



Bob

WENDY MASS AND REBECCA STEAD

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Fiction

RECOMMENDED READING AGE: 8+

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CURRICULUM GUIDE

The following teaching guide has been designed to embrace shared curriculum values. Students are encouraged to communicate their understanding of a text through speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and representing.

The learning activities aim to encourage students to think critically, creatively and independently, to reflect on their learning, and connect it to audience, purpose and context. They aim to encompass a range of forms and include a focus on language, literature and literacy. Where appropriate, they include the integration of ICT and life skills.

SYNOPSIS

It's been five years since ten-year-old Livy has visited her grandmother in Australia. Livy has the feeling that there is something important that she has forgotten about her grandmother's house. Then she finds Bob, a short greenish creature dressed in a chicken suit, in her closet. She learns that he has been waiting five years for her return because she promised to help him find out who he is and where he came from. Livy and Bob work to piece together their memories of her previous visit so that they can unravel the mystery of Bob's identity and get him home.

Wendy Mass and Rebecca Stead co-wrote this magical story about the power of friendship and the importance of believing in yourself.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Wendy Mass is the New York Times bestselling author of twenty-two novels for young readers including *The Candymakers*. Wendy lives in New Jersey.

Rebecca Stead is the author of the children's novels *First Light* and the Newbery Medal winner *When You Reach Me*. She lives in New York with her husband and two children.

USING BOB IN THE CLASSROOM

Bob can be used in many ways in your classroom. Students can read it in literature circles, with a partner or independently. Reading aloud the first chapter is an effective way to introduce this book to your class.

Feel free to adapt these questions and activities to meet the needs of your students. You know them best!

BEFORE READING

Introduce the book *Bob* to students by giving them a brief overview of the story and explaining that Livy and Bob have to solve the mystery of Bob's identity and where he came from. Tell students that while they are reading, they may have questions about what is happening in the story. Model this for them by reading aloud the first few pages of the book and sharing a question you have. Have students create a chart with two columns for questions and answers. Tell them to write their questions down as they are reading and to record any answers they find. They should cite the page numbers in both columns. Explain that they will revisit this chart after they finish reading.

THE GAME OF CHESS

There are many references to the game of chess in *Bob*. Give students a short handout with the rules of chess



and the moves each piece makes. If possible, provide a chessboard with the pieces for them to see. Encourage students who are familiar with the game to explain it to the class.

QUESTIONS

Encourage students to cite specific evidence from the story in their discussions.

1. What do we learn about Livy in Chapter One? Why is she upset when she's unable to remember her first visit to her grandmother's house?
2. What do we learn about Bob in Chapter Two? How were the five years they were apart different for him than they were for Livy?
3. Why do you think Bob is so upset that Livy can't remember his name? Why is this so important to him?
4. How does Livy feel about her mother leaving her with her grandmother for a few days? Why does this make her want to find Bob's home even more?
5. What clues do Livy and Bob find in their search for Bob's home?
6. Why does Livy think Bob is magic? How does she think his magic protects him?
7. Bob tells Livy that in chess, the pawn is the key to the game. Who could be a pawn in this story?
8. Why is finding out his identity so important to Bob?
9. How do the searches for Danny and the book of folktales lead to the same place?
10. What do you think caused the drought? What ends it?
11. Memories come and go for Livy and Bob. What helps Livy to remember her times with Bob? What does Bob need in order to remember his past?
12. Why does Bob's mom take the pawn away from Livy? Why does Bob return it to her?
13. What does Bob mean when he talks about "Old Livy" and "New Livy?" What does he learn about her and all people at the end?

AFTER READING

CLOSE READING

Have students meet with a partner to share their question/answer charts. Tell them to take turns sharing their questions and answers, referring to the corresponding places in the text.

MEMORY AND IDENTITY

When Bob is away from his well, he loses all memories of his home and identity. When Livy doesn't have the pawn, she loses her memories of Bob and their time together. Have students think about themselves and how their past experiences and memories contribute to who they are. Share a few examples of "I Am From" poems with students and give them a template for

them to write their own poems based on their personal experiences and memories. Provide time for students to read their poems to their classmates and display them in the classroom.

MY PERSPECTIVE, YOUR PERSPECTIVE

Explain to students that the authors wrote this book alternating between Livy's and Bob's perspectives and point out that their perspectives often differ, based on their experiences. Have students share a few examples of when Livy and Bob look at things differently and how their friendship grows when they begin to consider the other's point of view.

Have students generate a list of things kids their age like to do, such as playing a particular sport, taking dance lessons, reading, playing computer games, doing crafts, etc. Write these activities on index cards. Divide students into groups of two and give each set of partners a card with an activity on it. Have the partners take turns interviewing each other, asking questions and taking notes about how their partner feels about this activity and why. Provide time for students to present their partner's point of view to the class.

CENTRAL THEMES

Have the class generate a list of themes that are explored in *Bob*. Ask students to determine what they feel the central theme of the book is and to write a summary of the text that shows how this theme is conveyed through the plot, and through how the characters interact and respond to challenges.

CHESS AS A METAPHOR FOR LIFE

Have students find the references to chess and pawns in the story and mark them with sticky notes. Ask students to think about what the game of chess symbolises in the story. Then have them write brief essays that explain how the pawn and chess are used to symbolise what is happening to Bob and Livy in the story. They should cite evidence from the book to support their interpretations. Provide time for students to share these essays with the class.