



YOUNG MASTER CHALLENGE

Student Learning Pack Honey Bee (ENGLISH)



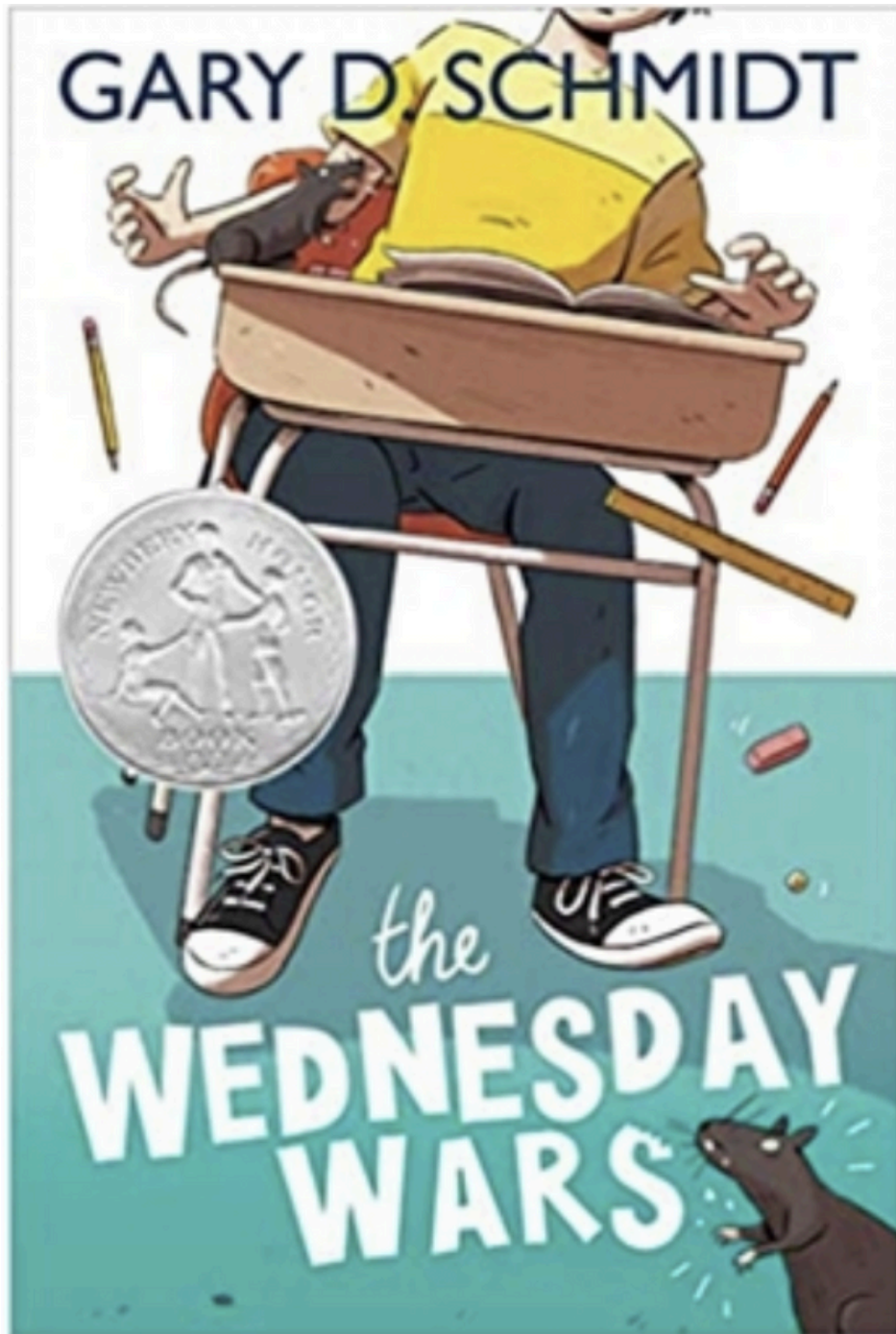
Resources:

