

Paula Goodwin  
Education L530  
June 18, 2008

## **YHBA Novel Resource**

Author-Sarah Weeks  
Title-Jumping the Scratch  
Copyright date-2006  
Publisher-HarperCollins

### Author's Background

Sarah Week's homepage is <http://www.sarahweeks.com/>. The publisher's webpage is <http://www.harpercollins.com/hc/home.asp>. Sarah Weeks has been writing children's books and songs for twenty years according to her biography. She was born in Ann Arbor, Michigan and attended Hampshire College for her Bachelor degree and New York University for her Master of Fine Arts degree. Her first children's novel, So B. It, was released for publishing in early 2004. Her popular Regular Guy series for middle graders has resulted in a development deal with Disney for a feature length live-action film. Sarah Weeks has written more than thirty picture books and she is an accomplished singer and songwriter. Sarah Weeks promotes her books by visiting schools and speaking to children about reading her books, writing, and singing her songs. She lives in New York City with her two teenage sons.

Sarah Weeks email address is [authorweeks@aol.com](mailto:authorweeks@aol.com) and her mailing address is:

Sarah Weeks  
c/o HarperCollins Author Mail  
1350 Avenue of the Americas  
NY, NY 10019

Paula Goodwin  
IUPUI  
psgoodwi@iupui.edu



Originally the title of the book was “Visiting Arthur”, and the focus of the story was going to be about a relationship between a boy who has a secret he’s afraid to tell, and a writer who helps him find the courage and the voice to tell his story according to Sarah Weeks. She decided to write the setting of this book in Northern Michigan because that is where she grew up. Sarah Weeks states “I remember buying cherries at the roadside stands and my sister Jane and me rolling down the rear windows of the car so we could spit the pits out as my dad drove us home.” She also says in her biography that when she wrote Jumping the Scratch that it came in pieces unlike her other book So B. It. Sarah Weeks is also author to many other books including: Up All Night, Oggie Cooder, Regular Guy, Guy Time, My Guy, Guy Wire, and Beware of Mad Dog. Her first YA novel, So B. It, which appeared on the LA Times bestseller list was chosen as an ALA Best Book for Young Adults, a Booksense 2004 best book of the year and received the 2004 Parent’s Choice Gold Award.

### Annotation for Jumping the Scratch and Genre

Jumping the Scratch, written by Sarah Weeks, is about an eleven year old boy named Jamie Reardon who is having a difficult time adjusting to his new life. His cat, Mister, suddenly disappeared one day and this was just the beginning of Jamie’s downward spiral. Soon after, Jamie found Mister dead in a ditch by the side of the road. Jamie blamed himself for Mister’s death. Not only did his one true friend die but now his father has also left. If things couldn’t get any worse, his aunt Sapphy has had an accident at the cherry factory and needs help. Jamie soon finds himself living in a new city, with a new teacher, and helping his mother take care of aunt Sapphy. Jamie’s aunt

Paula Goodwin  
IUPUI  
psgoodwi@iupui.edu

Sapphy was the one person, besides Mister, who actually listened to him. When his aunt would come and visit she would somehow understand Jamie and really listen to him. But now that his aunt has had her accident, she can't keep any new memories from forming. While working at the cherry plant, a big piece of steel hit her across the head. Now, her memory is like an old record and it jumps the scratch. Jamie needs to find the one thing that can help his help jump the scratch. Jamie also has another major problem; he's keeping a secret that he just wants to forget. The manager of the trailer park, Old Grey, is the cause of Jamie's problems. With the help of a mysterious girl Audrey Krouch, Jamie hopes hypnosis will help him forget his past or will be forced to confront it. The setting to this story takes place in Traverse City, Michigan where Jamie is forced to move after his father abandons the family. Jamie Reardon is the main character with the help of some poignant minor characters. This book confronts some serious issues from depression, school bullies, family crisis and sexual predators.

This book is considered Young Adult Fiction.

### Point of View

Jumping the Scratch is told from Jamie Reardon's point of view. Since Jamie is the main character, he gives a first person account of what happens. There is some dialog but all the descriptive details come from Jamie's perspective.

### Theme

The theme of Jumping the Scratch is surviving misfortune and family turmoil. My interpretation of the meaning of the title has to do with Jamie's Aunt Sapphy. She has lost her ability to remember new memories. She remembers everything up to the point of the accident but cannot remember what happens after that. When the family explains that she had an accident, she will comprehend what happened for a short period of time and then reverts back to the beginning. Her memory jumps back to where she was previously.

