

# **A Teaching Unit For Maniac Magee**

*Jerry Spinelli*



## **ELA Core Plans**

Teacher-Written Standards-Based Lesson Plans

# Teaching Unit

## *Maniac Magee*

Jerry Spinelli



**ELA Core Plans**  
Teacher-Written Standards-Based Lesson Plans

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ELA Core Plans

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***Maniac Magee Teaching Unit***  
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# Maniac Magee

## Pre-reading Activities

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Anticipation Guide

Read each of the following statements. Place a *T* beside the statements that you think are true and a *F* beside statements that you think are false.

It is okay for families of one race to "take in" a child from another race. \_\_\_\_\_

You should always ignore bullies. \_\_\_\_\_

Prejudices are not a big deal. \_\_\_\_\_

A kid cannot survive without a family. \_\_\_\_\_

Enemies can become friends. \_\_\_\_\_

### Writing Response

In *Maniac Magee*, one person lives alone outdoors. Think about what it would be like to be homeless and on your own without anyone to care for you. What would you need to survive? What traits do you have that may help you survive or not survive? Complete the following chart with things that you would need to live on your own and a list of words that describe your personality. Then, write a paragraph telling whether or not you think you could make it.

Things I would need	My personality traits

Paragraph

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### Chapter Titles for *Maniac Magee*

Jerry Spinelli does not include chapter titles in this novel. After you read a chapter, create a title for it using the following chart.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter	Title
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
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<b>44</b>	
<b>45</b>	
<b>46</b>	

# Maniac Magee

Chapters 1 & 2

Name \_\_\_\_\_

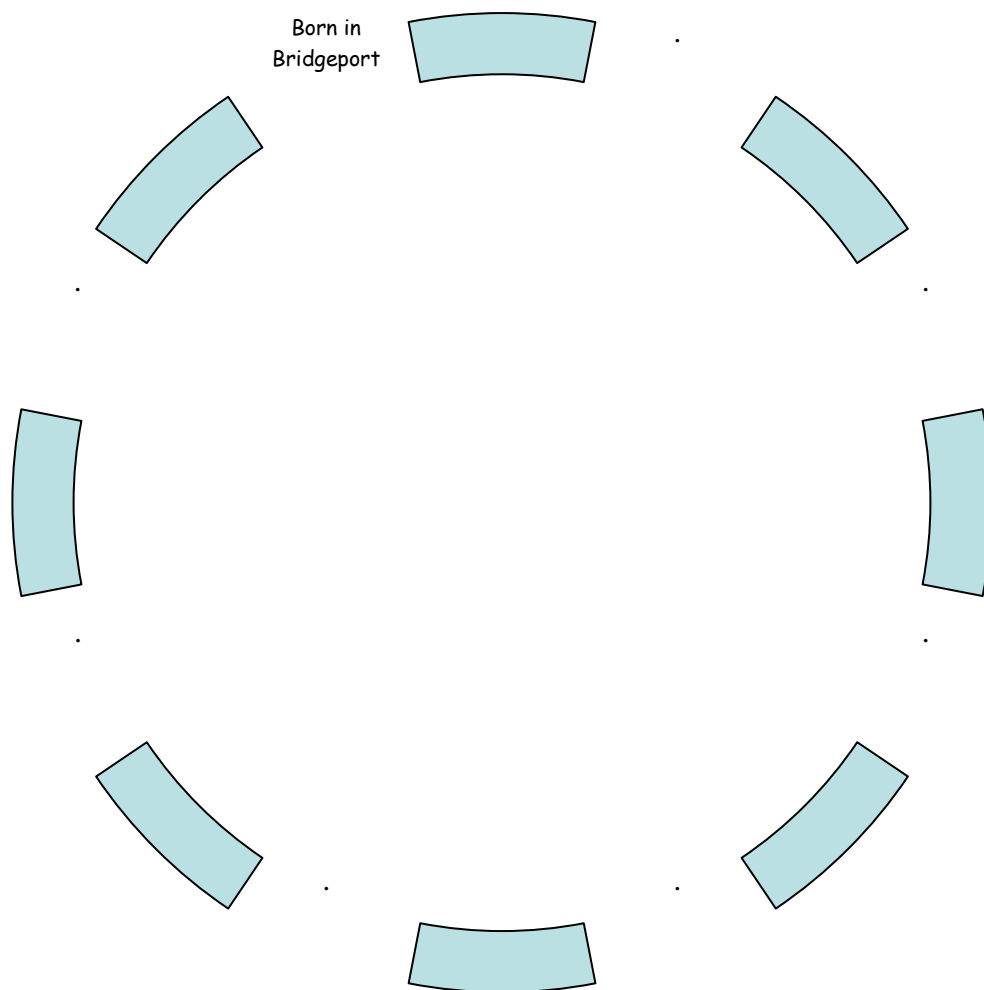
Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Comprehension

1. What happened to Maniac Magee's parents?
2. What is Maniac Magee's real name?
3. Who did Maniac Magee go live with after he became an orphan?
4. What was Maniac Magee screaming to his aunt and uncle during the spring musical?
5. Where did Maniac Magee go when he left Hollidaysburg?

## Map it Out

Use the following graphic organizer to map out the events of Maniac Magee's childhood.



## Predict

*Never again to return to the house of the two toasters. Never again to return to school.*  
Where do you think Maniac Magee is going?

# Maniac Magee

## Chapter 3

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Comprehension

1. Who was the first person to stop and talk to Maniac Magee in Two Mills?
2. What did this person have with her?
3. Why does this person take this with her everyday?
4. What does Jeffery ask for at the end of this chapter?

### Point of View

The point of view of a story makes all the difference in the world. If a character is telling the story, the first person point of view is used. If none of the characters are telling the story, and an unseen narrator is telling it, the third person point of view is being used. If the narrator focuses on only one character, the limited third person point of view is used. If the narrator allows the reader to know thoughts and feelings of more than one character, the third person omniscient point of view is used.

What point of view is used in *Maniac Magee*? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you know this point of view is used?

\_\_\_\_\_

If it were told from Maniac Magee's point of view, what are some things that we would not know about that we know about now?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Predict

Do you think that Amanda and Jeffery will form a friendship by the end of the book? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Maniac Magee

## Chapter 4

Name \_\_\_\_\_

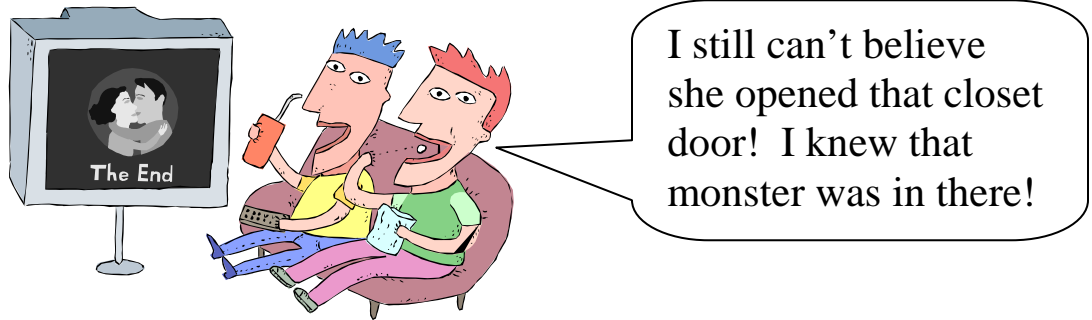
Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Comprehension

1. Who is Brian Denehy?
2. Who punted the ball back to the players?

### Dramatic Irony

Dramatic irony occurs when the audience or the reader knows something a character does not know. Example: The reader knows who the criminal is, but the characters do not know.



