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INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PACKET/TEACHING UNIT

Durango Street

F R A N K B O N H A M



PRESTWICK HOUSE
I N C O R P O R A T E D

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

Durango Street

by Frank Bonham

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Durango Street

Objectives

By the end of this unit, the student will be able to:

1. infer about characters and events when these meanings are not explicitly stated.
2. define vocabulary words from the text.
3. define slang words and phrases in the text, and discuss the extent to which these slang terms help add verisimilitude to the story.
4. point out instances of the following uses of language in the story: personification, simile.
5. discuss this story as a coming of age novel for Rufus and relate incidents from the story illustrating the ways Rufus comes to understand the world in adult terms.
6. point out instances of foreshadowing in the text.
7. cite instances from the story to illustrate Rufus' leadership abilities.
8. identify the reasons Rufus, and other boys in similar circumstances, join gangs.
9. relate Alex's plan to break up Rufus' gang and discuss the extent to which his plan is successful.
10. point out instances of irony in the story.
11. cite incidents where the author uses descriptive imagery to create mood.
12. discuss the color red as a symbol in the story.
13. cite incidents from the story to prove or disprove the following theme: Fighting does not solve problems because fighting leads to more fighting.
14. cite incidents from the story to support the following statements:
 - The destructive behavior of gangs can be redirected into something positive.
 - Young people who need protection should trust the adults and authority figures in their lives and ask them for help.
 - Young men need a strong father figure, so they can develop pride and self respect.
15. discuss the extent to which this story, written in the 1960's, is relevant today.

Durango Street

Test

Matching – Identify the speaker of the following passages from the story. Each name may be used more than once.

- | | | | |
|----|--|----|-------|
| 1. | “Every boy has to have a hero. Often as not, it’s an athlete.” (Pg. 150) | A. | Rufus |
| 2. | “Forgot to tell you, Henry. You gets beat’ into this gang, and you gets beat’ out.” (Pg. 68) | B. | Alex |
| | | C. | Simon |
| | | D. | Bantu |
| | | E. | Ernie |
| 3. | “Do like the man said. Face the wall. Maybe that’s where the answers are...” (Pg. 70) | | |
| 4. | “You boys know as well as I do that you’re in a jam. That’s why you all swing together – because you’re afraid to go it alone.” (Pg. 88) | | |
| 5. | “Fight Two grows out of Fight One. Fight Three grows out of Fight Two. Where does it stop? Sometimes at the gas chamber. Sometimes merely at the reformatory.” (Pg. 113) | | |

Multiple Choice

6. Rufus is sent to Pine Valley Detention Center for
- A. fighting.
 - B. drinking.
 - C. selling drugs.
 - D. stealing a car.
 - E. shooting a gun.
7. Rufus believes he **MUST** join the Moors because
- A. he wants to be with his friend Baby.
 - B. he needs protection.
 - C. the Moors are the only African-American gang in the area.
 - D. he does not want to return to school.
 - E. his older brother is a member of the Moors.

8. Rufus' nickname for himself is
- A. Black Panther.
 - B. Raid Planner.
 - C. Red Devil.
 - D. Black Pride.
 - E. Halfback Henry.
9. It is ironic that Rufus
- A. must endure a beating to join the Moors.
 - B. advises Curtis NOT to join a gang.
 - C. insists that Janet walk home alone from Chang's grocery story.
 - D. Both A and B
 - E. A, B and C
10. Rufus concludes that Bantu is NOT an effective gang leader because
- A. Bantu holds a meeting on the playground, which is a place where the gang is easily trapped by the police.
 - B. Bantu drinks too much.
 - C. Bantu fails to keep the Gassers out of Moor territory.
 - D. Both A and B
 - E. A, B and C
11. Initially, Rufus and the others do not trust Alex because
- A. they believe Alex is just like a cop.
 - B. Alex is white.
 - C. Alex is an adult.
 - D. Both A and B
 - E. A, B and C
12. Rufus begins to cooperate, at least on the surface, with Alex when
- A. Alex goes to see Rufus' mother.
 - B. Alex helps Idell's family get a phone.
 - C. Alex tells Rufus about the trip to see Ernie Brown and the Marauders.
 - D. Alex saves Janet from the Gassers.
 - E. Alex gives him several hundred dollars to plan the dance.
13. Rufus' "Big Lawn Plan" is a plan
- A. which helps the Moors and the other gangs to establish alibis for each other whenever there is trouble with the police.
 - B. to teach Simon a lesson.
 - C. to keep the Gassers away from the dance.
 - D. to get a gun to shoot at Simon and the others.
 - E. to eliminate Pelican Smith's gang from the area.

14. Rufus insists that Willie get a gun
- A. to prove that Willie is still a member of the Moors and not a spy for the Gassers.
 - B. to reestablish his leadership over the Moors, after Simon damages his authority by exposing his scrapbook about Ernie to public view.
 - C. because he is no longer afraid of going back to Pine Valley. Rufus is confident that Alex will use his influence to help Rufus no matter what crime Rufus commits.
 - D. Both A and B
 - E. A, B, and C
15. Alex tries to prevent a war between the Gassers and the Moors by
- A. having Baby arrested.
 - B. asking the police to disarm the Gassers.
 - C. insisting that both gangs attend the Marauder training camp together.
 - D. discouraging Rufus from planning a dance.
 - E. talking to Mrs. Henry.
16. Rufus' "Mystery Sniper Routine" is a plan
- A. in which Rufus will shoot the gun at the Gassers while the other gang members create diversionary disturbances in other locations to confuse the police.
 - B. to shoot out the tires of Pelican Smith's car.
 - C. to kill or wound any Gassers who dare to drive down Durango Street.
 - D. Both A and B
 - E. A, B and C
17. Rufus decides to sponsor the dance because
- A. he wants to please the girls who feel jealous of their non-dropout friends who are graduating.
 - B. he knows that the Gassers will be unable to resist trying to crash the dance. He wants them to crash the dance so he and the other Moors can crush them.
 - C. he wants to thank Alex for arranging the trip to meet Ernie.
 - D. he likes to solve complex problems, and putting a dance together on short notice, is a complex problem.
 - E. his girlfriend Judy convinces him it is a good idea.

18. Mrs. Henry objected, her face *dolorous*. “Mr. Robbins, I never yet won no prizes dealing with the *police*. Far back as I can remember, some policeman or welfare worker was criticizing the way I raised my chil’ren or didn’t pay my bills. Black folks does best when they stays *out* of police stations, *whatever* they problems.” (Pg. 112)

In the above passage, the word “*dolorous*” can be replaced with

- A. very sad.
 - B. proud.
 - C. angry.
 - D. defiant.
 - E. joyful.
19. As they [Rufus and Janet] went on, past dark shops where night lights burned like sickroom lamps, Rufus hid his tension behind a bouncing stride. They neared the taco stand. “That’s the Happy Spot,” Janet said. “Mama won’t let us go there.” “She’s right this time.” (Pg. 39)

The mood of the above passage can be described as

- A. happy.
 - B. fearful.
 - C. sad.
 - D. Both A and B
 - E. A, B, and C
20. Rufus tries to save the dance from the Gassers by
- A. carrying a gun to the dance.
 - B. asking Alex for help when the Gassers disrupt the dance.
 - C. asking Pelican for help.
 - D. proposing a truce to Simon.
 - E. pushing Simon’s car into the river so he and his gang do not have any transportation to the dance.

Essays – Answer any two.

- 1. Cite incidents from the story to illustrate that this is a coming of age story for Rufus.
- 2. Bantu, Rufus, and Simon are all gang leaders. Discuss the qualities of leadership each illustrates. Cite incidents from the text to support your answer.
- 3. List the reasons Alex believes young men like Rufus join gangs. Then discuss the details of his plan to break up the Moors. Cite specific incidents from the story in your answer.
- 4. Discuss Mrs. Henry’s reasons for telling Rufus that she was once married to Ernie Brown. Based on incidents from the text, comment on the extent to which you believe Rufus’ hero worship for Ernie Brown is a positive force in his life.

Durango Street

Test

Answer Key

1.	E	6.	D	11.	A	16.	A
2.	D	7.	B	12.	C	17.	B
3.	A	8.	A	13.	A	18.	A
4.	B	9.	D	14.	D	19.	B
5.	B	10.	E	15.	C	20.	B

Durango Street

Terms and Definitions

Climax - the point of greatest dramatic tension or excitement in a story. **Examples:** Othello's murder of Desdemona. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the person chasing Scout is killed.

Coming of Age - a novel or other work of literature in which the main character or characters grow, mature, or understand the world in adult terms. **Examples:** *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; *The Cay*

Foreshadowing - the use of hints or clues in a story to suggest what action is to come. Foreshadowing is frequently used to create interest and build suspense. **Example:** Two small and seemingly inconsequential car accidents predict and hint at the upcoming, important wreck in *The Great Gatsby*.

Imagery - the use of words to evoke impressions and meanings that are more than just the basic, accepted definitions of the words themselves. **Example:** The quotation, "Get thee to a nunnery," from *Hamlet* implies that Ophelia must regain her purity and chastity and does not simply mean that she needs to go to a convent.

Inference - the act of drawing a conclusion that is not actually stated by the author. **Example:** In *The Pigman*, John and Lorraine are writing a "memorial epic" about Mr. Pignati. Therefore, the reader may logically assume that Mr. Pignati dies in the book.

Irony - a perception of inconsistency, sometimes humorous, in which the significance and understanding of a statement or event is changed by its context. **Example:** The firehouse burned down.

