

NOVEL IDEAS

BARBARA ROBINSON'S

THE BEST SCHOOL YEAR EVER



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Novel Ideas

Barabara Robinson's The Best School Year Ever

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USING THE NOVEL STUDY

The novel study can be used in four ways:

- Independent reading at student created paced
- Small group independent reading student created paced
- Small group reading guided by the teacher
- Whole class reading guided by the teacher.

Each chapter or set of chapters has a particular task:

Vocabulary:

Students need to be able to write the definition/meaning of the word in their own words as the word is used in the story. If they are unable to, they need to find the word in the dictionary and match the correct definition with the context that the word is used in the book.

Short response questions:

The questions come in two forms. The first is basic comprehension directly from the story. This is your “Who, What, Where, Why, How, When” question.

The second form is analysis of information and events in the story. The student is required to explain an answer, respond as if they were in the story, or state what they think the character(s) should do.

The remaining sections are key components in studying literature in a detailed and meaningful way. The directions for each part are given within each section.

THE NOVEL STUDY CAN BE PRINTED AND STAPLED AS A PACKET USING THE INTRODUCTION AS THE COVER PAGE.

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THE BEST SCHOOL YEAR EVER

BY

BARBARA ROBINSON

When you think of the coming school year, you think of all of the learning and fun with friends you are going to have. At Woodrow Wilson School, all the students can think about is which Herdman they were going to have in their classroom. It isn't a pleasant thought either.

The Herdmans are rotten, dirty, and crazy. They create disasters everywhere they go and never get caught doing it, even though everyone knows they caused it. They don't limit their mischief to school. The whole town is always on the look out for them.

All the kids get nervous around them and Beth Bradley is no exception. Only this year, she has a class project to find a compliment to say about each classmate, including Imogene Herdman. Good luck, Beth.

Name _____

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

1. In the book, Beth Bradley's way of dealing with Imogene Herdman is avoiding her. Do you or have you ever had a child in your classroom or neighborhood who was a lot of trouble? How did you deal with that child? If you have never experienced this, how do you think you would deal with that child?

2. Take a minute to think about your best friend. Now think of three compliments you would give your best friend and explain why those compliments fit their personality.

CHAPTER ONE

VOCABULARY

Word	Page #	Meaning/Definition
Industrious		
Compliments		
Beware		
Homeliest		
Interesting		
Scouring		

1. What was Imogene's science project? What do you think she is going to do with it now that she doesn't need it?

2. What is the assignment of the year? What is your opinion of this project?

3. Why did Gladys make a "Beware of Gladys" sign and wear it for a week?

4. Who got in trouble for the Herdman's marking up Howard? Why didn't the Herdmans?

CHAPTER TWO

VOCABULARY

Word	Page #	Meaning/Definition
Hysterical		
Investigate		
Typical		
Skittered		
Allergic		
Anonymous		

1. Why weren't the Herdmans allowed in the Town Hall anymore?

2. Why weren't the Herdmans allowed in the Sunoco Station or Post Office?

3. Why weren't the Herdmans allowed in the Laundromat?

4. After everything that happened because of the Herdmans, why do you think they felt they did nothing wrong?

POINT OF VIEW ACTIVITY

Have you ever heard the expression, ‘...walk in someone else’s shoes...’? What that means is looking at a situation or event from someone else’s life. When you read a story, the author is trying to help you imagine what the character is thinking to help you understand why the character did something. Have you ever felt like you wouldn’t have done an event the same way a character did it in a book?

Think about a scene from a movie or television show you have recently watched where a character, or a group of characters, had a point of view that was different than your’s for the situation they were in. Fill in the chart below for two separate shows or movies.

Name of the character	What the character did	What you would have done

Everyone in town looks down on the Herdman children. In some cases, they may deserve it for stealing things. In chapter two, the Herdmans wanted to give their cat a bath. They figured the best way to wash a cat is by putting it in a washing machine. When the cat destroys the Laundromat, they get blamed for everything else that happens after that. They just wanted to wash their cat. There are two points of view in this situation. Use the table below to identify the two points of view and use supporting details from the book.

	Point of View	Details that support this view
The Herdmans are not to blame for all of the problems because they just wanted to wash their cat.	·	
The town blaming the Herdmans for everything that happened in town because of the cat.	·	

POINT OF VIEW CONTINUED...