Chapter four is full of dramatic irony. What is the irony in this chapter?

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### Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences

What can you infer about Maniac Magee from his actions in this chapter?

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# Maniac Magee

## Chapter 5

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Comprehension

1. What happened to Arnold Jones?
2. Where did Maniac Magee put Arnold?

### The Finsterwald's Backyard

Read the description of the Finsterwald's backyard on pages 16 - 17.

Find the metaphor in the description.

---

Jerry Spinelli's description of the Finsterwald's backyard is notable because of the metaphor used to describe it and the witty examples of those who dared not grace the place. Using this passage as a model, write a description of the Finsterwald's backyard, but describe it as if it were the nicest place in town, as if the Finsterwalds were the nicest people around.

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# Maniac Magee

Chapters 6 - 8

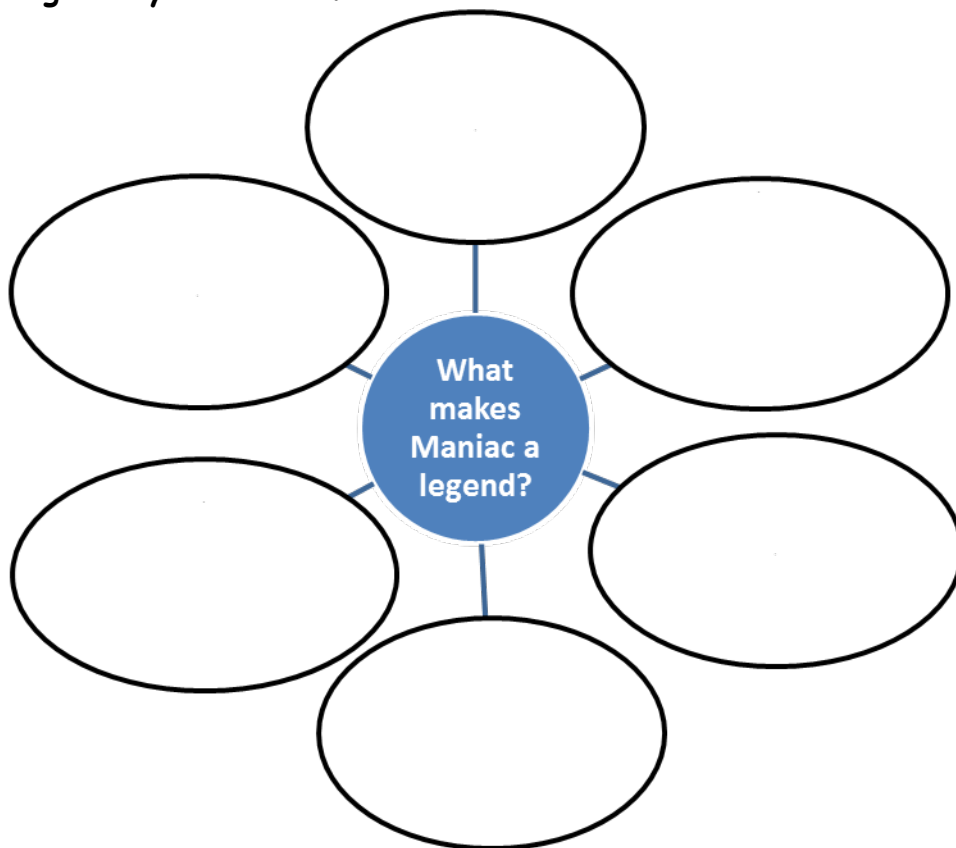
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Comprehension

1. What did all of the Pickwell's eat around?
2. Where was Maniac Magee running that everyone else only walks?
3. Describe John McNab.
4. What did Maniac Magee do to the frog?
5. How did Maniac Magee get his nickname?

**The Legend of Maniac** In chapters six through eight, it is easy to see that Maniac is "larger than life". Maniac is a legend or a hero. Typically, a character who is a hero often begins life as a normal person, but is transformed into someone extraordinary by significant life events, often in response to social injustice, and sometimes in response to natural disasters. In Maniac's case, he is transformed in response to social injustice. His parents have died, and he is left to fend for himself. **Complete the following graphic organizer to map out the actions that make Maniac Magee a legendary character.**



# Maniac Magee

Chapters 9 & 10

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Comprehension

1. What did McNab and his friends call themselves?
2. What was Maniac Magee doing when McNab and his pals found him?
3. What is the significance of Hector Street?
4. Who is Mars Bar?
5. What does Mars Bar take from Maniac?
6. Who helps Maniac take back the page?

## Author's Writing Style ~ Sentence Fluency

A style is a way of writing. It involves how something is said, not what is said. Many elements contribute to style, including word choice, sentence length, tone, and figurative language.

In chapters nine and ten, let us take a look at how Jerry Spinelli crafts his sentences in a way that add to the action of the story.

Go back to page 31 and read the last paragraph. You will see that there are only two sentences in this very lengthy paragraph that describe Maniac's flee from the Cobras. Jerry Spinelli's purpose is to speed up the action and create a sense of quickness, speed, and a blur. The words seem to whiz by on the page. This mimics Maniac's run. The sentence creates a breathless reaction in the reader because there are no periods. This is done on purpose. In a way, the reader experiences a little of what Maniac experiences, and this is done all through sentence fluency.

Look at the following passage from page 36. These sentences have a total opposite affect as the one just discussed. Instead of creating speed, these short sentences slow down the action.

*Silence. Eyes. The flies were waiting. East End vultures.*

What do you think Jerry Spinelli's purpose is in slowing down the action here?

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## You Try It!

Write a paragraph describing yourself in a chase. Decide on your setting first. Are you in the woods? In a swamp? An alley? Next, what are you being chased by? A dog? An alligator? A bear? Make sure your sentence fluency mimics the action. Allow it to slow down or speed up the action.

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# Maniac Magee

Chapters 11-13

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Comprehension

1. Who is Mars Bar referring to when he says "Hey, fishbelly."?
2. Who comes to Maniac's rescue?
3. Where does Amanda invite Maniac?
4. Why does Amanda's mother carry around a yellow plastic bucket and a sponge?
5. Who are Hester and Lester?
6. What does Maniac tell Mr. Beale in the car?
7. Where is Maniac's new home?
8. To what is Mrs. Beale referring when she says the miracle on Sycamore Street?
9. Who takes a bath with Hester and Lester since Amanda won't?
10. What is Maniac Magee allergic to?

