

LEMONY SNICKET

A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS

A Teacher's Guide to
Lemony Snicket's
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Dear Educator,

Teachers tend to be noble people, because there are few deeds nobler than interesting a young person in a good book. Even in the noblest of professions, however, there can be a few bad apples, an expression which here means “teachers who would rather interest their students in something unpleasant.” The books in *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, for instance, include man-eating leeches, large vocabulary words, and a talentless vice principal who subjects his students to six-hour violin recitals.

In fact, the only thing worse for an impressionable young mind than a book in *A Series of Unfortunate Events* is an attractively packaged and inexpensively priced paperback book in *A Series of Unfortunate Events*. Unless you're a bad apple, you'd be much better off folding this teaching guide into a paper airplane and sailing it straight out your classroom window.

Wouldn't you rather teach something else?

With all due respect,

Lemony Snicket

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The activities in this guide are designed to capitalize on the oddly irresistible genius of Lemony Snicket. In addition to in-depth teaching plans for the first book of the series, *The Bad Beginning*, you will find extensive across-the-series activities that incorporate the details of Books 2 through 13. Activities can be used for independent readers, small groups, or full classes. Whether used in their entirety or in part, these activities will allow students to become more adept in understanding vocabulary, idioms, anagrams, word choice, character development, and thematic statements. This guide is meant to supplement and enhance the teaching of *A Series of Unfortunate Events* and to create a classroom environment that would impress Mr. Snicket himself.

ABOUT THIS SERIES

When the Baudelaire parents perish in a terrible fire, Mr. Poe, a banker and friend of the family, assumes responsibility for the Baudelaire orphans and their fortune. Complying with instructions in their parents' will, Mr. Poe places the children—Violet, a creative inventor at age 14, Klaus, an avid reader at age 12, and Sunny, a baby with a unique vocabulary and four very sharp teeth—with their nearest distant relative, Count Olaf, an actor who is determined to steal their fortune. Count Olaf relentlessly pursues the children from one guardian to another, hatching a series of ever-more-diabolical plots. The result is a series of misadventures in which the three children can save themselves only by out-thinking the treacherous villain and his associates.

The Baudelaire orphans' lives become even more complex when they befriend the Quagmire triplets, whose parents also died in a fire, and the children learn that a secret organization known as V.F.D. is somehow intricately involved in their past, present, and future. The orphans' pursuit to discover what V.F.D. is and how their parents were connected to it proves difficult and dangerous, but with every misadventure they hope to arrive one step closer to the truth.

Those hoping to learn more about Lemony Snicket and his role in *A Series of Unfortunate Events* can consult *Lemony Snicket: The Unauthorized Autobiography* and/or the startling private correspondence collected in *The Beatrice Letters*.

AN IN-DEPTH STUDY OF A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS BOOK 1: THE BAD BEGINNING

About the Book

After learning of their parents' death in a terrible fire, Violet, Klaus, and Sunny Baudelaire are taken to live with Count Olaf, a bad actor and despicable villain. The Baudelaire parents left behind a vast fortune, and Count Olaf plans on taking control of the children's inheritance by tricking Violet into marrying him. When the children discover his plan, Count Olaf kidnaps Sunny, intending to hold her hostage until the mockery of a wedding takes place. Fortunately for Violet, she devises a plan to foil his scheme just in time to save Sunny and their fortune.



Discussion Questions

1. Why does Lemony Snicket warn readers at the beginning and several times throughout the book to put it down and read something else? Why would anyone want to read a book when they have been forewarned that the likeable main characters will meet nothing but despair? Are Snicket's warnings sincere? What effect do they have?
2. Mr. Poe and Justice Strauss do not believe the children's accounts of Count Olaf's mistreatment. Why not? How might the Baudelaire children have convinced them of Count Olaf's cruelty? How could the adults have helped the children?
3. The children soon realize that they must depend on one another and their own wits in order to survive in Count Olaf's care. How are each of their special skills crucial to their survival?
4. The morning after they visit Mr. Poe at the bank, Count Olaf serves the children oatmeal with fresh raspberries. Why is he suddenly so kind to them?
5. Count Olaf and his troupe are all actors. How does being actors help them in their villainous plots?
6. The Baudelaires are often the victims of bad luck. What could they do to change their situation?
7. Who is Lemony Snicket? How does he know so much about the Baudelaire children?
8. Who is Al Funcoot? What did he write?



