

Young Hoosier Book Award Novel Resource #5

Rules

I. Book Information:

Author: Cynthia Lord

Title: Rules

Copyright date: 2006

Publisher: Scholastic Press



II. About the Author:

Ms. Lord grew up in New Hampshire. She started writing when she was four. Actually, Ms. Lord dictated to her older sister a song about cherries. Ms. Lord loved reading as a child. She would make up stories about some of her favorite books.

www.cynthialord.com

After college Ms. Lord worked as a teacher in several different grade levels. She also married her husband John who now takes care of her appearances. Together they live in Maine with their two teenage children: Julia and Gregory.

Rules was Ms. Lord's first children's book, Touch Blue is her second, and she is currently working on a third book. Ms. Lord keeps one thing on her computer monitor as a reminder of the books she has written. For Rules she has a doll's teacup. For Touch Blue she has a toy lobster boat. She also has a moose on her monitor for the book she is currently working on.

Author's webpage address: www.cynthialord.com

Author email address: cynthia@cynthialord.com

Author mailing address: Cynthia Lord

P.O. Box 388

Topsham, Maine 04086

Author's connections to the book:

Ms. Lord says that she writes for her younger self. When she was younger she would lie on a raft like Catherine would do when on

the pond. She also writes of David who is autistic. She happens to know this subject very well because she has a son who is autistic.

Awards for Rules:

This novel has won seven awards so far. They include:

- Kentucky Bluegrass Award
- Maine Student Book Award
- Mitten Award from the Michigan Library Association
- Newberry Honor Medal
- New Hampshire's Great Stone Face Award
- Schneider Family Book Award
- Vermont's Dorothy Canfield Fisher Award

Other books by Cynthia Lord:

Touch Blue

III. Annotation:

Catherine is a twelve year old who is compiling a list of rules for her brother to live by. David, Catherine's brother, loves rules; he *needs* rules.

It's also summer vacation and Catherine's best friend is away for the summer. With no one to confide in Catherine pins her hopes of friendship with the new girl who is moving in next door. Instead she finds friendship in an unexpected place, a waiting room.

Cynthia Lord writes a truly riveting novel about a girl's fight for acceptance for her brother and herself as well.

IV. Genre:

Family fiction is the genre of this novel.

V. Point of View:

This novel is written in the first person point of view from the perspective of Catherine.

VI. Theme:

Acceptance is the theme of this novel. Throughout this novel Catherine is fighting for acceptance of her brother, David. She battles with a not-so-nice neighborhood boy. However, acceptance for

her brother isn't the only acceptance she is looking for. She is looking for acceptance from her father. She wants him to accept that she needs him too.

Catherine also wants to be accepted by her new neighbor. To this end, she tries to keep David and her friendship with Jason under wraps.

Given the title I believe that the most important rule for everyone should be: Accept people for who they are, regardless of their abilities.

VII. Conflict:

The conflict in this novel is external. Throughout the whole novel there is conflict with Catherine and David. Catherine tries to keep David from making a scene or to get him to do the right thing by creating rules for him.

There is also conflict with Catherine and her father. Catherine desperately wants some attention from him; attention that doesn't get diverted by David. She wants to know she matter too, not in terms of keeping an eye on David.

Another example of conflict in this novel is the conflict between Catherine and other people like Ryan who look at David, Jason and her as if they are invisible, with pity or with sympathy.

VIII. Conflict Resolution:

The conflict between Catherine and her dad gets resolved when Catherine tells her dad, "I have to matter too, as much as work and your garden and even as much as David. I need you too." (page 187) Her dad then tells her she matters to him.

By inviting Jason to the dance and introducing him to Kristi and Ryan as her friend, Catherine shows people that Jason and she aren't invisible. This is also evident when they go and dance with everyone else.

IX. Characters:

Catherine

- Main character & narrator
- Twelve years old
- Likes to read

- Likes to draw
- Has two pet guinea pigs
- Wants to be an artist

David

- Catherine's brother
- Is autistic
- Loves rules
- Loves to quote The Frog and the Toad

Mrs. Bowman

- Catherine's old neighbor

Melissa

- Catherine's best friend
- Spends the summer in California with her dad

Stephanie

- Therapist who works with David.

