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In a Pickle

A Teacher's Guide

By

Beth Overmyer

Dear educator,

Thank you for picking up a copy of this guide, a companion to *In a Pickle*, a middle grade time-travel adventure. This guide is meant to help make your job a little easier. I provide activities, quizzes, games, and more to impart some history and help test reading comprehension, vocabulary levels, math, art and writing skills. I hope you find everything helpful. Feel free to make as many copies of this guide as you need. Let me know if you have any questions. My email address is author.overmyer@gmail.com .

Thanks!

Sincerely,

Beth Overmyer

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Summary

Charlie Pickle is a time-traveling orphan from 1920. On a trip back to 1910, he meets Henry Stoner, a homeless man. When Henry witnesses a murder, Charlie tries to convince him to go to the police with what he knows. The truth, however, has consequences; and being in the wrong place at the wrong time could change history itself.

Vocabulary (Advanced, 6th+))

A

- Aghast
- Anguished
- Appendage

B

- Bemused
- Billow
- Blasé
- Bungle

C

- Catechism
- Cat's pajamas, the
- Celibacy
- Commandeer
- Crest

D

- Delicatessen
- Demeaning

- Demise
- Dicker
- Dredge

E

- Exert

F

- Feign
- Flail
- Forlorn

G

- Guffaw

H

- Haggard

I

- Imminent
- Indignant
- Irate

P

- Pummel

R

- Relic
- Ruse

S

- Suppress

T

- Tagalong
- Trussed

What's What?

Match each word with the correct definition

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Aghast | A. (N.) The end of existence; death |
| 2. Anguished | B. (V.) To make a mess of something; to goof up |
| 3. Appendage | C. (Adj.) Indifferent; unexcited about something |
| 4. Bemused | D. (Adj.) A worn or weary appearance |
| 5. Billow | E. (Adj., expression/slang) Cool, hip, neat |
| 6. Blasé | F. (N.) An external extension of a body (arm, leg, etc.) |
| 7. Bungle | G. (N.) To fake something, such as an injury |
| 8. Trussed | H. (Adj.) Tied up |
| 9. (The) Cat's pajamas | I. (Adj.) Extremely upset; suffering |
| 10. Commandeer | J. (V.) To bargain/argue; to try to gain a deal |
| 11. Crest | K. (N.) A store selling already (or almost) prepared foods |
| 12. Delicatessen | L. (Adj.) Bewildered or confused |
| 13. Demise | M. (V.) To swell or to rise |
| 14. Dicker | N. (V.) To take possession of something from someone |
| 15. Dredge | O. (N.) A family's symbol or emblem |
| 16. Exert | P. (Adj.) Shocked or taken aback |
| 17. Feign | Q. (V.) To use energy or force |
| 18. Haggard | R. (V.) To bring up; to come up with |

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Answers

1. P

2. I

3. F

4. L

5. M

6. C

7. B

8. H

9. E

10. N

11. O

12. K

13. A

14. J

15. R

16. Q

17. G

18. D

Discussion Questions:

- Have you ever been bullied? If so, how did you react?
- Charlie isn't afraid of Henry...once he realizes he's not the Garbage Monster. Why do you think Charlie isn't warier of strangers? *(Some possibilities: The era he lives in; lack of life experience, due to age; perhaps the nuns didn't teach him to be cautious, etc.)*
- Different inventions such as the zipper (which was actually known as the "Separable Fastener" until the 1920's) and Oreos are mentioned in this book. What invention/s do you think we take the most for granted?
- If you could time-travel to any year, what year would it be and why?
- If you were Henry, would you have gone to the police about the murder? Why or why not?
- For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Discuss what might have happened if...? *(Example: What if Charlie hadn't time-traveled early that one and final time? He and Henry probably would have died at Jim's hand, and Jim wouldn't be there for his son in the future. Sister Mary Lou would probably have remained in the insane asylum, because she didn't stop being a nun to marry Henry. And so forth.)*
- Discuss what if's in real life on global, national, local, and personal levels. *(What might have gone differently if X had happened or Y hadn't? Example: If you hadn't ended up at the school you're at, what would be different?)*

Group Activities/Homework:

- Each student draws a picture of what they'd want their family crest to look like. If you scan and send them to me, I'll post them on my blog (<http://bethovermyer.com>) My email is: author.overmyer@gmail.com
- Each student writes a letter to his future self. They can share their hopes and dreams, or just vent. Everyone puts their letters in envelopes and seals them. Write across the front: Do not open until 2- - - (five years from the current year.) Or better yet, mail the letters to them when they graduate.
- “Bang-up” (adjective) is a slang word from the early 1900's. Each student makes up their own slang words with definitions.
- Make a list of five events in history/your past that you wish you could change. Explain why you chose those events.
- A lot has changed since 1920. Write a short essay on what you think your country will be like one-hundred years in the future.
- Charlie has a scrapbook of newspaper clippings. Start a scrapbook of your own, pasting interesting names, words, facts, and articles onto the pages of a notebook. If you don't know a word, highlight it, look up the definition and write it on the page next to it.
- Write a short story with yourself as the protagonist, facing your greatest fear/s.
- Write a list of pros and cons of Charlie's gift/plight, time-travel (example: A pro is that he could prevent a bad event from happening. A con is that he might cause something bad to happen and mess up the future.)