- *Dramatic Irony* - the audience or reader knows more about a character's situation than the character does and knows that the character's understanding is incorrect. **Example:** In *Medea*, Creon asks, "What atrocities could she commit in one day?" The reader, however, knows Medea will destroy her family and Creon's by day's end.
- *Structural Irony* – the use of a naïve hero, whose incorrect perceptions differ from the reader's correct ones. **Example:** Huck Finn.
- *Verbal Irony* - a discrepancy between what is said and what is really meant; sarcasm. **Example:** A large man whose nickname is "Tiny."

Mood - the emotional aspect of the work, which contributes to the feeling the reader gets from the book. **Example:** Gothic novels like *Frankenstein* have a gloomy, dark quality to them, which the author reflects through the depiction of nature, character, and plot.

Personification - a figure of speech in which an object, abstract idea, or animal is given human characteristics. **Examples:** The wall did its best to keep out the invaders.

“Because I could not stop for Death,

He kindly stopped for me.”

—Emily Dickinson

Simile - a comparison between two different things using either *like* or *as*. **Examples:** I am as hungry as a horse. The huge trees broke like twigs during the hurricane.

Symbol - an object, person, or place that has a meaning in itself and that also stands for something larger than itself, usually an idea or concept; some concrete thing which represents an abstraction. **Example:** The sea could be symbolic for “the unknown.” Since the sea is something that is physical and can be seen by the reader, and also has elements that cannot be understood, it can be used symbolically to stand for the abstraction of “mystery,” “obscurity,” or “the unknown.”

Theme - the central or dominant idea behind the story; the most important aspect that emerges from how the book treats its subject. Sometimes theme is easy to see, but, at other times, it may be more difficult. Theme is usually expressed indirectly, as an element the reader must figure out. It is a universal statement about humanity, rather than a simple statement dealing with plot or characters in the story. Themes are generally hinted at through different methods: a phrase or quotation that introduces the novel, a recurring element in the book, or an observation made that is reinforced through plot, dialogue, or characters. It must be emphasized that not all works of literature have themes in them. **Example:** In a story about a man who is diagnosed with cancer and, through medicine and will-power, returns to his former occupation, the theme might be: “Real courage is demonstrated through internal bravery and perseverance.” In a poem about a flower that grows, blooms, and dies, the theme might be: “Youth fades, and death comes to all.”

Verisimilitude - the use of realistic elements to make literature appear truthful or accurate.

Example: The creature in *Frankenstein* meets and converses with a blind man.

Durango Street

Notes

Durango Street by Frank Bonham was first published in 1965. It is the story of a young boy's struggle to survive in a neighborhood dominated by powerful gangs. As part of his probation from the detention center, Rufus knows he must resist joining a gang. Rufus wants to find a better way to live, but he understands the reality of life on Durango Street – to survive, a boy must be connected to a gang.

This story is replete with valuable vocabulary words whose meanings can usually be determined by the context. While the story is sometimes gripping, there is very little violence and no foul language. Some students may question whether or not the information about gangs in this story can be applied to today's world, which may result in lively, interesting classroom discussions on why young people join gangs and how society can help eliminate gangs from our cities.

All references come from the Puffin Books edition of *Durango Street*, copyright 1965.

Durango Street

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Describe Durango Street. How does Rufus feel when he learns his mother has moved to a house near Durango Street?
2. What is the main reason young people like Rufus join gangs? For what reasons is Rufus unable to simply walk away when gangs taunt him?
3. Discuss Rufus' relationship with his mother. Why does she seem to have given up on her son? For what reasons might she have invented the story about her relationship with Ernie Brown?
4. List three qualities of leadership found in Rufus. Cite incidents from the story to illustrate each quality. For example, Rufus is a crew leader at the detention camp. When he leaves the camp, he misses managing the work crew. This incident illustrates that Rufus possesses the ability to help a group of individuals work together to accomplish a goal. He guides the work crew to work as one unit in order to finish their jobs.
5. One of the thematic concepts in this story deals with the relationship between dreams VS reality. Cite two incidents from the story that illustrate this idea.
6. Discuss the color red as a symbol in this story. Consider the following:
 - The Gassers all have red hair.
 - When Rufus joins the Moors, he is told he must take a can of red paint and paint "Moors is boss" on the wall of the police station.
7. Cite incidents from the story to prove or disprove the following statement: Bantu would not have remained the leader of the Moors for much longer even if Rufus had not joined the gang.
8. Why is the following statement ironic?
"You gets beat' into this gang, and you gets beat' out." (Pg. 68)
Find another example of irony in this story. Hint: Consider the advice Rufus gives to Curtis.
9. Describe Alex's plan to break up the Moors. To what extent is his plan successful?
10. Why does Rufus plan a raid on the Gassers? Briefly describe his battle plan. To what extent is he successful?

11. Cite incidents from the story to illustrate the following statement: Robbins is hopeful that Rufus can be helped because he believes Rufus is thinking about the consequences of his actions.
12. What is the climax of this novel? How is Rufus changed by the incident?
13. For what reasons does Rufus ask Willie to buy a gun? Why is Rufus relieved when the gun is stolen?
14. Rufus initially agrees to sponsor the dance as a way to retaliate against the Gassers. Why does he change his mind? What actions does Rufus take at the dance that illustrates that he is beginning to view the world in adult terms?
15. To what extent do you think this story is believable? Could these incidents happen today as they are described in the story?

Durango Street

Study Guide Teacher's Copy

Chapter One

Vocabulary

commence – begin, start

conversed – talked

gambit – an opening maneuver, action, or remark intended to gain an advantage or offer an opinion

perplexed – full of doubt or uncertainty; puzzled

pronounced – unmistakable; clearly marked

skeptically – unconvinced, with doubt

vessel – a person thought of as being the receiver or repository of some spirit or influence

1. Briefly describe Mr. Rubio and Rufus, and discuss Rufus' relationship with Mr. Rubino.

Mr. Rubio is a social worker at the Pine Valley Honor Camp where Rufus is serving his sentence for stealing a car. Mr. Rubio is a small, energetic, smiling man. Rufus Henry is a streetwise young man who does not reveal anything about his inner self to Mr. Rubio. He lives in the "flats" in Coast City, California, with his mother. His is an African American with short hair and an expressive face. Rufus wears pants and a denim shirt. Mr. Rubio is trying to understand and to help Rufus, but Rufus refuses to cooperate with Mr. Rubio's efforts.

2. Who is Baby Gibson? What secret about Rufus does Baby Gibson reveal to Mr. Rubio?
Baby Gibson has recently been released from Pine Valley Honor Camp. He lives near Rufus in Coast City, California. Baby tells Mr. Rubio that Rufus keeps a scrapbook on the career of Ernie Brown, a halfback for the Cleveland Corsairs.

3. List two things Rufus dislikes about Pine Valley Honor Camp.

Rufus dislikes the lack of privacy at the camp and not having access to his scrapbook.

4. What evidence is there in this chapter that Rufus is not happy about his mother's decision to move?

Answers will vary.

Example:

"His stomach had dropped the moment Mr. Rubio said, 'Durango.' But why tell anybody about it? Better just keep his mouth shut and see what happened." (Pg. 13)

5. What two qualities does Rufus possess which, in the opinion of Mr. Rubio, makes Rufus a “sound vessel”?

He is intelligent and has leadership abilities.

6. What good news does Mr. Rubio have for Rufus?

Rufus is going home.

Chapter Two

Vocabulary

laceration – jagged tear or wound

quaked – shuddered or shivered

roust – to drive out, to stir up

sauntered –leisurely and aimlessly walked; strolled

1. Find a simile in this chapter describing how Rufus feels about moving into a new neighborhood.

Answers will vary.

Example:

“Any new neighborhood was like a cellar you entered with your hands tied behind you, the darkness brushing your face like cobwebs. Suddenly the door slammed behind you, and the darkness quaked with danger...” (Pg. 15)

2. Dreams VS reality is one of the thematic concepts in this story. Find an example of one of Rufus’ dreams in this chapter.

Answers will vary.

Example:

Rufus fantasizes about going to Africa and becoming the leader of a tribe.

3. What does Rufus like about Mr. Travers?

Rufus likes his frankness.

4. One of the themes of this story is to explore the nature of gangs and to understand why boys join gangs. What warning does Mr. Travers give to Rufus regarding gangs? For what reasons does Mr. Travers believe young people join gangs?

If Rufus joins a gang, then he will be returned to Pine Valley Detention Center. Mr. Travers believes young people join the gangs for protection.

5. Why does Rufus believe many young people join gangs?

Rufus believes that those who do not join gangs, do not need protection. They do not fight because they have no pride. He thinks that anyone with pride must fight, so they must join a gang for protection.

6. What evidence is there in this chapter that should Rufus decide to join a gang, Mr. Travers will be unable to stop him?

Mr. Travers is overworked. He has only three minutes a week for each boy he represents.

Chapter Three

Vocabulary

antiquity – the quality of being ancient or old

arbor – a place shaded by trees or shrubs

festooned – adorned

pensive – thinking deeply or seriously, often of sad or melancholy things

scrutinized – looked at very carefully; examined closely

vestibule – a small entrance hall or room either to a building or to a larger room

1. Find an example of personification in this chapter.

Answers will vary.