Mrs. Frost

- Tiny older lady
- Older brother has stroke and goes to speech.
- Waits in the clinic waiting room with Catherine

Carol

- Young mom
- Baby has Downs syndrome.
- Waits in the clinic waiting room with Catherine

Mrs. Elizabeth Morehouse

- Jason's mom

Jason

- Fourteen or fifteen
- Confined to a wheelchair
- Has a communication book
- Has reddish brown wavy hair

- Catherine makes cards for his communication book.

Ryan Deschaine

- Delivers newspapers
- Has curly black hair
- Rides bus with Catherine
- Teases David

Catherine's mom

- Prepares taxes from home

Catherine's dad

- Pharmacist
- Always late

Kristi

- Catherine's new neighbor
- Twelve
- Plays with her hair
- Has long, straight brown hair
- Parents are separated

Kristi's mom

- Moves in next door to Catherine
- Short, brown hair
- Younger than Catherine's mom

Elliot

- Owns Elliot's Antiques where Catherine buys Jason birthday present
- Thin, old and stooped

X. **Setting:**

This novel takes place in the present day in Maine during summer vacation.

XI. Interest Level and Reading Level

Interest Level: 6-8

Reading Level: 4.5

XII. Booktalk:

Even though her best friend is away for the summer Catherine still has high hopes; there is a new girl moving in next door that same age as Catherine, twelve. Catherine envisions doing all her favorite things with this girl all summer. Do Catherine's hopes come true? Does her brother ruin it or does Catherine do that herself?

XIII. Discussion Questions:

Pre-Reading

- The title of the book is Rules. What kind of rules do you think this novel is about?
- Now look at the cover of the book. Would you review your prediction? Explain why or why not.

Chapter 1 - "Follow the rules."

- Why does David like rules so much? (page 4)
- Do you think Catherine will be disappointed in her new neighbor or will they be good friends like she envisions? (page 5)
- Why is Catherine making a list of rules? (page 12)

Chapter 2 - "Don't run down the clinic hallway."

- Was it right of Mrs. Morehouse to yell at Catherine? (page 21)
- Should Catherine have asked before drawing Jason? (page 21)
- Why do you think Catherine gave Jason her drawing? (page 28)

Chapter 3 - "If it's too loud, cover your ears or ask the other person to be quiet"

- Is the list of rules her or David?

Chapter 4 - "Sometimes you've gotta work with what you've got."

- Is Catherine describing herself? (page 41)
- Would you offer to make cards for Jason like Catherine? (page 47)
- What seven words do you think Catherine will draw? (page 47)

Chapter 5- "If you don't have the words you need, borrow someone else's"

- What do you think Ryan is telling Catherine's new neighbor? (page 57)

Chapter 6 - "Sometimes things work out, but don't count on it."

- Do you think the new neighbors will come to their barbeque? (page 59)
- Why didn't Catherine ask the new neighbor to the barbeque? (page 59)
- Why do you think Catherine lies about the neighbors being busy? (page 65)

Chapter 7 - "Saying you'll do something means you have to do it - unless you have a very good excuse."

- Catherine is getting along so well with Jason. Why doesn't she get along as well with David? (page 75)
- Do you think Jason changed his shirt for his therapist? Why or why not? (page 75)

Chapter 8 - "If you can only choose one, pick carefully."

- Was it nice of Catherine to put David in her mom's office while she was on the phone? (page 86)
- What is your impression of Kristi? (page 88)
- How do you think Jason will react when Catherine isn't at therapy? (page 88)

Chapter 9 - "At someone else's house, you have to follow their rules."

- How do you think Catherine will make it up to Jason for not seeing him at therapy? (page 97)

Chapter 10 - "If it fits in your mouth, it's food."

- What do you think will happen next? (page 103)

Chapter 11 - "Sometimes people laugh when they like you. But sometimes they laugh to hurt you."

- What would you have done if you were Catherine? (page 108)

Chapter 12 - "Open closet doors carefully. Sometimes things fall out."

- Do you think Catherine and Jason are becoming friends? (page 117)
- Do you think they will crash? (page 122)

Chapter 13 - "Sometimes people don't answer because they didn't hear you. Other times it's because they don't want to hear you."

- Do you think Catherine might run away? (page 128)

Chapter 14 - "No toys in the fish tank."

- Do you think Catherine was second choice? (page 133)
- Why doesn't Catherine tell Kristi about Jason? (page 144)

Chapter 15 - "Solving one problem can create another."