Book: The Wednesday Wars (Gary D. Schmidt)

Film: Akeelah and the Bee

Focus Value: Honesty

Unit 1: the Wednesday Wars



The Wednesday Wars is a novel by Gary D. Schmidt about seventh-grader Holling Hoodhood, who spends Wednesday afternoons with his teacher, Mrs. Baker, while his classmates attend religious instruction. The overview focuses on Holling's year in 1967-1968 Long Island as he navigates life during the Vietnam War while discovering the works of William Shakespeare, leading to a coming-of-age story about finding courage and purpose. Key themes include coming-of-age, the relationship between Holling and Mrs. Baker, the parallel between Shakespeare's plays and his own life, and the impact of the Vietnam War.

Unit 1: The Wednesday Wars

Activity 1: Before Reading – Context and Controversy

This activity is designed to activate prior knowledge about the 1960s, introduce the historical setting of the novel, and engage students with a central conflict of the story before they begin reading.

Context & Conflict in 1968

Instructions: The Wednesday Wars is set during the 1967–1968 school year. This was a time of huge social and political upheaval in America.

Part 1: The Historical Backdrop

List three historical events or movements you associate with the late 1960s (1967–1968).

Example: The Civil Rights Movement.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Part 2: The Core Conflict

The main character, Holling Hoodhood, is the only Presbyterian student in his class. All his classmates leave for religious instruction (Catholic Catechism or Hebrew School) on Wednesday afternoons, forcing Holling to stay behind with his teacher, Mrs. Baker.

Holling's Perspective: If you were Holling, how would you feel about being the only one left behind with your teacher? Check all that apply and briefly explain your choices.

- ☐ Targeted/Singled out
- ☐ Lonely/Isolated
- ☐ Suspicious of the teacher
- ☐ Relieved to avoid religious classes

Explanation: _____

Mrs. Baker's Perspective: Holling is convinced Mrs. Baker hates him. Given the historical context (her husband, Lt. Tybalt Baker, is deployed to Vietnam), brainstorm three potential pressures or distractions Mrs. Baker might be dealing with, which could explain her initial demeanour toward Holling.

Prediction: Holling's father is a highly ambitious architect. Why might Holling's dad care about Holling's relationship with Mrs. Baker? Make one prediction about how Holling's dad might influence the situation.

Prediction: _____

Activity 2: After Reading – Character Analysis and Growth

This activity requires students to reflect on the major themes and analyse the changes in Holling and the key adult figures throughout the novel.

Transformation and Theme

Instructions: Holling Hoodhood undergoes significant growth throughout his seventh-grade year. Analyse his transformation and the impact of the adults in his life.

Part 1: Holling's Emotional Growth

The novel features Holling's journey from isolation to connection, often guided by his Shakespeare readings. Match Holling’s major emotional theme to the Shakespeare play he was reading at the time:

| Play | Holling’s Emotional Theme |
|--|--|
| A. <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> (October) | 1. The price of ruthless ambition and finding the courage to take a moral stand. |
| B. <i>The Tempest</i> (November) | 2. Learning the meaning of mercy over vengeance, and the coldness of transactional justice. |
| C. <i>Macbeth</i> (January) | 3. The search for freedom from a controlling master, and the nature of betrayal. |
| D. <i>Hamlet</i> (May) | 4. The agony of indecision and the challenge of choosing one's own path over fate. |

Part 2: The Evolving Relationship

Complete the table below to track the change in Mrs. Baker and Holling's relationship from the beginning to the end of the book.

| Characteristic | September (Beginning) | June (End) |
|--|--|---|
| Holling's view of Mrs. Baker | Convinced she hates him and is plotting revenge. | |
| Mrs. Baker's actions toward Holling | Assigns menial chores (like cleaning erasers) and seems distant. | |
| Holling's attitude toward his Wednesday time | | Views it as a valuable time for reading, learning, and finding support. |

Activity 3: Comprehension Questions (Give your answers on a separate sheet)

SEPTEMBER

1. Holling uses the word “perfect” a lot when describing his house. Why do you think he does this? Describe the irony (irony = one thing seems one way but is actually the opposite).
2. Holling likes to read, and he mentions several books that he enjoys. Which character from *Treasure Island* does Holling relate to and why?
3. Holling complains to his family that Mrs. Baker hates him, yet they are unsympathetic. Why do you think this is?
4. Explain why Holling has to spend Wednesday afternoons alone with Mrs. Baker. What does he think Mrs. Baker is planning?
5. Based on his name and the fact that an announcement was made about him at school, who might Lieutenant Tybalt Baker be, and where is he going?

