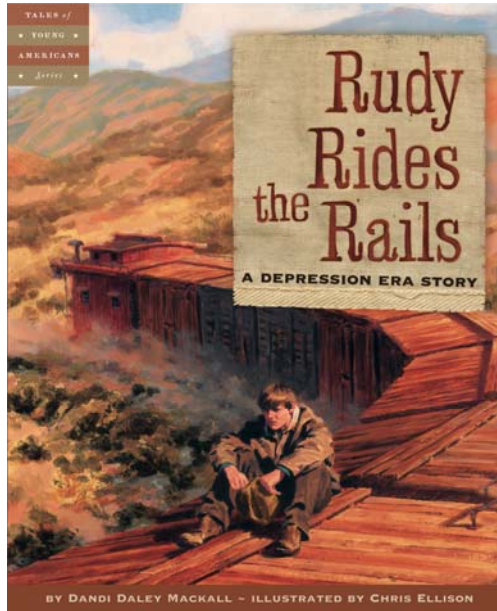


Teacher's Guide



Rudy Rides the Rails: A Depression Era Story

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Illustrator: Chris Ellison

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Rudy Rides the Rails

Pre-reading and background building activities

Anticipatory questions:

Ask the following questions and discuss responses before reading *Rudy Rides the Rails* by Dandi Daley Mackall.

1. Does everyone have the right to a job?
2. What would happen if farmers left their crops in the field to rot?
3. What would happen to teachers if schools closed down?
4. What would happen to students if schools closed down?
5. What might be the consequences if banks ran out of money?
6. What would you do if there were no food for dinner?
7. What is a hobo?

Before reading *Rudy Rides the Rails*, read the author's note to the class. Discuss.



Rudy Rides the Rails

Plural nouns can be formed in many ways. Some plurals add s to the word; some add es or ies, and some totally change form.

Make each of these nouns plural.

1. hobo _____
2. family _____
3. brother _____
4. ox _____
5. book _____
6. mouse _____
7. house _____
8. box _____
9. train _____
10. child _____

Add three plurals of your own to this list.

RUDY RIDES THE RAILS

Similes



A simile compares two things using the words “like” or “as.” Example— Her hair was like the golden sun.

Find 4 similes in *Rudy Rides the Rails*.
Write the whole phrase.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Write 3 similes of your own.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The Great Depression Math

Rudy Rides the Rails

GROCERY PRICES DURING THE DEPRESSION

BREAD	9 cents a loaf
MILK	14 cents a quart
ROUND STEAK	12 cents a pound
CHICKEN	10 cents a pound

1. Rudy went to the store with a \$1.00 bill. His mother told him to buy 1 loaf of bread, 2 quarts of milk, and 2 pounds of steak. How much change did he get back ?
2. Anna, Eva, and Edna put their money together to buy 2 pounds of steak. Each girl paid $\frac{1}{3}$ of the cost. How much did each girl pay?
3. How many pounds of chicken could Jim buy with \$1.50?
4. Emily had \$1.25 to spend for dinner for her family of four. Plan her menu. State what you will buy and the total cost.

TIME TRAVEL

Give each student a copy of the following cards related to the book *Rudy Rides the Rails*. Have students divide cards into three piles. Pile 1 should relate to people and items from the Depression. Pile 2 should contain items that you would only find now. Pile 3 should contain items that could be found both in the Depression era and now.

Trains

Hoover
blanket

Bread lines

Cell phones

Closed banks

ATM
machine

Time Travel *Continued* (2)

President
Herbert Hoover

President
George Bush

Diner

Bread at 9 cents
a loaf

Mulligan stew

Hobo signs

Time Travel *Continued* (3)

Radio

Computers

Books

Add one item to each group



Hobo Nicknames

Throughout the book *Rudy Rides the Rails*, Rudy encounters many hoboes along the way. Many help Rudy make it through his trip. The hoboes are called by interesting nicknames.

Circle the names of the hoboes Rudy met.

Fishbones

Dog Paws

Moose

Box Car Betty

Caboose Charlie

Elk

G.I. Joe

Texas Slim

Big Bob

Piano Pete

Drumming Dave

Banjo Bill

What would you choose as your name if you had the chance to be a hobo?

Explain your choice _____

Rudy Rides the Rails

WHO DID IT?

Rudy encountered many people on his journey across the United States during the Depression. Some people were helpful and understanding while others just chased him away.

Choose a person from the box below to complete each sentence.