Vocabulary Activities—Book 1

Below is a selection of vocabulary words from each chapter of *The Bad Beginning*. Use one or all of the following three vocabulary activities in conjunction with this list of words.

CHAPTER 2

- Recuperate
- Grotesque
- Briskly
- Solemnly

CHAPTER 3

- Abominably

CHAPTER 5

- Invigorated

CHAPTER 7

- Incentive

CHAPTER 8

- Dilemma

CHAPTER 9

- Skulk
- Relinquished

CHAPTER 10

- Despondent
- Nefarious
- Accomplice

CHAPTER 11

- Scurry
- Hoisted
- Illegible
- Predicament

CHAPTER 12

- Pandemonium
- Insipid
- Duration

CHAPTER 13

- Treachery

1. Challenge students to write haiku, limerick, and/or diamante poems using any of the vocabulary words as the title and focus of the poem.
2. Ask students to define the vocabulary words on a 3" x 5" note card. Then have students work in small groups to prepare a demonstration for each of the words. Have the small groups present their demonstrations and allow the class to guess their words.
3. Ask students to identify the part of speech for each of the vocabulary words and categorize them accordingly. Have students work with partners or in small groups to write sentences using their vocabulary word and additional words that begin with the same letter (alliteration). Practice reading the tongue-twister sentences and share them with the class.

Journal Prompts—Book 1

- ✿ All is not gloomy with the Baudelaire children—they enjoy themselves at Briny Beach before Mr. Poe’s arrival, they pass the time relaxing and reading books from Justice Strauss’s library, and they enjoy one another’s company. Write about a difficult situation that was made better by the people you were with or by what you were doing. What happened? How did others help you adjust? How did your activity help make you feel differently?
- ✿ Lemony Snicket says, “Unless you have been very, very lucky, you have undoubtedly experienced events in your life that have made you cry. So unless you have been very, very lucky, you know that a good, long session of weeping can often make you feel better, even if your circumstances have not changed one bit.” Write about a time when crying made you feel better. Why do you think crying helped?
- ✿ Mrs. Poe bought horrible, itchy clothes for the Baudelaire children to wear, and they hated wearing them. Write about a time that you had to wear clothing you did not like or that was uncomfortable. While you were suffering, where did you go and what did you do in those clothes? Which was worse—the event or the clothes?
- ✿ Even though Violet and Klaus cooked him and his troupe a delicious meal, Count Olaf was angry because he wanted roast beef. Write about a time you did something nice for someone else, but it didn’t result in the reaction you expected. What went wrong? How did you feel? How do you wish the other person had acted?

Research/Writing Activities—Book 1

- ✿ Ask students to assume the role of one of the major characters and to keep a journal during the course of the story recording the character’s feelings and emotions as each major event unfolds. Students may also include artwork to illustrate their journal.
- ✿ Have students form small groups and ask them to go to their school or public library and peruse the collection of cookbooks. Ask each group to plan a three-course meal for Count Olaf and his acting troupe. Course one should be an appetizer, soup, or salad; course two should be a main dish, including meat and vegetables; and course three should be a dessert. Ask students to make an illustrated menu.
- ✿ Using *The Marvelous Marriage* as a model, ask each group of three to five students to select a situation in *The Bad Beginning* and write a short one-act play about it. For example, students can select the scene when the children meet Count Olaf for the first time or the scene with Count Olaf’s dinner with his troupe, or any other scene with multiple characters. Students should write the script, cast the characters, and then, after practicing and gathering costumes, present their play to the class.
- ✿ Brett Helquist illustrates *The Bad Beginning*, but as with any book, not every scene can be pictured. Ask each student to illustrate (with an original drawing or pictures from the Internet or magazines) a place, a character, or an event from the novel that was not illustrated by Brett Helquist. Students should add an appropriate caption under each illustration. Display the illustrations in the classroom.
- ✿ Mr. Poe invites the Baudelaires to contact him at the bank if they have any questions, but he refuses to help when they visit him. Invite students to write a formal letter to Mr. Poe at Mulctuary Money Management, informing him of the situation at Count Olaf’s house and trying to convince him to take action to help the Baudelaires. Letters may be posted together on the classroom bulletin board.