OCTOBER

1. What are Holling’s father’s priorities?
2. On page 37, Heather says, “I want support for believing in something bigger than me.” What is she referring to?
3. Who are Sycorax and Caliban? What happens to them?
4. Which Shakespearean play does Holling read first, and why does he think she is getting him to read this play? Does he think she succeeds?
5. Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary defines mercy as “kind or forgiving treatment of someone who could be treated harshly.” Holling will repeatedly refer to the following lines about mercy throughout the book: “The quality of mercy is not strained, / It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven / Upon the place beneath” (47). What do you think Shakespeare is explaining about mercy through those lines?

NOVEMBER

1. What is the second Shakespeare play Holling reads? How does he find Shakespeare’s writing useful to him?
2. Based on the ending of *The Tempest*, Holling disagrees with Mrs. Baker and feels that “Defeat doesn’t help you to grow.” Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
3. This chapter ends with sadness and prejudice in Holling’s community. What is Holling trying to tell the reader in the last four lines of November?

DECEMBER

1. How does understanding what Ariel felt on p.84 help Holling realize something important about himself and his own life? Use cited evidence from the book to prove your answer.
2. How do you feel about Holling's parents not watching his performance? How does Holling seem to feel?
3. "When gods die, they die hard" (93). What is the metaphorical death taking place in the story?
4. Why is Mrs. Bigio mean to Mai Thi in the lunch line?
5. How does Mrs. Baker make up for what happened at the Baker Sporting Emporium? What does this tell us about her as a person?

JANUARY

1. What frustrates you the most about Mr. Hoodhood in this chapter? Would you react to his words and actions more like Holling or his sister does?
2. Why do you think Mai Thi doesn't speak up for herself when Mrs. Bigio does not give her hot chocolate?
3. Mrs. Baker says Macbeth teaches the reader "that compared with love, malice is a small and petty thing" (109). Why does Holling disagree?
4. During the snowstorm, Holling saw a chance for revenge against Doug Swietek's brother. What does Holling do?
5. Explain how Holling relates recent events in his life to events in Macbeth on pages 128 and 129.

FEBRUARY

1. Based on the events in this chapter, what is ironic about Mr. Hoodhood receiving the award for the Chamber of Commerce Businessman of 1967?
2. Why does Holling get so upset when his father's design for the new school is ruined? – p.149
3. Why does Holling compare his father to Shakespeare's character, Shylock?
4. How does Holling's viewpoint about Romeo and Juliet change by the end of February?
5. The last two lines on page 155 read, "DOWNED HELICOPTER TRANSPORT STOP KHESANH STOP LT T BAKER MISSING IN ACTION STOP." What was the telegram reporting?

MARCH

1. Holling uses a metaphor to explain Mrs. Baker and the classroom. What is this metaphor at the bottom of page 157?
2. What happened when Mr. Vendleri replaced the bulging ceiling tiles?
3. Holling has two experiences of foretelling the future in March. What were these?
4. First, Holling recites Shakespeare (p. 174). What do you think the poem means?
5. Why did the discrimination against Mai Thi build up with the finding of the class pets?
6. Holling made the varsity cross country team. What are the reasons for his success?
7. What do Danny Hupfer and Mai Thi have in common?