Guess Who!

Fill in the blanks with the name of the character who answers to the description.

1. I am strict and like to keep attendance lists. Someone called me “Cranky Pants,” but I have my more tender moments. Who am I? _____
2. I hate my name, hate my lot in life, and I hate/d the school bully. Who am I?

3. By the end of the book, my dad’s in prison, but at least he’s alive. I used to be very mean, but now I’m different. Who am I?

4. I can be gruff and a coward, but I try to save the kid in the end. Oh, and I smell bad. Who am I? _____
5. I am the SECOND fatality in the story and one of Henry’s friends. Who am I?

6. I give Charlie a hard time and he calls me a big fat liar behind my back. Who am I?

7. I’m in a gang, maybe aided in a murder, and I almost killed two other people before a miracle happened. Who am I? _____

Answers

1. Sister Mary Lou Ann
2. Charlie (Pickle)
3. Grigs/Grigsby (Mud)
4. (Captain) Henry (Stoner)
5. Tim/Timothy (C. Barnes)
6. Sparky (Masterson)
7. James/Jim (Mud)

What's in a Story?

1. In what city is *In a Pickle* set?
 - A. New York
 - B. Amherst
 - C. Chicago
 - D. Detroit

2. What is the name of Charlie's orphanage in 1920?
 - A. St. Joseph's
 - B. St. Peter's
 - C. St. Andrew's
 - D. St. Matthew's

3. What is Henry's last name?
 - A. Mud
 - B. Masterson
 - C. Overmyer
 - D. Stoner

4. How old is Charlie Pickle?
 - A. 8
 - B. 9

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- C. 10
 - D. 11
5. At what time does Charlie time-travel, save for the final time?
- A. 12:00 pm
 - B. 12:00 am
 - C. 3:00 am
 - D. 4:00 pm
6. Who was the snitch mentioned toward the beginning of the book?
- A. Tim
 - B. Jim
 - C. Sparky
 - D. Karl
7. True or false: James “Jim” Mud still did jail time after selling out the rest of the gang?
- True
- False
8. True or false: Will Smickett was a roommate of Charlie’s?
- True
- False
9. In what month is In a Pickle set? _____
10. What cookie was 1910’s equivalent of an Oreo? (Hint: Brand) _____

Answers

1. C. Chicago
2. A. St. Joseph's
3. D. Stoner
4. C. 10
5. B. 12:00 am
6. A. Tim
7. True
8. True
9. July
10. Hydrox or Hydrox cookie

Fun facts:

- In 1920, the life expectancy for men was 53.6 years. The life expectancy for women was 54.6 years¹
- In the 1920s, a bottle of Coca-Cola cost \$0.05; a Baby Ruth candy bar was also \$0.05¹
- In 1920, the US population was 106,021,537¹
- July 12, 1920 was a Tuesday²
- The capitol of Illinois is NOT Chicago but Springfield
- Illinois was admitted as a state in 1818
- Some Illinois nicknames: “The Windy City,” “Second City,” “Paris of the Prairie,” “Pride of the Rust Belt,” “City in a Garden,” “City of Big Shoulders,” and “Hog Butcher to the World”³
- The population in Chicago in 1890 (8 years before Captain Henry Stoner abandoned ship in the Navy) was 1,099,850³
- The name Chicago comes from the Potawatomi language and means “wild onions”³

Resources:

¹*America Popular Culture Through History: The 1920s* by Kathleen Drowne and Patrick Huber

² <http://www.mathsisfun.com/games/dayofweek.html>

³ <http://chicago-trivia.blogspot.com/>

Word Scrambles:

1. LICKPE
2. TRECS
3. ELRCI
4. OPTECK TWAHC (*2 WORDS*)
5. APROHNGAE
6. UKSCRU
7. AWESOCLL
8. SLANGGOAT
9. LUBLY
10. DIMTHING

Answers to Word Scrambles:

1. PICKLE
2. CREST
3. RELIC
4. POCKET WATCH
5. ORPHANAGE
6. RUCKUS
7. COLESLAW
8. TAGALONGS
9. BULLY
10. MIDNIGHT

YOU Do the Math

- How old would Charlie be if he lived to July of this year?
- The year 1920 was a leap year. July 12, 1920 was a Monday. What day of the week was July 12, 1910? (Don't forget leap years!)
- In the 1920s, ten packs of Wrigley's gum cost \$0.39. In 2010, one pack of Wrigley's gum cost \$1.49. What is the difference?

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Answers

1. As of July 2013: 103

2. A Tuesday

3. \$1.45