet 5b

Nick-names (part 2)

Explain why you think the nick-names are important to the boys whilst they are at Camp Green Lake.

Use this writing frame to help you structure your work.

I want to explain why nick-names are important to the boys at Camp Green Lake.

All the boys have really crazy names, for example....

Mr Pendanski always uses their 'proper' names and this annoys them because....

The main reason for this is....

Another reason is....

Zero doesn't call Stanley 'Caveman' because....

Ideas to think about:

- The boys feel insecure at the Camp; nick-names help them to survive.
- They bully each other and need to appear cool towards each other rather than friendly.
- They need a nick-name to hide behind, to hide their true identity; they use it like a label that says, 'don't mess with me.'
- Their nick-name is their camp identity as it is based on something about their way of dealing with the stress of camp life.
- You only let a friend use your proper name and they are not friendly towards each other.

Sheet 6

Survival

Think of the things that help Stanley and Zero to survive, many of them have echoes from the past. Use this grid to help you think.

Important things	How each of these helps them to survive
The wreck of the Mary Lou	
Sploosh	
Remembering God's Thumb and other stories from family history	
The onions	
Stanley teaching Zero to read	

Imagine that you are Stanley and you have been asked to write an article for a magazine on 'Five things that helped you to survive' the ordeal on God's Thumb.

Write it in the first person, don't forget to mention five important things and don't forget to make it interesting to readers who have never been in that kind of situation and would be fascinated to know how you managed to come back alive.

Sheet 7

Bullying

This story shows how both adults and young people use bullying as a method of getting their own way, or of trying to protect themselves when they feel vulnerable.

Task 1

Write a description of Pedanski and how he behaves towards Zero.

Include these ideas:

- Things that Pedanski says to Zero. (Use quotes from the text)
- Why you think he says them.
- What Zero's reaction is.
- The incident with Pedanski just before Zero runs away.
- Why you think Zero reacts in this way now.
- What has given Zero the power to do this?

Task 2

Write a character sketch of X-Ray.

Include these ideas:

- X-Ray is smaller than the others and has poor eyesight.
- He uses aggression to control people around him.
- An incident when he forces Stanley to do something for him.
- He feels he has lost some power when he realises that Stanley and Zero have become friends.
- The power of friendship to overcome the effects of bullying.

Sheet 8a

Themes to think about and analyse

Theme	Evidence found in the story
The benefit of friendship	
How cruelty can be destructive	

Think carefully about these two themes and complete the 'evidence' boxes from your knowledge of the story. Then go onto the next sheet.

When you have collected this information look at the next sheet for guidance on how to construct a piece of writing that will analyse these ideas.

Sheet 8b

Writing an analysis

You should begin this kind of work by saying how? Or why? or what is the effect?

Start with this title:

What does this story tell us about the power of friendship?

In this story we see a good example of friendship between two young people.

Stanley and Zero meet up.....

Very soon Zero realises that it's his fault that Stanley is there because.....

At first they are very cold towards each other and.....

When Stanley realises that Zero can't read his attitude changes and.....

Gradually a friendship forms and.....

We see the friendship take off when Stanley chases after Zero.....

Because of this friendship important things happen at the end of the story.....

This writing frame is for guidance if you need it.

You can use as much or as little of it as you like.

The important thing to remember is the sequence of ideas because you are building up an argument to support the statement in the title.

Sheet 9

Interrogating the characters

If you had the opportunity to interrogate The Warden, Pendanski and Mr. Sir what ten questions would you put to them?

You could cover things like:

- their history and background and things they might want to hide.
- their motivation for working at Camp Green Lake
- what they knew about the history of the town of Green Lake
- what they planned to do now that the Camp was going to be closed

Task:

Design a form for each of the characters with the questions that you would like to ask and leave a space so that you can write down the answers you think they might give. Use this as a model:

Name: Warden Walker

Position: Warden of Camp Green Lake Juvenile Correction Facility, Texas.

Question	Response
Why did you decide to set up this facility right here in Texas?	
How did you convince the authorities that you were a fit person to run such a place?	
What made you think you had the right to the buried treasure in the first place?	

And so on...