

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

**Grade 6**

**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?

**Reading**

Have your students write an essay using any of the following ideas:

1. Determine a theme or central idea of *Address Unknown* and show how it is conveyed through specific details of the text.
2. Summarize the story of *Address Unknown* without using any personal opinions or judgments.
3. Describe how *Address Unknown*’s plot unfolds through a series of episodes. How does Marshall change as the plot moves forward?
4. Select your favorite chapter of *Address Unknown* and analyze how it fits into the overall structure of the text and contributes to the development of the plot.
5. How does the author develop the point of view of the narrator of the novel? Give specific details from the text.

**Writing**

Have your students do any of the following writing exercises:

1. Choose either topic “a” or “b” below to write an essay in which you support your view with clear reasons and relevant evidence. Introduce your claims and organize the reasons and

evidence clearly. Use credible sources and demonstrate an understanding of the topic. Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claims and reasons. Establish and maintain a formal style. Provide a concluding statement that follows from the argument presented.

a. Bullying is a serious problem and should be the concern of school personnel, parents, and students.

b. Bullying is nothing more than kids teasing each other and should be ignored by adults.

2. Write an informative essay examining the topic of homelessness, conveying your ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. Remember to do the following: Introduce the topic; organize your ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting, graphics, and multimedia when useful to aid comprehension. Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about the topic. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information presented.

3. Write a narrative to develop either a real or imagined experience involving homelessness or bullying. Use effective techniques, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. Engage the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters. Use dialogue, pacing, and description to develop the story and characters. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and shifts from one setting or time frame to another. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events. Provide a logical conclusion.

4. Share your narrative from number three (above) with your teacher, class, or group of students, asking for their feedback. Using their guidance and support, strengthen your writing as needed by rewriting, editing, or trying a new approach.

### **Speaking and Listening**

1. After having read *Address Unknown* and having completed some research on the topic of homelessness, have your students engage in a discussion of one of the following topics. You may have them discuss one-on-one, in small groups, or you may lead the entire class in the discussion.

Have your students review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate that they understand the different perspectives by using reflection and paraphrasing.

- Could Marshall have done more to help Harry? Should the community do more to help Harry?

- How did Marshall handle buying Crystal's gift? Should he have done something different? What would you have done?
- Did Shark change over the course of the novel? If so, what brought about that change? What are your thoughts about why Shark was a bully?

2. Have your students research a question concerning homelessness or bullying and present their findings to the class. Remind them to use appropriate description, facts, and details and to make good eye contact with their audience, use adequate volume, and clear pronunciation. They should be encouraged to use multimedia components to clarify their information.