Example:

“The small, dry, crumbling houses were collapsing from sheer discouragement.” (Pg. 20)

2. In the following passage, the author describes the area known as the “Flats.”

“Mr. Travers turned into a side street in the shadow of a booming freeway that formed a solid boundary to the Flats on the east. Durango Street passed beneath the freeway and ascended a hill. But the whole Flats area was jammed between the concrete riverbed on the west and the curving gray arm of the freeway on the east.” (Pg. 20)

What mood do you think the author is conveying about Durango Street and the Flats in the above passage?

Answers will vary.

Example: Trapped, separated, rejected

3. Describe Janet, Curtis, and Mrs. Henry. How does each one feel about seeing Rufus again? How does Rufus feel about being home?

Rufus is happy to be home. Janet is twelve years old, skinny, and wears pigtails tied with red ribbons. Janet cries happy tears when she sees Rufus. Curtis is much younger than Rufus and still under his mother's control. He wants to know if Rufus is home to stay. Mrs. Henry is a thin, dark-brown woman. She does not believe Rufus has changed. Although she loves Rufus, she has given up on him and is ashamed of his poor behavior.

4. What kind of job does Mr. Travers find for Rufus? How does Rufus feel about the job? What plans does he have for his own future?

Mr. Travers finds Rufus a job in a tire retreading business. Rufus does not want the job. He knows that he had high scores on the intelligence tests he took at Pine Valley. Because of these scores, Rufus wants to go back to school. With an education, he hopes to avoid spending his life working in car washes or tire retreading shops.

5. What evidence is there that Mrs. Henry is not telling Rufus the truth about her relationship with Ernie Brown? What thematic concept does her behavior illustrate?

Rufus learns that Ernie Brown was born and raised in Detroit, yet his mother claims to have known him when she was younger. Dreams VS Reality

Chapter Four

Vocabulary

balustrade – a railing on stairs

brandishing – waving, exhibiting in a menacing, challenging way

ramrodding – directing, telling others what to do in an unyielding way

1. What does Rufus miss about the work camp?

Rufus was a crew leader at the camp. He misses managing a work crew.

2. Briefly relate the dream Rufus has about Ernie Brown. What does the dream reveal to the reader about Rufus' life and his needs now that he is back home?

Rufus dreams that he is in the playground fighting a gang of boys. He is bravely fighting when Ernie Brown comes to his rescue. In the dream, Ernie fights the boys and then asks Rufus to play for the Corsairs.

Rufus needs a strong male to protect him and to fight for him. He is worried about the other boys in the neighborhood and that he will need to stand alone to fight them.

3. What advice does Rufus give to Curtis about gangs? Why is this advice ironic? How does Rufus plan to protect Curtis from the neighborhood gangs?

Rufus tells Curtis not to join a gang. He says that joining a gang “means going to war with the police.” (Pg. 33) It is ironic that Rufus tells Curtis not to join a gang for protection when that is what Rufus thinks he must do to protect himself. Rufus is going to protect Curtis, so Curtis will not need to join a gang.

4. What is “gate” money? What does Rufus do with his money?

“Gate” money is the money the state gives to Rufus when he is released from Pine Valley. They give him \$50, which he splits with his mother. He is going to use part of the remaining money to buy his brother and sister some ice cream.

Chapter Five

Vocabulary

scrutiny – close examination

somber – earnest and solemn; grave

1. Why does Rufus refuse to go home after the gang of boys throw a bag of bottles at him? What future event does his behavior foreshadow?

Rufus does not think the gang wants to hurt him or Janet because if they did, the gang would have attacked them right away. He also refuses to be run off the street. In addition, Rufus wants to get the milk because if he goes home without it, his mother will know he had trouble on the street. This behavior suggests that Rufus will join a gang for protection.

2. For what reasons is Rufus angry with Janet for talking to the police?

Rufus knows that the Gassers will eventually find out that Janet is the one who talked to the police. For revenge, the Gassers will either claw Janet with a beer can opener or they will beat Rufus.

3. What is the meaning of the following underlined slang phrases from the story?

- ‘Cause if you talk, it’s you the wagon’s carting off next time. (Pg. 38)
that will be dead.
- A block west, the small white taco stand Rufus had seen that afternoon was getting a big play. (Pg. 38)
very popular, has a lot of customers.

Chapter Six

Vocabulary

brindled – having a gray or tawny coat streaked or spotted with a darker color

meticulous – extremely or excessively careful about details

1. What does it mean to have “Gassed” hair?

Kinky hair is straightened with a mixture of mashed potatoes and lye. When the curl returns, the hair is soaked in gasoline. The gasoline straightens the hair again, but colors the hair red.

2. Why does Rufus linger in Chang’s Grocery?

He is trying to stay off the street long enough for the Gassers to leave the neighborhood.

3. For what reasons does Rufus send Janet home alone?

A member of the Gassers finds Rufus and Janet in Chang’s Grocery store. Rufus knows that there is going to be a fight, but he does not want his little sister to be hurt, so he sends her home alone.

4. Why does Rufus think he might have a chance against the Gassers?

He knows that the police took all of their weapons.

Chapter Seven

1. One of the themes in this novel is that Rufus sometimes has trouble distinguishing reality from his dreams. In the following passage, Rufus imagines that he sees Big Ernie in the alley.

“Against the bricks stood an enormous man, black from head to foot and at least seven feet tall! It was like a miracle. Big Ernie had come up through the pavement to save him. Standing there, he seemed to say: *Like the way you handle yourself in a scrap, Rufus* –” (Pg. 46)

In what way does this imaginary Ernie help Rufus?

Answers will vary.

Example: Rufus needs courage to face the Gassers. Imagining Ernie gives him courage.

2. In what ways does Rufus try to avoid problems with the Gassers? Why is he unsuccessful?

Rufus tries to hide in the store to avoid a conflict with the Gassers. When this does not work, he is forced to fight. He holds a broken bottle to Simon's neck, but instead of cutting him, Rufus tries to explain to Simon that he did not tell the police about the bottles. When Rufus realizes the gang believes him, he takes the keys to Simon's car and orders the gang into the car. He then tells them that he will leave the car keys at the end of the alley. Rufus knows that for Simon to remain the leader of the Gassers, Simon must do something to get back at Rufus. Rufus knows that there is going to be a fight.

3. At the end of this chapter, Mrs. Henry tells Rufus that she was only sixteen when she was married to Ernie Brown. She also tells him to keep the information about their relationship to himself because no one would believe it. Why do you think Rufus asks her if she “got married again right away”? (Pg. 50)

Answers will vary.

Rufus suspects and hopes that Ernie Brown is his real father.

4. In your opinion, is Mrs. Henry telling her son the truth about her past relationship with Ernie Brown? If not, why do you think she might make up such a story?

Answers will vary.

Example: It is possible that Mrs. Henry is making up the story to give Rufus someone to admire. Another possibility is that Mrs. Henry, like her son, has trouble distinguishing between dreams and reality. She may have wished she was married to Ernie Brown.

Chapter Eight

Vocabulary

chagrined – a feeling of embarrassment and annoyance because one has failed or been disappointed

dilapidated – fallen to pieces or into disrepair, broken down; shabby and neglected

impassive – not feeling or showing emotion; calm

laths – thin, narrow strips of wood used in lattices

negligent – careless, lax, inattentive or indifferent

perceptibly – noticeably, but barely

queried – questioned, inquired

ransacking – searching thoroughly; ruining

somber – dark and gloomy or dull

Tyrolean hat – a man's soft felt hat with a somewhat conical crown that is flat and creased at the top, a narrow brim partially turned up, usually a feather for decoration

1. Describe Baby Gibson. In what ways do Baby and Rufus help each other while they are at the detention camp?

Baby is six feet tall and lifts weights. He has a brain injury so he can not do school work. In addition, Baby has a bad temper. The boys help each other at the detention center. Baby's great physical strength gives Rufus protection from the other inmates. Rufus helps Baby avoid trouble at the center by redirecting Baby's destructive moods into a positive activity such as weightlifting.

2. What does Mr. Wells do to make Rufus angry? How does Rufus retaliate?

Mr. Wells calls Rufus "boy" and a "jailbird". Rufus deliberately destroys the tire casings he is grinding. After he has destroyed several casings, Rufus asks for a coffee break and walks away from the job, never to return.

3. Describe Richard Motley (Bantu), Whitey, Everett, and Willie Clanton. How does each react to Rufus when Baby introduces Rufus to them?

Bantu has long black hair, wears a black shirt and a Tyrolean hat. His eyes are described as narrow and bloodshot. Bantu is the leader of the Moors. Bantu refuses to shake Rufus' hand, but he does let Rufus sit with the gang. Whitey and Rufus are the same age. Whitey is slender, good looking, and is wearing dark glasses. Whitey responds to Rufus' greeting with a deadpan "Hi". Everett is a small, thin boy with a nearly bald head. He mumbles when Rufus is introduced. Willie has a large mouth and holds a harmonica equipped with a hidden knife blade in his hand. He says "Hello" in a lazy voice.

4. Why is Bantu reluctant to let Rufus into the gang? How does Rufus maneuver Bantu into agreeing?

Bantu knows that Rufus is in trouble with Simon and the Gassers. He understands that Rufus wants to join the gang because he needs protection from the Gassers. Rufus reminds Bantu that Simon and his gang were infringing on the Moors' territory when they harassed Rufus. Rufus knows that Bantu, as the leader of the Moors, must defend his territory.

Chapter Nine

Vocabulary

acridness – bitterness, sharpness of taste

intangible – that which cannot be touched, defined, formulated or grasped

pummeled – beaten with repeated blows of the fist

reverberated – echoed

scorning – disliking, having contempt for

1. Describe Marshall Smith.

Marshall is twenty years old and wears a yellow coat, black pants, and a large key ring full of keys.