ACROSS THE SERIES

BOOKS 2 THROUGH 13

Discussion Questions

1. Violet says that everyone should keep a few secrets, and almost every character in A Series of Unfortunate Events keeps secrets. What are the disadvantages of keeping secrets? How can keeping secrets be a good thing?
2. A Series of Unfortunate Events takes place over an unspecified time period. During the course of events, in what ways does each of the Baudelaire children change? What are the most important lessons they learn?
3. In *The Vile Village* (Book 7), Lemony Snicket's brother, Jacques, appears; at the end of *The Slippery Slope* (Book 10), his sister, Kit Snicket, comes on the scene. How does Lemony Snicket's role in the story change as the series goes on? What do you think his relationship to the Baudelaire siblings is? Why is it Mr. Snicket's "solemn obligation" to tell their tale?
4. Many of the Baudelaire's guardians suffer from a "fatal flaw" that makes them unhelpful, no matter how well-meaning they are. For instance, Aunt Josephine's fear of almost everything prevents her from taking proper care of the children. What are the fatal flaws of some of the Baudelaire's other guardians? How do their fatal flaws endanger the guardian, the children, or both?
5. The Baudelaire children and the Quagmire triplets realize that they are sending signals, breaking codes, discovering secrets, and wearing disguises, all the things the V.F.D. volunteers do. What role did their parents play in training them? Would their parents be proud of them? Why or why not?
6. The Baudelaire orphans are betrayed or neglected by many of the people they trust, and mistreated by many of the villains they fear. How do Violet, Klaus, and Sunny distinguish the "good" people from the "bad" people when both have hurt them? How does the behavior of the volunteers ultimately affect the decisions the children make?
7. What villainous acts do Violet, Klaus, and Sunny commit? How do their crimes affect what others think about them? How do these acts affect how they feel about themselves?
8. In *The Wide Window*, Lemony Snicket writes, "If you are allergic to a thing, it is best not to put that thing in your mouth, particularly if the thing is cats." What role does humor play in Lemony Snicket's writing? Do you think he's ever kidding? Can something be funny and sad at the same time?
9. Is all of the orphans' misfortune Count Olaf's fault? Why or why not?
10. Who is Beatrice and what connection does she have to the Baudelaire orphans? Why did Lemony Snicket dedicate the books to her? Why is she an important character in the series?



ACROSS-THE-SERIES ACTIVITIES

Art, Language, and Literature

INGENIOUS ILLUSTRATIONS

Ask students to choose from one of the ideas listed below or find another equally descriptive passage to illustrate. Students may want to draw a triptych as Mr. Snicket described in *The Austere Academy* to illustrate some of the events including both the Quagmire and Baudelaire orphans. Students should be encouraged to use different types of art media: charcoal, pastels, crayons, tempera paints, watercolors, pens, pencils, markers, colored pencils, etc.

