

Oggie Cooder

By Sarah Weeks

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Library of Congress Summary: Quirky fourth-grader Oggie Cooder goes from being shunned to everyone's best friend when his uncanny ability to chew slices of cheese into the shapes of states wins him a slot on a popular television talent show, but he soon learns the perils of being a celebrity – and having a neighbor girl as his manager.

Book Information:

Time Period: Contemporary

Setting/Location: Wawatosa, Wisconsin

Genre: Contemporary Fiction

Curriculum Ties: geography

Booktalk: <http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/collateral.jsp?id=31455>

Author Information

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

Sarah Weeks' website includes her biography and information about her involvement in Reader's Theatre. Although her website is more teacher than student oriented, it does contain a FAQ interview that will allow the students to learn more about this author. This website also contains a list of all of Weeks' books that are divided into sections by novels, middle grade chapter books, picture books with music, picture books, early reader books, and pop ups and lift-the-flap books.

Chapters 1-3

Questions:

1. What do you think the author means when she calls Oggie a “cheese carving champion” (pg. 2)? What do you think cheese carving means?
2. What have we learned about Oggie that would make his teachers describe him as “unique”, “quirky”, and “one of a kind”?
3. What do you think it sounds like when Oggie says “Prrrr-ip!!!”?

Journal Topic: Pretend you entered a contest just like Oggie entered the “name-the-new-bagel” contest. What would be your dream vacation spot for the grand prize? Describe and illustrate where the dream spot would be located, why, what it looks like, what you would do there, and who you would take with you there.

Vocabulary:

Deserted- abandoned; lonely (pg. 1)

Ukulele- a small, guitarlike musical instrument (pg. 1)

Aloft – at or to a great height (pg. 3)

Crochet- needlework done with a needle having a small hook at one end for drawing the thread or yarn through intertwined loops (pg. 15)

Kazoo- a musical toy consisting of a tube that is open at both ends and has a hole in the side covered with parchment or membrane, which produces a buzzing sound when the performer hums into one end (pg. 19)

Chapters 4-6

Questions:

1. What types of words did Oggie say they had learned for their spelling test that week? (pg. 26; *o-u-s* words). What are some words that you can think of that end in *o-u-s*?
2. Oggie asks “[y]ou told us that we were supposed to pass our papers to the person sitting in front of us...how am I supposed to do [that] when there isn’t anybody sitting in front of me?” (pg. 27). What do you think Mr. Snolinovsky will tell him to do to solve his problem?

3. What have we learned so far about charving?
 - Oggie does it when he's nervous
 - American cheese works best
 - Charving is chewing and carving cheese into states
 - The perfect temperature for charving
 - Charving is going to somehow help Donnica to get to Hollywood.

Journal Topic: Predict how charving is going to help get Donnica to Hollywood.

Vocabulary

Absentmindedly- lost in thought and unaware of one's surroundings or actions (pg. 39)

Atlas- a bound collection of maps (pg 40)

Chapters 7-9

Questions:

1. What type of literary device is used in "ideas are like seeds"? (pg. 43) Can you find any other examples like this?
2. What did Donnica tell Oggie she needed to learn how to charve for? (pg. 67)
3. Why do you think Donnica did not want her friends to see the flyer? What was the flyer for?

Journal Writing:

1. We find out that Oggie's least favorite subject is creative writing. What is your least favorite or favorite subject? Why?
2. Write about an interesting talent you have. How did you find out you had this talent? How do you use this talent? If you can't think of one, write about a talent that a family member or friend has.

Vocabulary

Grimaced- a facial expression usually of disgust, disapproval, or pain (pg. 50)

Clutching- to grip or hold tightly; firmly (pg. 51)

Haste- rapidity of motion (pg. 60)

Manicured- well taken care of (pg. 62)

Careening- to lean, sway, or tip to one side while in motion (pg. 62)

Chapters 10-12

Questions:

1. What do you think Oggie is forgetting to tell Donnica?
2. Why do you think Oggie said Kansas, Wyoming, and Colorado are the easiest states to charve?
3. What does Oggie tell Donnica is the key to charving? (pg. 72)

Journal Writing:

1. Do you think Donnica will make it to Hollywood? Why or why not?
2. What is your favorite kind of pizza toppings? If you could put any toppings on a pizza, what would you choose? Why did you choose these toppings?

