

**Teacher Guides for *Address Unknown* by Charles Warren:
Developed Using the Common Core State Standards Initiative**

Grade 4

About *Address Unknown*

When Marshall’s single mother loses her job, the family has to live in a car for five weeks. In this sensitive and thought-provoking novel for youthful readers, seventh-grader Marshall wrestles with the usual ups-and-downs of friendship, family life, and school—along with an unexpected problem: Homelessness. As he struggles to resolve this crisis, Marshall is challenged to discover new truths about himself, his friends, his school, and his community.

Pre reading Activity

1. Write a poem describing what you think it must be like to be homeless.
2. Have a class discussion to explore why some students might feel different from everyone else. What can the person who feels that way do about it? What can other students do to help that person?

Language Arts:

Chapter 1 The Secret:

1. Being homeless caused Marshall to act and feel different from the days before he lived in a car. Give some details showing how he was different.
2. Write about a time when you were worried about something and tell how you acted different because of it.
3. Where did Marshall’s mom park their car overnight?
4. Why was Marshall alarmed when he saw Harry, the homeless man?
5. Marshall’s mom asked her children not to tell anyone that they are homeless. Do you think that was the right thing to do, or should she have told others and tried to get help?
6. Marshall didn’t perform very well at school during his first day as a homeless student. How do you think he will do in school over the next few days?
7. What do you think is the meaning of the following words? Try to guess from their context in the sentence and then check your answers with a dictionary.

Circulation (page 1) Minimum (page 3) Rumpling (page 3) Reluctant (page 3)
Humongous (page 4) Hordes (page 5) Trudging (page 9) Zombie (page 9)
Kaleidoscope (page 10) Rowdy (page 10) Temporary (page 15)

Chapter 2 Shark:

1. Describe the problem with the security guard at GR's and the solution. What skills did Marshall's mother use to arrive at the solution?
2. Write a persuasive essay on whether or not you believe the school should have expected each student in the band to pay fifty dollars in order to make the trip to the competition.
3. Describe Shark's character. What information does the author give that influences your opinion about Shark?
4. Write the meaning of the following words using their context as a clue and using a dictionary to check your answers:

Flailed (page 18) analytical (page 18) muted (page 19) wavering (page 20)
unorthodox (page 20) ecstatic (page 26) engrossed (page 29) contagious (page 33)

Chapter 3 Week Two

1. Describe the problem Marshall had with his science teacher and the solution he found. Write your opinion as to whether or not his solution was a good one and explain your answer.
2. Describe in detail what happened when Shark and his buddies encountered Marshall in the park.
3. The author wrote that a "lone cup blew across the dark, deserted parking lot." (page 43) What do you think was the purpose of that line? Do you think it was an effective line? Explain your answer.
4. Write the meaning of the following words using their context as a clue and a dictionary to check your answers:

Jazzy (page 38) evaporated (page 40) self-contempt (page 42) swarm (page 46)

Chapter 4 Auntie Sarah

1. Using specific details in the text, explain what happened when Marshall checked the mailbox at the brown brick house. What was Marshall's state of mind at that time?
2. Describe the relationship that developed between Marshall and Auntie Sarah. What did Auntie Sarah do to put Marshall at ease?

3. What did Auntie Sarah mean when she said “That’s the worst kind a trouble.”? (page 53)
Write a persuasive essay on whether or not you agree and why.

4. Write the meanings of the following words using their context as a clue and using a dictionary to check your answers:

Pleaded (page 47) resignation (page 48) reluctant (page 49) compelling (page 50)

Chapter 5 Week Three

1. Write an essay to show how Marshall’s secret complicated his relationship with Crystal. Refer to details from the chapter to support your narrative.

2. Write an essay to develop your imagined events that led Harry to become the person he is today and thus to react the way he did to Marshall and Mindy.

3. Do you agree with Marshall’s mother to not call the police when she was robbed? Support your opinion with an essay using facts and details and provide a concluding statement at the end.

4. Write the meaning of the following words using their context as a clue and check your answers with a dictionary:

Galaxies (page 58) Hubble Space Telescope (page 58) awkward (page 60)
frantically (page 62) cosmos (page 62) concentrating (page 64)

Chapter 6 Change

1. Marshall had to withdraw from the band competition. Have you ever had to quit something you enjoyed? Write a narrative about a real or imagined event in which you were forced to stop an activity you enjoyed. Use descriptive details and clear event sequences.

2. Marshall felt differently about Shark after seeing the encounter he had with his mother. Compare Marshall’s feelings about Shark before the encounter and after. Write an essay about why you think his feelings changed.

3. What was your reaction when Marshall bought Crystal a gift? Write an essay about what you might have done in a similar circumstance and tell why.