Directions: Write a letter from Herdman's point of view, asking for advice on how to deal with being blamed for everything the cat caused.

- Tell the person that you are writing to the main problem(s) that you are having with being blamed.
- Ask for his/her advice on how to deal with the situation. Be specific about the kind of advice that you want.
- Thank him/her for taking the time to read your letter.
- Correct spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar.

Planning Page

Introduction: List the problem(s) you are having:

List what specific advice you are going to ask for in the letter:

Conclusion: Notes on how you would end your letter.

CHAPTER THREE

VOCABULARY

Word	Page #	Meaning/Definition
Volunteering		
Respirator		
Recess		
Immediately		
Cooperative		
Kindness		

1. Why didn't Mrs. Bradley like the Herdmans?

2. How did Imogene's freaking out because of Alice's picture affect the whole school?

3. What do you think is the true story about the snake's death?

4. Why did Leroy get the Good School Citizen of the Month Award? Did it work?

SEQUENCING OF EVENTS ACTIVITY

In order to be able to correctly summarize the key events in a story, you need to be able to put those events in the correct order. Sequencing events is just that, putting events in the correct order from start to finish. On this page, use the first three chapters of the book to help you put these main events in order. Use pencil so that you can erase if you need to. Good luck!

- Gladys wears a “Beware of Gladys” sign for a week.
- The Herdmans’ cat destroys the Laundromat.
- Claude gets stuck in the Sunoco Station’s bathroom.
- Imogene tries to sell her science project to Beth.
- The Herdmans put their cat in the Laundromat’s washing machine.
- Miss Farley, the town clerk, drinks frogs from the fountain.
- Howard McCluskey is stolen by the Herdmans.

Now use the table to put the above events in the correct order.

First...	
Second...	
Third...	
Then...	
Next...	
After that...	
Finally...	

Rewrite the listed events into a summary paragraph on the lines below.

CHAPTER FOUR

VOCABULARY

Word	Page #	Meaning/Definition
Refreshments		
Nervous		
Sculpture		
Fascinating		
Success		
Juggle		

1. Why did Mr. Sprague stop using the trash masher?

2. What was good news for the PTA? Do you think so, too? Why?

3. What was Eugene's talent that Gladys discovered? Would you consider it a talent? Explain.

4. Why did Gladys have Eugene smash walnuts on his head at the talent show?

CHAPTER FIVE

VOCABULARY

Word	Page #	Meaning/Definition
Fact		
Password		
Disappear		
Supervisor		
Privacy		
Shifty		