- **THE REPTILE ROOM**—Using colored pencils, draw the Reptile Room complete with the library and the cages for the snakes, toads, lizards, and other amazing creatures.
- **THE AUSTERE ACADEMY**—Illustrate the tin orphan shack at the Prufrock Preparatory School where Violet, Klaus, and Sunny were forced to stay.
- **THE VILE VILLAGE**—Draw Hector's self-sustaining hot air mobile home, escaping with the Quagmire triplets.
- **THE CARNIVOROUS CARNIVAL**—Draw the Caligari Carnival, with its tents, caravans, and dilapidated roller coaster. Or draw a performance at the freak show, with Hugo the hunchback, Collette the contortionist, and Kevin, who is ambidexterous.
- **THE SLIPPERY SLOPE**—Illustrate the V.F.D. headquarters that Violet, Klaus, and Quigley found destroyed by fire.
- **THE PENULTIMATE PERIL**—Illustrate a scene from the Hotel Denouement or draw the exterior, including the reflecting pond.

ABSORBING ALLUSIONS

Lemony Snicket artfully uses literary and historical allusions to give clues about the nature of characters and settings. Provide students with the following list of people and places from A Series of Unfortunate Events. Then, ask students to work in small groups to research the terms to identify allusions to world leaders, famous authors, and ancient places and to deduce the possible reasons Mr. Snicket chose them for his stories. Can they find any other allusions in the books?

PEOPLE

- Vice Principal Nero
- Dr. Georgina Orwell
- Coach Ghengis
- Duncan & Isadora Quagmire
- Mr. Fagin
- Detective Dupin
- Hugo and Colette

PLACES

- Damocles Dock
- Caligari Carnival
- Prufrock Preparatory School
- Heimlich Hospital
- Nevermore Tree
- Mortmain Mountains
- Café Salmonella

THRILLING THEMES

Themes are the main ideas of the story; they are not the subjects of the work, but, instead, are insights about life or human nature. Based on this definition of theme, ask students to write a one-sentence theme of *A Series of Unfortunate Events* and find a famous quote—or even a quote from the books themselves—that exemplifies the theme. Some possible themes for the books in *A Series of Unfortunate Events* are courage, loyalty, overcoming challenges, family relationships, and friendship. Have students create an inspirational poster using their quote and adding illustrations suggested by the series. Display posters in the classroom.

RIGOROUS RESEARCH

The Baudelaire orphans find themselves in numerous situations in which Klaus, because of his research skills, is able to help them escape or find the solution to a problem. Ask students to assume the role of Klaus and research one of the following areas or another of their own choosing suggested by book events.

- **THE REPTILE ROOM**—Research poisonous snakes and other unusual reptiles that could have been present in Uncle Monty's reptile room.
- **THE MISERABLE MILL**—Research hypnosis, including the theory behind how it works, common methods and uses, and examples of how it can make people do things against their will, like Klaus did.
- **THE VILE VILLAGE**—Research the history of hot air balloons and how they work.
- **THE CARNIVOROUS CARNIVAL**—Investigate the history of carnival freak shows to determine the authenticity of the freak show at Madame Lulu's Caligari Carnival.
- **THE GRIM GROTTO**—Research the history of submarines and how they work. Or, investigate grottos and explain what they are and how they are formed, with a focus on famous grottos in the world today.

✿ *Students can present their information as taped interviews with an expert, PowerPoint presentations, labeled drawings, creative writings, brochures, or letters.*

LIVELY LIBRARIES

Every book in *A Series of Unfortunate Events* includes a library in the story line, and each library contains books based on the preferences, hobbies, and interests of the person who owns the library. Examples of libraries in the series include Uncle Monty's library of books about reptiles, Aunt Josephine's library of books on grammar, Prufrock Preparatory School's collection of academic books, Heimlich Hospital's library of records, and Madame Lulu's secret archival library under the tablecloth. Ask students to design a library they would like to frequent, complete with the types of books they would want and a list of book titles, a blueprint of the floor plan with the layout of shelving units, furniture and seating choices, creative extras, and decor ideas. Students can present their plans to the class in blueprint form or prepare a 3-D model of their library to display in the school library.

READER BEWARE!