**Conflict - a struggle or clash between opposing characters or forces (external conflict) or the character's emotions (internal conflict)**

Complete the following chart to analyze the conflicts that are present in the novel.

Character	Conflict	Passage from the book that proves or supports that conflict	Type of conflict (internal or external)
Maniac Magee			
Mars Bar			
Amanda Beale			
John McNab			

# Maniac Magee

Chapters 14-15

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Comprehension

1. Who is Bow Wow?
2. Who picks Maniac first for a game of football?
3. What do little kids from all over bring to Maniac?
4. Which encyclopedia does Maniac want from Amanda?

## Imagery - language that creates a sensory impression within the reader's mind

Imagery consists of words and phrases that appeal to readers' senses. Writers use sensory details to help readers imagine how things look, feel, smell, sound, and taste. In these two chapters, Spinelli uses a great deal of imagery. He is describing the things that Maniac loves about his new life.

Complete the following chart as you analyze the imagery.

The things Maniac loved	Words that create imagery	The sense or senses that the imagery appeals to
Early morning	Red brick rows of houses, even the windows resting from faces, the cool silent sidewalks, water running	Sight and sound
Pancake batter		
Church		
The fourth of July block party		
The colors of the East End		

**Predict** *Maniac loved almost everything about his new life, but everything did not love him back.* Do you think Maniac's life is about to make a change for the worse? If so, what do you think will happen?

# Maniac Magee

Chapters 16-21

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Comprehension

1. What could Maniac Magee not see?
2. What is the setting as chapter seventeen begins?
3. Who yells at Maniac Magee?
4. Why did Hester and Lester want to stop Maniac Magee from going home?
5. Why is Maniac Magee arguing with Amanda?
6. What is Cobble's Knot?
7. What did Maniac Magee do to earn a year's worth of large pizzas?
8. What happened to the encyclopedia A?

**Tone:** the attitude that a writer takes toward the audience, a subject, or a character

So far, the overall tone of this novel is lighthearted and humorous. In chapter seventeen, however, the tone changes. Write a few words that describe the attitude that the author has toward the issue of race which is becoming one of the main conflicts in this novel.

**Words to describe the tone in chapter seventeen:**

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**Situational Irony** occurs when what happens is very different from what is expected to happen.

Examples:

A woman finally pays off her car and the next day it is wrecked and totaled.

The man who was the voice of Bugs Bunny was allergic to carrots.

A woman goes on a diet and the next day she wins a huge chocolate cake.

A lifeguard drowns.

**Why is it ironic that Maniac Magee wins pizza for a whole year from Cobble's Corner?**

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**Predict**

Where do you think Maniac Magee will go now? What will he do?

# Maniac Magee

## Writing Opportunity After Chapter 17

Jerry Spinelli effectively describes a hot August day by using hyperbole, or extreme exaggeration. Reread the beginning of chapter 17.

What examples of hyperbole do you find?

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**You try it!** Write a paragraph describing a cold day in January. Like Spinelli, use hyperbole to playfully get your point across.

It was a cold day in January.

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# Maniac Magee

## Writing Opportunity After Chapter 17

On page 59, Spinelli describes the block party by writing a series of short and one-word sentences. These sentences could be turned into a poem simply by arranging them to look like one.

### Block Party

Radios blaring.

People blaring.

Somebody selling lemonade.

Somebody selling Kool-Aid ice cubes on toothpicks.

Bodies.

Skin.

Colors.

Water.

Gleaming.

Buttery.

Warm.

Cool.

Wet.

Screaming.

Happy.

Create your own poem using this same writing style. You can write one describing your classroom, a baseball game, a football game, a water park, a circus, or any other place that you could describe.

# Maniac Magee

## Test on Part I

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Who is telling the story of Manic Magee?
  - a. Maniac
  - b. Amanda
  - c. Aunt Dot
  - d. An unseen narrator
2. Why does Maniac Magee have to go and live with Aunt Dot and Uncle Dan?
  - a. His parents have given them temporary custody while they travel out of the country.
  - b. He is tired of living under his parents' strict rules.
  - c. His parents are killed in a trolley crash, and he is forced to go live with them.
  - d. His parents have moved and he lives with his aunt and uncle so he does not have to change schools.
3. Which of the following is **not** something that Maniac loves about living at the Beale's home?
  - a. Going to the fourth of July block party
  - b. attending church
  - c. walking Bow Wow
  - d. sharing the *A* encyclopedia with Amanda
4. Which of following best describes Maniac?
  - a. timid and hopeful
  - b. aggressive and mean
  - c. trustworthy and daring
  - d. sad and lonely
5. What is the author's main purpose for including the character of Hands Down in this novel?
  - a. to offer Maniac someone to talk with
  - b. to contrast Maniac with someone who is satisfied with his life
  - c. to help create Maniac Magee as a legend
  - d. to offer Maniac Magee a best friend
6. Which of the following does Maniac do that amazes Mrs. Beale?
  - a. takes baths
  - b. reads lots of books
  - c. keeps his room clean
  - d. sings
7. What does Maniac bunt to score a run on John McNab?
  - a. a frog
  - b. a curve ball
  - c. a candy bar
  - d. a pine cone

8. Which of these events happened first?
  - a. Maniac moves in with Amanda Beale.
  - b. The Cobras try to catch Maniac.
  - c. Maniac borrows a book from Amanda.
  - d. Maniac finds out he is allergic to pizza.
9. Which of the following is the main conflict in the book so far?
  - a. Maniac is allergic to pizza.
  - b. Amanda's struggle to protect her books
  - c. Maniac Magee's struggle to find his place in the world
  - d. Mars Bar's need to find a friend
10. The conflict of the story begins when -
  - a. Maniac is born.
  - b. Maniac meets Mars Bar.
  - c. Maniac moves in with the Beales.
  - d. Maniac runs out of the gym during the spring musical.
11. Which of the following best describes the Finsterwald's backyard?
  - a. evil and dark
  - b. bright and refreshing
  - c. messy yet clean
  - d. foreboding and infamous
12. From Mars Bar's thoughts and actions, the reader can infer that he -
  - a. thinks that messing with Maniac Magee is too dangerous.
  - b. cannot do things well when he is under pressure.
  - c. was not in very good physical condition.
  - d. is arrogant and very aggressive.
13. What is Maniac Magee's real name?
  - a. Jeffrey
  - b. Bob
  - c. John
  - d. Duke
14. Why is it so easy for Maniac to blend in with the Pickwell family at supper?
  - a. They all have the same color hair.
  - b. There are so many children that nobody notices there is an extra one.
  - c. The Pickwells are playing a ballgame, and they are all in uniform.
  - d. He looks just like the Pickwells.
15. Which of the following characters was a member of the Cobras?
  - a. Mars Bar
  - b. Hands Down
  - c. John McNab
  - d. Hester Beale