1. What did Alice get to do to make her feel important? How would it make you feel if you were in Alice's shoes?

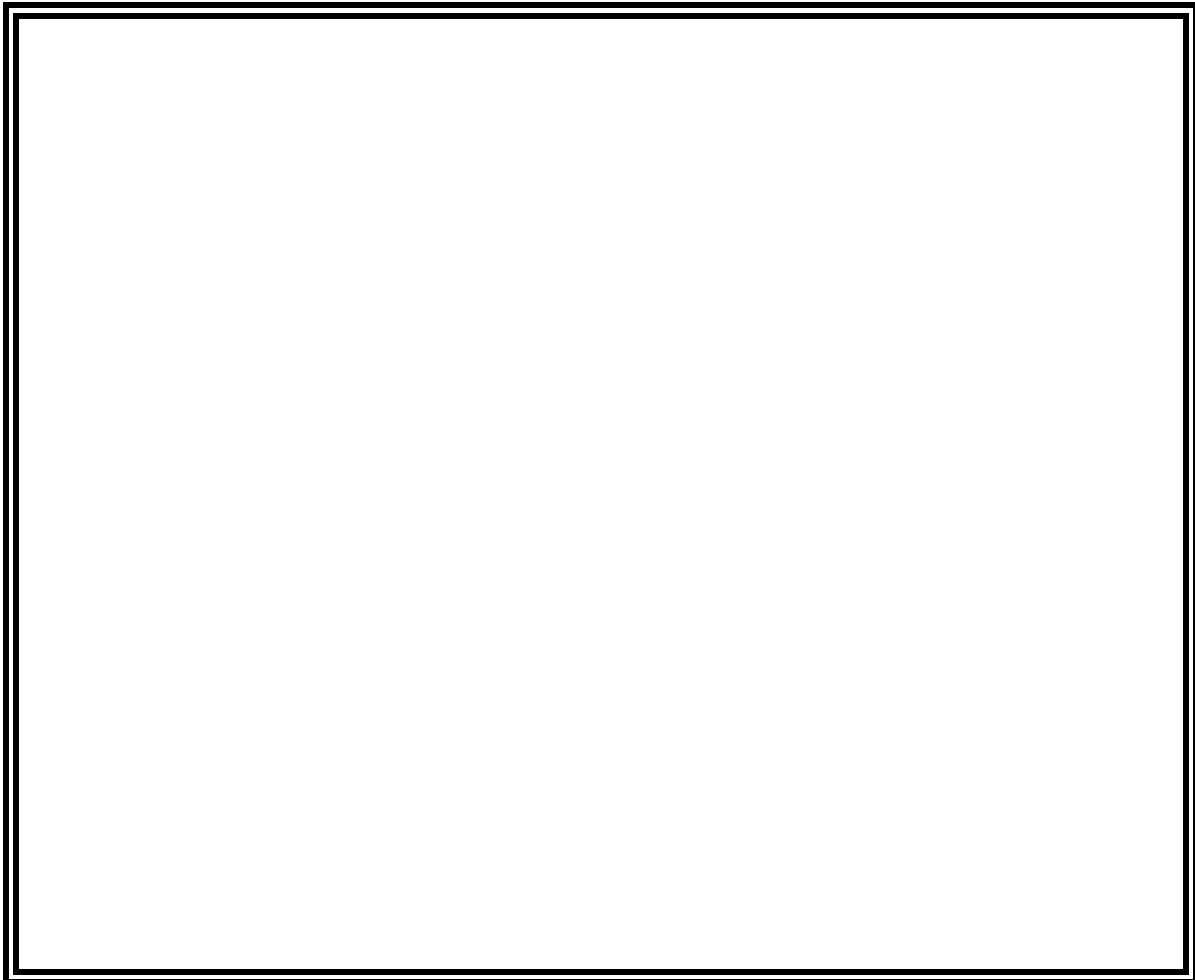
2. Why do you think everyone believed Imogene's story about Kenneth Weaver? Do you?

3. Who opened the teacher's room door for the adults? Why did she wait so long to do it?

4. How did Imogene cover her lie about Kenneth Weaver?

ILLUSTRATING AN EVENT ACTIVITY

Most chapter books are written with very few to no illustrations. Visualizing the events of the story is left to the reader's imagination. On this page, I would like you to illustrate any scene from the book so far. Try to do a scene that you feel gave you a clear picture of what was occurring in the story. Underneath your picture write a sentence or two that explains the part of the reading that you drew.



Explanation:

CHAPTER SIX

VOCABULARY

Word	Page #	Meaning/Definition
Switch		
Outlaw		
Doomed		
Shiny		
Territory		
Fancier		

1. Why was Lester so afraid to get his eyes tested?

2. Why was everyone afraid of Bus #6?

3. What happened when the Herdmans were finally allowed on Bus #6?

4. What was the popular replacement for braces that the students used on their teeth? Why?

CHAPTER SEVEN

VOCABULARY

Word	Page #	Meaning/Definition
Improvement		
Manners		
Gathered		
Stalked		
Pretend		
Sympathetic		

1. Who did the Herdmans have pretend to be a dog? Have you ever pretended to be an animal before? If so, which one and why?

2. Who took the blanket away from Howard during recess? Why?

3. What did Louella think was the reason for Imogene protecting Howard?

4. What do you think I. H. stands for? Why do you think she did it?

CHARACTER ANALYSIS ACTIVITY

When reading a novel it is very natural for the reader to develop opinions of the characters. You decide which characters you like and dislike, which are funny, and which are sincere. This process is called analyzing characters. A good writer wants the reader to do this. It helps the reader understand the story better and enjoy the story more. It also helps the reader become part of the story, in a way, because we also compare characters in stories with people we know or have met.

You have really been able to ‘get to know’ Beth Bradley in this story. Fill in the chart below about her character traits. When you are done, use one character trait in the chart to write a paragraph about Beth’s character. It is important that you include several details from the story to support your choice of trait.

Character Trait	Details To Prove It	Connection to Your Life
1.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
2.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
3.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
4.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Now, choose one other character from the book (Charlie, Alice, Imogene, Louella, Mrs. Wendleken). Be sure to use a lot of details to support the character traits you choose.