2. Why is Bantu wearing sunglasses at night? Why does Rufus think he is stupid to be wearing them?

Bantu is trying to hide his bloodshot eyes. Rufus thinks wearing sunglasses at night is a red flag, which reveals to the cops that the person wearing the glasses is drunk.

3. The color red has been used several times throughout this and previous chapters. For example:

“Up in the pine forest, a red slash of earth revealed where the inmates of the honor camp were building a fire road.” (Pg. 9)

“In Rufus’s mind a red light flashed beside the tracks. Last week, too, Mr. Rubio had mentioned football. And both times he had talked about halfbacks!” (Pg. 11)

“Looking at the others, he saw that all of them had the same orange-red hair. “Gassed” was the name for it.” (Pg. 40)

“You got to get yourself a can of red spray paint and go up to Cathedral Division police station. And you writes on the wall by the front door, ‘Moors is boss.’ You still with us, Henry?” (Pg. 67)

Based on the above excerpts, what do you think the color red might represent or symbolize in the story?

Answers will vary. Examples: trouble, rebellion

4. In what sense is it ironic that Henry tells Rufus, “You gets beat’ into this gang, and you gets beat’ out”? (Pg. 68)

Rufus wants to join the gang for protection to avoid a beating by the Gassers. It is ironic that he must endure a beating to avoid a beating.

5. Why does Baby decide not to participate when the Moors beat Rufus into the gang?

Baby refuses to beat Rufus because Rufus is his friend.

6. At the end of this chapter, the police break up the gang initiation. Bantu tells everyone to run, but the Moors are trapped in the enclosed playground. Rufus thinks to himself,

They might as well have thrown away the key the first time they jailed me, he thought. You were licked if you got in trouble, licked if you tried to stay out. How else could you play their game?

Rufus swayed there, watching the police line the boys up facing the wall. “What do we do now?” Baby asked.

Rufus shook off his hand. “Do like the man said. Face the wall. Maybe that’s where the answers are...” (Pg. 70)

What “answers” is Rufus referring to in the above passage?

Answers will vary.

Example: He does not know how a person with pride can survive in the neighborhood without joining a gang.

7. Mr. Travers is frustrated by Rufus and other gang members in his care. Who does he call for help? If you could give Mr. Travers some advice on how to deal with Rufus, what might you tell him?

He calls the Group Service Council. They are an organization who specializes in breaking up gangs.

Answers will vary.

8. If you could give Rufus some advice, what might you say to him?

Answers will vary.

Chapter Ten

Vocabulary

disconsolately – inconsolably, dejectedly

gravitation – the act or process of moving toward as if in accordance with the force of gravity

lithe – bending easily; flexible; supple

traversed – passed, moved, or extended over

1. Describe Alex Robbins. What role do you think he will have in Rufus' life?

Alex Robbins is a tall, athletic-looking African-American. He works with the Group Service Council.

Answers will vary.

Example: He is going to try to break up the Moors and help Rufus survive on Durango Street without the protection of a gang.

2. For what reasons does Starkey think Idell Southworth is a lost cause?

Idell has been arrested for purse snatching, extortion, narcotics and battery.

3. According to Robbins, what are the root causes for Idell's decision to join the Moors? What does he think he can do to help Idell?

Young men who join gangs often have been expelled from school and thrown out of every playground and club in the city. They do not have a father in the house and they have been in trouble since they were seven or eight years old.

Robbins wants to win Idell's confidence, so Idell will tell him about his problems. Then Robbins will work to help him deal with those problems.

4. What evidence is there in this chapter that Starkey, even though he would like to help Idell, has given up on him?

Answers will vary.

Example:

The police officer sighed. "I know. I've knocked myself out time and again to help some kid I took a shine to. But now I wear my All-American Sap pin inside my undershirt. The scratching reminds me that you can't bring the dead back to life." (Pg. 74)

5. Describe Headshrinker. What role does he play in the Moors gang?

Headshrinker has dark black skin and is small for his age. He is the gang's errand boy and court jester.

6. Why do you suppose Rufus lets some gravel fall out of his fist each time Robbins talks?

Answers will vary.

Example: He is letting Robbins know that the Moors are dangerous. Rufus' behavior is a form of intimidation.

7. For what reasons does Rufus agree to meet Robbins at Walnut Street?

Rufus believes Robbins is no better than a cop, so if the Moors fail to cooperate, they will be in trouble with the cops. Since Rufus does not want to go back to Pine Valley, he agrees to meet Alex at Walnut Street.

8. One of the thematic concepts in this novel is to understand the qualities of a good leader. What evidence is there in this chapter that Rufus has leadership qualities?

Bantu is in jail when Alex Robbins comes to see the Moors. The other boys look to Rufus to help them know how to behave with Robbins.

9. One of the reasons an author uses foreshadowing is to keep the reader's interest by building suspense. Find an example of foreshadowing in this chapter which builds suspense, so that the reader wants to continue reading the next chapter.

Answers will vary.

Example:

Rufus wants anyone who is meeting at Walnut street to wear dark glasses because he is going to "do a little fixing" himself. (Pg. 80)

Chapter Eleven

Vocabulary

escapade – a reckless adventure or prank

1. Find an incident in this chapter illustrating the thematic concept of dreams VS reality.

Rufus fantasizes about telling Ernie Brown that he is his son.

2. How does Mrs. Henry react to Alex Robbins' presence in Rufus' life? To what extent are you surprised by her attitude?

She rejects Alex's offer of help and she rejects his idea of starting a parent's group for the families of the gang. Mrs. Henry has given up on Rufus and does not believe Robbins can help. She thinks the gang will soon drive Alex away.

Answers will vary.

3. Why does Rufus want the boys to wear dark glasses? Describe his plan to handle Alex Robbins.

Rufus believes that “if a guy can’t see your eyes, he don’t know what’s going on in your head.” (Pg. 84) Rufus wants to push Robbins as far as possible without making Robbins walk out of the meeting. Any time Rufus believes the gang has gone too far, he will rub his eye.

Chapter Twelve

Vocabulary

semaphoring – to signal using a series of flags, one held in each hand, the letters of the alphabet are represented by the various positions of the arms

1. Robbins tells the Moors that they are all part of a gang because they are scared. The Moors, except for Rufus, become outraged and start to leave the room. Why do you suppose Rufus remains?

Answers will vary.

Example: Rufus knows that Robbins is correct. They are all in the gang for protection and they are all scared. He wants to find a better way, but he does not know how. He stays because he is interested to discover if Robbins has the answer.

2. Why does Rufus nominate Leeroy for president of the new club? How does Idell feel about the election?

Rufus nominates Leeroy because he [Leeroy] is the weakest member of the gang. He is making a point to Robbins that the club is worthless so it should have a weak, worthless leader. Idell is loyal to Bantu. He thinks Rufus is trying to push Bantu out of power.

3. Why do you think Alex suggests a field trip to the Marauders’ training camp? To what extent do you think he is successful at forming a relationship with the Moors?

Alex knows that Rufus admires Ernie Brown and that Rufus will keep coming to the meetings so he can have the opportunity to meet Ernie.

Answers will vary.

Example: Alex is successful in persuading the Moors to come to the meeting and in getting them to listen to his ideas. He also is successful in ensuring there will be another meeting by promising to take Rufus and the others on a field trip to the Marauders’ training camp. Alex is unsuccessful in gaining the trust of the gang. Because they think he is like a cop, they do not trust him.

Chapter Thirteen

Vocabulary

scrutinized – looked at very carefully, closely examined

1. In your opinion, is Mrs. Henry telling Rufus the truth about his father when she tells him his father is Ernie Brown? What reasons might she have to make up the story?

Answers will vary.

Example: Rufus is beginning to get into trouble. He clearly has no respect for John Henry, so John Henry is not a good role model for Rufus. Mrs. Henry may have lied about Ernie Brown to give her son a reason to be proud of his father and to give him someone he can strive to emulate.

Chapter Fourteen

Vocabulary

befuddled – confused

dubiously – doubtfully

feigning – pretending

1. Why does Rufus throw down his knife during the fight with Bantu?

Rufus knows that he will be sent back to Pine Valley if he is caught with a knife. He also understands that if he kills Bantu with a knife then he will go to the gas chamber.

2. How do the other gang members react when Rufus is beating Bantu?

The boys enjoy watching Bantu's defeat. They have all been beaten when they joined the Moors because Bantu's rule is "You get beat' into the gang, and you get beat' out." (Pg. 100)

3. Why do you suppose Rufus is able to defeat Bantu, even though Bantu has a knife?

Bantu is in terrible shape because he drinks and may also be taking drugs.

Chapter Fifteen

Vocabulary

forge – to form, shape, produce

serum – the clear, yellowish fluid of the blood which separates from a blood clot after coagulation and shrinkage

1. How do guys outgrow gangs?

Young men grow large enough to be able to defend themselves. The rival gangs no longer threaten them, so they no longer need the protection of a gang.

2. Rufus believes that “you [the gang] *had* to fight to stay alive.” (Pg. 103) In what sense is his philosophy ironic?

If a gang establishes a reputation with other gangs as being tough fighters, the other gangs will leave them alone. It is ironic that Rufus believes that by fighting, the gang will not have to fight.

3. As the new leader of the Moors, Rufus makes plans to take control over the Flats. The gang understands that these plans will include fighting. Describe Rufus’ strategy to keep his gang members from getting arrested after each fight.

