

From the author:

Critical thinking skills can be hard to learn. They are *invisible* activities. We might learn how to bake a cake or build a house by watching someone else do these things, but we can't learn much by watching someone read. As teachers of a visual generation, we have to make the learning *visible* for our students.

This Teacher's Guide provides a variety of thought-provoking activities for students of different ability levels and learning styles. These are not typical main idea and vocabulary drills. Instead, they are short, active projects planned to engage students with classroom discussion, graphic organizers, and thoughtful writing assignments. They're designed to make the learning visible, and to entice students into the critical thinking process by making it fresh and fun.

The sections in the guide parallel the chapters of the novel Found on 16th Avenue. Each section offers activities that prompt students to *discuss* and *evaluate* issues from the reading. Tactile, three-dimensional *projects* are included for kinesthetic and visual learners. *Writing assignments* follow the thinking activities, with a mixture of objective and subjective prompts for different modes of writing. Suggestions for *creative writing* and *additional research* finish out each section.

These chapter activities are not intended as a complete list for every student to work through. Teachers should pick and choose what suits their class. A typical lesson plan might begin with students discussing a topic in pairs and filling out graphic organizers before beginning a writing assignment. After ideas are discussed and organized, the teacher can demonstrate on the board how to structure a paragraph or an essay from the ideas. Advanced students can support less experienced ones as they work together on these short, varied activities.

Lead your students through the critical thinking skills. Help them verbalize their own thoughts, organize them, and communicate them through writing assignments and oral presentations. Schedule time for special, unusual projects. Consider your students' individual talents and give them assignments that play to their strengths. Enjoy your class and give them a semester to remember!

I hope that the lessons on these pages spark your imagination and engage your students. Please share your adventures in the classroom by emailing me or posting a comment to my website. I love to reconnect with old friends and make new ones—and in any case, we teachers need to encourage one another, so drop me a line and say hello!

Teaching is a noble calling. Best wishes to you always, and I hope you and your students have a wonderful time exploring Found on 16th Avenue.

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Additional suggestions:

Reinforce the homework reading. Typically, teachers use quizzes at the beginning of class to check up on students' reading. Try contests instead. Pit the boys against the girls or one side of the room against the other. Ask questions, keep the contest brisk, and applaud the winners. You'll wake students up, get them involved, and reward the good readers.

Encourage classroom discussion with Think-Pair-Share activities. Pair up students to talk about discussion questions, then bring the class back together to share answers. This requires students to verbalize their thoughts, and reticent students can try out their comments on a single listener before they speak in front of a large group. A positive response along the lines of "Oh, that's cool," can give students confidence.

Use charting activities (graphic organizers) to help students analyze abstract concepts. Paper and pen are concrete, tactile tools. We can doodle, draw, and jot down thoughts. Written words stay put – they don't jump around and vanish right when we need them. Students can fill out graphic organizers individually, in pairs, or as a large group, and then use the information as starting points for writing assignments. Show your students how to take their thoughts and organize them. Demonstrate on the board – or let your students demonstrate on the board – how to select details from their charts and organize them into an outline for a paragraph or essay. This gives students support and direction before they begin writing.

Engage your kinesthetic and visual learners with art, music, drama, fashion and food-related projects. Incorporate non-verbal activities into lesson plans as much as possible so that all your students can shine. Let your musicians play songs, your *fashionistas* put on fashion shows, your artists paint and draw, and your show-offs stage skits or broadcast radio programs. Make time for fun. Schedule activities that turn your classroom into bedlam for a while. Shake up your students' ideas about education.

Challenge your advanced readers and writers. Prompt them with assignments from *The Creative Writer's Craft* and *Research Questions*. Schedule time for students to read their writings and present their findings to the class, and create an atmosphere of excitement with your encouragement and applause.

Chapter Two: December / Christmas

Your Thoughts

“Did everything go all right tonight? With Joe?” John asked.

“Oh, it was fine,” Kate said, studying the plate of fudge and picking out a small piece to sample. “Joe helped a lot. The handle on my eggbeater broke and he fixed it for me.”

“Huh.” John Mark thought about that as he picked out his own piece of candy. “How’d he do that?”

“He chopped up a piece of wood and whittled it down to fit in between the handle bars, and then he tied it with some string for me to use tonight. He said he’d fix it for good tomorrow.”

“Hmhf,” John Mark said through a mouthful of fudge. “He actually talked to you?” He gave Kate a grin.