Character Trait	Details To Prove It	Connection To Your Life
1.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
2.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
3.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
4.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Write a paragraph that describes the character.

Character Traits

humble	studious	demanding	brave
intelligent	bossy	courageous	honest
gentle	serious	mischievous	loving
funny	friendly	proud	humorous
adventurous	wild	sad	messy
hard-working	resourceful	timid	neat
stubborn	shy	joyful	loyal
bold	cooperative	gullible	daring
lovable	handsome	dainty	ambitious
caring	busy	quiet	carefree
lazy	curious	selfish	patriotic
witty	unselfish	fun-loving	fighter
generous	successful	determined	confident
responsible	energetic	respectful	helpful
cheerful	considerate	thoughtful	dreamer
imaginative	happy	calm	inventive
disagreeable	mannerly	creative	conceited
rude	independent	leader	mean

CHAPTER EIGHT

VOCABULARY

Word	Page #	Meaning/Definition
Absent		
Contagious		
Demonstrate		
Muscled		
Donating		
Mock		

1. Why did the school get a Speed and Safety Award? How was it possible this year?

2. What happened to the second grade fire prevention display?

3. Why didn't anyone want to be on the Fire Safety Team? Would you?

4. What caused most of the students to miss Fire Prevention Day?

CHAPTER NINE

VOCABULARY

Word	Page #	Meaning/Definition
Personality		
Moral		
Collections		
Optimism		
Resourceful		
Comment		

1. Why were the pet parade and the collections event cancelled?

2. How did the students feel about receiving compliments?

3. Write down at least one compliment for each member of your family.
Now add some compliments for some of your friends.

BOOK SUMMARY

Paragraph #1 – Introduction

Book Title: _____

Author: _____

Illustrator: _____

A summary statement about the book: _____

Paragraph #2 –

Setting: Where did the story take place? Describe briefly.

Theme: What idea came up during the entire book or what point was the author trying to make?

Paragraph #3 – Main Characters (Briefly tell about each character and what their role in the book was.)

Beth Bradley:

Charlie Bradley:

Alice Wendleken:

Imogene Herdman:

Louella McCluskey:

The rest of the Herdmans:

Paragraph #4 - #6 – Main Events: Summarize the important events as they happened.

Beginning:

Middle:

End:

Paragraph #7 – Conclusion: Share your personal opinions of the story. What were your likes and dislikes of the story? Would you recommend this story to another reader? Explain.

RUBRIC FOR THE BEST SCHOOL YEAR EVER

	Exceptional Writer 4	Strong Writer 3	Developing Writer 2	Beginning Writer 1
Introduction: Includes book title, author, and statement.				
Ideas are fully developed using: Problem/Solution, Theme, Characters, Setting				
Conclusion: Summarizes what was written about using details from story.				
Develops the topic in clear and detailed way.				
Shows organization and it makes sense sequentially.				
Uses descriptive language.				
Piece has a sense of voice.				
Is written for a specific audience.				
Uses correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.				

Name _____

Score: ___/36

ANSWER KEY
CHAPTER ONE

VOCABULARY Have students put meaning/definitions in their own words

Word	Page #
Industrious	4
Compliments	6
Beware	9
Homeliest	11
Interesting	14
Scouring	15

1. Mice in a box. The remaining answer is student prediction.
2. The assignment is Compliments for Classmates. The remaining answer is student opinion.
3. Gladys bit Charlie and his mother said she should wear that kind of sign, so she did.
4. Beth, Louella, and Charlie got in trouble.
 - Everyone thought Mrs. McCluskey was lucky to get Howard back.

CHAPTER TWO

VOCABULARY Have students put meaning/definitions in their own words

Word	Page #
Hysterical	18
Investigate	20
Typical	22
Skittered	23
Allergic	23
Anonymous	25

1. They put tiny frogs in the drinking fountain and the town clerk accidentally drank some of them.
2. Claude “got stuck” in the Sunoco Station bathroom and “someone” stole motor oil and a wrench. The Herdman pictures were put up with the most wanted posters in the post office.
3. They put the cat in a wash machine. When it got out, it destroyed the place and caused a huge commotion in town.
4. Answers will be student opinions.