## Conflict and Conflict Resolution

The internal conflict lies within Jamie Reardon when he finds himself in a situation that is dangerous and he wishes he could forget what happened. He is conflicted about not being able to control situations in his life. His father has left his cat Mister has died and now he was sexually harassed by an older man where he lives in a trailer park. This conflict is resolved when he finally tells his Aunt Saphy what happened to him the night of Christmas Eve and the man is arrested for sexually abusing Jamie.

## Characters

Jamie Reardon-The main character in the book, *Jumping the Scratch*. He is eleven years old and in the fifth grade at Pine Tree Elementary. Before Jamie's father left, he was just a normal kid at his school, but now that his father's gone, Jamie and his mom was forced to move to another city and a different school. Jamie is a very depressed boy who is trying hard to forget something bad that happened during Christmas.

Opal Reardon-Jamie's mom is a minor character in this book. Opal is rarely home because her husband left her and Jamie which has forced her to move in with her sister. She takes a job working at the same cherry factory that her sister had an accident at.

Aunt Saphy-Jamie's aunt had a serious accident at the cherry factory and now Jamie and his mom (Saphy's sister) has moved in with her. She lives in a trailer park in Traverse City. She cannot retain any new memory and is a source of comedy in this serious book. Saphy is one of the few people Jamie can confide in.

Audrey Krouch-Audrey, otherwise known as Madame Yerdua, is a young girl who attends school with Jamie. She is in the same class, rides his bus and lives in the same trailer court. Audrey pretends she has ESP and can help him with his aunt. While she tries to hypnotize Jamie, he finds himself very vulnerable because the one memory he wishes to forget comes back to him.

Miss Miller-Jamie's teacher, who doesn't really care about helping Jamie. She likes helping student's who listen and are quiet. Miss Miller is rude to Jamie and doesn't really care what he has been through.

Anthony Stone-Jamie refers to this man as Arthur because the day Miss Miller was talking about his appearance, Jamie was not listening. “Arthur” actually helps Jamie to think about writing someday.

### Setting

Most of the setting takes place at Jamie Reardon’s trailer which is in Traverse City. The trailer park is called Wondrous Acres. There are a few scenes at Jamie’s school and his previous house where he lived with his mother and father in Battle Creek, Michigan. The beginning of the book starts in November when Jamie starts school but the year is not given.

### Interest Level and Reading Level

The interest level for this particular book is young fiction. The book and some websites state that ages 9-12 would be particularly interested in this book. The lexile is 920.

### Booktalk

Imagine that you are an eleven-year-old boy and your father has just left and walked out on you and your mom. One day you have a normal life and the next minute you’re moving in with your favorite aunt who has lost her short term memory when she was hit on the head at the town’s cherry factory. One minute, life is normal the next minute you are in a new school, being picked on by the school bully and an awkward girl is telling you she can help because she has ESP. But there is one thing you don’t want to remember, the worst day of your life.

## Discussion Questions

### Pre-Reading Questions by Chapter

1. What does the title “Jumping the Scratch” tell you about this book?
2. Why did Jamie’s father leave the family?
3. Jamie refers to a guy named “Arthur”. Who do you think Arthur is?
4. Why is so important about Arthur’s visit?
5. Why do you think Audrey wears big black glasses with only the frame?
6. Who is Old Grey?
7. Who is Madame Yerdua?
8. Why is Jamie testing his aunt Saphy with different spices?
9. How did Audrey manage to persuade Jamie to be hypnotized?
10. Who is Mr. Stone?
11. How does Audrey know that Jamie is hiding something?
12. Will Jamie tell his mother what happened to him?
13. Will Jamie say something about what happened on Christmas Eve while Audrey is hypnotizing him?
14. What is the key that will trigger Aunt Saphy’s memory?
15. How does Audrey know that Jamie is hiding something?
16. What do think happened on Christmas Eve to Jamie?
17. What will happen to Old Grey?