Vocabulary:

Mangled-spoiled or ruined (pg. 74)

Frenzy- a fit or spell of wild excitement (pg. 76)

Peninsula- a piece of land jutting out into the water (pg. 85)

Unencumbered- to remove a burden or load (pg. 86)

Chapters 13-15

Questions:

1. How do you think Donnica will do at the Hidden Talent tryouts? Why?

2. Why was Donnica having so much trouble with carving the cheese?
3. Why do you think Donnica says “*With-consin*” instead of “*Wisconsin*.”

Journal Writing: Hannah tells Oggie that “everybody watches [*Hidden Talents*]”. Tell a little about your favorite television show or movie. How would you feel if your family did not own a television? If you did not have a television, what would you do instead?

Vocabulary:

Emerged- to come fourth into view or notice (pg. 95)

Unison- in perfect agreement; at the same time (pg. 98)

Megaphone- a cone-shaped device for magnifying or directing the voice (pg. 63)

Justice- to receive deserved punishment or reward (pg. 105)

Chapters 16-17

Questions:

1. What do you think Oggie was planning on doing with the ten thousand dollars?
2. Why do you think Oggie lets Donnica be his manager after she tried to steal his talent?
3. Why is Donnica being so nice to Oggie all of a sudden? Who else is acting differently towards Oggie?

Journal Writing: Pretend you are a news reporter who wrote the article in the Watwatosa newspaper headlined “Local Boy Becomes Big Cheese”. Write one to two paragraphs to go along with the headline.

Vocabulary:

Gleam- a brief or faint appearance; small bright light (pg. 121)

Confrontation- a face to face meeting; clashing of ideas (pg. 126)

Dismayed- to cause to lose courage or resolution (pg. 127)

Chapters 18-20

Questions:

1. What does Brad mean by “Oggie Fever”? Why do people want to be just like Oggie? What famous people do you like to dress as or look up to?
2. What do you think is in the “...small cardboard box sitting in the basket attached to [Donnica’s] handlebars”? (pg. 149).
3. Why does Oggie’s stomach continue to feel his stomach to pinch harder and harder?

Journal Writing: Pretend you are a costume designer. What clothes would you design for yourself to wear that would best describe your personality? Draw a picture of what your clothes would look like and explain why that outfit would fit your personality.

Vocabulary:

Formality- Following or according with established form, custom, or rule (pg.135)

Seersucker- a light fabric of linen, cotton, or rayon usually striped and slightly puckered (pg. 136)

Flustered- to look upset or confused (pg. 140)

Persuasive- able to easily convince (pg. 141)

Reluctantly- To show or feel hesitation (pg. 148)

Turban- a headdress (pg. 152)

Chapters 21-23

Questions:

1. Why did all of the reporters show up at Oggie’s house? Why do you think Donnica enjoyed talking to the press?

2. How do you feel about Oggie's new look? Do you think how he dresses still fits his personality? Why or why not?
3. Do you think Oggie would have won the competition if he had gone on *Hidden Talents*? Do you think Oggie made the right choice by not going on the show *Hidden Talents*? Why or why not?

Journal Writing:

1. If you won ten thousand dollars, what would you spend the money on?
2. What was your favorite part about this book? Did you enjoy reading this book? Why or why not? What kind of lessons did you learn from reading *Oggie Cooder*?

Vocabulary:

Knickers- loose fitting short pants gathered at the knee (162)

Snarled- to speak in a threatening manner suggestive of a dog's snarl (166)

Other Works by Sarah Weeks:

Oggie Cooder: Party Animal

The Guy Series: Regular Guy, Guy Time, My Guy, Guy Wire

The Boyd Series: Beware of Mad Dog!, Get Well Soon Or Else, Danger Boys Dancing!, Fink's Funk

Additional Websites:

<http://www.ilfonline.org/clientuploads/YHBA/10-11%20YHBA%20Resources/OggieCooder.pdf>

<http://k8talksbooks.blogspot.com/2009/02/oggie-cooder-by-sarah-weeks.html>

The above link includes a description of all of the characters in the book and more questions and journaling ideas that can be used when reading the book.

http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/web_games.htm

The above link is a great interactive website that will help students to learn what the different states look like and the state capitals.