

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

**Grade 8**

**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 do any of the following exercises:

1. Analyze two ideas that are explicit in *Address Unknown* and cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports your analysis.
2. Analyze two inferences drawn from *Address Unknown* and cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports your analysis.
3. Determine a theme or central idea of *Address Unknown* and analyze its development over the course of the novel. How does the theme or central idea relate to the characters, setting, and plot?
4. Write an objective summary of *Address Unknown*.
5. How do differences in the points of view of Shark, Marshall, and the reader, create humor in the “science project” scene?

**Writing**

Have your students do any of the following writing exercises:

1. Write an essay to either support or refute the following statement:

“Bullying is nothing more than kids teasing other kids and adults should not get involved.”

Introduce your point of view and distinguish it from opposing claims. Support your claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate and credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among counterclaims, reasons and evidence. Provide a concluding statement or section that supports your claim.

2. Write an essay to examine the topic of homelessness. Introduce your topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize your ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting, graphics, and multimedia when useful to aid comprehension. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary. Establish and maintain a formal style. Provide a concluding statement or section that supports your information.

3. Write a narrative developing a real or imagined experience or event relating to bullying. Use effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. Engage the reader by establishing context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters. Use techniques such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop the events and characters. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, shifts from one time frame to another, and show the relationships among events. Provide a conclusion that follows from your narrative.

4. Share your writing from number three above with your teacher, the class, or a small group of students. Listen to feedback from others and revise your narrative as necessary to strengthen it, focusing on your purpose for writing it and the audience for which it was written.

5. Conduct a short research project to investigate the causes of homelessness. Use several different sources to gather your information. Assess the credibility of the sources you use. Quote or paraphrase your sources being careful not to plagiarize and to follow a standard format for citation.

6. Marshall felt that he was different from the other students. Adolescents often feel this way. What are some other reasons that an adolescent might feel different from other adolescents? How might someone who feels different learn to cope with that feeling?

7. In what country did jazz originate? Write an essay, after doing adequate research, in which you discuss how jazz originated, the great jazz musicians throughout history, some of the great songs, and the role jazz has played in our culture.

### **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 pose questions that connect the ideas of different speakers and respond to questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas. Have them acknowledge new information expressed by others and qualify or justify their own views using the evidence presented.

- Could Marshall have done more to help Harry? Should the community do more to help Harry?
- How pervasive is homelessness in your community? What are the resources for the homeless in your community?
- What are the causes of homelessness? How can we as a nation do more to prevent people from becoming homeless?

2. Have your students research a question concerning homelessness or bullying and present their findings to the class. Remind them to emphasize important points in a focused, coherent manner using relevant evidence, sound reasoning, and well-chosen detail. Remind them 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, to strengthen their claims, and add interest.

3. Chose a speaker and have your class analyze the purpose of presenting the information in diverse media and formats and evaluate the motives behind its presentation. Have your class delineate a speaker's argument and claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and the relevancy and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is used.