



## Teacher Lesson Material for *Howl* by Micah Hales

A Note to Teachers: The Book Club Discussion Question packet can be used any way that you see will best fit your students' needs. The short response questions are designed to help students understand the novel's major plot points, track character development, and examine major symbolism and themes in the book. You could assign every short response question, or allow students to choose a few to answer. The extended response questions could be developed into full essays, or simply longer paragraphs. Again, you could assign a specific extended response question, or allow students to choose the one they are most interested in. Below the exemplar answers you will find a few classroom activities that highlight literary aspects of the novel. (Figurative language, setting, and character development.) You could use the classroom activities for short class discussions, or you could develop them into full lesson plans. Finally, you will find printable bookmarks with a reminder of some traits of a great reader. (These could be shrunk, or left the current size, and printed on cardstock.)

### **Short Response Sample Answers:**

These answers are exemplars. Students' answers will vary greatly depending on their grade and reading comprehension level. These exemplar answers are not necessarily the "correct" answers, but rather intended to help teachers guide student thinking.

#### Chapter 1: Camp Glynwood

1. Why is Celia leaving Camp Glynwood? What is her plan? (p. 17)

Exemplar answer: Celia is planning to sneak away from Camp Glynwood because she wants to get back to Brooklyn to look for her brother, Kyel, who has been missing since April. Her plan is to steal a bike and ride back to the bus station in Phoenicia and catch the bus back to Penn Station in New York City.

#### Chapter 3: Escape Route

2. Does Celia's plan work? What happens instead? (p. 30)

Exemplar Answer: Celia's plan doesn't work. Instead she sees something in the middle of the road and crashes the bike. On page 29, the text says, "A four-legged creature stood in the middle of the road in front of her. Its bright golden-yellow eyes started at her." This is similar to what she experienced in the Gather Round back

at Camp Glynwood.

#### Chapter 7: The Way Back

3. What do you learn about Celia in this chapter? Try to summarize it in four concise sentences. (p. 54)

Exemplar Answer: In this chapter we learn that Celia's parents met in Jamaica and moved to Brooklyn after Celia was born. Her younger brother, Kyel, has been missing for a few months, but the grown-up's have stopped looking for him. She is at summer camp now because her parents wanted her to be around kids her own age, instead of going back to Jamaica for the summer as she usually did with Kyel.

#### Chapter 9: A Bare Wrist

4. What is significant about Celia and Violet walking together in silence? What does this show you about their friendship? (p. 67)

Exemplar answer: This scene shows us that Celia and Violet are becoming true friends. They understand each other and are comfortable enough to walk together in complete silence. When Celia said she wasn't in the mood for talking, Violet could have been put off by this and left, but instead she stayed and the two girls shared a nice moment together.

#### Chapter 11: The Howling

5. What effect did the howling have on Celia? What happened? How did it change how Celia feels? (p. 87)

Exemplar answer: The howling gave Celia hope that she will find Kyel. While Celia joined the other animals howling, she began to think she heard her brother howling back. She isn't sure what she heard, and she's beginning to hope that maybe she heard him. However, this hope is also causing her doubt and confusion. On page 87 it says, "Or maybe, just maybe, it was Kyel, calling out to her, trying to tell her where he was and how she could find him and bring him back to their family. Now that this door of hope had flung open inside her chest, she felt more confused than ever."

#### Chapter 14: The Feline

6. In your own words, summarize the history between the last speaker in the Snapping Turtle King. (p. 110)

Exemplar Answer: The Snapping Turtle King believes that the last Speaker killed his queen. He thinks this because the turtles smelled the death of the queen where they saw the footprints of the Speaker and the Lynx's mother.

#### Chapter 15: The Truth

7. In this chapter the Feline says, "The truth is not always the first story we tell." How does this become clear

in this chapter? (p. 112)

Exemplar Answer: “The truth is not always the first story we tell,” becomes clear in this chapter because Celia finally admits to herself and the Feline that her brother Kyel has died. She explains that he drowned while they were playing in the stream behind their school. She hasn’t been able to face the actual truth since his death and so she has been lying to herself and everyone she meets, saying that Kyel has been missing and that the grown-up’s gave up looking for him.

#### Chapter 20: Rearranging Letters

8. Susan and Violet each bring something to Celia while she is staying in the Cupcake. How do the journal and the prism each help Celia during this part of the book? (p. 139)

Exemplar Answer: Susan brings her grandmother Edith’s journal to Celia. This helps Celia because she identified with Edith’s emotional state during a time of loss. She also realizes that Edith was the first Speaker. Violet brings the prism to Celia and it helps her remember the kindness of her friend, and perhaps makes her remember Violet’s loss of her father. Both objects help Celia decide that she is ready to leave the Cupcake and “join the world of the living.”