### During Reading Questions

1. Why did Jamie’s father leave? (page 6)
2. If Jamie was not picked on at his old school, why are Larry Baywood and other kids picking on him at his new school? (page 11)
3. What happened to Aunt Saphy? (page 18)
4. What is Use It or Lose It? (page 31)
5. What happens to Aunt Saphy good china? (page 39)
6. Who is Madame Yerdua? (page 59)
7. How did Audrey convince Jamie to be hypnotized? (page 66)
8. Why does Jamie not like “Arthur”? (page 99)
9. What happened in Old Grey’s office? (145)
10. Why does Jamie taste Butterscotch? (143)

## Post-Reading Questions

1. What is Wondrous Acres?
2. How did Aunt Saphy have her accident and where did she have it?
3. Why does Marge hate her job?
4. Why did Jamie call Madame Yerdua?
5. Did Jamie find Aunt Saphy's trigger?
6. What happened when Jamie's grandfather was hypnotized at the county fair?
7. Why did Jamie not read his story of a special place in front of the class?
8. What happened when Jamie read his dialogue?
9. What was Jamie's nickname for Larry Baywood and what does it mean?
10. What does Audrey tell Jamie about her father?

## Language (Spelling/Vocabulary)

Reminisce-looking back on something that has happened in a person's life (page 26)

Circulars-advertisements that come in the mail for grocery stores (page 33)

Penny socials-many years ago there was social events that cost only a penny for each ticket (page 44)

Cardamom-a spice that may trigger Aunt Saphy's memory (page 53)

Hypnotize-to put someone in a trance-like state until they are relaxed and can remember past details (page 59)

ESP-extrasensory perception; someone who can read another person's mind (page 65)

Dialogue-when two people are speaking to each other, this can be written or spoken dialogue (page 93)

Waterlogged-when something has soaked in water for a long time and does not retain its natural state (page 101)

Eclectic-what appears to be the best titles that Jamie has chosen for his books (111)

Susceptible-how easy it is to put someone under hypnosis (page 127)

## Indiana Academic Standards

## Grade Six

- 6.1.4 Understand unknown words in informational texts by using word, sentence, and paragraph clues to determine meaning.
- 6.2.4 Clarify an understanding of texts by creating outlines, notes, diagrams, summaries, or reports.
- 6.2.7 Make reasonable statements and conclusions about a text, supporting them with evidence from the text.
- 6.2.8 Identify how an author's choice of words, examples, and reasons are used to persuade the reader of something.
- 6.3.2 Analyze the effect of the qualities of the character on the plot and the resolution of the conflict.
- 6.3.3 Analyze the influence of the setting on the problem and its resolution.
- 6.3.5 Identify the speaker and recognize the difference between first-person (the narrator tells the story from the "I" perspective) and third-person (the narrator tells the story from an outside perspective) narration.
- 6.3.6 Identify and analyze features of themes conveyed through characters, actions, and images.
- 6.3.9 Identify the main problem or conflict of the plot and explain how it is resolved.

## Grade Seven

- 7.1.3 Clarify word meanings through the use of definition, example, restatement, or through the use of contrast stated in the text.
- 7.3.2 Identify events that advance the plot and determine how each event explains past or present action or foreshadows (provides clues to) future action.
- 7.3.3 Analyze characterization as shown through a character's thoughts, words, speech patterns, and actions; the narrator's description; and the thoughts, words, and actions of other characters.
- 7.3.4 Identify and analyze themes — such as bravery, loyalty, friendship, and loneliness — which appear in many different works.
- 7.3.8 Analyze the influence of the setting on the problem and its resolution.
- 7.3.9 Analyze the relevance of setting (places, times, customs) to mood, tone, and meaning of text.

## Grade Eight

Paula Goodwin  
IUPUI  
psgoodwi@iupui.edu

Verify the meaning of a word in its context, even when its meaning is not directly stated, through the use of definition, restatement, example, comparison, or contrast.

8.3.2 Evaluate the structural elements of the plot, such as subplots, parallel episodes, and climax; the plot's development; and the way in which conflicts are (or are not) addressed and resolved.

8.3.3 Compare and contrast the motivations and reactions of literary characters from different historical eras confronting either similar situations and conflicts or similar hypothetical situations.

8.3.4 Analyze the importance of the setting to the mood, tone, or meaning of the text.

8.3.5 Identify and analyze recurring themes (such as good versus evil) that appear frequently across traditional and contemporary works.

8.3.9 Analyze the relevance of setting (places, times, customs) to mood, tone, and meaning of text.

8.3.7 Analyze a work of literature, showing how it reflects the heritage, traditions, attitudes, and beliefs of its author.

