

THE YOUNG MAN AND THE SEA

Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Award Nominee 2007 Grades 6-8

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The Young Man and the Sea by Rodman Philbrick. Scholastic (The Blue Sky Press),
2004. 192 p.

Summary

Skiff Beaman is twelve years old and struggling on his own in a fishing town on the coast of Maine. Ever since Skiff's mother died, his father has done nothing but lie on the "TV couch" and drink beer. He used to make his living fishing, but he has not stepped foot onto his boat since his wife's death. Skiff realizes that it is up to him to earn money if they are to survive. When their boat, the *Mary Rose*, sinks at the dock, Skiff takes it upon himself to raise the boat. He has his work cut out for him just to get the *Mary Rose* ready to sail. Not only must he raise the sunken boat and earn money for the supplies to repair the boat, but he must also deal with the hostility of the rich brat Tyler Croft. The author provides plenty of details of Skiff's hard work and readers will be impressed with Skiff's determination to succeed. After numerous set backs, Skiff is able to set out to sea to try to harpoon the bluefin tuna. It is the second half of the book that has parallels to Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*.

Awards

School Library Journal's Best Books of the Year 2004

Author's Biography

Rodman Philbrick grew up on the New England coast, where he built boats and worked as a longshoreman. He started writing mystery novels and then moved on to write young adult and children's books, including *Freak the Mighty*, which was made into a popular movie. He and his wife, live in Maine and the Florida Keys.

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

<http://www.seacoastnh.com/film/mighty.html>

Other Titles by Rodman Philbrick

Freak the Mighty

Max the Mighty

The Fire Pony

REM World

The Last Book in the Universe

My Name is America: The Journal of Douglas Allen Deeds

Related Titles: Fishing

Devil's Bridge by Cynthia DeFelice.

Let's Go Fishing in the Ocean by George Travis. (Nonfiction)

Lord of the Deep by Graham Salisbury.

Nim's Island by Wendy Orr.

The Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway.

The Shark Beneath the Reef by Jean Craighead George.

Classroom Connections

See **Scholastic.com – Discussion Guide for the Young Man and the Sea**

<http://www2.scholastic.com/teachers/authorsandbooks/teachingwithbooks/producthome.html?productID=14101&collateralID=11917&displayName=Discussion+Guide>

Discussion guide and links.

See **Scholastic Literature Circle Guide to The Young Man and the Sea**

http://teacher.scholastic.com/clubs/pdfs/youngman_t.pdf

http://teacher.scholastic.com/clubs/pdfs/youngman_q.pdf

Literature Guide (PDF version) contains a book summary, author information, questions and answers to accompany the book and classroom activities.

Language Arts

- Read *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway. Discuss the similarities and differences in the plot and in the characters of *The Young Man and the Sea*.
- Write an essay explaining why you think the author gave each main character their particular name: Samuel “Skiff” Beaman, Tyler Croft, Jack Croft, Mary Roselyn, Spinney Beaman, Mr. Amos Woodwell, and Captain Alex Keelson.
- Write about why you think it is so important to Skiff to raise the *Mary Rose*.
- Using the main character’s nickname “Skiff,” have the students write an acrostic poem to describe his personality.

Science

- Research how fog is made. Conduct an experiment and make your own fog.
<http://eo.ucar.edu/webweather/cloudact1.html>
http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/showbiz_science/showbiz_science005.shtml
- Research the bluefin tuna.
- Build a skiff or a skiff model as an ongoing class project. Complete plans and information can be found in *Building a Weekend Skiff* by Richard Butz and John Montague. ISBN 1-888671—10-6 \$19.95.
- Discuss the term “extinction.” Find fish and animals that are in danger of extinction and discuss ways that it could be prevented.

Math

- Have students figure out how many gallons of gas Skiff should have had with him so that he would not have run out of gas on his way back home in his skiff.

Social Studies

- Draw a map of the Maine coastline. Map where Skiff could have taken his skiff out.

Health

- Research the effects of dehydration on a person’s mental and physical condition.

Music:

- Listen to songs that have to do with fishing villages, fishing, and fathers and sons. http://www.bigtroutradio.com/btr_music.html

- Have students choose a popular song for each character that would be that character's theme song based on the character's personality and situation. See <http://www.secondaryenglish.com/youngmanandthesea.htm> for list of music.

**Connections by Elizabeth Dumas, Good Hope Middle School, West Monroe
Grade 6**

ELA Unit 2: Fiction-Realistic Fiction

Activity 1: Characteristics of Fiction and Realistic Fiction. Excerpts from this novel can be read to illustrate some of the real-life issues found in realistic fiction. The teacher or library media specialist can read Chapter 1 to illustrate some of the real-life issues found in realistic fiction.

Grade 8

ELA Unit 5: Novel

Activity 1: Sustained Silent Reading. This book can be included on a recommended independent reading list for students. It can then be used for the other follow-up activities in this unit.

Web Links

Author and Book

Arizona State University: English Education – The Young Man and the Sea

<http://www.asu.edu/english/englished/yalit/youngmansea/>

Site contains a summary of the book, related links and quiz questions related to the book.

Rodman Philbrick

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

Site features information about the author and his upcoming projects, study guides to some of his books, author contact information, and a list of awards.

Scholastic.com – Discussion Guide for the Young Man and the Sea

<http://www2.scholastic.com/teachers/authorsandbooks/teachingwithbooks/producthome.html?productID=14101&collateralID=11917&displayName=Discussion+Guide>

This is an excellent website with a discussion guide and links to sites about the author. It includes a list of books with similar topics.

Scholastic Literature Circle Guide to The Young Man and the Sea

http://teacher.scholastic.com/clubs/pdfs/youngman_t.pdf

http://teacher.scholastic.com/clubs/pdfs/youngman_q.pdf

Literature Guide (PDF version) contains a book summary, author information, questions and answers to accompany the book and classroom activities. The second site listed includes just the questions and classroom activities (no answers) to the Literature Circle Guide.

SeacoastNH.com

<http://www.seacoastnh.com/film/mighty.html>

Interview with Rodman Philbrick about the filming of his book *Freak the Mighty*.

Secondary English: Young Man and the Sea

<http://www.secondaryenglish.com>

<http://www.secondaryenglish.com/youngmanandthesea.htm>

Review of the book with an evaluation and lists of related books, movies and music.

Teacher CyberGuide: The Old Man and the Sea

<http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/oldman/oldmantg.html>

The San Diego County Office of Education's site contains activities for middle school students based on *The Old Man and the Sea*, which could be adapted for *The Young Man and the Sea*. A comparison could then be made between the two books.

Fishing

Big Trout Radio Station

http://www.bigtroutradio.com/btr_music.html

Fishing songs.

Maine Department of Marine Resources

<http://www.maine.gov/dmr/recreational/fishes/bluefintuna.htm>

Basic information about the bluefin tuna.

The Maine Farmhouse Journal: Fishing

<http://www.crabcoll.com/journal/tuna.html>

Detailed description of fishing for tuna, with facts about tunas.

World Book Online Reference Center: Tuna

<http://www.worldbookonline.com/wb/Article?id=ar570220&st=Bluefin+Tuna>

This has a good article about how big a bluefish tuna can grow and general facts about tuna. (Available through World Book Online subscription by Louisiana State Department of Education)

Weather

Web Weather for Kids

<http://eo.ucar.edu/webweather/cloudact1.html>

Instructions for making fog.

Education World

http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/showbiz_science/showbiz_science005.shtml

Instructions for making fog.