16. Which of the following sentences from the novel contains imagery?
- He flipped through some pages. "Looks like mine."*
  - Mrs. Beale held up a hand, said, "Hold it," and went on scrubbing.*
  - By the time they got out, it was too late to go to church and almost lunchtime.*
  - Maniac was covered with round, red blotches, all shiny from the bath water.*

*Mars Bar jammed his arms downward, stuck out his chin, sneered. "Am I bad?"* (page 35)

17. In this passage, the author uses the words "jammed" and "sneered" to show Mars Bar's feelings of \_\_\_\_\_.
- anxiety
  - curiosity
  - caution
  - anger
18. The use of the third person omniscient point of view allows the author to \_\_\_\_\_.
- share many of the characters' inner thoughts and feelings
  - concentrate on creating unusual characters
  - describe the story's setting in vivid detail
  - focus in on only what the main character is thinking and feeling
19. Why does Maniac not want the Beales to call him Maniac?
- He hates the name.
  - He does not want to lose the name his parents gave to him.
  - He is tired of the name.
  - He would rather them call him Miracle Magee.
20. What are the names of Amanda's brother and sister?
- Amanda and John
  - Dot and Don
  - Dan and Sarah
  - Hester and Lester

Maniac Magee  
Answer Key  
Part 1

Number	Answer
1	d
2	c
3	d
4	c
5	c
6	c
7	a
8	c
9	c
10	d
11	d
12	d
13	a
14	b
15	c
16	d
17	d
18	a
19	b
20	d



# Maniac Magee

## Chapters 24 & 25

### Comprehension

1. What does Maniac tell Grayson about the Beales that shocks him?
2. What did Grayson say he wanted to be when he grew up?
3. What is Grayson's first name?
4. What trick was played on Grayson his first day in the Minors?

### Realistic Dialogue

In order to create characters that seem real, writers must sometimes stray away from Standard English when writing dialogue. The character, Grayson, is an older man who does not speak "the correct way" all of the time.

On page 91, find the three double negatives Grayson says. A double negative is the nonstandard use of two negative words when one is enough. For example, **I ain't got no money to give you**. In this sentence, not and no are used. The sentence should be written as **I have not got any money to give you**.

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These sentences contain something called double negatives.  
Rewrite these sentences the correct way.

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Find other examples of Grayson's dialogue that do not follow the rules of Standard English. Use the following chart to help you find these examples.

Page #	Dialogue
89	
92	

Discuss: How does Grayson's dialogue add to the development of his character?

# Maniac Magee

## Chapters 26 & 27

### Comprehension

1. What did Maniac Magee do while listening to Grayson's stories?
2. What pitch can Grayson still throw?
3. What does Maniac do with the money that Grayson gives him?
4. What does Grayson want Maniac to teach him?

### Extended Metaphor

An **extended metaphor** is a metaphor that continues into the sentences that follow. On page 102, there is an extended metaphor. Reread the first two paragraphs on page 102.

The metaphor begins with *The kid was a good manager*. He is talking about a baseball manager, of course. Then, the author extends this metaphor by weaving in words that go with baseball. List those words below:

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### You try it!

It is easy to create an extended metaphor. Let's try one as a poem.

Start with this metaphor: **Life is a baseball game**.

Now, write a list of things, sights, sounds, experiences that come to mind when you think of a baseball game.

Finally, write your poem. Let your first line be *Life is a baseball game*. Then, weave in the words that you listed throughout your poem.



Life is a baseball game

### Sample Extended Metaphor Poem

Step one: Make a list of words that you associate with a baseball game.

Life is a baseball game

Crowd  
Peanuts  
Popcorn  
Strike outs  
Homeruns  
Dust  
Slide  
You're out  
Scoreboard

Step 2: Write the poem. Begin with the metaphor, and weave in the words you have listed.

#### **Life**

Life is a baseball game.  
It has its share of dust and crowds  
but also has peanuts and popcorn!  
If you will just keep your eye on what's important  
and keep swinging,  
those strike outs won't keep you down  
And the homeruns  
are all that really count  
on the scoreboard of life.

# Maniac Magee

## Chapters 28-32

### Comprehension

1. What was the first book Grayson read on his own?
2. What things did Grayson bring Maniac to make the apartment more comfortable?
3. What did Maniac and Grayson have for Thanksgiving dinner?
4. What does Maniac paint?
5. Where does Grayson move when he leaves the Y?
6. What gifts did Maniac and Grayson exchange for Christmas?
7. What happened to Grayson five days after Christmas?

### Discussion:

1. What is the significance of Grayson reading *The Little Engine That Could*?
2. Grayson and Maniac have each other for companionship. Their friendship is fitting. Think of all the things they have in common and all of the differences between them as well. Use a Venn diagram to show the comparisons and contrasts between the two characters.
3. What is the significance of Maniac painting a house number on the outside of the band shelter?
4. Why does Maniac react the way he does to Grayson's death?

# Maniac Magee

## Test on Part II

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Who found Maniac after he climbed out of the buffalo pen?
  - a. Mars Bar
  - b. Amanda
  - c. Grayson
  - d. The park Superintendent
2. What did Grayson do before working at the park zoo?
  - a. He worked at the Blue Star Restaurant.
  - b. He managed the YMCA in Two Mills.
  - c. He taught school.
  - d. He played Minor League Baseball.
3. Which of the following best describes Grayson?
  - a. judgmental, dedicated
  - b. caring, generous
  - c. cold-hearted, selfish
  - d. forgiving, lazy
4. What did Maniac paint on the outside of his "apartment"?
  - a. a house number
  - b. a "beware of dog" sign
  - c. a "keep-out" sign
  - d. a decorative wreath

...*"Where you think you're gonna stay?"*

*Maniac's answer was prompt: "The baseball room. It's perfect."*

*A tiny idea was beginning to worm its way into Grayson's head;*

5. Which of the following can you infer is most likely Grayson's tiny idea?
  - a. taking Maniac back home
  - b. letting Maniac live with him
  - c. finding a job at the park for Maniac
  - d. taking Maniac to buy Krimpets
6. Which of the following **best** describes the relationship between Grayson and Maniac?
  - a. They have a father/son type relationship.
  - b. They have a love/hate relationship.
  - c. They have a caring friendship in which they help one another.
  - d. They are only acquaintances.

*The old man just looked at him for a while with a mixture of puzzlement and recognition, as though the fish he had landed might be the same one he had thrown away long before. (pg.86)*

7. What does this passage mean?
- The old man wants to take Maniac fishing.
  - The old man is searching for answers.
  - The old man remembers Maniac from a previous time in his life.
  - The old man sees himself in Maniac.
8. Which of the following is **not** a comparison of Grayson and Maniac?
- They both graduated from high school.
  - Each of them had unhappy homes.
  - Both learn new things from the other.
  - Each of them works at the zoo.