He is going to ask neighboring gangs to provide the Moors with an alibi any time there is trouble. Rufus hopes the gangs will do this in exchange for the same favor from the Moors when their gang is in trouble with the law.

Chapter Sixteen

Vocabulary

nettled – irritated, annoyed

1. What is Rufus’ Big Lawn Plan?

The gangs who live near or on the Big Lawn are all going to stick together. When one gang has a fight with a gang from the Heights, the other gangs will give the fighting gang an alibi.

2. How do the Bloods and the Aztecs respond to Rufus’ plan?

The Bloods and the Aztecs listen, but do not agree to the plan.

Chapter Seventeen

Vocabulary

clannish – tending to associate closely with one's own group and to avoid others

delving – searching for, investigating

dolorous - very sorrowful or sad; mournful

1. Why does Rufus refer to himself as the Black Panther? Hint: Review Chapter Fifteen.

The Black Panther is the fastest of the big cats.

2. The following excerpt from this chapter describes Alex. In what way does the metaphor in this description help the reader to understand that Alex is a man that Rufus may one day admire and respect?

Alex walked toward him, tall and narrow-hipped. His hands were huge, the hands of a pass-catching end. He still maintained that irritating calmness, but the cop in him was close to the surface now. (Pg. 112)

Answers will vary.

Example: Alex's hands are compared to the hands of a football player. Rufus admires Ernie Brown, who is a football player.

3. Why does Rufus want to go to war with Simon? What does Alex say to try to stop the fight?

Simon and his gang cut off Janet's pigtail and put it on the aerial of Simon's car. Alex wants Rufus to let the police handle the problem, because he believes one fight leads to another fight, which leads to yet more fighting. All of this fighting can lead to the gas chamber or the reformatory.

4. Discuss whether or not you think Rufus should listen to Alex's advice on how to handle Simon.

Answers will vary.

Chapter Eighteen

Vocabulary

mayhem – any deliberate destruction or violence

precariously – uncertainly, insecurely

1. To what extent does Rufus trust his gang to execute the raid against Simon?

At first, the gang does not seem ready to fight, but they listen carefully to Rufus' battle plan. He was not impressed with the way they acted under Bantu's leadership, but Rufus is confident that with his superior leadership, the Moors will be different.

2. It is reasonable for the reader to expect that gang members, such as Rufus, would speak using slang words and phrases. However, most of Rufus' dialogue in this novel is in normal English. Occasionally the author interjects some slang words to add interest and realism to the story. For example, in Chapter Fifteen Idell tells Rufus that "I swing with you now. All the way." (Pg. 104) Idell is using a slang phrase, "swing with you," to let Rufus know that he accepts Rufus as the new leader and he will follow Rufus' orders.

Find two examples of slang in this chapter. Indicate the meaning of each slang word or phrase you select.

Answers will vary.

Example: It had better be different, he thought, with a dryness in his mouth, or their first throw would be a disaster. (Pg. 117) First raid.

The Gasser slumped onto his hams with blood on his lips. (Pg. 120) slumped into a sitting position

Chapter Nineteen

Vocabulary

remorselessly – mercilessly, ruthlessly, cruelly

1. In short logical sentences, list the steps of Rufus' battle plan. The first two sentences are done for you as an example.

First, Rufus punches Simon causing Simon and his gang to chase Rufus and Whitey as they drive away.

Next, Rufus and Whitey get out of the car and lead Simon's gang to a stretched out tripping wire.

Answers will vary. Example:

Leeroy sets off the dynamite caps simulating gunfire. The Gassers are in a panic.

As the Gassers attempt to return to their car, the Moors surround them and begin to fight them.

When the Gassers again try to leave in their car, Rufus warns them that the car is booby-trapped.

The Gassers, except for Simon, believe him and run away on foot.

Rufus warns Simon to stay away from his family and to stay out of the Flats.

Rufus lets Simon go but forces him to leave his car.

The Moors then sink the car in the water.

2. What does Rufus tell his gang members to do if the police question them?

No matter what the police ask, the gang members are to say they were on the Big Lawn when the fight took place.

Chapter Twenty

Vocabulary

adulation – excessive admiration

incredulous – unwilling or unable to believe; doubting; skeptical

ruminated – turned something over in the mind, meditated on

1. Why is Rufus upset with the Moors after the raid? What happens during the police questioning that helps to establish Rufus as a great leader?

Rufus is upset that the Moors packed sand into the rubber hoses when he specifically told them not to do it. Hoses with sand are considered by the law to be lethal weapons. Rufus does not want to risk being sent to jail for possessing a lethal weapon.

Pelican Smith confirms Rufus' alibi. Even the police are impressed that Rufus is able to gain Pelican's cooperation.

2. Starkey and Robbins are not happy with Rufus for leading the Moors in the raid, but Robbins perceives something hopeful in Rufus' behavior. What does he find encouraging about Rufus' actions?

Rufus did not want bloodshed. Despite the hoses with sand, there were no other weapons used. Alex knows that Rufus did this to avoid being sent back to Pine Valley. Rufus is thinking about the consequences of his actions. He is thinking past the next fight. Alex is encouraged by this forethought.

3. What is Alex's plan to try to prevent another fight between the Gassers and the Moors? Why is another fight especially dangerous for Rufus?

Alex wants both gangs to meet on neutral ground. He arranges for both gangs to go to the Marauders' training camp to meet Ernie Brown. Another fight will be especially dangerous for Rufus because Simon is trying to obtain a gun.

Chapter Twenty One

Vocabulary

castigate – punish or rebuke severely

chamois – a soft piece of leather used as a polishing cloth

voraciously – greedily, with great desire, insatiably

1. What evidence is there in this chapter that Rufus is in control of the Moors?

The Moors vote on whether or not to include the Gassers in the trip to the Marauders' training camp. In the first vote, they all vote the Gassers out. Alex tells them that without the Gassers, there will be no outing. Rufus wants to see Ernie Brown, so he asks for another vote. He votes the Gassers in, so all of the other Moors follow his lead and also vote to include the Gassers in the trip.

2. Alex wants to dismantle the Moors. Rufus is the clear leader of the Moors. If Alex is able to convince Rufus to leave the gang, do you think the others will follow? Why or why not?

Answers will vary.

Example: One response is that the gang will continue, but with a new leader. The Moors have existed for a long time and there have been many different leaders. A gang does not disperse because the gang's leader decides to leave. If Alex wants to dismantle the Moors, he must work with all of the gang members.

Chapter Twenty Two

Vocabulary

gratification – satisfaction

obscurely – imperceptibly, in a way that is difficult to detect

wrathful – intensely angry

1. Alex insists that the Moors wear jeans, t-shirts and sneakers to the training camp. Why do you think he does this?

Answers will vary.

Example: One answer is that jeans and sneakers is the appropriate dress for playing ball. Another possibility is that Alex wants Rufus and the others to see that the way the Gassers dress is inappropriate on the field. When the Gassers take off their coats so they can play, Rufus can see that the Gassers are not powerful. They are just a group of thin boys.

Chapter Twenty Three

Vocabulary

perplexed – full of doubt or uncertainty; puzzled

coalesced – to unite or merge into a single body, group, or mass

1. How does Mrs. Henry behave when Rufus tells her Ernie is going to help organize some neighborhood football teams? Why do you think she does this?

She changes the subject and then leaves the room.

Answers will vary.

Example: She does not want to answer any questions about Ernie, because she made up the whole story about her relationship with him.

2. In what way is Willie's behavior suspicious?

Willie knows that Simon is planning to "get square" with Rufus at the rally. (Pg. 146) Willie also knows that the Gassers are wearing striped shirts and pants like football referees wear. Rufus realizes that Willis must be associating with the Gassers because he knows so much about them. It is possible, that because of his association with the Gassers, Willie will be disloyal to the Moors.

3. The police, Alex, and Ernie are all upset with Simon for exposing Rufus' private scrapbook to the other boys. How do you think the other Moors will react to Simon's prank? What do you think Rufus might do to maintain his role as leader of the gang?

Answers will vary.

Example: Rufus believes the scrapbook will hurt his status as the leader of the Moors. If he wants to maintain his leadership of the Moors, Rufus must strike back against Simon.

4. Alone in the car with Ernie and Alex, Rufus could have mentioned Leesburg to Ernie to try to establish that Ernie is his real father. Why do you suppose he decides not to do this?

Answers will vary.

Example: Rufus knows that Ernie is not his real father. Another possible answer is that Rufus does not think Ernie or Alex will believe him.

Chapter Twenty Four

Vocabulary

stropped – to sharpen on a strop or a thick leather band used for putting a fine edge on razors

1. Critics believe this novel is a coming of age story for Rufus. What pivotal experience changes his view of the world and helps him to understand the world in adult terms? Describe the incident and how Rufus is changed by it.

Simon gives Rufus' private scrapbook to Ernie Brown revealing to Ernie Rufus' fantasy of being his son. From this experience, Rufus understands that Ernie is not going to rescue him from his life. Rufus must make it on his own.

2. Why does Rufus want to keep Willie in his gang? What must Willie do to regain his place in the Moors? To what extent are you disappointed or surprised by Rufus' behavior in this chapter?

If he loses members of his gang to the Gassers, then he also loses some of his power and status. Rufus wants Willie to get a rifle.

Answers will vary.

Example: The reader knows that a gun will increase the fighting and increase Rufus' chances of getting into trouble with the police. It is disappointing to see him going in this direction.