Ask students to select a favorite book (one that is not part of *A Series of Unfortunate Events*) and rewrite that book's back cover or jacket flap in the Snicket voice, telling readers why they shouldn't read it. Students can reread the first few pages of any book in *A Series of Unfortunate Events* for a model on how to warn readers about the book. Videotape students as they read and demonstrate their book flaps and share the videotape with other classes or the librarian to use during Children's Book Week.

CRAZY COMMERCIALS

Have students form small groups. Ask them to choose one of the following items or places featured in *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, and write a commercial for it that discourages viewers from purchasing or visiting what's advertised, à la Snicket. Students should include warnings against the purchase of the item as well as the possible repercussions that could result from the ill-advised purchase of the advertised product. Ask each group to perform their anti-commercial for the class.

- Anxious Clown Restaurant
- Café Salmonella
- Captain Sham's Sailboat Rentals
- *The Daily Punctilio*
- Prufrock Preparatory School
- Self-Sustaining Hot Air Mobile Home
- Caligari Carnival
- The House of Freaks
- The Hotel Denouement

CURIOUS COMMONPLACE BOOK

Quigley Quagmire, and later Klaus Baudelaire, both keep commonplace books, in which they write any important-seeming information they come across. Assign small groups two to four books each in the series and have them compile pages for a commonplace book, including any possible evidence regarding the Baudelaire's parents, the meaning of V.F.D., and the nature of the secret organization. Bind all of the groups' contributions into one commonplace book, and invite the class to draw their own conclusions to the mysteries that plague the Baudelaires. Consider putting the completed commonplace book on display in the school library, to help other investigators of the Baudelaire case.

RIOTOUS REVERSALS

Most people will automatically want to do what you tell them not to, and Lemony Snicket is a master at eliciting this response. Modeling his writing style, ask students to write one of the following items in the voice of Snicket, who turns everything on its head:

- A birthday invitation
- A holiday card
- A campaign speech for a class office
- A school club announcement
- A get-well card

✿ *Students can read their writing to the class and display their cards and invitations.*

IDENTIFIABLE IDIOMS

An idiom is a type of figurative language in which a group of words has a secondary meaning that is different from the literal meaning of the individual words. Also, idioms do not always follow the normal rules of meaning and grammar. Mr. Snicket frequently uses idioms to help convey the meaning of a situation or a character description. Ask students to find idioms from an idiom dictionary or online websites that describe or relate to one of the major characters or events in the series. For example: “A leopard can’t change his spots” (Count Olaf), “Last but not least” (Sunny), and “Pull the wool over his eyes” (Mr. Poe). Ask students to write the idiom on a sentence strip with the character or event listed on the reverse side. Have students in the class guess the character or event suggested by the idiom. Display the sentence strips on the wall of the classroom.

DELIRIOUS DICTIONARY

Sunny speaks using a unique vocabulary, and only Violet and Klaus can understand what she says. Assign small groups two to four books each from A Series of Unfortunate Events, and ask them to make a nonsense dictionary, listing Sunny’s words and their meanings. Combine each group’s list to make one booklet and ask for a volunteer to create the cover.

AMUSING ACRONYMS

V.F.D. is an organization whose members are highly trained in the use of coded messages and disguises. Lemony Snicket introduces V.F.D. to his readers in *The Austere Academy* (Book 5) and continually drops clues to help or, more accurately, to confuse the readers about what it does and who its members are. Ask students to make a list of the phrases Lemony Snicket uses with the initials V.F.D. Here are a few to get them started:

- Very Fancy Doilies
- Volunteers Fighting Disease
- Very Frightening Dilemma
- Village of Fowl Devotees
- Verbal Fridge Dialogue

✿ *As an extension, using the initials of their own names, have students write one or more mysterious acronyms that describe a character or situation in the book. Have students write their acronyms on sentence strips and post them around the room.*

NOTEWORTHY NEWSPAPER

The Daily Punctilio plays a role in the Baudelaire children’s lives over which they have no control. Now that the students know “the rest of the story,” ask them to write, illustrate, and compile a special edition of the newspaper, including front-page headlines and stories, obituaries, a travel section, theater reviews, and classified ads.