- Why do you think her teeth are clenched? (page 151, after first paragraph)
- What Catherine just did is the same thing other people do that makes her upset. Why doesn't she realize this? (page 152)
- Given the title of this chapter and how it ended, predict what will happen next. (page 154)

Chapter 16 - "No dancing unless I'm alone in my room or it's pitch - black dark."

- Do you think Kristi was trying to make David look stupid or just treating him like everyone else? (page 160)

Chapter 17 - "Not everything worth keeping has to be useful."

- Why do you think Catherine's picture of "together" upsets him? (page 166)

Chapter 18 - "Pantless brothers are not my problem"

- Do you think Catherine is embarrassed about Jason? (page 176)

Chapter 19 - "Some people think they know who you are when they really don't."

- Will Mrs. Morehouse relay Catherine's message? (page 184)
- Will Catherine get into trouble for talking to her dad like that? (page 185)

Chapter 20 - "Late doesn't mean not coming."

- Were you surprised Catherine changed her wish? (page 190)

Chapter 21 - "A real conversation takes two people."

- What do you think about Kristi and how she reacted? (page 196)

Chapter 22 - "If you need to borrow words, Arnold Lobel wrote some good ones."

- Were you surprised David finally knocked? (page 198)

Post Reading Questions

- Did you like this book? Why or why not?
- What did you learn by reading this book?
- Explain the cover of the book now that you have read the novel.

XIV. Language

- egrets (page 13) - birds
- osprey (page 13) - a large hawk that eats fish
- anthropological (page 51) - having do to with the study of human beings
- billowing (page 78) - rising in big puffs
- peril (page 95) - danger
- twines (page 192) - twists

XV. Novel Content Standards

Grade 3:

English/Language Arts

Standard 1: 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.1.4, 3.1.6, 3.1.7, 3.1.8

Standard 3: 3.3.3, 3.3.4, 3.3.6, 3.3.8

Grade 4:

English/Language Arts

Standard 1: 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3, 4.1.6, 4.1.7

Standard 3: 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.3.6

Grade 5:

English/Language Arts

Standard 1: 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.6

Standard 3: 5.3.2, 5.3.3, 5.3.4, 5.3.8

XVI: Anticipation Statements:

- It is okay to tease people.
- You should tell you parents how you feel.
- You should always stand up for your brother or sister.
- Not telling somebody something is the same as lying.
- Real friends understand.

XVII: Read Aloud Passages

Passage #1: Page 98, first paragraph

Catherine felt guilty about not seeing Jason at his previous therapy session when he brought a gift for her pets. This paragraph says that

Catherine is bringing something with her to the clinic that she never brought before.

This paragraph leaves the reader wanting to know what Catherine is bringing with her.

Passage #2: From the end of page 173 through page 177

Catherine is at Jason's birthday party eating cake. David arrives wanting cake and Jason comes back to talk to Catherine after talking to a neighbor. Catherine and Jason start talking about Kristi and the dance. Jason asks Catherine if she wants to go with him. They argue that she is making excuses. Catherine uses David as a escape to leave the party.

I chose this passage because it provides a good discussion topic. Is Catherine embarrassed to be seen with Jason? Is her rule about dancing an excuse? How do you think she feels about Jason liking her? It also leaves the reader wondering what will happen next. What should she do now? How do you think he feels?

XVIII: If you like this book, you'll love these:

Touch Blue by Cynthia Lord

The Boy Who Ate Stars by Kochka

Al Capone Does My Shirts by Gennifer Choldenko

A Corner of the Universe by Ann Martin

Tru Confessions by Janet Tashjian

Joey Pigza Loses Control by Jack Gantos

XIV: Across Curriculum Connections

Connection #1: Journal Entry

At the end of the novel have the students write in their journals giving them this prompt taken from http://www.cynthialord.com/pdf/rules_discuss.pdf: "If Catherine were to write a rule at the very end of the book, what do you think it would be?" Don't forget to explain why.

Supplies

- Journals
- Pencils

Standards:

Grade 3:

English/Language Arts

Standard 3: 3.4.3, 3.4.9

Standard 5: 3.5.7

Standard 6: 3.6.1

Grade 4:

English/Language Arts

Standard 4: 4.4.3, 4.4.5, 4.4.10

Standard 5: 4.5.2

Standard 6: 4.6.1

Grade 5:

English/Language Arts

Standard 4: 5.4.3, 5.4.8

Standard 5: 5.5.2, 5.5.4

Connection #2: Art Activity

For this activity you could team up with the art teacher for this activity if possible. Maybe the students could pick one word and create a drawing showing that word on a bigger piece of paper in a specific medium. If this is not possible you can print off the pages from http://www.cynthialord.com/pdf/rules_worksheets.pdf and have the students select a specific number from each page to complete.