#### Chapter 23: The Deal

9. In this chapter we meet two new characters. Describe, then compare and contrast, their character traits. Celia needs each of them to help her with something. What are the two things she needs help with? (p. 157)

Exemplar Answer: Keen is a small owl that is curious, nervous, and very eager to please. Otto is an otter who is very grumpy and doesn’t care what Celia thinks about him. Both characters care about each other and their friendship, and perhaps even depend on each other like an adopted family.

#### Chapter 27: The Snapping Turtle King

10. Celia thinks to herself, “What kind of creature would want to live down here, so tucked away from sunlight and anything living?” In real life, turtles do not live underwater all the time. They need to come to the water’s surface to breathe oxygen, and warm themselves in the sun. Why do you think the author has chosen this setting for the Snapping Turtle King? What does it symbolize about his character? (p. 177)

Exemplar Answer: The Snapping Turtle King’s Palace is sunken in the lowest part of the Lake. It’s dark, damp and dreary. It’s far away from the sun, which symbolizes life, happiness or hope. The Snapping Turtle King has literally drowned in his own sadness. He has also brought all the rest of the Snapping Turtles down into his despair with him.

11. Otto, Tippit and Celia each show courage during this chapter. How and when do they each do this? What

is motivating them to be brave? (p. 186)

Exemplar Answer: Otto shows bravery when he first presents himself to the Snapping Turtle King by returning before three full moons have passed. Tippit shows bravery by challenging the Snapping Turtle King of not being able to talk to humans. At this moment, Celia is frozen with fear. Tippit buys her some time, by suggesting that the Snapping Turtle King can only speak to animals that have passed away. Both Otto and Tippit are motivated to be brave to support Celia. Celia is brave when she finally speaks up and forces herself to speak. She does this because of her intense desire to be in contact with Kyel.

#### Chapter 28: A Reminder of Sunlight

12. What challenge does the Snapping Turtle King demand of Celia? What are the consequences if she does not succeed? (p. 192)

Exemplar Answer: The Snapping Turtle King has told Celia to bring him his Queen before sunrise. Somehow the prism has told him that she can do it. If Celia doesn't find the Snapping Turtle Queen and bring her back to the King, the turtles will drown Tippit. The guards have taken Tippit as a hostage.

#### Chapter 31: Susan's Pilot Light

13. What is a pilot light on a gas stove? How is the author using the pilot light as a metaphor in this chapter? (p. 203)

Exemplar Answer: A pilot light is a small flame on a gas stove that is always burning. It allows the burners to ignite when the gas is turned on. The author uses this to symbolize Susan's joy and wonderment. Ever since the first day of Camp, Susan is feeling weighed down by the pressure of being Camp Director. Symbolically, the Chow Lodge's pilot light has been broken, and she's been trying to fix the part. In this scene Susan is attempting to fix the pilot light again when she sees Celia and Violet sneaking out of the attic together. On page 204 it says, "Despite herself, Susan felt a small flame of hope flicker to life in her chest." Somehow this simple act reminds Susan why she loves her role, working with children, and perhaps is reminded of the original spirit of Camp Glynwood.

#### Chapter 33: The Remembering

14. In your own words, explain what happened in this chapter. Did Celia finally get her wish of finding Kyel? Why or why not? (p. 220)

Exemplar answer: (This answer may be very different for each student, and that's okay.)

#### Chapter 34: The Silence

15. Look back at your answer to question number 10 from Chapter 27. How do the events of this chapter show

change? (p. 221- 222)

Exemplar Answer: Once the Snapping Turtle King is able to overcome the grief of losing his Queen, his Palace rises to the surface of the Lake. Just like the Palace is no longer buried in the deepest, darkest part of the lake, he is no longer buried by his sadness. Now the Palace has risen to the Lake's surface and is resting next to the place where the Queen died, and the King is happy and hopeful again. The last we see of the Snapping Turtle King he has tossed aside his crown and (p. 222) "was slowly swimming across the Lake on his back, gazing up at the sunbeams streaking across the sky, half-humming-half-singing a soft melody."

#### Chapter 35: Visiting Day

16. Look at Samantha and Celia's interaction about her Dodger's Sweatshirt on page 226. How is this different from their interaction about the sweatshirt back on page 55? What does this tell you about how their relationship has changed? (p. 226)

Exemplar Answer: In the beginning of the summer Samantha and Celia butt heads. Samantha is rude about Celia wearing the same sweatshirt everyday, and Celia is dismissive of Samantha's opinion. At the end of the novel, the girls have developed a respectful friendship. This is exemplified when Samantha asks if Celia is going to wear the same sweatshirt every day. When Celia says probably, Samantha responds, "I can respect that."

17. How does "Celia – not Alice" come into play in this last scene? What is Celia telling her mom? How does this make her mother feel? (p. 231)

Exemplar Answer: In this scene Celia tells her mother that she remembers her mother's advice to her when she was a little girl about being strong when she faces adversity in her life. On page 231, she says, "You were right mom. I did get pretty lost. And I still am a little bit. But I know I'm going to find my way again. 'Cause you know, I'm Celia, not Alice." She is referring to the fact that she felt lost when Kyel first died, but now she is finding her way through the emotional grief, and she knows she will ultimately be okay. Celia's mom feels proud of her daughter's strength and perhaps thankful that her family is beginning to pull through this tough time together.