EDITORIAL EPILOGUE

After Chapter 14 in *The End*, there is no letter “To My Kind Editor” from Lemony Snicket. Ask students to assume the voice of Lemony Snicket and write a final letter to his editor, perhaps telling her of Mr. Snicket’s future plans, thanking her for a job well done on A Series of Unfortunate Events, or scolding her for encouraging so many people to read the series. Compile all of the students’ letters to the editor in a book.

ACROSS-THE-SERIES ACTIVITIES

Character Studies

TRAITOROUS CHARACTER TRAITS

The following is a list of character traits that the main characters in *A Series of Unfortunate Events* possess. Have students work with a partner to select a character and connect the appropriate traits to the character. Students can then write an introduction for that character, adding additional information they gleaned from their reading, including the character's aliases and disguises, and stating in their introduction how the character has changed since he or she was originally introduced in the series. Have students present a "parade of characters" in which one partner will introduce the character and the other partner will assume the dress, props, mannerisms, and walk of the character in a class presentation.

CHARACTERS

Sunny Baudelaire

Klaus Baudelaire

Violet Baudelaire

Count Olaf

Isadora Quagmire

Duncan Quagmire

Mr. Poe

Lemony Snicket

Esmé Squalor

Carmelita Spats

CHARACTER TRAITS

- Constantly coughing into a white handkerchief
- Unhelpful in an innocent, yet annoying way
- Speaks in a unique vocabulary
- World traveler and writer
- Carries a black notebook
- Inventor of amazing devices
- Reader and researcher of both boring and interesting books
- A biter extraordinaire
- Carries a dark green notebook
- A poet who writes in couplets
- Jealous of Beatrice
- A journalist who takes copious notes
- An evil, treacherous man who is a master of disguise
- Likes to define words
- Married to Jerome, a nice man
- A filthy escape artist
- Manager of the Baudelaire fortune
- In love with Beatrice
- A rude, mean girl who thinks she's the best at everything
- A budding chef with the ability to make something from nothing
- The least delightful person on earth

CHARACTER CATEGORIES

Some of the Baudelaire children's guardians were genuinely kind and took care of them, offering them comfort and compassion when needed. Other guardians, either knowingly or unknowingly, helped Count Olaf in his treacherous plans to take control of the Baudelaire fortune. Ask students to form small groups and brainstorm a list of the guardians, and then divide the guardians into two categories, stating why each person is in that particular category. Then, have students write an epitaph, a eulogy, a newspaper article, a thank-you note, or a police report, as is appropriate for that guardian.

HORRIFIC HENCHPEOPLE “WANTED” POSTERS

Count Olaf gathers despicable associates to aid him in his devious plans for the orphans. As a class, brainstorm a list of some of these horrendous characters from various books in the series. Then ask students to choose one character from Olaf’s treacherous troupe and prepare a “wanted” poster of that character. Students should sketch the character based on details from the book(s), and then write a summary that includes some or all of the following details:

- A physical description
- Personality traits and mental attributes of the evil character
- An explanation of the character’s specific involvement with Olaf and the orphans
- A notation of which book(s) the character appears in
- Information about where the character was last seen
- Aliases the character might assume
- Reward information for the character’s whereabouts

✿ *Students can share their posters and descriptions with the full class or in small groups. Once shared, all posters can be hung up to create a post office-style “Characters Unfortunately Most Wanted” bulletin board.*

CHARACTER CREATIONS

Ask each student to create a new guardian for the Baudelaire orphans, or a new villainous associate for Count Olaf, by completing the following tasks:

1. Write an introduction to the character in the style of Lemony Snicket, focusing on their unusual character traits and what effect they will have on the lives of the Baudelaires.
2. Give a brief history of the character, including such details as their family members, their associates, and their past crimes and/or noble acts.
3. Name the character using an anagram of someone in the news, a family member, a friend, or the student’s own name.
4. Draw a picture of the character, complete with the attire, and state why the character would dress the way he or she does.
5. Design the character’s living quarters and sketch a blueprint.
6. Create a grocery shopping list, a holiday gift list, or a “Things to Do” list that might be found in the character’s pocket.
7. Invent a Snicket-style recipe for the character’s favorite food.