4. Write the meaning of the following words using their context as a clue and using a dictionary to check your answers:

Inadequate (page 71) deflect (page 71) awkward (page 72) chaotic (page 74)
harvest (page 75) sprouted (page 76) swagger (page 78)

Chapter 7 Jelani

1. Write an essay about why you think Mr. Tulley loaned Marshall his clarinet. Use details in the book to support your reasons.
2. Do you think Marshall and Akua felt different about each other after he played the clarinet for Auntie? Support your opinion with details from the story.
3. What significance did the name “Jelani” have for Auntie Sarah and why did she give Marshall that name?
4. Write the meaning for the following words using their context as a clue and using a dictionary to check your answers:

Trek (page 82) gaudy (page 83) erratic (page 83) favoritism (page 84)
massacred (page 85) coaxed (page 87) adversaries (page 87) improvisations (page 89)

Chapter 8 Science Project

1. Marshall didn’t believe that Mindy’s three suggestions for dealing with a bully would work with Shark. What do you think? Write an essay expressing your opinion. Link your opinion to reasons by using words like “for instance” and “in order to.” Provide a concluding statement.
2. Imagine that you were a slave living during the 1800’s. Write a journal entry explaining what your day was like using details from Auntie Sarah’s story. (Even though most slaves could neither read nor write, for this question we’ll assume that you were one of those few who could.)
3. During the science fair, Marshall wasn’t able to work up his usual dislike for Shark. Why do you think he felt that way? Use details from the story to explain your thoughts.
4. Write the meaning for the following words using their context as a clue and using the dictionary to check your answers:

Dreary (page 96) resigned (page 97) lingered (page 98) blacksmith (101)
plantation (page 102) lanky (page 104) preoccupation (page 105) havoc (page 106)

Chapter 9 The Final Week

1. Marshall said that he “began to see Robert instead of Shark.” How was that a different way of “seeing” the bully? What difference did it make in what Marshall did and how Robert responded?
2. Do you think Auntie Sarah giving Marshall the name Jelani had anything to do with how well he faced Shark? Use details from the story to support your opinion.

3. Why do you think Marshall waves to Harry and is friendly towards him? Why do you think Harry does not respond to Marshall?

4. Write the meaning for each of the following words using their context as a clue and using the dictionary to check your answers:

Tormentor (page 109) illustrate (page 110) douse (page 111) investigation (page 112)
assaulted (page 114) nailed (page 114) sarcastic (page 115) weathered (page 119)

Chapter 10 The Home Stretch

1. When Marshall told the band he was homeless, some of them reacted compassionately and others did not. How would you react if you learned a classmate was homeless? What are some reasons people become homeless?

2. Both the security guard and Auntie Sarah were willing to help Marshall and his family. What do you think would have happened if they didn't help them?

3. If you had to live in a car for five weeks, what five things would you miss the most from your house?

4. Write the meaning for each of the following words using their context as a clue and using the dictionary to check your answers:

Resolved (page 121) frantic (page 130) carpeted (page 131) fleeting (page 131)
abruptly (page 132) maneuvered (page 133) verify (page 136) impress (page 137)

Chapter 11 Harry

1. Marshall wondered how Harry could go from being a hero and father to being homeless. Write a brief story about an imaginary person who is doing well, but then faces a number of situations that cause him or her to become homeless.

2. Marshall's mother says that everything happens for a purpose. Marshall doesn't agree. What do you think? Write a persuasive essay expressing your thoughts.

3. Did you find the ending of the story to be satisfying to you? The ending could have been different in many ways. Think of other ways the story could have ended and then write a different ending.

Answer These Questions After Having Read *Address Unknown*

Have your students write any of the following exercises:

1. What is the theme of *Address Unknown* and explain why you chose that as the theme.

2. Describe Marshall in detail, including his looks and his personality. Show his character through his own words and actions.
3. Is this story told in first or third person? Explain why you think the author chose to tell the story in this way.
4. Write a story about Marshall in his new home. Use dialog and description to develop experiences and events and show the responses of the characters to situations. Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey these experiences and events. Make sure your conclusion follows logically from the story.

Speaking and Listening

1. Using one of the discussion questions in the *Address Unknown* Appendix or one of your own, have a class or small group discussion to explore ideas of the topic under discussion. Prior to the discussion, explain the rules: only one person talks at a time; honor the ideas and comments of others even if you don't agree; and be respectful to others. At the end, have the group review the ideas expressed and tell how the discussion changed or influenced their ideas and understanding.
2. Have each student give an oral report, tell a story, or recount an experience on homelessness or bullying in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and details. Allow them to use audio and visual media when appropriate. Remind them to speak clearly and understandably. Before the reports begin, ask the class to differentiate between situations that call for more formal English and situations where informal discourse is appropriate.

Art:

1. Who was your favorite character? Show what you believe that character looks like by drawing his/her portrait.
2. Draw an outside scene to illustrate what you think Auntie Sarah's house looked like.