#### After Students Finish Reading the Book

##### Extended Response Choices:

1. Choose two character from the box below and explain how they have changed over the course of the novel. In what ways are they different now? What caused them to change? (Celia, Snapping Turtle King, Susan)
2. Although this book uses many elements of the fantasy, there are real-life lessons the author wants you to think about. What lesson, or theme, do you think the author wants you to think about when you

read *Howl*? What lesson could you learn from Celia’s journey and apply to our own life?

3. In this story both Celia and Violet explain the story behind their names. The meaning is important to understanding who they are. Talk to your parents or guardians. Does your name mean something? Why did your parents choose that name for you?

Just for Fun!

1. Draw a picture of your favorite character from *Howl*.
2. Create a graphic novel of your favorite scene from *Howl*. Who are the characters? What is happening?
3. You are the writer! Write the next chapter... use one of the scenarios below, or make up your own.
  - a. Tippit arrives back at the den.
  - b. Celia returns to her apartment in Brooklyn after camp is over.
  - c. The Snapping Turtle King goes to talk with the Feline.

Additional Classroom Resources and Activities:

#### Figurative Language

Here is a list of examples of figurative language to discuss with students. You can ask them to explain the type of figurative language it shows, and the intended meaning.

p. 12 – “The choir of crickets, cicadas, and tree frogs sounded like a sprinkler that was stuck hitting the side of a tree trunk.”

p. 18 – Seeing them felt like grabbing two fists of searing hot coals.”

p. 20 – “Her laugh made Celia think of a flash of tinsel catching the sunlight from a grey, winter sidewalk.”

p. 29 – “Suddenly her breath froze into a block of ice in her throat.”

p. 101 – “It was loud and sudden, like a startling clap of thunder on a sunny day.”

p. 116 – “Every emotion reached up and grabbed her body, pulling her to the ground or thrashing her into trees, making her stumble and stagger like she was fighting invisible demons.”

Can students find their own examples? Can they create their own examples?

|   |
|---|
| Setting   |
| As with most novels, setting plays a very important role in <i>Howl</i> . Often the setting helps create the mood of the scene. It is also sometimes a metaphor for a bigger idea or theme in the novel. Discuss the following points with your students and see if they can find other instances in the book where the setting effects the characters of mood of the scene.    |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compare and contrast Tippit's den to the Lynx's cave. How to the two settings create different feelings?</li> <li>2. Describe how the Snapping Turtle's Palace location at the bottom of the lake, and its following relocation to the sunlight, is important for understanding the Snapping Turtle King's transformation.</li> </ol> |

Describing Characters – Ask students use words from the boxes below to describe the following characters at the beginning, middle and end of the novel. How do the characters change? What causes these changes? What are other novels students have read this year that have characters that experience change?

|           |       |       |        |
|-----------|-------|-------|--------|
|           | Celia | Susan | Violet |
| Beginning |       |       |        |
| Middle    |       |       |        |
| End       |       |       |        |

|            |           |             |           |
|------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| fearful    | sluggish  | caring      | sensitive |
| withdrawn  | dishonest | respectful  | patient   |
| neglectful | cruel     | adventurous | mature    |
| lonely     | angry     | curious     | sad       |
| confused   | worried   | joyful      | honest    |

If you enjoy reading *Howl*, please recommend the book to fellow educators or your friends! Here are some ways to spread the word:

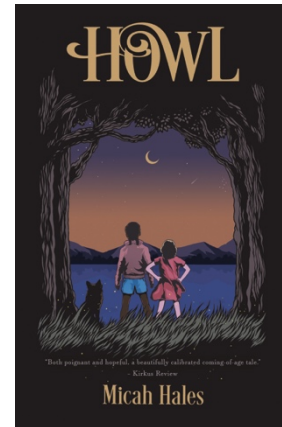
1. Recommend the book to fellow educators and friends through social media: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.
2. Rate the book on Amazon and leave a short review.
3. Use [www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com) or [www.dogobooks.com](http://www.dogobooks.com) to connect with other readers and recommend the book.
4. Reach out to the author through her website [www.micahhales.com](http://www.micahhales.com). She would love to hear from you and will write you back!





Hey, Amazing Reader! Don't Forget To...

1. Reread sections that you don't understand
2. Make predictions before, during, and after reading
3. Figure out unknown words using context clues (or use a dictionary if an unknown word seems important and context clues don't help)
4. Focus on the characters – What are their character traits? How do they respond to challenges? How do they change over the course of the story? Why?
5. Look for examples of figurative language (metaphors, similes, hyperboles)
6. Think about the setting and how it impacts the story
7. Ask questions and make connections between the story and yourself, the world, and other books
8. Look for larger themes or lessons that the author may be trying to teach you



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