



TEACHER'S PET PUBLICATIONS

LITPLAN TEACHER PACK™

for

Freak the Mighty

based on the book by
Rodman Philbrick

Written by
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A FEW NOTES ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rodman Philbrick worked as a longshoreman and boat builder on the New England coast where he grew up. He has been writing since the age of sixteen and has published over a dozen novels, short stories, articles, and reviews.

Freak the Mighty, his first novel for young readers was inspired by a boy who lived a few blocks from his home. *Freak the Mighty* was named an ALA Best Book for Young Adults, a Judy Lopez Memorial Award Honor Book, and an ALA Quick Pick. The book was made into a movie in 1998 by Miramax and released as *The Mighty*.

Other books for young readers include *The Fire Pony*, *Max the Mighty*, *REM World*, *The Last Book In The Universe*, *The Journal of Douglas Allen Deeds*, and *The Young Man and The Sea*.

Rodman Philbrick and his wife divide their time between Maine and the Florida Keys.

INTRODUCTION

This LitPlan has been designed to develop students' reading, writing, thinking, and language skills through exercises and activities related to *Freak The Mighty*. It includes 21 lessons, supported by extra resource materials.

The **introductory lesson** introduces students to the idea that a person's appearance doesn't necessarily indicate who that person is inside. Following the introductory activity, students are given a transition to explain how the activity relates to the book they are about to read. Following the transition, students are given the materials they will be using during the unit. At the end of the lesson, students begin the pre-reading work for the first reading assignment.

The **reading assignments** are approximately twenty pages each; some are a little shorter while others are a little longer. Students have approximately 15 minutes of pre-reading work to do prior to each reading assignment. This pre-reading work involves reviewing the study questions for the assignment and doing some vocabulary work for 7 to 10 vocabulary words they will encounter in their reading.

The **study guide questions** are fact-based questions; students can find the answers to these questions right in the text. These questions come in two formats: short answer or multiple choice. The best use of these materials is probably to use the short answer version of the questions as study guides for students (since answers will be more complete), and to use the multiple choice version for occasional quizzes.

The **vocabulary work** is intended to enrich students' vocabularies as well as to aid in the students' understanding of the book. Prior to each reading assignment, students will complete a two-part worksheet for approximately 7 to 10 vocabulary words in the upcoming reading assignment. Part I focuses on students' use of general knowledge and contextual clues by giving the sentence in which the word appears in the text. Students are then to write down what they think the words mean based on the words' usage. Part II nails down the definitions of the words by giving students dictionary definitions of the words and having students match the words to the correct definitions based on the words' contextual usage. Students should then have an understanding of the words when they meet them in the text.

After each reading assignment, students will go back and formulate answers for the study guide questions. Discussion of these questions serves as a **review** of the most important events and ideas presented in the reading assignments.

After students complete reading the work, there is a **vocabulary review** lesson which pulls together all of the fragmented vocabulary lists for the reading assignments and gives students a review of all of the words they have studied.

Following the vocabulary review, a lesson is devoted to the **extra discussion questions/writing assignments**. These questions focus on interpretation, critical analysis, and personal response, employing a variety of thinking skills and adding to the students' understanding of the novel.

There is a **group theme project** in this unit. Students will become knights on a quest to bring their Liege information about the Arthurian Legend.

There are three **writing assignments** in this unit, each with the purpose of informing, persuading, or having students express personal opinions. In Writing Assignment One students will write an informative essay about their quest project assignments. Writing Assignment Two asks students to give a personal response to one of two quotes from the story. In Writing Assignment Three students pretend to be the prosecuting attorney for Killer Kane's attempted murder trial, and they write their closing arguments to the jury.

There is a **nonfiction reading assignment**. Students must read nonfiction articles, books, etc. to gather information about their themes in our world today.

The **review lesson** pulls together all of the aspects of the unit. The teacher is given four or five choices of activities or games to use which all serve the same basic function of reviewing all of the information presented in the unit.

The **unit test** comes in two formats: multiple choice or short answer. As a convenience, two different tests for each format have been included. There is also an advanced short answer unit test for advanced students.

There are additional **support materials** included with this unit. The **Unit Resource Materials** section includes suggestions for an in-class library, crossword and word search puzzles related to the novel, and extra worksheets. There is a list of **bulletin board ideas** which gives the teacher suggestions for bulletin boards to go along with this unit. In addition, there is a list of **extra class activities** the teacher could choose from to enhance the unit or as a substitution for an exercise the teacher might feel is inappropriate for his/her class. **Answer keys** are located directly after the **reproducible student materials** throughout the unit. The **Vocabulary Resource Materials** section includes similar worksheets and games to reinforce the vocabulary words.

The **level** of this unit can be varied depending upon the criteria on which the individual assignments are graded, the teacher's expectations of his/her students in class discussions, and the formats chosen for the study guides, quizzes and test. If teachers have other ideas/activities they wish to use, they can usually easily be inserted prior to the review lesson.