### Anticipation Statements

Agree	Disagree	Topic: Jumping the Scratch
		ESP is when a person can read someone's mind.
		The title "Jumping the Scratch" is a children's jump-rope game.
		Sexual abuse only happens to girls.

		A person can regain their short term memory by getting hit on the head again.
		If a person has amnesia, one item could trigger a person's memory so they regain their memory.

### Read Aloud Passages

Before I read this passage to the class, I would ask my class if they think Jamie will tell his Aunt Saphy and will she remember or not remember?

“It wasn’t old blue eyes who finally got Saphy’s memory to jump the scratch. It was me. Who would have guessed that what we hadn’t been able to find in the spice rack or the photo albums or the back of the closet would lie in the painful butterscotch-flavored secret. I told her that night.” (157).

After I read this passage, I would ask them how they think this triggered Aunt Saphy’s memory of the accident and everything afterward. Will she remember everything from now on? What will happen to Jamie?

I chose this passage because I think it’s vital to the book. Jamie has finally confessed his secret and even Aunt Saphy has retained her memory. This passage basically wraps the story up and the conflict is being resolved. Now the reader understands the meaning of the butterscotch statements. The reference to “Blue Eyes” is Aunt Saphy’s favorite singer and Jamie and his mother has played all of her records to try and trigger her memory but that did not work.

Up to this point, the reader does not know what Jamie’s secret is and I would ask my class, what could have happened to make Jamie want to forget his past.

“Our mailbox in Battle Creek was a big basket, which hung outside on the wall next to the front door. There were two silver hooks that held it up, and whenever we had letters to mail, we stuck the envelopes behind the tips of

Paula Goodwin  
IUPUI  
psgoodwi@iupui.edu

those hooks so the mailman would see them. At Wondrous Acres there was a honeycomb of identical mailboxes for all the trailers out on the road. You had to walk down the gravel driveway to get there. But I didn't go that way. I always cut through the weeds, angled down the hill, and walked along the ditch same as when I got off the bus, only in reverse." (34).

After reading this paragraph, I would ask my class why Jamie doesn't like to walk down the gravel driveway. Why does he make a point of telling the reader this?

I chose this passage because it gives the reader a clue to why Jamie doesn't like walking down the gravel road. He is trying to avoid running into Old Grey. After this paragraph, Jamie runs into Audrey who notices that he never walks past the office and she asks him why?

### Read-Alikes

#### So B. It by *Sarah Weeks*

This book is a recommended read by the same author, Sarah Weeks. Although she lives an unconventional lifestyle with her mentally disabled mother and their doting neighbor, Bernadette, Heidi has a lucky streak that has a way of pointing her in the right direction. When a mysterious word in her mother's vocabulary begins to haunt her, Heidi's thirst for the truth leads her on a cross country journey in search of the secrets of her past.

#### The Perks of Being a Wallflower by *Stephen Chbosky*

The story takes place over a series of letters to a friend written by the narrator, a teenager named Charlie. Charlie is a high school freshman. Charlie is the wallflower of the novel. He is an unconventional thinker, and as the story begins he is shy and unpopular. This book also deals with teenage sexuality and abuse.

#### Speak by *Laurie Halse Anderson*

Melinda Sordino, a student with good grades and great friends, has made some mistakes. At the end of a summer party she calls the cops, yet when they arrive she doesn't tell them anything. Back at school the next year, her friends won't speak to her, and people she doesn't even know hate her as the fink who wrecked everybody's party, and her grades start dropping. Her relationship with her parents deteriorates quickly. She becomes sullen, and withdrawn. However this picture is not the whole story.

### Across the Curriculum Connections

#### Language Arts

The first assignment for *Jumping the Scratch* would be to have the student's begin a journal. They will write down clues to what Jamie's secret is. The student's will give evidence to support their claim and can change their opinion as they move through the book. They will need to give the page number as supportive evidence.

The only material the student will need is a journal notebook and pencil.

6.2.7 Make reasonable statements and conclusions about a text, supporting them with evidence from the text.

7.3.2 Identify events that advance the plot and determine how each event explains past or present action or foreshadows (provides clues to) future action.