She sniffed at him. “Yes, he actually did. He’s coming along. We just have to be patient.” She sighed and leaned her head into her hand. “I think we should just treat him like a normal kid, John Mark. I don’t think you need to be so extra careful with him. Send him to school, and that’ll stop all this wandering around the house that he does at night. I talk to him every day exactly like I do to the boys, and someday he’s going to start talking back.”

John finished his fudge. “I don’t know,” he said. “That might work for you, but I don’t think it’ll work for me. He won’t even look me in the eye. He jumps every time I go near him. He’s so edgy, like he’s feeling guilty all the time.” He picked out another piece of fudge and chewed for a while before he spoke again.

“I don’t mean to talk bad about him, hon, but we got to face the fact that he could be up to something, stealing from us or something like that. Lord knows what he might do behind our backs. He could just take off one day and never come back, or only come back once in a while when he wants a meal and a new pair of shoes.”

“I don’t think that’s what he’s going to do,” Kate said after a while. “He talks to me, a little. Maybe he feels safer around me because I’m a woman.”

John Mark was quiet, thinking about that idea. “He doesn’t say much to Johnny, either,” he finally said. “He’ll talk to Stephen, if I’m not around. But hardly ever to Johnny.” He threw a glance at Kate. “And don’t think Johnny hasn’t noticed. I have to talk to him every day about remembering that Joe’s been through a hard time and we need to be patient with him.”

1. What’s your favorite holiday? Why?
2. What’s your family’s morning routine? If you could change it, what would you do?
3. Speculate about why Joe feels closer to his grandmother than to other characters who are actually closer to him in age.
4. If you were in John Mark and Kate’s position, trying to help Joe fit into their family, what would you do?

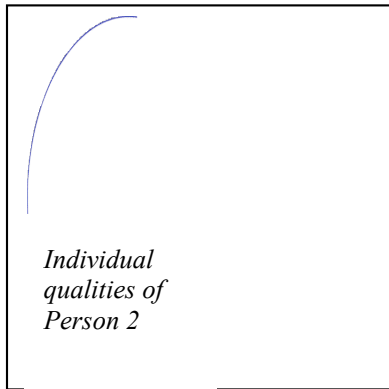
Your Evaluation

1. Describe the three families portrayed in Chapter Two.

	Members	Housing	Family Relationships	Recent family history
John Mark Starosta's family				
Vincent Starosta's family				
Karel Prasky's Family				

2. John Mark, Vincent, and Karel all have different parenting styles. Choose two of them to compare and contrast. Organize your thoughts by listing the contrasting qualities in the outer areas of the circle and similar qualities in the shared area of the circles.

Example:



3. List the qualities you think are most important for a father.

For Fun

1. Play a recording of the songs “Puttin’ on the Ritz” or “I Got Rhythm.”
2. Choose modern-day Christmas gifts for each of the Starostas. Explain why you chose them.
3. Bring food to class for tasting. Try divinity, cherry *vanocka* bread, pickled beets or roast goose. If no goose is available, try duck instead.
4. Act out the scene where Johnny leans out over the ice to reach the knife.

Paragraphs and Essays

1. Describe a holiday your family celebrates.
2. If you had an unlimited budget, how would you decorate your house for an important holiday?
3. Describe a gift you’ve received that was especially significant to you. Explain why it was so important.
4. Write an essay about different parenting styles. Recommend the style you think is best.
5. Write an essay about how people choose gifts.
6. Write an essay about which gifts are the best to give, to receive, or both.

Creative Writer’s Craft

1. Write a vivid “word portrait” about one of the characters. Include as many of the senses as possible in your description. Don’t forget to include information about how the character communicates non-verbally (expression and body language). Try listing all the details first, then combining them into a paragraph.

Example: Stephen Starosta is six years old, adorably cute with silky blond hair and wide blue eyes, and always making friends or getting himself into trouble. He chatters endlessly to anyone who will listen, and sings to himself if nothing more interesting is going on. Stephen loves to hug and touch, and he is so open and friendly that even Joe feels the warmth of his love.

2. Write additional lyrics for one of the songs or carols in the chapter.

3. The scene in the park reflects the different characters of the boys – Joe is competitive, Johnny is helpful, Wence is level-headed, and so on. Change some characteristics in one or more of the boys, and write a new ending based on what would have happened differently.

Research Topics

1. Find a photo of an old wringer-washer for laundering clothes. Explain how it worked.
2. Look up common grocery prices in the 1930's. Make a list of things that cost less than a dollar.
3. How did the sport of tennis begin, and when did it become popular in America?
4. People didn't always eat turkey for Thanksgiving. When did turkey become popular, and why?