✿ *As a culmination to the character activities and a celebration of Lemony Snicket, ask students to dress up like their character and/or bring the food item for the recipe they wrote. Take pictures for the school newsletter and/or website.*



V.F.D. FAMILY DIAGRAM

Most of the characters in *A Series of Unfortunate Events* are associated in one way or another with V.F.D., the secret organization introduced in *The Austere Academy* (Book 5). Ask students in small groups to select three or four of the books in the series, making sure all thirteen books are represented. Each group should make a list of the major characters in their selected books and write by each character's name how the character is associated with V.F.D. Then on a large piece of butcher paper on one wall of the classroom, design a V.F.D. "family" tree as a class. Have students use their character lists to connect the characters to one another and to the Baudelaires and the Quagmires.

DIFFERENT DENOUEMENT

Klaus's reading and his ability to deduce what is important frequently allow him to get himself and his siblings out of difficult situations. Similarly, Violet's inventions and Sunny's sharp teeth manage to save the siblings from certain misfortune again and again. Just as movies on DVD often have alternate endings in the "extras," have students work in pairs to write an alternate escape or rescue to the "close calls" found in the books. Like Klaus, Violet, and Sunny, students must use knowledge/research, an ingenious invention (real or fictional), very sharp teeth, or all three, to escape the devices of Count Olaf. Students should write alternate scenes incorporating their research or invention to read aloud. They may add sound effects and/or background music to heighten the suspense.

AMUSING ANAGRAMS

Lemony Snicket is a master of anagrams, and many of the characters have aliases created by the use of an anagram. Give each student five 3" x 5" cards. Ask them to write on each card an original anagram of the name of one of the characters in the books; on the back, they should write the character name. Then, in small groups of 3–4 students, allow each student to quiz classmates, flashcard-style, with the anagram cards he/she has created. Each student takes a turn to hold up one of their cards, anagram side showing. Whichever of the other students first identifies the character name that matches the anagram gets a point. If there is time, students can switch groups to quiz other classmates with their cards. After playing this game a few times, start over by asking students to write five new anagrams of the names of five students in their class and/or teachers in their school.

PHONY PHILOSOPHIES

Many of the characters in *A Series of Unfortunate Events* operate with a personal philosophy of life. Captain Widdershins says, "He or she who hesitates is lost"; Madame Lulu says, "Give them what they want"; Count Olaf and Esmé focus on "the greater good" (for themselves). Ask students to work in small groups to consider other characters in *A Series of Unfortunate Events* and determine a personal philosophy of life for each, based on the character's actions and decisions. If possible, students should find a single line of the character's dialogue that states or hints at his or her philosophy. Ask each group to list five characters, each of their philosophies, explanations of what the philosophies mean, and a situation where the philosophies do not come in handy at all. Have students choose their personal favorite of the various characters' philosophies and create a T-shirt design incorporating the philosophy and references to text or drawings to plot events or characters. Display the T-shirt designs or have students transfer their design to a plain white T-shirt.

Vile Vocabulary Exercises

These pages contain vocabulary words from across the series. In addition to the usual vocabulary exercises used by your class, you can use one or all of the activities suggested.

