



TeachersFirst READING TREKS

Harriet the Spy

Teacher Guide

Access Reading
Trek Map

Grade Level & Content Areas

Ages: 9–12

Grades: 4–7

Reading Level: 5th grade

Lexile Measure: 760L

Guided Reading Level: T

Developmental Reading

Assessment (DRA): 50

Content Areas: Reading, literature, and social studies (including geography).

Synopsis of Book

Louise Fitzhugh's iconic novel revolutionized children's literature by challenging gender stereotypes and exploring themes like bullying, family dynamics, and individual differences. Harriet records her thoughts about the people in her world and others that she spies on in her notebook. She is blatantly honest, even to the point of being cruel. When her friends and classmates read her notebook, Harriet's whole world changes, and she must learn painful life lessons.

Standards

Common Core State Standards for K–5

Reading: Literature

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure

Writing

- Text Types and Purposes
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge
- Range of Writing

Common Core State Standards for 6–12

Reading: Literature

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure

Writing

- Text Types and Purposes
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge
- Range of Writing

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

- Theme 1: CULTURE
- Theme 2: TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE
- Theme 3: PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS

National Core Arts Standards for Visual Arts

- CREATING
- RESPONDING

Using a TeachersFirst® Reading Trek to Explore This Book

TeachersFirst Reading Treks create a virtual field trip of resources about a piece of literature or a text using the My Maps feature of Google Maps. To motivate and enrich student reading, teachers and students can reference this visual collection of web resources and images as they relate to the contents of a book.

TeachersFirst has done the hard work for you! Use the activities in this teacher guide and the accompanying [Reading Trek map](#) as you and your students explore this book. And, if you feel inspired, you (or your students) can create your own Reading Trek about this or another book!

Using This Reading Trek in Class

Below is a list of ideas for how to use this Reading Trek in your educational setting.

Working with the Map:

1. Introduce the book to the class by displaying the [Reading Trek map](#) on an interactive whiteboard and highlighting the *Harriet M. Welsch's Places* layer. Note that many of the places named in the text still exist today. Others, such as Harriet's school, are based on the author's own experiences and may no longer exist but are similar to areas shown.
 - prompts about traveling by subway, living in large cities compared to the suburbs or rural areas, and other topics.
2. Use the [Reading Trek map](#) to stimulate discussion, ask questions, or inspire writing
3. Introduce the concept of "spying" on others and discuss the moral and ethical consequences of such behavior and the dangers of judgments and prejudices formed from distant observation.

4. Use Smore ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to create a classroom newsletter with fictitious and gossip-filled articles, being certain to include a disclaimer about its nature.
5. Use Sutori ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to construct a virtual timeline of your students' lives just as Harriet did. Check out the review for more ideas for using this free tool.
6. Make a chocolate egg cream like the one Harriet orders in the story. In a large glass, combine $\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk with 2–3 tablespoons of thick chocolate syrup (as used on ice cream sundaes) and stir well, then stir in 1 cup of cold seltzer water or club soda.
7. Have students draw a basic map of the neighborhood in which they live and/or where they go to school. For a digital option, use Google My Maps ([TeachersFirst review](#)). Include landmarks and have them make a legend to clarify any symbols they include, then ask them to imagine a route they could take if they were asked to spy on or observe others.
8. Research how New York City has changed in the last 10 years, 25 years, or 100 years. Look up old maps showing landmarks and note what has changed.

Extension Activities:

1. Play a game where students either listen to or read a dialogue between two people, then describe how they think the two characters look. This could be done in small groups with the class voting on which description is the most accurate.
2. Discuss the book's illustrations of: Mrs. Golly (17), Ole Golly (23), Agatha Plumber (44), Little Joe Curry (59), Mr. and Mrs. Robinson (67), Harrison Withers (72), Janie (77), Mr. Waldenstein (110), Mr. and Mrs. Welsch (124), Miss Berry (153), the stunned classmates (180-181), and Sport (241). Compare them to those of Harriet (40, 55, 71, 133, 167, 173, 204, and 220). (Note: page numbers may vary slightly in different editions of the book.)
3. Write a letter of encouragement to someone in another geographical area who is dealing with a stressful situation.
4. Create a book trailer using Typito ([TeachersFirst review](#)).
5. Draw a picture of the Robinsons' "Baby" sculpture (157). For a digital option, try ClipDrop ([TeachersFirst review](#)). This tool will create AI images using your drawings.
6. Compare and contrast the Welsch family's previous and current neighborhoods. Consider using an interactive digital Venn Diagram ([TeachersFirst review](#)) for the comparison.
7. Have each student keep a "Spy Notebook" for a week. Make notes about things they observed about people they interact with daily.
8. Have students divide into two groups and debate whether Harriet was wrong to spy on others or if it was okay. Try out a virtual debate tool like Kialo Edu ([TeachersFirst review](#)). Should she have written down all her thoughts? Plead your case. Include in your discussion the role of privacy, honesty, and emotional intelligence.
9. Create a science experiment Janie could do. Include the hypothesis, procedure, and results she might find.

Helpful Resources

From TeachersFirst:

- [TeachersFirst CurriConnects Book List - Maps](#)
- [TeachersFirst Review: Google My Maps](#)
- [OK2Ask: Building Background Knowledge with Reading Treks](#)
- [OK2Ask: No Passport Required: Cross-Curricular Learning Journeys with Google My Maps](#)

Other Resources:

- [Spying on Louise Fitzhugh](#).
- Book trailer examples found on [Kid Lit TV's Book Trailer Archives](#) or [Slime Kids](#).