*He held the cold, limp hand that had thrown the pitch that had struck out Willie Mays, that had betrayed the old man's stoic ways by giving him a squeeze. (pages 115-116)*

9. What is the tone of the above passage?
- critical
  - resentful
  - respectful
  - humorous
10. What does the above passage reveal about Grayson?
- He lived through a crisis.
  - He was tough yet loving.
  - He was mad at Willie Mays.
  - He squeezed Willie Mays' hand.

*"Well, ...it's the same. There's bathtubs and refrigerators and rugs and TVs and beds..." Grayson was wagging his head. "Ain't that somethin'...ain't that something... (page 89)*

11. What does this passage reveal about Grayson?
- He doesn't know much at all about white people.
  - He doesn't realize that black people are a lot like white people.
  - He doesn't like black people.
  - He doesn't think black people and white people should live together.

*..."Uh, I was thinkin', uh maybe you want to come over to my place..."*

*The grizzled, gray old parkhand could never know how much Maniac was tempted or how deeply the offer touched him. Neither could Maniac explain that the bad luck he always seemed to have with parents had led him to the conclusion that he better stick to himself. (Page 89)*

12. According to this passage, why does Maniac not want to go stay with Grayson?
- He is afraid that like before, something will go wrong and he will be hurt again.
  - He is secretly afraid of the old man.
  - He enjoyed living all alone.
  - He does not like the smell of Grayson's house.

*"Couldn't never make it to the Majors." There was a frayed weariness in the old man's words, as though they long-since worn out.*

13. From this passage, the reader can infer that Grayson is \_\_\_\_\_ about not making it to the Major League.
- happy
  - angry
  - disappointed
  - impassive

*He showed them to the old man. Ancient, back-broken math books, flaking travel books, warped spellers, mangled mysteries, biographies, music books, astronomy books, cookbooks.*

*"What's the matter?" said the old man. "Can't you make up your mind what kind you want?"*

*The kid laughed. "I want them all." He threw his hands out. "I'm learning everything!"*

14. Why is this bolded quotation most likely included in this part of the novel?
- to tell how Maniac feels about Grayson
  - to show that Maniac yearns for knowledge
  - to explain that Maniac is selfish
  - to illustrate Maniac's humor
15. What evidence **best** shows that Grayson was very fond of Maniac Magee?
- Grayson tells him he struck out Willie Mays.
  - Grayson drinks a glass of apple juice with him.
  - Grayson gives Maniac his old glove from the Minors.
  - Grayson shares butterscotch Krimpets with Maniac Magee.

**Maniac Magee  
Answer Key  
Part 2**

Number	Answer
1	c
2	d
3	b
4	a
5	b
6	c
7	d
8	a
9	c
10	b
11	b
12	a
13	c
14	b
15	c

# Maniac Magee

## Chapters 33-35

### Comprehension

1. After Grayson's death, did Maniac Magee stay at the band shell?
2. Who are Piper and Russell?
3. Describe John McNab's house.

### Figurative Language

Writers use figurative language to make their writing more interesting and effective. By using a simile, metaphor, or personification, the writer is able to paint a picture in the mind of the reader.

**Simile** - a comparison of two things using the words *like* or *as*

**Metaphor** - calls one thing another

**Personification** - gives a nonhuman object human traits

**Hyperbole** - an extreme exaggeration

**Idiom** - a commonly used expression that means something totally different than what it says

Complete the following chart to examine the figurative language in these chapters.

Page #	Passage	Type of figurative language	What it means
125		personification	
128	<i>They huddled around him like babies on a possum's back...</i>		
130	<i>...and you pitched it, and I missed it by a mile...</i>		
131		simile	
132	<i>They tore into the bag like jackals into carrion</i>		
133		personification	

# Maniac Magee

## Chapters 36-37

### Comprehension

1. Why is Maniac making deals with Russell and Piper?
2. Who goes to the Finsterwald's house?
3. Does anyone go inside the Finsterwald's house?
4. List three feats that Maniac accomplishes in chapter thirty-seven.

**Suspense** The author of this book knows when to slow the action down to add suspense. Read the following paragraph that lacks suspense.

*Maniac Magee walks up to the brick house and climbs the steps. He knocks on the door. The door opens. After a few moments, Maniac Magee comes back down the steps and rejoins the crowd.*

The action in this chapter is not written like the above passage, and thankfully so! If it were, it would lack suspense. Complete the following chart to figure out what the author did to create suspense.

Actions before Maniac leaves the Finsterwald's porch (pages 139-140)	How this adds suspense

### Discussion

Reread the second full paragraph on page 142. It begins with To much of the town... and ends with And who after all is the more amazing, the lion or the tamer?

What does the final question in this paragraph mean? What do you think is the answer of this question?

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# Maniac Magee

## Chapters 38-40

### Comprehension

1. Maniac was not afraid of the East Enders. What was he afraid of?
2. What did Mars challenge Maniac to do?
3. Who cheered for Maniac when everyone else was cheering for Mars?
4. Why does Mars get so mad at Maniac?

### Discussion

1. What or who might the worms in chapter thirty-eight symbolize? Explain your answer.

Reread the last paragraph of chapter 39. It begins with *That had been weeks before*, and ends with *garbage and turds*.

2. What does this passage mean? What is the "something else" in the house?

Reread the second full paragraph on page 155.

3. What does "the rot would reach the pit" mean?

# Maniac Magee

## Chapters 41-43

### Comprehension

1. Who did Maniac bring to the birthday party?
2. Where does Maniac take this person before the birthday party?
3. What did Maniac give Piper for his birthday?
4. What game did they play at the birthday party?
5. What time of day did Maniac like the best?

### Context Clues

You can really build your vocabulary by reading books like *Maniac Magee*. Let's take a look at some words that you can learn by using context clues.

Read each of the following sentences from chapters forty-one through forty-three. Use context clues to figure out the **best** meaning of the bolded words.

1. *It hadn't been easy: finding Mars Bar, taking all his lip about cheating on the race, taking some bumps, some shoves, Mars **goad**ing him to fight.*
  - a. urging
  - b. approaching
  - c. begging
  - d. moving
2. *But keeping his own cool, matching Mars Bar glare for glare, telling him he wasn't as bad as he thought he was. Really **stoke**ing him now, making him slam his candy bar to the ground.*
  - a. questioning
  - b. fueling
  - c. disappointing
  - d. moving around
3. *Stepping back then, folding his arms, smuggling it up just enough, standing there in his white skin, gazing **nonchalant**ly about six-blocks deep in the heart of the black side.*
  - a. in an angry way
  - b. in a sad way
  - c. in a serious way
  - d. in an unconcerned way
4. *But the Pickwells **persist**ed, and when they reached Marshall Street, Mars Bar commanded, "Stay here," and stepped into the traffic.*
  - a. argued
  - b. agreed
  - c. insisted
  - d. inscribed

# Maniac Magee

## Chapters 44-46

### Comprehension

1. Who did Maniac run with in the mornings?
2. Why do you think Maniac could not bring himself to help save Russell?
3. Who did save Russell?
4. How did Russell react towards the person that saved him?
5. To what did Amanda Beale say she was changing Mars Bars' name?
6. Who did Maniac go to live with in the end?