3. To what extent is Alex making progress in his efforts to break up the Moors?

Alex is holding meetings with the parents of the gang members. He has their attention and their confidence.

Chapter Twenty Five

1. What does Rufus plan to do with the gun?

He is going to use it to shoot holes in Simon's car.

Chapter Twenty Six

Vocabulary

cajoled – coaxed with flattery and insincere talk

diversionary – serving to distract the enemy from the main point of attack

exaltation – a feeling of great joy, pride, power, rapture

scrimmage line – in football a play that begins with the snap from the center, with both teams positioned on the line of scrimmage

1. Describe Rufus' "Mystery Sniper Routine".

Before Rufus shoots the gun, the other gang members will create a diversionary disturbance to confuse the police.

2. How does Rufus feel when Willie tells him the rifle has been stolen?

He is relieved.

3. Find a passage in this chapter illustrating that Rufus is beginning to view the world in adult terms.

Answers will vary.

Example:

He seemed to hear Alex's mellow laughter nearby, as though he were leaning against the fence, enjoying the Moors' predicament.

Fight Two grows out of Fight One, he had said. Fight Three grows out of Fight Two – (Pg. 163)

4. Why does Rufus dislike having girls hanging around?

Their feelings are easily hurt and they can cause fights by insisting the boys fight to rectify any wrongs they might suffer.

5. Why do the girls want to have a graduation dance?

The girls are dropouts who are jealous of their non-dropout friends who are graduating.

6. For what reason(s) does Rufus decide he wants to have a dance?

Rufus knows that the Gassers will try to crash the dance. He is hoping to break the record for the “most Gassers laid out in one night.” (Pg. 168)

Chapter Twenty Seven

Vocabulary

refining – to free from imperfection

sardonic – disdainfully or bitterly sneering, ironic, or sarcastic

scrutinizing – looking at very carefully, examining closely

1. Alex suspects that Rufus wants to give the dance as a “trap to square with Simon Jones.” (Pg. 170) To what extent is Alex correct?

Alex is correct that Rufus wants Simon to wreck the dance, but not because Rufus plans to start trouble with Simon. Rufus knows there will be cops at the dance, so when Simon starts a fight, he will be arrested and put away.

2. Why do you think Alex agrees to sponsor the dance?

Answers will vary.

Example: Planning a dance is a good activity for the gang. It is better than planning a fight or a raid.

Chapter Twenty Eight

Vocabulary

aperture – an opening; hole; gap

immersion – plunging or dropping into a liquid

1. After making the complex arrangements for the dance, Rufus stops by Judy’s apartment. Why does he feel guilty when she talks about how wonderful the dance will be?

Rufus knows that Judy is looking forward to the dance because she has never had the opportunity to attend a formal dance. She does not know that he expects, and hopes, the Gassers will start a fight and ruin the evening. When Rufus leaves her apartment, he feels guilty for deceiving Judy and for arranging a dance that he knows will be spoiled.

Chapter Twenty Nine

Vocabulary

haughtily – having or showing great pride in oneself and disdain, contempt, or scorn for others;
proud; arrogant

incubating – developing, taking form

ominous – having the character of an evil omen; threatening; sinister

unobtrusively – without calling attention to oneself

1. Rufus plans this dance to trap Simon. Why then, does he ask Sergeant Wenzle to station somebody downstairs to keep the Gassers out of the dance?

Rufus begins to care about the success of the dance, so he no longer wants to see it ruined by the Gassers.

2. At the end of this chapter, Rufus returns from the dance floor to discover that Simon and another couple have taken over his table. What do you think Rufus should do about this situation? What do you think he is going to do?

Answers will vary.

Example: Rufus can not let Simon stay at the table. He must find a way to remove him without starting a fight. He should ask Alex for help.

Chapter Thirty

Vocabulary

anemic – lacking vigor, lifeless

indignantly – angrily due to unjust treatment

petulantly – insolently, impatiently due to a petty annoyance

surreptitiously – secretly, stealthily

1. Why does Rufus begin to suspect that Simon and the other Gassers have a plan to disrupt the dance?

The girls who came with the Gassers all leave the dance early, and the gang members cluster around the doorway.

2. What steps does Rufus take to save the dance once he realizes the Gassers have planted a smoke bomb in the ventilation system?

First, Rufus tells Whitey to ask the band leader to make an announcement so the guests do not panic. Then he cautions the girls to remain at the table, because if there is a panic, the stairways will be dangerous. Finally, Rufus goes to Alex for help.

3. Consider Rufus' behavior at the dance when he realizes the Gassers have planted a smoke bomb. In what ways has his attitude about how to deal with them changed since the beginning of the story? In what ways does his altered behavior help to illustrate that this is a coming of age story for Rufus?

Instead of immediately fighting the Gassers, Rufus goes to Alex for help. At the beginning of the story, Rufus believes he must belong to a gang for protection. Alex tries to tell him that there is another way. He suggests that Rufus let him, and the authorities, deal with Simon. Now that Rufus wants the party to be a success, he is listening to Alex's advice. Rufus is able to see the wisdom in Alex's words.

Chapter Thirty One

1. Are you satisfied with the ending of this story? Why or why not? Do you think Rufus will go to the continuation school and be successful there?

Answers will vary.

2. This novel was written in 1965. Based on what you have seen on television, read in newspapers, or have experienced in life discuss the extent to which this story is still relevant today. Consider the following questions:

Do cities still have a problem with gangs?

Have the reasons for joining a gang changed?

Are gangs more or less dangerous today than they were in 1965?

Has society developed any new strategies for dealing with gangs?

Answers will vary.

3. Some critics believe that this story offers the following solutions to the gang problems in cities. Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with each proposed solution. Be sure to include any suggestions of your own.
 - The destructive behavior of gangs can be redirected into something positive. For example, the Moors plan a dance instead of planning a raid on the Gassers.
 - Young people who need protection should trust the authorities enough to ask them for help. In the story Rufus asks Alex for help to keep the Gassers from ruining the dance.
 - Young men need a strong father figure so they can develop pride and self-respect. Rufus does not have a good father figure in his life, so he pretends Ernie is his father.

Durango Street

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Chapter One

Vocabulary

commence – begin, start

conversed – talked

gambit – an opening maneuver, action, or remark intended to gain an advantage or offer an opinion

perplexed – full of doubt or uncertainty; puzzled

pronounced – unmistakable; clearly marked

skeptically – unconvinced, with doubt

vessel – a person thought of as being the receiver or repository of some spirit or influence

1. Briefly describe Mr. Rubio and Rufus, and discuss Rufus' relationship with Mr. Rubino.
2. Who is Baby Gibson? What secret about Rufus does Baby Gibson reveal to Mr. Rubio?
3. List two things Rufus dislikes about Pine Valley Honor Camp.
4. What evidence is there in this chapter that Rufus is not happy about his mother's decision to move?
5. What two qualities does Rufus possess which, in the opinion of Mr. Rubio, makes Rufus a "sound vessel"?
6. What good news does Mr. Rubio have for Rufus?

Chapter Two

Vocabulary

laceration – jagged tear or wound

quaked – shuddered or shivered

roust – to drive out, to stir up

sauntered –leisurely and aimlessly walked; strolled

1. Find a simile in this chapter describing how Rufus feels about moving into a new neighborhood.
2. Dreams VS reality is one of the thematic concepts in this story. Find an example of one of Rufus' dreams in this chapter.
3. What does Rufus like about Mr. Travers?
4. One of the themes of this story is to explore the nature of gangs and to understand why boys join gangs. What warning does Mr. Travers give to Rufus regarding gangs? For what reasons does Mr. Travers believe young people join gangs?
5. Why does Rufus believe many young people join gangs?
6. What evidence is there in this chapter that should Rufus decide to join a gang, Mr. Travers will be unable to stop him?

Chapter Three

Vocabulary

antiquity – the quality of being ancient or old

arbor – a place shaded by trees or shrubs

festooned – adorned

pensive – thinking deeply or seriously, often of sad or melancholy things

scrutinized – looked at very carefully; examined closely

vestibule – a small entrance hall or room either to a building or to a larger room

1. Find an example of personification in this chapter.
2. In the following passage, the author describes the area known as the “Flats.”

“Mr. Travers turned into a side street in the shadow of a booming freeway that formed a solid boundary to the Flats on the east. Durango Street passed beneath the freeway and ascended a hill. But the whole Flats area was jammed between the concrete riverbed on the west and the curving gray arm of the freeway on the east.” (Pg. 20)

What mood do you think the author is conveying about Durango Street and the Flats in the above passage?

3. Describe Janet, Curtis, and Mrs. Henry. How does each one feel about seeing Rufus again? How does Rufus feel about being home?
4. What kind of job does Mr. Travers find for Rufus? How does Rufus feel about the job? What plans does he have for his own future?
5. What evidence is there that Mrs. Henry is not telling Rufus the truth about her relationship with Ernie Brown? What thematic concept does her behavior illustrate?

Chapter Four

Vocabulary

balustrade – a railing on stairs

brandishing – waving, exhibiting in a menacing, challenging way

ramrodding – directing, telling others what to do in an unyielding way

1. What does Rufus miss about the work camp?
2. Briefly relate the dream Rufus has about Ernie Brown. What does the dream reveal to the reader about Rufus' life and his needs now that he is back home?
3. What advice does Rufus give to Curtis about gangs? Why is this advice ironic? How does Rufus plan to protect Curtis from the neighborhood gangs?
4. What is “gate” money? What does Rufus do with his money?

