Chapter 1 - pp 1-9

Vocabulary:
1. tingled 1 5. sparse 5
2. sheer 1 6. jaunt 8
3. scorcher 2 7. jubilant 8
4. hovering 4 8. outrageous 9

Questions:
1. What is Tony’s suggestion for the day?
2. What is Joel’s immediate reaction to his friend’s suggestion? How would you react to such a suggestion from a friend?
3. How does Tony counter Joel’s initial objections to climbing the cliffs?
4. As the boys disagree about their plans for the day, which boy seems to you most likely to prevail and why?
5. How does Joel’s idea for getting out of climbing the bluffs backfire?
6. Why do you think the author emphasizes Joes being on his honor?

Chapter 2 - pp 10-16

Vocabulary:
1. intention 10 7. mimicked 15
2. sizzled 11 8. taunt 15
3. exuberance 11 9. haphazardly 16
4. wobbled 12 10. lasso 16
5. momentum 12 11. sloth 16
6. trapeze 14

Questions
1. From whose viewpoint is the book written? How do you know?
2. How does Tony convince Joel to go swimming in the Vermillion River?
3. Is swimming in the Vermillion a good idea?

Activities:
1. Character/Attribute Webs: Create attribute webs for Tony and Joel, include descriptions of personality characteristics as well as the evidence from the book that led you to that conclusion.
2. Compare and contrast the two boys by creating a T Chart with these categories:
   - Regarding Family
   - Regarding School
   - Regarding Decision Making

Chapter 3 - pp 17-24

Vocabulary:
1. flailing 17
2. gawk 19
3. thrashing 20
4. glowering 22
5. slog 22
6. immersing 23

Questions:

1. How do the boys differ in the way they each approach the water?
2. What are the boys’ attitudes toward their fathers? Is your attitude toward your parents similar to either Joes’s or Tony’s?
3. How do the boys’ reactions to each other and their challenges or taunts cause their actions in this chapter?
4. Notice how the author ends each chapter so far. What feelings, as a reader, does she provoke?

Chapter 4 - pp 25-30

Vocabulary

1. eddied 28
2. impatiently 29

Questions:

1. How could Joel who loved to swim and went swimming with his friend Tony on many occasions not know how poor a swimmer Tony was? Can you add any additional understanding from your own experiences?
2. Why is Chapter Four a turning point in the story?
3. How does Joel feel when, on page 30, he “understood everything”?

Prediction: What will Joel do next? Why?
Look for clues in Chapters 1-4 to what happens at the end of Chapter 4.

Chapter 5 - pp 31-36

Vocabulary:

1. deceptively 31
2. barrage 31
3. lunging 31
4. clarity 33
5. pulp 34
6. convulsed 34
7. glinted 34
8. rippling 34
9. erratic 35
10. thistle 35

Questions:

1. What questions came to Joel’s logical mind when he realized that Tony was underwater?
2. What does Joel do in the terrible ordeal?
3. The author provides details which Joes thinks of in the midst of his scary, frightening, and physical ordeal. Make a list of the details and then discuss why the author writes this way whether or not it is accurate. (Possibly share your own experiences when in a scary, dangerous situation.)
Chapter 6 - pp37-45

Vocabulary:
1. screeching 37
2. vibrating 37
3. desperately 41

Questions:
1. Where does Joel get help in trying to save Tony?
2. Why was Joes so upset by the teenager’s conversation?
3. Why don’t Joel and the teenager go to the police?
4. What is Joel’s promise at the end of Chapter 6?
5. How is Joel on keeping promises?

Prediction: This book has twelve chapters. You have read six. What will happen in the second half of the book?

Discussion: Why doesn’t Bauer give names to the teenagers in the car? How do authors choose the names they use for characters in a book? Why don’t authors name all the characters in a book? Discuss with classmate, using examples from this book as well as others.

