

Date: _____

Teacher: _____

Sergeant Stubby In The Great War: Lesson Plan

Note: This complimentary lesson plan is provided by the author, Melissa Pilgrim.

Disclaimer: This lesson plan is provided as a general template only. Teachers are welcomed to implement adaptations to it based on their own student's individual interests and needs, whenever needed, or according to their school's (or state's) course study or curricula needs.

1. How is the lead character, Stubby, introduced in the beginning of the story?

Answer: As a stray puppy (separated from and looking for his mom).

Follow-up Question: What's he like in the beginning of the story?

Answer: Open to class discussion. (Can cover things like his description [young/puppy-age, small, male, mutt/mixed breed, short, tan and white brindled fur, long legs, stocky body, round head], and his personality [curious, spunky, mostly afraid], etc.)

Follow-up Question: What are his problems in the beginning of the story?

Answer: Open to class discussion. (Can cover things like he's all alone, missing his mom/looking for her, hungry, learns about the dogcatcher, is very afraid of people and the city streets, etc.)

2. What is the setting (time and place) of the story in the beginning?

Answers:

- *Time: summer, 1917*
- *Place: city (urban)*

Follow-up Question: What specific words/phrases are given to help you know this?

Answers:

- *For Time: The phrase "hot summer sun" is stated in story indicating the summer time and the phrase "latest 1917's fashions" is stated in story indicating the year.*
- *For Place: Several descriptions like "large, noisy city," and "where he was in the city" indicate it's a city (or urban place) and not a country (or rural place).*

Bonus Questions for Setting:

- Can you find any clues in the story to help determine which city it is in the United States?
Answer: Phrases "college students... Yale Daily News" (this shows it's on the college campus of Yale University).
- Where is Yale located?
Answer: New Haven, Connecticut. (So this is the actual city the story takes place in.)

3. How has the job of a dogcatcher changed from 1917 until now?

Answer: Open to class discussion. (Can cover things like now there are more no-kill shelter options, society educates people about being better caretakers of their pets so they don't become strays, etc.)

4. How have cars changed from the Ford Model T in 1917 until now?

Answer: Open to class discussion. (Can cover things like they go much faster now—the Ford Model T only went 45 miles per hour—they look very different than cars used to look, etc.)

5. How is Private Robert Conroy introduced in the beginning of the story?

Answer: As a soldier.

Follow-up Question: What is he doing specifically?

Answer: Learning drill commands.

Follow-up Question: What are drill commands?

Answer: A series of instructions taught to army soldiers that help them stand, move, and act correctly (and in unison) while in groups or when addressing superior officers.

Follow-up Question: Can you give an example from the story?

Answer: “Right, FACE!” (which means “turn to your right”).

6. What does the term “doughboy” mean?

Answer: Another name for an American soldier at this time.

Note: Can see the Glossary for more information and discuss its possible origin.

Follow-up Question: Is it a clue to what the story could be more about later on?

Answer: Yes, a war (World War I, to be more specific).

7. What is the big war going on at the time of the story?

Answer: World War I, also called “The Great War.”

Follow-up Question: Who was fighting in World War I, what countries were involved?

Answer: The Central Powers led by Germany (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire) and the Allied Powers, which American was part of (Britain, France, Italy, Russia, and the United States).

Follow-up Question: Who won the war?

Answer: The Allied Powers (Stubby’s side!).

8. Why was World War I called The Great War?

Answer: Because it was a war of so many “firsts” in modern warfare.

Follow-up Question: What were some of these firsts?

Answer: Any of the following: the most countries from all over the world being involved in a war together... the first time battles were fought with modern warfare devices like tanks, machine guns, mustard gas, planes, and radios... because of new medical inventions created to help wounded soldiers, such as gas masks and x-ray machines.

9. Who was Stubby’s bird friend in the war?

Answer: Chappy.

Follow-up Question: What country was he from?

Answer: England (meaning he was British, which is why he talked with a British accent).

Follow-up Question: What did he do for a job in the war?

Answer: He was a carrier pigeon who delivered important messages to different soldiers.

Follow-up Question: Was Chappy brave?

Answer: Open to class discussion. (He really wanted to be, but he was really a “fraidy-cat” most of the time. But he still did do his job, so he could be brave at times, but wasn’t normally very brave overall.)

10. Does Stubby overcome his fears and learn to be brave during the story?

Answer: Yes! (First by trusting Conroy in the beginning, then by going off to fight in the war.)

Follow-up Question: Are Conroy and the rest of his squad all very brave to be able to go off to war and fight?

Answer: Yes!

Follow-up Question: What were some of the things Stubby did that were brave during the war?

Answer: Open to class discussion. (Can cover things like he warned the men of air raids and artillery attacks, looked for wounded soldiers, got wounded in battle, caught a German spy, etc.)

11. What are the “bird monsters” in the story?

Answers: Planes.

Follow-up Question: Who is the meanest bird monster Chappy is most afraid of?

Answer: The Red Baron.

Follow-up Question: Who was the Red Baron?

Answer: A German fighter pilot; then can open this up to a class discussion about him.

Note: See both the Historical Fact Sheet and the Glossary for more information on the Red Baron you can discuss.

12. What is the British Cavalry?

Answer: Highly mobile troops who are trained to fight in wars on horseback.

Follow-up Question: What are the horses called in a cavalry?

Answer: Warhorses.

13. What is a medical field hospital?

Answer: A tent-like structure that is mobile to be able to move around medical staff and equipment during a war to help the wounded soldiers.

Follow-up Question: Who was the medical person in the field hospital who was able to help Stubby heal when he got wounded?

Answer: A nurse who had grown up on a farm where she first practiced medicine on the animals, so she knew how to help dogs.

Follow-up Question: How was Stubby hurt in the story?

Answer: Two times; poisoned by mustard gas and hit by a grenade.

Follow-up Question: What were some of the medical advances that were invented during the war to help soldiers?

Answer: Gas masks and x-ray machines.

14. What is a Hello Girl?

Answer: Women who translated between the English and French languages during World War I.

Follow-up Question: When was one used in the story?

Answer: When two French women gave Stubby a coat they had made for him to put all his medals and awards on.

15. What invention replaced Chappy's job of delivering messages at the end of the story?

Answer: Radios; then can open this up to a class discussion about how different radio communication is today compared to back in WWI—no cell phones or computers back then!

Note: *See the Glossary for more information on radios.*

*** Bonus Question:**

Becoming a sergeant in the military is a very special honor. If Stubby hadn't caught the German spy, do you think he would have been nominated to become a sergeant?

Answer: Not very likely, unless he did something else just as important as catching a spy.