Chapter Five

Vocabulary

scrutiny – close examination

somber – earnest and solemn; grave

1. Why does Rufus refuse to go home after the gang of boys throw a bag of bottles at him?
What future event does his behavior foreshadow?
2. For what reasons is Rufus angry with Janet for talking to the police?
3. What is the meaning of the following underlined slang phrases from the story?
 - ‘Cause if you talk, it’s you the wagon’s carting off next time. (Pg. 38)
 - A block west, the small white taco stand Rufus had seen that afternoon was getting a big play. (Pg. 38)

Chapter Six

Vocabulary

brindled – having a gray or tawny coat streaked or spotted with a darker color

meticulous – extremely or excessively careful about details

1. What does it mean to have “Gassed” hair?
2. Why does Rufus linger in Chang’s Grocery?
3. For what reasons does Rufus send Janet home alone?
4. Why does Rufus think he might have a chance against the Gassers?

Chapter Seven

1. One of the themes in this novel is that Rufus sometimes has trouble distinguishing reality from his dreams. In the following passage, Rufus imagines that he sees Big Ernie in the alley.

“Against the bricks stood an enormous man, black from head to foot and at least seven feet tall! It was like a miracle. Big Ernie had come up through the pavement to save him. Standing there, he seemed to say: *Like the way you handle yourself in a scrap, Rufus –*” (Pg. 46)

In what way does this imaginary Ernie help Rufus?

2. In what ways does Rufus try to avoid problems with the Gassers? Why is he unsuccessful?
3. At the end of this chapter, Mrs. Henry tells Rufus that she was only sixteen when she was married to Ernie Brown. She also tells him to keep the information about their relationship to himself because no one would believe it. Why do you think Rufus asks her if she “got married again right away”? (Pg. 50)
4. In your opinion, is Mrs. Henry telling her son the truth about her past relationship with Ernie Brown? If not, why do you think she might make up such a story?

Chapter Eight

Vocabulary

chagrined – a feeling of embarrassment and annoyance because one has failed or been disappointed

dilapidated – fallen to pieces or into disrepair, broken down; shabby and neglected

impassive – not feeling or showing emotion; calm

laths – thin, narrow strips of wood used in lattices

negligent – careless, lax, inattentive or indifferent

perceptibly – noticeably, but barely

queried – questioned, inquired

ransacking – searching thoroughly; ruining

somber – dark and gloomy or dull

Tyrolean hat – a man's soft felt hat with a somewhat conical crown that is flat and creased at the top, a narrow brim partially turned up, usually a feather for decoration

1. Describe Baby Gibson. In what ways do Baby and Rufus help each other while they are at the detention camp?
2. What does Mr. Wells do to make Rufus angry? How does Rufus retaliate?
3. Describe Richard Motley (Bantu), Whitey, Everett, and Willie Clanton. How does each react to Rufus when Baby introduces Rufus to them?
4. Why is Bantu reluctant to let Rufus into the gang? How does Rufus maneuver Bantu into agreeing?

Chapter Nine

Vocabulary

acridness – bitterness, sharpness of taste

intangible – that which cannot be touched, defined, formulated or grasped

pummeled – beaten with repeated blows of the fist

reverberated – echoed

scorning – disliking, having contempt for

1. Describe Marshall Smith.
2. Why is Bantu wearing sunglasses at night? Why does Rufus think he is stupid to be wearing them?
3. The color red has been used several times throughout this and previous chapters. For example:

“Up in the pine forest, a red slash of earth revealed where the inmates of the honor camp were building a fire road.” (Pg. 9)

“In Rufus’s mind a red light flashed beside the tracks. Last week, too, Mr. Rubio had mentioned football. And both times he had talked about halfbacks!” (Pg. 11)

“Looking at the others, he saw that all of them had the same orange-red hair. “Gassed” was the name for it.” (Pg. 40)

“You got to get yourself a can of red spray paint and go up to Cathedral Division police station. And you writes on the wall by the front door, ‘Moors is boss.’ You still with us, Henry?” (Pg. 67)

Based on the above excerpts, what do you think the color red might represent or symbolize in the story?
4. In what sense is it ironic that Henry tells Rufus, “You gets beat’ into this gang, and you gets beat’ out”? (Pg. 68)

5. Why does Baby decide not to participate when the Moors beat Rufus into the gang?
6. At the end of this chapter, the police break up the gang initiation. Bantu tells everyone to run, but the Moors are trapped in the enclosed playground. Rufus thinks to himself,

They might as well have thrown away the key the first time they jailed me, he thought. You were licked if you got in trouble, licked if you tried to stay out. How else could you play their game?

Rufus swayed there, watching the police line the boys up facing the wall. "What do we do now?" Baby asked.

Rufus shook off his hand. "Do like the man said. Face the wall. Maybe that's where the answers are..." (Pg. 70)

What "answers" is Rufus referring to in the above passage?

7. Mr. Travers is frustrated by Rufus and other gang members in his care. Who does he call for help? If you could give Mr. Travers some advice on how to deal with Rufus, what might you tell him?
8. If you could give Rufus some advice, what might you say to him?

Chapter Ten

Vocabulary

disconsolately – inconsolably, dejectedly

gravitation – the act or process of moving toward as if in accordance with the force of gravity

lithe – bending easily; flexible; supple

traversed – passed, moved, or extended over

1. Describe Alex Robbins. What role do you think he will have in Rufus' life?
2. For what reasons does Starkey think Idell Southworth is a lost cause?
3. According to Robbins, what are the root causes for Idell's decision to join the Moors? What does he think he can do to help Idell?
4. What evidence is there in this chapter that Starkey, even though he would like to help Idell, has given up on him?
5. Describe Headshrinker. What role does he play in the Moors gang?

6. Why do you suppose Rufus lets some gravel fall out of his fist each time Robbins talks?
7. For what reasons does Rufus agree to meet Robbins at Walnut Street?
8. One of the thematic concepts in this novel is to understand the qualities of a good leader. What evidence is there in this chapter that Rufus has leadership qualities?
9. One of the reasons an author uses foreshadowing is to keep the reader's interest by building suspense. Find an example of foreshadowing in this chapter which builds suspense, so that the reader wants to continue reading the next chapter.

Chapter Eleven

Vocabulary

escapade – a reckless adventure or prank

1. Find an incident in this chapter illustrating the thematic concept of dreams VS reality.
2. How does Mrs. Henry react to Alex Robbins' presence in Rufus' life? To what extent are you surprised by her attitude?
3. Why does Rufus want the boys to wear dark glasses? Describe his plan to handle Alex Robbins.

Chapter Twelve

Vocabulary

semaphoring – to signal using a series of flags, one held in each hand, the letters of the alphabet are represented by the various positions of the arms

1. Robbins tells the Moors that they are all part of a gang because they are scared. The Moors, except for Rufus, become outraged and start to leave the room. Why do you suppose Rufus remains?
2. Why does Rufus nominate Leeroy for president of the new club? How does Idell feel about the election?
3. Why do you think Alex suggests a field trip to the Marauders' training camp? To what extent do you think he is successful at forming a relationship with the Moors?

Chapter Thirteen

Vocabulary

scrutinized – looked at very carefully, closely examined

1. In your opinion, is Mrs. Henry telling Rufus the truth about his father when she tells him his father is Ernie Brown? What reasons might she have to make up the story?

Chapter Fourteen

Vocabulary

befuddled – confused

dubiously – doubtfully

feigning – pretending

1. Why does Rufus throw down his knife during the fight with Bantu?
2. How do the other gang members react when Rufus is beating Bantu?
3. Why do you suppose Rufus is able to defeat Bantu, even though Bantu has a knife?

Chapter Fifteen

Vocabulary

forge – to form, shape, produce

serum – the clear, yellowish fluid of the blood which separates from a blood clot after coagulation and shrinkage

1. How do guys outgrow gangs?
2. Rufus believes that “you [the gang] *had* to fight to stay alive.” (Pg. 103) In what sense is his philosophy ironic?
3. As the new leader of the Moors, Rufus makes plans to take control over the Flats. The gang understands that these plans will include fighting. Describe Rufus’ strategy to keep his gang members from getting arrested after each fight.

Chapter Sixteen

Vocabulary

nettled – irritated, annoyed

1. What is Rufus’ Big Lawn Plan?
2. How do the Bloods and the Aztecs respond to Rufus’ plan?

Chapter Seventeen

Vocabulary

clannish – tending to associate closely with one's own group and to avoid others

delving – searching for, investigating

dolorous - very sorrowful or sad; mournful

1. Why does Rufus refer to himself as the Black Panther? Hint: Review Chapter Fifteen.

2. The following excerpt from this chapter describes Alex. In what way does the metaphor in this description help the reader to understand that Alex is a man that Rufus may one day admire and respect?

Alex walked toward him, tall and narrow-hipped. His hands were huge, the hands of a pass-catching end. He still maintained that irritating calmness, but the cop in him was close to the surface now. (Pg. 112)

3. Why does Rufus want to go to war with Simon? What does Alex say to try to stop the fight?

4. Discuss whether or not you think Rufus should listen to Alex's advice on how to handle Simon.

Chapter Eighteen

Vocabulary

mayhem – any deliberate destruction or violence

precariously – uncertainly, insecurely

1. To what extent does Rufus trust his gang to execute the raid against Simon?
2. It is reasonable for the reader to expect that gang members, such as Rufus, would speak using slang words and phrases. However, most of Rufus' dialogue in this novel is in normal English. Occasionally the author interjects some slang words to add interest and realism to the story. For example, in Chapter Fifteen Idell tells Rufus that "I swing with you now. All the way." (Pg. 104) Idell is using a slang phrase, "swing with you," to let Rufus know that he accepts Rufus as the new leader and he will follow Rufus' orders.