BOOKS 2-4

The Reptile Room (Book 2)

- CHAPTER 2 • Inquisitive
- CHAPTER 5 • Menacingly
- CHAPTER 6 • Fervently • Generic
- CHAPTER 7 • Futile

The Wide Window (Book 3)

- CHAPTER 1 • Voracious
- CHAPTER 2 • Contradict
- CHAPTER 4 • Impertinent
- CHAPTER 9 • Triumphantly
- CHAPTER 12 • Distaught

The Miserable Mill (Book 4)

- CHAPTER 1 • Catastrophe
- CHAPTER 2 • Diligent
- CHAPTER 4 • Pondered
- CHAPTER 8 • Dastardly
- CHAPTER 11 • Ineffectual

- ✿ Have students work with partners to find antonyms and/or synonyms for each word. Ask students to substitute the antonym and/or synonym they found for Snicket's word in the sentence. As a class, discuss how the meaning of the sentence changes with different antonyms and synonyms. Add the vocabulary words and the antonyms and synonyms to a Snicket "word wall".

BOOKS 5-7

The Austere Academy (Book 5)

- CHAPTER 1 • Adversity
- CHAPTER 2 • Ferocious
- CHAPTER 5 • Suspicious • Inevitable
- CHAPTER 7 • Luminous

The Ersatz Elevator (Book 6)

- CHAPTER 2 • Quench
- CHAPTER 3 • Mortified
- CHAPTER 10 • Beckoned • Disconcerting
- CHAPTER 12 • Befuddled

The Vile Village (Book 7)

- CHAPTER 1 • Skittish • Crucial
- CHAPTER 4 • Shuddered
- CHAPTER 5 • Intimidated
- CHAPTER 9 • Sinister

- ✿ Ask students to choose one of the vocabulary words and write an acrostic, a poem in which the first letter of each line forms the word; in turn, each line of the poem relates to the meaning of the word. Such a poem was used by Isadora to lead the Baudelaires to find Duncan and her in the Fowl Fountain. The acrostic poems can be written and illustrated on a sheet of colored paper and displayed on one wall in the classroom.





BOOKS 8–10

The Hostile Hospital (Book 8)

- CHAPTER 2 • Sneering
- CHAPTER 3 • Unequivocally
- CHAPTER 6 • Audacity
- CHAPTER 7 • Tottering
- CHAPTER 9 • Spurious

The Carnivorous Carnival (Book 9)

- CHAPTER 3 • Haughtily
- CHAPTER 4 • Humiliated
- CHAPTER 5 • Depict • Insignia
- CHAPTER 9 • Scornfully

The Slippery Slope (Book 10)

- CHAPTER 1 • Predicament
- CHAPTER 2 • Ominous
- CHAPTER 4 • Tedious
- CHAPTER 7 • Integrity
- CHAPTER 8 • Intrepid

✿ Challenge students to select one vocabulary word as the title of a poem and to create a short poem using phrases from the novels, synonyms and antonyms of the words in the vocabulary lists, and ideas of their own. Have students share their creations and display them in the classroom.

BOOKS 11–13

The Grim Grotto (Book 11)

- CHAPTER 1 • Phenomena
- CHAPTER 2 • Dilapidated
- CHAPTER 7 • Whetted
- CHAPTER 10 • Henchman
- CHAPTER 12 • Unbridled

The Penultimate Peril (Book 12)

- CHAPTER 1 • Daunted
- CHAPTER 2 • Infiltrate
- CHAPTER 8 • Insatiable
- CHAPTER 9 • Succinct
- CHAPTER 11 • Unfathomable

The End (Book 13)

- CHAPTER 1 • Wither
- CHAPTER 2 • Bedraggled • Revere
- CHAPTER 4 • Succumbing
- CHAPTER 11 • Languor

✿ Have each student draw or select one vocabulary word. Have students create, on a poster board, a vocabulary collage of the word. Students should include the word, the definition, synonyms (labeled), antonyms (labeled), drawings or magazine pictures to illustrate the words, rhyming words, colors that denote the tone of the word, and any other creative elements they can produce. Display posters as a “vocabulary art” collection.

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