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UNIT OBJECTIVES - *Freak The Mighty*

1. Through reading *Freak The Mighty*, students will explore how disabilities can be overcome with the strength of friendship.
2. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the text on four levels: factual, interpretive, critical, and personal.
3. Students will practice reading orally and silently.
4. Students will study the Arthurian Legend.
5. Students will answer questions to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the main events and characters in *Freak The Mighty* as they relate to the author's theme development.
6. Students will enrich their vocabularies and improve their understanding of the novel through the vocabulary lessons prepared for use in conjunction with the novel.
7. The writing assignments in this unit are geared to several purposes:
 - a. To have students demonstrate their abilities to inform, to persuade, or to express their own personal ideas
Note: Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively to inform by developing and organizing facts to convey information. Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively to persuade by selecting and organizing relevant information, establishing an argumentative purpose, and by designing an appropriate strategy for an identified audience. Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively to express personal ideas by selecting a form and its appropriate elements.
 - b. To check the students' reading comprehension
 - c. To make students think about the ideas presented by the novel
 - d. To encourage logical thinking
 - e. To provide an opportunity to practice good grammar and improve students' use of the English language.
8. Students will read aloud, report, and participate in large and small group discussions to improve their public speaking and personal interaction skills.
9. Students will read and share non-fiction articles related to the book.

READING ASSIGNMENT SHEET - *Freak The Mighty*

Date Assigned	Chapters Assigned	Completion Date
	1-4	
	5-7	
	8-10	
	11-13	
	14-15	
	16-19	
	20-22	
	23-25	

UNIT OUTLINE - *Freak The Mighty*

1	2	3	4	5
Introduction PV 1-4	R 1-4 LD Exercise	Study ? 1-4 PVR 5-7	Study ? 5-7 Introduction to Quest Project Writing #1	PVR 8-10 Bullies, Gangs, and Terrorists
6	7	8	9	10
Study ? 8-10 PVR 11-13 Quest Groups	Study? 11-13 PVR 14-15	Study ? 14-15 Quest Projects PVR 16-19	Writing Assignment #2	Study? 16-19 PVR 20-22
11	12	13	14	15
Study? 20-22 PVR 23-25	Study? 23-25 Themes	Extra Discussion	Extra Discussion Continued	Vocabulary Review
16	17	18	19	20
Nonfiction	Writing Assignment #3	Quest Presentations	Quest Presentations Continued	Unit Review
21				
Unit Test				

Key: P = Preview Study Questions V = Vocabulary Work R= Read

LESSON ONE

Objectives

To introduce *Freak The Mighty*

To distribute books, study guides and other related materials

To preview the study questions and vocabulary work for Chapters 1-4

NOTE: Prior to this class period, you need to ask students each to bring in one picture of someone who is considered a “freak.” It can be from a book (like *Ripley’s Believe It Or Not* or *The Guinness Book of World Records*), a magazine, the Internet, or whatever sources students have available.

Activity #1

Give students a few minutes to look at the pictures they brought into class. They can do this in small groups, informally at random, or by everyone passing pictures to the left until they all have their original pictures back.

Activity #2

Tell students to take out a piece of paper and a pencil. They are to write a Dear Diary entry from the person whose picture they have. The entry should be at least twenty sentences long and can be anything students honestly feel that their person would confide to a diary. Give students ample time to complete this assignment. Collect the assignments (with the pictures, if possible, to post together on the bulletin board after class).

Activity #3

Read a few of the diary entries out loud to the class. Hopefully you will find that many or most of the entries express the person’s sadness at being so physically different, their wishes to be accepted and not just judged on their personal appearance, etc. Use this as a springboard for a short transition discussion to introduce the book *Freak the Mighty*.

Activity #4

Distribute the materials students will use in this unit. Explain in detail how students are to use these materials.

Study Guides Students should read the study guide questions for each reading assignment prior to beginning the reading assignment to get a feeling for what events and ideas are important in the section they are about to read. After reading the section, students will (as a class or individually) answer the questions to review the important events and ideas from that section of the book. Students should keep the study guides as study materials for the unit test. **Preview the study questions for Chapters 1-4 together as a class.**

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 - *Freak the Mighty*
Writing to Inform

PROMPT

You have gathered information about your assigned topic from the Internet. Now you are to take your information and put it into a formal essay informing your Liege of what you have found so that the Secret of the Legend of Arthur can be revealed.

PREWRITING

Gather the notes you have made during your research and review them. Make a list of “categories” of information as you review. For example, you might have *background information* as a category—or perhaps *examples*, or *current references*. There are many different kinds of categories you might have; you need to look at your information and decide what groups your information falls into. After creating the categories, begin to list pieces of information under each, organizing your notes and thoughts in a logical sequence.

DRAFTING

Take your categories and notes and begin writing your essay explaining about your topic. You should have an introductory paragraph which introduces your topic. Write one paragraph in your essay for each of the categories you compiled with your notes. Use any appropriate quotations from your sources, noting the references. Your essay should also have a concluding paragraph. Make a list of the sources you found, noting which ones you actually used in your essay.

PROMPT

When you finish the rough draft of your essay, ask a student who sits near you to read it. After reading your rough draft, he/she should tell you which parts were difficult to understand, if any, and ways in which your work could be improved. Reread your essay considering your critic's comments, and make the corrections you think are necessary.

PROOFREADING

Do a final proofreading of your essay double-checking your grammar, spelling, organization, and the clarity of your ideas.