Find two examples of slang in this chapter. Indicate the meaning of each slang word or phrase you select.

Chapter Nineteen

Vocabulary

remorselessly – mercilessly, ruthlessly, cruelly

1. In short logical sentences, list the steps of Rufus' battle plan. The first two sentences are done for you as an example.

First, Rufus punches Simon causing Simon and his gang to chase Rufus and Whitey as they drive away.

Next, Rufus and Whitey get out of the car and lead Simon's gang to a stretched out tripping wire.

2. What does Rufus tell his gang members to do if the police question them?

Chapter Twenty

Vocabulary

adulation – excessive admiration

incredulous – unwilling or unable to believe; doubting; skeptical

ruminated – turned something over in the mind, meditated on

1. Why is Rufus upset with the Moors after the raid? What happens during the police questioning that helps to establish Rufus as a great leader?
2. Starkey and Robbins are not happy with Rufus for leading the Moors in the raid, but Robbins perceives something hopeful in Rufus' behavior. What does he find encouraging about Rufus' actions?
3. What is Alex's plan to try to prevent another fight between the Gassers and the Moors? Why is another fight especially dangerous for Rufus?

Chapter Twenty One

Vocabulary

castigate – punish or rebuke severely

chamois – a soft piece of leather used as a polishing cloth

voraciously – greedily, with great desire, insatiably

1. What evidence is there in this chapter that Rufus is in control of the Moors?
2. Alex wants to dismantle the Moors. Rufus is the clear leader of the Moors. If Alex is able to convince Rufus to leave the gang, do you think the others will follow? Why or why not?

Chapter Twenty Two

Vocabulary

gratification – satisfaction

obscurely – imperceptibly, in a way that is difficult to detect

wrathful – intensely angry

1. Alex insists that the Moors wear jeans, t-shirts and sneakers to the training camp. Why do you think he does this?

Chapter Twenty Three

Vocabulary

perplexed – full of doubt or uncertainty; puzzled

coalesced – to unite or merge into a single body, group, or mass

1. How does Mrs. Henry behave when Rufus tells her Ernie is going to help organize some neighborhood football teams? Why do you think she does this?
2. In what way is Willie's behavior suspicious?
3. The police, Alex, and Ernie are all upset with Simon for exposing Rufus' private scrapbook to the other boys. How do you think the other Moors will react to Simon's prank? What do you think Rufus might do to maintain his role as leader of the gang?
4. Alone in the car with Ernie and Alex, Rufus could have mentioned Leesburg to Ernie to try to establish that Ernie is his real father. Why do you suppose he decides not to do this?

Chapter Twenty Four

Vocabulary

stropped – to sharpen on a strop or a thick leather band used for putting a fine edge on razors

1. Critics believe this novel is a coming of age story for Rufus. What pivotal experience changes his view of the world and helps him to understand the world in adult terms? Describe the incident and how Rufus is changed by it.

2. Why does Rufus want to keep Willie in his gang? What must Willie do to regain his place in the Moors? To what extent are you disappointed or surprised by Rufus' behavior in this chapter?

3. To what extent is Alex making progress in his efforts to break up the Moors?

Chapter Twenty Five

1. What does Rufus plan to do with the gun?

Chapter Twenty Six

Vocabulary

cajoled – coaxed with flattery and insincere talk

diversionary – serving to distract the enemy from the main point of attack

exaltation – a feeling of great joy, pride, power, rapture

scrimmage line – in football a play that begins with the snap from the center, with both teams positioned on the line of scrimmage

1. Describe Rufus' "Mystery Sniper Routine".
2. How does Rufus feel when Willie tells him the rifle has been stolen?
3. Find a passage in this chapter illustrating that Rufus is beginning to view the world in adult terms.
4. Why does Rufus dislike having girls hanging around?
5. Why do the girls want to have a graduation dance?
6. For what reason(s) does Rufus decide he wants to have a dance?

Chapter Twenty Seven

Vocabulary

refining – to free from imperfection

sardonic – disdainfully or bitterly sneering, ironic, or sarcastic

scrutinizing – looking at very carefully, examining closely

1. Alex suspects that Rufus wants to give the dance as a “trap to square with Simon Jones.” (Pg. 170) To what extent is Alex correct?
2. Why do you think Alex agrees to sponsor the dance?

Chapter Twenty Eight

Vocabulary

aperture – an opening; hole; gap

immersion – plunging or dropping into a liquid

1. After making the complex arrangements for the dance, Rufus stops by Judy’s apartment. Why does he feel guilty when she talks about how wonderful the dance will be?

Chapter Twenty Nine

Vocabulary

haughtily – having or showing great pride in oneself and disdain, contempt, or scorn for others;
proud; arrogant

incubating – developing, taking form

ominous – having the character of an evil omen; threatening; sinister

unobtrusively – without calling attention to oneself

1. Rufus plans this dance to trap Simon. Why then, does he ask Sergeant Wenzle to station somebody downstairs to keep the Gassers out of the dance?
2. At the end of this chapter, Rufus returns from the dance floor to discover that Simon and another couple have taken over his table. What do you think Rufus should do about this situation? What do you think he is going to do?

Chapter Thirty

Vocabulary

anemic – lacking vigor, lifeless

indignantly – angrily due to unjust treatment

petulantly – insolently, impatiently due to a petty annoyance

surreptitiously – secretly, stealthily

1. Why does Rufus begin to suspect that Simon and the other Gassers have a plan to disrupt the dance?
2. What steps does Rufus take to save the dance once he realizes the Gassers have planted a smoke bomb in the ventilation system?
3. Consider Rufus' behavior at the dance when he realizes the Gassers have planted a smoke bomb. In what ways has his attitude about how to deal with them changed since the beginning of the story? In what ways does his altered behavior help to illustrate that this is a coming of age story for Rufus?

Chapter Thirty One

1. Are you satisfied with the ending of this story? Why or why not? Do you think Rufus will go to the continuation school and be successful there?

2. This novel was written in 1965. Based on what you have seen on television, read in newspapers, or have experienced in life discuss the extent to which this story is still relevant today. Consider the following questions:

Do cities still have a problem with gangs?

Have the reasons for joining a gang changed?

Are gangs more or less dangerous today than they were in 1965?

Has society developed any new strategies for dealing with gangs?

3. Some critics believe that this story offers the following solutions to the gang problems in cities. Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with each proposed solution. Be sure to include any suggestions of your own.
 - The destructive behavior of gangs can be redirected into something positive. For example, the Moors plan a dance instead of planning a raid on the Gassers.
 - Young people who need protection should trust the authorities enough to ask them for help. In the story Rufus asks Alex for help to keep the Gassers from ruining the dance.
 - Young men need a strong father figure so they can develop pride and self-respect. Rufus does not have a good father figure in his life, so he pretends Ernie is his father.

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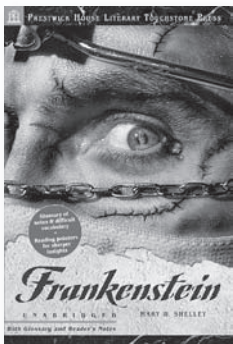
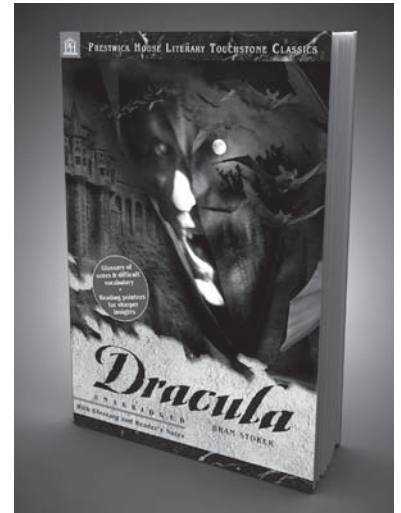
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P.O. Box 658
Clayton, DE 19938

Bill To: ☐ Home ☐ School

School:
Name:
Address:
City, State, Zip:
Phone: _____ Email: _____

Ship To: ☐ Home ☐ School

School:
Name:
Address:
City, State, Zip:
Phone: _____ Email: _____

ITEM NO	TITLE	QUANTITY	X	PRICE	=	TOTAL

Method of Payment (Choose one)

☐ Check or Money Order Enclosed

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover Card ☐ American Express

☐ Purchase Order Enclosed

We accept purchase orders and authorized orders charged to institutions. Personal orders not on a credit card must be accompanied by a check.

Signature _____

Telephone # _____

Exp. Date _____

Credit Card #

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Because charges for air delivery are based on weight and distance, heavy packages can be expensive to ship air freight. Typographic and photographic errors are subject to revision. Prestwick House is the sole source of all proprietary materials listed in this catalogue. Please be sure to include a street address. FedEx ground/UPS will not deliver to a P.O. Box.

Subtotal \$ _____

Shipping 12% S&H (\$6.00 minimum) \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Shipping & Handling

For orders of \$50.00 or less, please add \$6.00 for shipping and handling charges. For orders from \$50.01 to \$799.99 add 12%. For orders of \$800.00 and more, add 10%.

Delivery Service

Most orders are shipped FedEx and you can expect delivery within 7-10 working days. Items in stock are usually shipped within one working day of receiving your order.

Expedited Delivery

for expedited delivery ask about the following options:

- Overnight Air
- 2nd day air
- 3 Day Select