Frisco Fred

Ma

Preacher Jones

Fishbones

Shorty Sims

Bulls

1. Taught Rudy to read hobo signs _____

2. Chased Rudy off the train _____

3. Taught Rudy to tie his bundle handkerchief over his eyes _____

4. Told stories about mountain men _____

5. Showed him how to tie a wet kerchief around his neck to keep cool

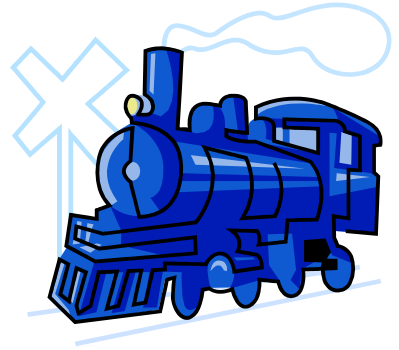
6. Gave him cheese, bread, and \$ 2.10

Which character was your favorite ? _____

Explain why _____

Rudy Rides the Rails

SEQUENCING



Read the exciting book *Rudy Rides the Rails*. Can you imagine what life was like for Rudy and the 250,000 other teenagers who decided to ride the rails?

Number the sentences below in the order they happened.

_____ Rudy carves a hobo sign on his family's porch.

_____ Pa lost his job.

_____ Rudy arrives in California.

_____ He meets Fishbone.

_____ Rudy catches an eastbound train.

_____ Rudy becomes "Ramblin' Rudy."

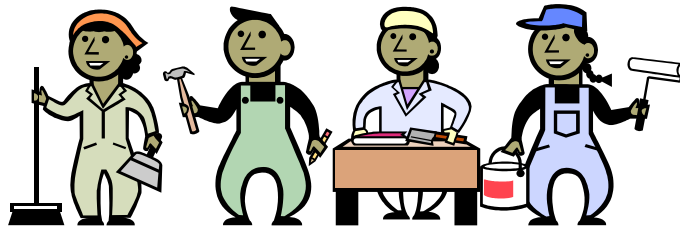
_____ Rudy decides to become a hobo to help his family.

Choose one of the above events and draw a picture of the people involved, showing how they felt.

Rudy's Jobs

Throughout *Rudy Rides the Rails* you will learn about the different jobs he did to earn money and keep himself alive.

Circle the jobs he held during his trip.



Picked fruit in California

Field work

Served ice cream

Swept a saloon

Painted a church

Cleaned railroad cars

Walked dogs

Washed windows

Unloaded fruit

Chopped wood

Could You Do It?

Think about what it was like for Rudy to leave his family behind and decide to become a hobo. Learn about his story in *Rudy Rides the Rails*.

Make a list of all of the personal qualities Rudy must have had to make the decision to hit the rails.

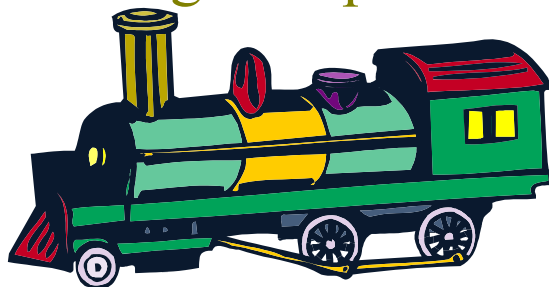
Example—brave

Do you think if you had been Rudy you would have made the choice to leave home and head to California? _____

Explain your answer.

RUDY RIDES THE RAILS

Making Comparisons



Rudy makes a decision in *Rudy Rides the Rails* to leave home and try to make it in the world on his own. You'll discover what he faced during his adventure.

In today's world there are many homeless teenagers and adults.

Make a list comparing the difficulties homeless teenagers and homeless adults face.

TEENAGERS

ADULTS

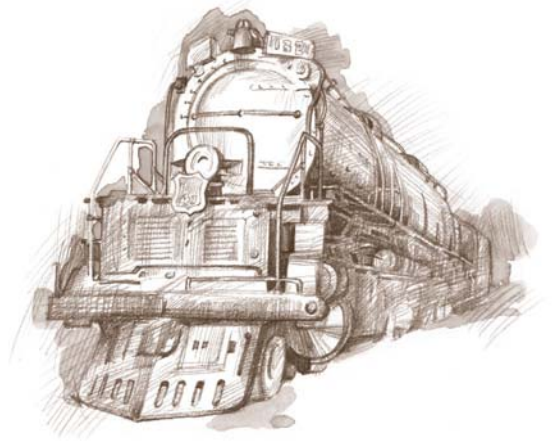
Would it be easier or harder to be homeless today than it was in the 1920s? _____

Explain _____

How Would You Feel?

Learn what life was like during the Great Depression that happened in the United States in *Rudy Rides the Rails*. This book gives you just one example of what happened to families during this difficult time.

