***Rumors*** by Denys Cazet Curriculum Guide

9781939547323

middle-grade novel

Lexile Level 590L, Guided Reading Level T, Grade Level Equivalent 5, Interest Level 3-8

Story elements: setting, plot and character development, cause and effect relationships, figurative language, illustrations enhance tone. Themes: middle school, friendship, family, wrestling, spreading rumors.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.3,4,4a,5,5a,5b,5c

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.5.3,3a,4,4a,4c

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,10

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1,1a,1c,1d,2,4,6

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3,3b,3c,3d,3e,4,9,9a,10

**Themes:**

The book begins and ends with rumors. What roles do rumors have in the story? Is the reader supposed to believe them?

Make a list of all the rumors you could find in the book. How many of them turn out to be true? How many have some basis in truth, but are exaggerated? How many are completely false?

How do people change their behavior based on the rumors they hear (and believe)?

Do the adults in the book believe rumors less than the kids or just as much? Give examples of how they do or don't.

Rumors are spread for many different reasons. Sometimes to scare people into behaving a certain way, like a rumor about a witch living in a creepy house will keep people away from the house. Give an example of this kind of rumor.

Sometimes to ruin a person's reputation or to make them sound better than they really are. Give an example of these kinds of rumors.

Sometimes to explain things that are hard to explain, like strange noises in pipes or weird lights in the sky. Give an example of these kinds of rumors.

How do you know when something you hear is true or not? How can you tell the difference between a rumor and a fact? Write a list of questions you might ask to figure out whether something is true or not.

Write a story based on a rumor you've heard.

Friendship is another theme in the book. What kind of relationship does Russell have with his friends? Do they loyally support everything he says and does? Why or why not?

What kind of friend does Lou become? Why does he help Russell and the others?

Lindsey and Daniela don't start out as friends, but they become friends with Russell. What brings them together? Getting in trouble together? Fighting the same enemy? Hearing the same rumors?

**Character development:**

What is your impression of Russell at the beginning of the book? At the end? How has your sense of his character changed?

Do any other characters change over the course of the story? Does Lou? Does the principal?

What about the bullies in the story, Slow Eddie and Butch? Describe their personalities. How are they different from Russell? From Lindsey? From Big David?

What roles do adults play in the story? Do they help solve problems or cause them? Compare/contrast Ms. Butters with Ms. Krunchensnap. Draw a picture of each and label it with their personality traits.

**Setting:**

Where is the book set? Can you picture the school and the town? How does the author give you a sense of place?

Find descriptions in the book of the costumes and flags so you can draw a picture of the final dramatic mud-wrestling bout. How is the Eye Popper dressed? How is the Atomic Midget costumed?

What kind of world does Lou come from? Write or draw a description of his home under the streets, in the pipes. Include the other creatures that live there.

**Tone:**

Every piece of writing has voice, the tone of the language. It can be scary or dramatic, silly or serious, funny or boring. What is the tone of *Rumors*? Point to specifice passages that give the book that character.

Write your own last chapter to *Rumors*, imagining what Lou tells the kids at the meeting he calls them to in the war room. Make sure you use a tone similar to the rest of the book. What does Lou say? And how is he dressed?