### The Appleskin Hour

With a partner, come up with a two-minute explanation as to why you think Maniac Magee would refer to the mornings as the appleskin hours. Make sure your explanation is thoughtful and symbolic. Think about the skin of an apple and how it may be linked metaphorically to the way Maniac views the mornings.

### Explanation

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# Maniac Magee

## Theme

**Theme:** the story's central message; a life lesson

**Some things to remember about theme are:**

- Theme is what the author wants you to remember most.
- Occasionally the theme is stated directly in the novel/passage.
- Most often, the theme is unstated and is revealed to the reader gradually throughout the novel/passage.
- Theme is written as a statement, not just a word.
- Different readers can have completely different theme statements. This is fine as long as each reader can support his/her idea with evidence from the novel/passage.

**Plan for understanding theme in Maniac Magee:**

**Step 1:** List words from the novel that express the big ideas or topics from the novel.

**Step 2:** Think about what the characters in the novel do and say that relate to the topics you listed above.

**Step 3:** Come up with a statement of the author's point or message based on one or more of your big ideas.

**Step 4:** Find passages and/or quotes from the novel that support your theme statement.

# Maniac Magee

## Writing Opportunity

Go back and read *Before the Story* on page one of the book. Write your own chant about Maniac that contains only facts about him.

### Chant

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# Maniac Magee

## Mottos

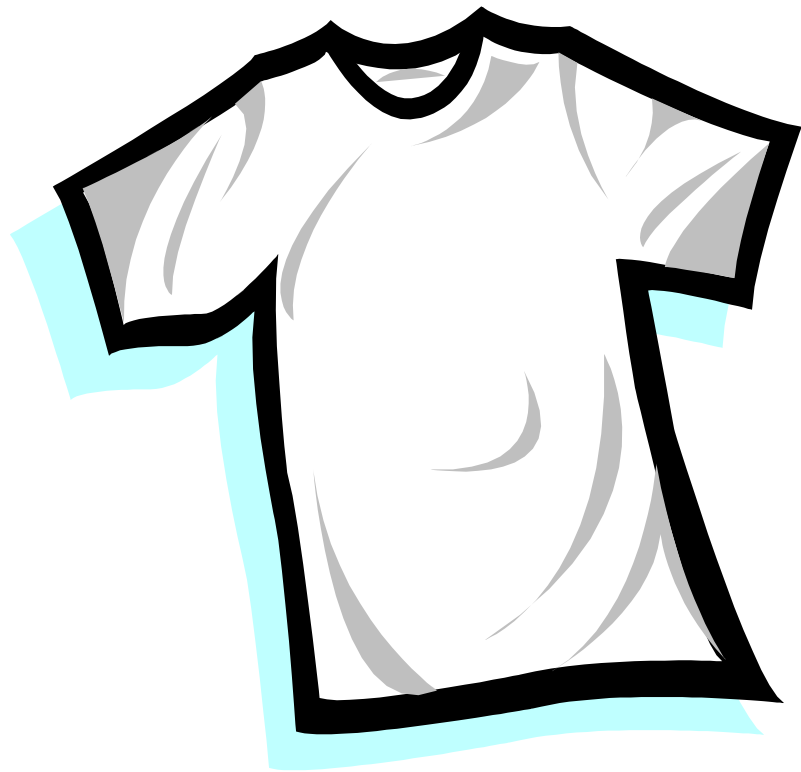
A motto is a word or saying that describes a principle or moral that someone lives by. Some examples are:

- The apple doesn't fall far from the tree.
- Never judge someone until you have walked a mile in his/her flip flops!

Create a T-shirt for two characters from the novel. In the center of each shirt, write a motto that this character would live by.



**Character:**



**Character:**

# Maniac Magee

## Character Analysis

Character	Traits	Round/flat	Static/dynamic
Maniac			
Mars Bar			
Grayson			
Amanda			
Piper & Russell			
John McNab			
Hands Down			

# Maniac Magee

## Final Test

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Use context clues to figure out the meaning of the bolded word in the following sentence.  
*He could always **extort** a day or two in class from them with the free weekly pizza. Beyond that, he goaded them toward school any way he could.*
  - a. persuade
  - b. expect
  - c. blackmail
  - d. arrange
2. All of the following are a part of the legend of Maniac Magee EXCEPT
  - a. He could run fast.
  - b. He sat on the Finsterwald's steps.
  - c. He loosened Cobble's Knot.
  - d. He wrestled a buffalo in front of a crowd.
3. Which word BEST describes Mars Bars' attitude toward Maniac in the first part of the novel?
  - a. caring
  - b. resentful
  - c. tolerant
  - d. nonchalant
4. Maniac lived with all of the following EXCEPT
  - a. Amanda Beale
  - b. Grayson
  - c. Mars Bar
  - d. Russell and Piper
5. Which of the following best describes Maniac's character?
  - a. lonely
  - b. joyful
  - c. courageous
  - d. selfish
6. Which of the following is the best overall tone of this novel?
  - a. eloquent and encouraging
  - b. profound and serious
  - c. humorous and touching
  - d. sarcastic and stern



*"His yo-yo string had a knot as fat as a mushroom."*

7. This quote is an example of what literary device?
  - a. metaphor
  - b. simile
  - c. personification
  - d. idiom
8. What does Maniac constantly have to trick Russell and Piper into doing?
  - a. brushing their teeth
  - b. going to school
  - c. taking a bath
  - d. eating nutritious meals
9. Which of the following is **not** a theme for this novel?
  - a. Prejudice is based on ignorance.
  - b. Speed is the key to life.
  - c. People would be much better off if it weren't for their judgments.
  - d. Everyone needs a place to call home.
10. The genre of this novel is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. science fiction
  - b. historical fiction
  - c. realistic fiction
  - d. nonfiction
11. The character of Mars Bar would best be described as \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. dynamic, flat
  - b. static, flat
  - c. static, round
  - d. dynamic, round
12. Which of the following words best describe Amanda Beale?
  - a. soft spoken and gentle
  - b. timid and awkward
  - c. stubborn and fierce tempered
  - d. outgoing and bubbly
13. Which of the following best describes the relationship between Grayson and Maniac Magee?
  - a. loving
  - b. turbulent
  - c. unsupportive
  - d. one-sided
14. Who are the Cobras?
  - a. snakes that live in the park near Maniac's house
  - b. a minor league team that Grayson played for
  - c. a fictional group of characters in one of Amanda's books
  - d. a gang with a strong hatred and fear of blacks