8.2.9 Make reasonable statements and draw conclusions about a text, supporting them with accurate examples.

#### Life Skills

One activity that I believe would help the class to understand what Jamie has gone through in his decision to not tell anyone about what happened to him would be for the class to write out different solutions to the problem. Who does Jamie trust and who could he have told? Students could make a chart of the different characters in the story and write whether Jamie could tell that character and why or why not.

- 6.2.2 Analyze text that uses a compare-and-contrast organizational pattern.
- 6.2.4 Clarify an understanding of texts by creating outlines, notes, diagrams, summaries, or reports.
- 6.2.5 Follow multiple-step instructions for preparing applications.
- 6.3.2 Analyze the effect of the qualities of the character on the plot and the resolution of the conflict.
  
- 7.2.7 Draw conclusions and make reasonable statements about a text, supporting the conclusions and statements with evidence from the text.
- 7.2.8 Identify methods (such as repetition of words, biased or incomplete evidence) an author uses to persuade the reader.
- 7.3.3 Analyze characterization as shown through a character's thoughts, words, speech patterns, and actions; the narrator's description; and the thoughts, words, and actions of other characters.
  
- 8.2.3 Find similarities and differences between texts in the treatment, amount of coverage, or organization of ideas.
- 8.2.9 Make reasonable statements and draw conclusions about a text, supporting them with accurate examples.
- 8.3.3 Compare and contrast the motivations and reactions of literary characters from different historical eras confronting either similar situations and conflicts or similar hypothetical situations.
- 8.4.1 Discuss ideas for writing, keep a list or notebook of ideas, and use graphic organizers to plan writing.

### Book Activities

According to Sarah Weeks “Originally the title of the book was “Visiting Arthur”, and the focus of the story was going to be about a relationship between a boy who has a secret he’s afraid to tell, and a writer who helps

Paula Goodwin  
IUPUI  
psgoodwi@iupui.edu

him find the courage and the voice to tell his story.” In this assignment, student’s will individually write a different ending to the story. When Jamie meets “Arthur” on the bus and pays for his fair, each student will write an alternative ending to the story, Jumping the Scratch.

#### Indiana Academic Standards

6.4.1 Discuss ideas for writing, keep a list or notebook of ideas, and use graphic organizers to plan writing.

6.4.2 Choose the form of writing that best suits the intended purpose.

6.4.8 Review, evaluate, and revise writing for meaning and clarity.

6.4.9 Edit and proofread one’s own writing, as well as that of others, using an editing checklist or set of rules, with specific examples of corrections of frequent errors.

6.4.10 Revise writing to improve the organization and consistency of ideas within and between paragraphs.

6.5.6 Use varied word choices to make writing interesting.

6.6.4 Use correct capitalization.

6.6.5 Spell correctly frequently misspelled words.

7.4.8 Review, evaluate, and revise writing for meaning and clarity.

7.4.9 Edit and proofread one’s own writing, as well as that of others, using an editing checklist or set of rules, with specific examples of corrections of frequent errors.

7.4.10 Revise writing to improve organization and word choice after checking the logic of the ideas and the precision of the vocabulary.

7.5.6 Use varied word choices to make writing interesting and more precise.

7.6.8 Use correct capitalization.

8.4.7 Review, evaluate, and revise writing for meaning and clarity.

8.4.11 Identify topics; ask and evaluate questions; and develop ideas leading to inquiry, investigation, and research.

8.4.8 Edit and proofread one’s own writing, as well as that of others, using an editing checklist or set of rules, with specific examples of corrections of frequent errors.

8.4.9 Revise writing for word choice; appropriate organization; consistent point of view; and transitions among paragraphs, passages, and ideas.

8.5.2 Write responses to literature that:

- demonstrate careful reading and insight into interpretations.
- connect response to the writer's techniques and to specific textual references.
- make supported inferences about the effects of a literary work on its audience.
- support statements with evidence from the text.

### Bibliography

Weeks, Sarah. Jumping the Scratch. New York City: HarperCollins, 2006.

Sarah Weeks, Children's Author. Online. 18 June 2008.

<<http://www.sarahweeks.com/>>

Indiana's Academic Standards. Online. 18 June 2008.

<<http://www.doe.state.in.us/standards/welcome.html>>

Amazon.com. Online. 18 June 2008

<<http://www.amazon.com/Speak-Laurie-Halse-Anderson/dp/014131088X>>

Paula Goodwin  
IUPUI  
psgoodwi@iupui.edu