Directions to students: In the book Catherine made numerous communication cards for Jason. Now try it for yourself. Be creative!

Supplies:

- Paper or worksheets from website
- Paint, chalk, colored pencils, or whatever medium is chosen

Standards:

This activity does not apply to any specific core subject standard. However, if done in conjunction with art class it might cover a section of art curriculum.

XV: Resources:

"Autism Society of America: Improving the Lives of All Affected by Autism."
Autism Society of America. 27 Jun 2008. Autism Society of America.
<<http://www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer>>.

This website is a good resource to find out more about autism so that you can be more knowledgeable on the topic of autism.

"Discussion Guide." Cynthia Lord. 26 Jun 2008. Cynthia Lord.
<http://www.cynthialord.com/pdf/rules_discuss.pdf>.

This website has some very good discussion questions from the author herself.

"Understanding Disability." School Zone. 26 Jun 2008. Gill Chesney-Green.
<http://www.schoolzone.co.uk/resources/articles/GoodPractice/classroom/Special_needs/Understanding_disability.asp>.

This website has a lesson plan on disabilities.

"Worksheets." Cynthia Lord. 26 Jun 2008. Cynthia Lord.
<http://www.cynthialord.com/pdf/rules_worksheets.pdf>.

This website has very good worksheets that correlate with the book and were created by the author herself.

XVI: Book Activities:

Activity #1

Disabilities Activity
A book related activity for
Rules by Cynthia Lord

Objective:

Students will learn more about the hardships people with disabilities live with all of their lives.

Indiana Academic Standards:

Grade 3

English/Language Arts

Standard 4: 3.4.3, 3.4.9

Standard 5: 3.5.7

Standard 6: 3.6.1

Grade 4

English/Language Arts

Standard 4: 4.4.3, 4.4.4, 4.4.10

Standard 5: 4.5.1

Standard 6: 4.6.1

Grade 5

English/Language Arts

Standard 4: 5.4.3, 5.4.8

Standard 5: 5.5.4

Time:

30 minutes total class time if recess used

Materials Needed:

Marbles

Sunglasses
Petroleum jelly
Tape
Cotton balls

Procedure:

Before doing this activity smear the dark sunglasses with petroleum jelly.

Split the class in six groups. Groups 1 & 2 will put on the sunglasses and put marbles in their shoes. Groups 3 & 4 will tape four of their fingers together. Groups 5 & 6 will put cotton balls in their ears and put marbles in their mouths.

When the students have their disabilities have them go out to recess and interact with other students or interact with another classroom for ten minutes.

After recess have the students write in their journals about their experiences. How did they feel? How did others react to them? What did they learn?

Assessment:

Assess writing for content and ideas. Do not assess for grammar, spelling or punctuation.

Activity #2

Make Your Own Rules
A book related activity for
Rules by Cynthia Lord

Objective:

Students will apply what they have read to their own lives.

Indiana Academic Standards:

Grade 3

English/Language Arts

Standard 4: 3.4.3, 3.4.9

Standard 6: 3.6.1

Grade 4

English/Language Arts

Standard 4: 4.4.10

Standard 5: 4.5.6

Standard 6: 4.6.1

Grade 5

English/Language Arts

Standard 4: 5.4.8

Standard 5: 5.5.6

Time:

- 15-20 minutes

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencils

Procedure:

Writing in your journals, make your own rules for your brother or sister. If you don't have a sibling make rules for your best friend. Please included an explanation for each one as to why you think this rule is important.

Assessment:

Students will be assessed on the quality of their rules. Are they serious?
Do they show thought or were they quickly created just to get done?

XVII: Bibliography

Rules by Cynthia Lord

<http://www.cynthialord.com>

<http://ideanet.doe/state.in.us/standards>

<http://www.help.lib.in.us>

<http://www.btsb.com/utilities/BookDetails.php?TitleNo=587340&AddTitle=1>

http://www.cynthialord.com/pdf/rules_worksheets.pdf

http://www.cynthialord.com/pdf/rules_discuss.pdf

<http://www.btsb.com>