15. Which of the following is an example of situational irony?
- Aunt Dot and Uncle Dan live in Hollidaysburg.
  - Grayson dies soon after Maniac and he form a great relationship.
  - Maniac Magee is a fast runner.
  - Amanda Beale collects books.
16. In the novel, the use of the third-person point of view allows the author to -
- share the inner thoughts and feelings of more than one character.
  - concentrate on creating unusual characters.
  - create imagery throughout the book.
  - describe the story's setting in vivid details.
17. How has Mars Bar changed by the end of the novel?
- He is more accepting of Maniac even though he is white.
  - He no longer thinks highly of himself.
  - He no longer likes Maniac.
  - He enjoys visiting Russell and Piper's house.
18. Who is John McNab?
- the park superintendent
  - Mars Bar's brother
  - Amanda Beale's next door neighbor
  - Russell and Piper's brother

*During the night, March doubled back and grabbed April by the scruff of the neck and flung it another week or two down the road.*

19. What type of figurative language is used in this passage?
- simile
  - metaphor
  - idiom
  - personification

20. In the end, we find out that all Maniac ever really wanted was \_\_\_\_\_.
- to be a friend.
  - to be a legend.
  - to have a home.
  - to be able to eat pizza.

*...and why no kid would ever shovel that sidewalk, not for a zillion dollars.*

21. What type of figurative language is included in this sentence?
- imagery
  - simile
  - hyperbole
  - personification

*Because to do so would be parental, and he was not yet ready for that. How could he act as a father to these boys when he himself ached to be somebody's son?*

22. What type of conflict is Maniac experiencing in this sentence?
- external
  - internal
  - both
  - neither

**Maniac Magee  
Answer Key  
Final Test**

Number	Answer
1	c
2	d
3	b
4	c
5	c
6	c
7	b
8	a
9	b
10	c
11	d
12	c
13	a
14	d
15	b
16	a
17	a
18	d
19	d
20	c
21	c
22	b

## Answer Key Comprehension Questions

### Chapters 1 & 2

1. killed in a trolley crash
2. Jeffery
3. His aunt and uncle
4. "Talk! Talk, will ya! Talk! Talk!"
5. ran to Two Mills

#### Map it out:

2. Jeffrey Magee's parents left him with a sitter to go to the city.
3. On the way back, his parents were on the P&W trolley when it had its famous crash
4. Jeffrey became an orphan at the age of three
5. He was shipped to his nearest relatives - Aunt Dot, Uncle Dan
6. He lived with them for 8 years.
7. He ran away after the spring musical and wound up in Two Mills

### Chapter 3

1. Amanda Beale
2. books
3. so her brother and sister would not color inside them
4. to borrow a book

#### Point of View

The book is told from the third person omniscient point of view. We know it is third person because none of the characters are telling the story. It's omniscient because we know the feelings of other characters besides Maniac. For example, the text says, *Aunt Dot and Uncle Dan hated each other, but because they were strict Catholics, they wouldn't get a divorce.* If this book were told from Maniac's point of view, we wouldn't know this information.

### Chapter 4

1. the high school star quarterback
2. Maniac Magee

#### Irony

Dramatic irony is in this chapter because the reader is aware of who the running kid is and also knows why he has a book. The characters on the field, however, do not know this information. From this chapter, the reader can infer that Maniac is eager to learn (because he wants to borrow a book), friendly (because he speaks to everyone), and athletic (because he punted the ball, and it sailed spiraling *more perfectly than anything Brian Denehy had ever thrown.*)

### Chapter 5

1. He was thrown into the Finsterwald's yard by high school boys
2. on the Finsterwald's front steps

#### Metaphor

Finsterwald's backyard was a graveyard of tennis balls and baseballs and footballs and Frisbees and model airplanes and one way boomerangs.

## Chapters 6 - 8

1. a ping pong table
2. on the steel railroad tracks
3. He is 5'8" tall and weighs 174 pounds.
4. He bunted it.
5. because of all the strange things he did around the town

### What makes Maniac a legend?

He is daring enough and talented enough to do things that other kids can't or don't. He runs on the steel rail of the railroad tracks. He hits ball after ball that McNab pitches, and he even hits homeruns. At the end of chapter seven, Maniac has *knocked the world's first frogball for a four-bagger*. In chapter eight, a list is provided that shows Maniac as a legend. He punted the football back longer than Denehy had ever thrown it, he rescued Arnaold Jones, and tattooed Giant John McNab's fastball for half a dozen home runs

## Chapters 9 & 10

1. the Cobras
2. running on the rails
3. It segregates the town.
4. a black kid who is always eating a candy bar and does not like Maniac
5. his book
6. an East End lady who is outside sweeping

### Sentence Fluency - author's purpose

The one-line sentences are used to create suspense. Just as the flies are waiting, so is the reader to find out what is going to happen to Maniac. The periods cause the reader to read slower because periods create pauses. This slows down the action, which creates suspense.

## Chapters 11-13

1. Maniac Magee
2. Amanda
3. her house
4. so she can clean off crayon markings
5. Amanda's little brother and sister
6. that he had no home
7. the Beales
8. Maniac keeping his room clean
9. Maniac
10. Pizza

### Conflicts

Maniac - His main conflict is that he doesn't have a home. This is an internal one. Maniac's lip started to quiver, and right there, with the car idling in the middle of the street, Maniac told him that he didn't really have a home, unless you counted the deer shed at the zoo. (page 43)

Mars Bar- He is used to being a bully and tries to bully Maniac. He tears a page out of Amanda's book, which upsets Maniac and Amanda. His conflicts with these characters are external. *As*

usual, when Mars Bar got confused, he got mad. He thumped Maniac in the chest. "You think you bad or somethin'?" (page 35)

Amanda - She is upset that her books keep getting ruined, normally by her siblings. She stands up to Mars Bar and says "I got a little brother and a little sister that crayon all over my books, and I got a dog that eats ehm and poops on them and that's just inside my own family, and I'm not - gonna have nobody - else messin' - with my books!" (page 40) This is an external conflict.

John McNab - He was upset that Maniac had hit a ball that he pitched. He wants to beat up Maniac to make up for it. *John McNab had never in his life met a kid he couldn't strike out. Until the runt.* (page 30) At this point, this conflict is internal - as McNab makes a decision to beat Maniac up. Maniac is not yet aware of this plan, so it can't be external.

### Chapters 14 & 15

1. the Beale's dog
2. Hands Down
3. knots
4. A

The things Maniac loved	Words that create imagery	The sense or senses that the imagery appeals to
Early morning	Red brick rows of houses, even the windows resting from faces, the cool silent sidewalks, water running	Sight and sound
Pancake batter	...sound of pancake batter hissing on the griddle	sound
Church	...a church called Bethany - when the minister would thump on the pulpit and the people would call out "Amen" and the choir would swing this way and swing that way and would sing "Hallelujah!"	sound, sight
The fourth of July block party	...when the whole East End converged for a day and night of games and music and grilled chicken and ribs and sweet-potato pie and dancing until the last firecracker and then some.	smells, tastes, sound
The colors of the East End	He kept looking and looking, and the colors he found were gingersnap and light fudge and dark fudge and acorn and butter rum and cinnamon and burnt orange. But never licorice, which, to him, was real black	sight

## Chapters 16-21

1. people disliking him
2. a hot August day
3. an old black man
4. so he would not see what was written on the house (fishbelly go home)
5. He wants to leave, and she doesn't want him to.
6. a very old knot that no one could ever untangle
7. untangle Cobble's Knot
8. It was destroyed.