Write the thoughts of Rudy, his mother, and his father about Rudy's leaving home.



RUDY

MOTHER

FATHER

TRANSPORTATION

Survey and Graph



In *Rudy Rides the Rails* you will see what it might have been like to travel across the United States in a railroad car.

Survey 25 people to find their favorite forms of transportation.

BICYCLE

CAR

TRAIN

AIRPLANE

Use the data you collected to make a bar graph showing the results.
Remember to label your graph. Make it colorful.

Make a rubber band guitar



Rudy and his friends got together many evenings to sing and play music. They didn't have a radio or i-Pod; they had to make their own music.

Try making your own rubber band guitar and see if you can play a tune on it.

Materials

Five rubber bands of different lengths and thicknesses

An empty tissue box

2 pieces of wood, ½ inch square. Cut to the size of the box width.

Directions

1. Glue your pieces of wood on the short sides of your tissue box.
2. Stretch the rubber bands around the box and over the wood.
3. Experiment with the sounds you get with the different rubber bands.
4. Learn to play a tune on your guitar.

Try making a bass guitar using a bucket, a string, and a broomstick.

Rudy's Journey

Does a railroad trip across the country sound like fun? Read about the trip that Rudy took and why he took it, in *Rudy Rides the Rails*.

Use the map of the United States below to show Rudy's route to and from California. Print the names of the states and the cities Rudy visited on the map.

Use **RED** to show his route to California and **BLUE** to show his return to Ohio.





Choose one of the following and write about life as a hobo riding the rails during the Depression.

RAP

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal dashed lines, typical of primary school writing paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Don't forget to include: characters, setting, plot, and resolution. Have fun and be creative!

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Write a journal entry from the *point of view* of a teenage boy who is riding the rails in the 1930s. Why did you leave home? What experiences did you have? What are your fears? What are your hopes?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

A HOBBO FEAST

The hoboes who rode the rails in *Rudy Rides the Rails* would often combine the food they were given into a big pot and make Mulligan Stew. Enjoy this version of Mulligan Stew.

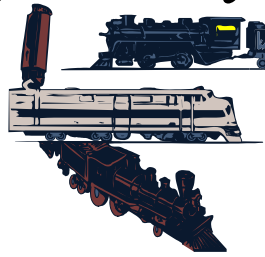
Mulligan Stew

- 1 lb. of hamburger, browned and drained
- 1 lb. of pork sausage, browned and drained
- 1 small chicken, cooked and diced
- 1 onion diced
- 1 can dark kidney beans with juice
- 1 package of small carrots
- 4 large diced potatoes
- 2 cans of whole tomatoes
- ½ stalk of celery, diced
- 1 quart of tomato juice
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- salt and pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients in a large soup pot and simmer for 6 hours, stirring occasionally.

Take a big bowl and enjoy your hobo stew.

Rudy's Story Map



Read and enjoy the story of Rudy and his adventures in *Rudy Rides the Rails*.

Construct a story map to show the setting, plot, conflict, and resolution of the story.

Story Map

Setting _____

Plot _____

Conflict _____

Resolution of conflict _____

Design a Symbol

How did the hoboes know where to ask for food on their trips cross-country? Learn the unique system they used in "*Rudy Rides the Rails*."

Design your own symbol for each phrase.

1. Keep quiet
2. Good place for a handout
3. Camp here
4. Danger
5. Work available
6. Ill-tempered woman
7. Kindness here
8. Go this way
9. OK, all right

Add your own sign to the list.

RUDY RIDES THE RAILS

ANSWER SHEET

Plurals- 1) hoboes 2) families 3) brothers 4) oxen 5) books 6) mice 7) houses
8) boxes 9) trains 10) children

Similes- 1) floor boards shook like chattering teeth 2) It shook him like dice in a cup
3) Rudy took off running like lightning on fire 4) Inside the box car was as black as coal

Math- 1) 39 cents 2) 8 cents 3) 15 lbs.

Time Travel- 3- trains, homeless people, Mulligan stew, radio, diner, books
1- Bread for 9 cents a loaf, hobo signs, Hoover blanket, bread lines, closed banks,
President Herbert Hoover
2- cell phones, ATM, President George Bush, computers

Hobo Nicknames- Fishbones, Box Car Betty, Moose, Texas Slim, Banjo Bill

Who Did It- 1) Fishbones 2) Bulls 3) Shorty Sims 4) Preacher Jones 5) Frisco Fred
6) Ma

Sequencing- 7, 1, 4, 3, 6, 5, 2

Rudy's Jobs- field work, swept a saloon, painted a church, washed windows, chopped
wood, unloaded fruit