Chapter 7 - pp 46-52

Vocabulary:
1. bunchy 46
2. rumbled 46
3. nonchalance 47
4. expelled 49
5. assembled 50
6. embankment 51
7. obscured 51
8. burbling 51
9. gleaming 52
10. supplication 52
11. clutching 52

Questions:
1. Does the author portray Joel realistically in Chapter Seven? Do you think you’d react the same way in a similar situation?
2. Why does the author describe Joel’s hand motions on page 52 as “in supplication”?
3. Summarize Joel’s feelings in this chapter.

Prediction: Will Joel tell his concocted explanation when he returns home?

Activities:
1. Joel has many feelings of insecurity in this chapter. Explore the term by completing an attribute web using your responses to these questions: What is the dictionary definition? What kind of situations promote insecurity? What are your feelings when insecure?
2. Notice how the author has ended the seven chapters you’ve read. Why does Bauer put significant thoughts or actions at the end of the chapters? Explain your answer in a short written paragraph.
Chapter 8 - pp 53-61

Vocabulary:
1. giddily 54
2. minutely 57
3. fragrance 59
4. swirled 61

Questions:
1. How does Joel spend the afternoon?
2. Why does Joel lie about Tony to his father?
3. Why does Joel smell the river so prominently when no one else notices the odor?

Activities:
1. Trace Joel's emotions on an emotions chart, summarizing his emotions in each chapter with a word or phrase. Include one sentence to explain your choice of emotion.
2. Continue adding to Joel's character/attribute bubble map.

Chapter 9 - pp 62-69

Vocabulary
1. reverently 65
2. guffaw 65
3. skeptical 67
4. concocted 67
5. engrossed 69
6. trembled 69

Questions:
1. Why does Joel say, "Everything hurts" (p 63)?
2. Is Joel's primary emotion in Chapter Nine anger or grief? Defend your answer. How are the two emotions related?
3. How does Joel treat Bobby in this chapter?

Prediction: Reread the last sentence of the chapter. What will happen next?

Activities:
1. Part-time Jobs: Joel has a paper route as a part-time job. Make a T chart summarizing the advantages and disadvantages of such a job.
2. The parents were talking when Joel and Bobby returned from the paper route. Pretend you are an actor and improvise their conversation.

Chapter 10 - pp 70-75

Vocabulary: suffocating 75

Questions
1. How could Joel not know that his friend Tony couldn't swim?
2. Why would Mrs. Zabrinsky say, "but you know what Tony's like. I guess I worry more about him than all the rest of the kids rolled up together"?
3. Why did Joel's parents each check on him, especially after he went to bed that night?
Activities:
1. Writing and Analysis: Worry plays a big part in Chapter Ten. Complete a T Chart to summarize ideas on the positive and negative aspects of worry. Then write a short paragraph telling about a time when you were worried.
2. Look back over the ten chapters you’ve read so far, as well as the plot line graph. Write a short paragraph summarizing the chapters emphasizing action. Then write a short paragraph describing those chapters which have little action but develop characters.

Chapter 11 - pp 76-81
Vocabulary:
1. hurtled 77
2. silhouetted 77
3. pivoted 78
4. simultaneously 78
5. absorbing 81

Questions:
1. What initially prompts Joel to tell the truth?
2. Why does Joel cry out that he hates his father?

Activity:
Analyze the adults and secondary characters using the chart.

Chapter 12 - pp 82-90
Vocabulary:
1. surged 87
2. pummel 87
3. tentatively 90

Questions:
1. How does Joel define “bad”? Give reasons to support or deny Joel’s thinking.
2. How does Joel's father help Joel put Tony's drowning in better perspective?
3. Joel's dad gives a lot of advice in this final chapter. Make a list from the book and explain why you agree or disagree. (see pages 85,86,87)
4. How does the story end?

Culminating Activities
1. Complete the Anticipation Guide. How did your ideas change after reading the book?
2. What did you learn from the book?
3. Is the title appropriate? Explain your answer.
4. Looking back on the Character/Attribute Bubble Maps for Tony and Joel, write a short summary of one of the characters and draw a picture of the boys.
5. There’s a lot of focus in this book on parents and parenting. What advice would you give to parents?
6. Create titles for the twelve chapters of the book.
7. Nominate the book for an award.