## Tone

Sample words to describe the tone: tense, angry, racist, serious

## Irony

It is ironic that Maniac wins pizza for a year because he is allergic to pizza.

## After chapter 17

Hyperbole - *It was so hot, if you stood still too long in the vacant lot, the sun bouncing off a chunk of broken glass or metal could fry a patch on your hide.* (page 59)

## Chapters 22 & 23

1. the buffalo pen
2. Grayson (the park maintenance man)
3. School

## Chapters 24 & 25

1. that they are like white people
2. a baseball player
3. Earl
4. He was told to go into a restaurant and order whatever he wanted and that it would be free. It was not.

## Double Negatives

5. Page 91 - I don't got no story. That ain't no story. Couldn't never make it to the majors.
6. Corrected - I don't have a story. That isn't a story. I never could make it to the majors.
7. This dialogue makes Grayson seem more realistic because it is the way he would really talk.

## Chapters 26 & 27

1. He would touch and smell baseball equipment.
2. the stopball
3. buys used books from the library
4. how to read

## Chapters 28-32

1. The Little Engine that Could
2. a chest of drawers, a space heater, a refrigerator, paper dishes, plastic utensils, blankets, and a sleeping mat
3. roasted chicken, gravy, cranberry sauce, apple sauce, Spaghettios, raisins, pumpkin pie, and butterscotch Krimpets
4. a house number on the outside of the door
5. the band shell with Maniac
6. gloves, hats, baseball gloves, books, etc.
7. He died.

### Discussion:

1. What is the significance of Grayson reading *The Little Engine That Could*?  
Grayson himself can be compared to the little engine. He had to work hard to learn to read, and like the little engine, he never gave up. In the end, he accomplished his goal.
2. Grayson and Maniac have each other for companionship. Their friendship is fitting. Think of all the things they have in common and all of the differences between them as well. Use a Venn diagram to show the comparisons and contrasts between the two characters.  
Like Maniac, Grayson had a troubled childhood. Both ran away. Both are fast learners. Both are athletic. Maniac teaches Grayson how to read and Grayson teaches Maniac about life. They both are seen as "misfits" by society.  
Unlike Maniac, Grayson's parents did not die. They just always left him alone. Grayson's love was for baseball.
3. What is the significance of Maniac painting a house number on the outside of the band shelter?  
Maniac's deepest desire is to have a home- a place where he belongs and acceptance, which he finds with Grayson.
4. Why does Maniac react the way he does to Grayson's death? Answers will vary. Mainly, his reactions show his love for Grayson.



### Chapters 33-35

1. no
2. John McNab's brothers
3. smells bad. It's very dirty and has roaches.
4. Complete the following chart to examine the figurative language in these chapters.

Page #	Passage	Type of figurative language	What it means
125	January slipped an icy finger under his collar and down his back.	personification	It was cold in January.
128	<i>They huddled around him like babies on a possum's back...</i>	Simile	They were very close to him.
130	<i>...and you pitched it, and I missed it by a mile...</i>	Hyperbole	It was not a close miss.
131	The peeling paint came off like cornflakes	simile	It crumbled off easily and looked like corn flakes.
132	<i>They tore into the bag like jackals into carrion.</i>		They tore into the bag quickly and like they were starved. Carrion is the decaying flesh of dead animals.
133	...three fries and a bird wing jumped to the floor	personification	Fries and a bird wing fell to the floor.

### Chapters 36 & 37

1. so that they will go to school
2. Maniac
3. no
4. beats a train, walked barefooted through a trash dump, stuck his hand in a dirty creek, kissed a baby buffalo

Actions before Maniac leaves the Finsterwald's porch (pages 139-140)	How this adds suspense
<i>They saw him stand directly in front of the red brick, three-story house... They saw him climb the three cement steps to the white door... They saw him raise his</i>	The way that the author shows what Maniac was doing through the eyes of those watching creates suspense because just as they were wondering what would happen, so

<i>hand, and though they were too far away to hear, they saw him knock...</i>	is the reader.
<i>The door opened. Finsterald's door opened. Not much, but enough so the witnesses could make out a thin strip of blackness.</i>	The italicized sentence adds suspense because it shows the amazement that those watching felt. Still, it doesn't reveal what is inside yet...drawing out the action.
Would Maniac be sucked into that black hole like so much lint into a vacuum cleaner?	There is a serious of questions which create suspense because the reader is made to wonder about all of this.

### Discussion

Reread the second full paragraph on page 142. It begins with *To much of the town... and ends with And who after all is the more amazing, the lion or the tamer?*

What does the final question in this paragraph mean? What do you think is the answer of this question? This question is asking whether the lion that does tricks is more important or the tamer who teaches the lion to do tricks is more important. Maniac realized that "he was being used for the greater glory of Piper and Russell."

### Chapters 38-40

1. causing trouble for the East Enders
2. a race
3. Hands Down
4. He runs backwards and still beats Mars Bar

### Discussion

1. What or who might the worms in chapter thirty-eight symbolize? Explain your answer. *The worms could symbolize Maniac. The book says that they were in "the very places where they didn't belong. Forlorn, marooned on concrete and asphalt, no place to burrow, April's orphans."* At this point in the plot, Maniac is in the East End, where he doesn't belong. Also, just as the worms have "no place to burrow", throughout the novel, Maniac has had no place to live permanently.

Reread the last paragraph of chapter 39. It begins with *That had been weeks before,* and ends with *garbage and turds.*

2. What does this passage mean? What is the "something else" in the house?

The "something else" that this passage refers to is prejudice and hatred which is ugly, very wrong, and is the worst thing about that household, much worse than the awful smell in their house.

Reread the second full paragraph on page 155.

3. What does "the rot would reach the pit" mean? **Sample Answer:** The "rot" is the prejudice that the boys' witness from their father. The "pit" represents who the boys are - their hearts. Maniac feels that if he is not there to intervene, the prejudice that the boys are raised around may reach their own hearts and they themselves may become filled with hatred.

**Chapters 41 - 43**

1. Mars Bar
2. to the Pickwell's
3. a compass
4. rebels
5. early morning

**Context Clues**

1. a   2. b   3. d   4. c

**Chapters 44-46**

1. Mars Bar
2. He was afraid of the trolley because of his parents' death
3. Mars Bar
4. He clings to him and doesn't want to leave him.
5. Snickers
6. the Beales

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