POINT OF VIEW ACTIVITY

The person	Point of View	Details that support this view
The Herdmans are not to blame for all of the problems because they just wanted to wash their cat.	All they wanted was to wash the cat. They weren't at the Laundromat when everything happened.	Answers should reflect details from the chapter.
The town blaming the Herdmans for everything that happened in town because of the cat.	It was their cat that caused it, so they should be blamed for what it does.	Answers should reflect details from events the Herdmans caused.

CHAPTER THREE

VOCABULARY Have students put meaning/definitions in their own words

Word	Page #
Volunteering	27
Respirator	28
Recess	29
Immediately	30
Cooperative	33
Kindness	35

1. The Herdmans always mop up the floor with Charlie.
2. The students figured if Imogene was afraid of it, it must be horrible.
3. Answers will be student opinions.
4. The social worker thought Leroy buried the snake and thought the award might change him for the better. No, it didn't work. He buried Charlie in the trash masher soon after.

SEQUENCING OF EVENTS ACTIVITY

- 2 Gladys wears a "Beware of Gladys" sign for a week.
- 7 The Herdman's cat destroys the Laundromat.
- 5 Claude gets stuck in the Sunoco Station's bathroom.
- 1 Imogene tries to sell her science project to Beth.
- 6 The Herdmans put their cat in the Laundromat's washing machine.
- 4 Miss Farley, the town clerk, drinks drank frogs from the fountain.
- 3 Howard McCluskey is stolen by the Herdmans.

CHAPTER FOUR

VOCABULARY Have students put meaning/definitions in their own words

Word	Page #
Refreshments	37
Nervous	39
Sculpture	40
Fascinating	41
Success	42
Juggle	43

1. The Herdmans kept destroying things in it.
2. Mrs. Wendleken quitting was good news. The remaining answer is student opinion.
3. He can smash open walnuts on his forehead. The remaining answer is student opinion.
4. She knew it would be distracting enough for people to watch so she and her siblings could steal all of the refreshments.

CHAPTER FIVE

VOCABULARY Have students put meaning/definitions in their own words

Word	Page #
Fact	49
Password	51
Disappear	54
Supervisor	54

Privacy	56
Shifty	57

1. She had been inside the teacher's room and knew where it was to take messages. The remaining answers will vary.
2. Answers will be student's opinions.
3. Imogene eventually opened the door. She wasn't sure if she should because students weren't allowed in the teacher's room.
4. She said she let him out and that is why he is in Toledo with his family.

CHAPTER SIX

VOCABULARY Have students put meaning/definitions in their own words

Word	Page #
Switch	62
Outlaw	65
Doomed	67
Shiny	69
Territory	71
Fancier	71

1. Gladys told him if he didn't do it right, they would switch his eyes.
2. The Herdmans weren't allowed on so they made everyone believe something was wrong with it.
3. They let turtles lose on everyone and stole lunches.
4. Paperclips were the popular replacements because everyone wanted to have them.

CHAPTER SEVEN

VOCABULARY Have students put meaning/definitions in their own words

Word	Page #
Improvement	72
Manners	73
Gathered	77
Stalked	78
Pretend	81
Sympathetic	87

1. They had Claude pretend to be a dog.
- Remaining answers will vary.
2. Boomer Malone did because he wanted to see Howard turn purple.
3. She thought Imogene wanted Howard to be her dog.
4. Answers will be student opinions.

CHAPTER EIGHT

VOCABULARY Have students put meaning/definitions in their own words

Word	Page #
Absent	88
Contagious	89

Demonstrate	93
Muscled	96
Donating	99
Mock	99

1. They did a really fast fire drill because all of the Herdmans were absent.
2. Someone decorated Smokey the bear with lighters, matches, firecrackers, and a cigar.
3. The Herdmans wanted to be on it.
- Remaining answer will be student opinion.
4. Chicken pox spread throughout the school.

CHAPTER NINE

VOCABULARY Have students put meaning/definitions in their own words

Word	Page #
Personality	103
Moral	103
Collections	105
Optimism	105
Resourceful	110
Comment	114

1. The pet parade was cancelled because the Herdmans whitewashed their cat and let it loose on the parade. The collections event was cancelled because Imogene brought in her belly-button collection and it grossed everyone out.
2. It made them feel nervous to hear someone give them compliments in their face.
3. Answers will be student compliments for family and friends.