APRIL

1. Mrs. Sidman, Mr. Guareschi, President Johnson, and Mr. Kowalski all have something in common at the beginning of this chapter. What is it?
2. What does Mr. Hoodhood mean when he says that architecture is a blood sport?
3. As Holling and Meryl Lee are working on their project, Mr. Kowalski tells them about a historical event. Which event is he referring to?
4. Describe the events that happen on the New York Yankees Opening Day. What do you think Mrs. Baker wanted to talk with the boss about?
5. During practice, Holling is careful not to run faster than any of the eighth-grade boys on the cross-country team. Why?
6. What reasons do you think Mr. Hoodhood has for saying Heather is not going to college?

MAY

1. Holling feels that several people need comforting at the beginning of this chapter. Which one do you think needs to be comforted the most? Why?
2. Where does Heather Hoodhood go in this chapter?
3. What thoughts and feelings are provoked in Holling while reading *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*?
4. How does Mrs. Baker respond to Holling's questions about why they practice for the atomic bombs?
5. How does Holling respond to his father's question to his sister, "Did you find yourself?"
6. What historical event happens in this chapter?
7. What are Holling's final thoughts on *Hamlet*? (page 234)
8. What news does Mrs. Baker receive at the end of this chapter?

JUNE

- 1 Mrs. Baker says, "A comedy isn't about being funny." What insight does she give Holling on comedy? (page 262)
2. Where does Mrs. Baker's seventh-grade class go for their class trip? What mistake does Holling make that results in Mrs. Sidman's injured fingers?
3. Mrs. Bigio joins the class on the second day. What does she ask Mai Thi? What is Mai Thi's response?
4. How does Danny Hupfer's Bar Mitzvah go?
5. What does Mrs. Baker suggest about Holling's future?
6. Although Holling does not experience a Bar Mitzvah, how has he become a man by the end of the book?

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Unit 2: Akeelah and the Bee



"Akeelah and the Bee" is a family drama about an 11-year-old girl from South Los Angeles who overcomes her fear of greatness to compete in the national spelling bee. The film explores themes of perseverance, community, self-esteem, self-honesty and the power of education, showing how Akeelah's journey inspires her neighbourhood and brings people together with the help of her coach and community. "Akeelah and the Bee" incorporates the theme of self-honesty through its focus on Akeelah's journey of overcoming self-doubt and fear to embrace her potential. The story shows her initially hiding her talent because of community stigma, but through her coach and community's support, she learns to be honest with herself about her intelligence and ability, ultimately allowing her to succeed. This is directly tied to the film's larger message of self-empowerment and the importance of being true to oneself.

Activity 1: Before Viewing - Overcoming Fear and Stigma

This activity introduces students to the film's core conflict: Akeelah's fear of displaying her intelligence due to the social stigma associated with being a "brainiac" in her neighbourhood.

Intelligence, Community, and Competition

Instructions: Akeelah and the Bee is about an 11-year-old girl with a natural talent for spelling. Before watching, consider the following questions related to the film's central themes.

Part 1: The Fear of Being Smart

A character in the movie, Akeelah, is afraid to enter the spelling bee because she doesn't want to be labelled a "brainiac" or "nerd" by her peers.

Why do you think some students might feel pressure to hide their intelligence or academic success? List two possible reasons:

1. _____
2. _____

In a sentence, define the term stigma:

Akeelah's principal forces her to enter the school spelling bee as punishment for skipping class. Why might a principal see a competition as a form of "punishment" or a necessary intervention for a talented student?

Part 2: The Role of Community

The movie's tagline is: ***"Against all odds, she found a coach, a purpose, and 50,000 friends."***

Think about what a student needs to succeed in a demanding academic competition (like a national spelling bee). Place an 'X' next to the three factors you think are most important:

- ☐ A skilled coach
- ☐ Financial resources
- ☐ Support from family
- ☐ Support from the wider community/neighbourhood
- ☐ Natural, raw talent

Prediction: Based on the tagline, what role do you predict the people in Akeelah's neighbourhood—outside of her direct family—will play in her journey?

Part 3: The Coach-Student Dynamic

Akeelah is coached by Dr. Larabee, a former English professor. This relationship is often difficult.

What qualities do you think a successful coach-student relationship needs to thrive, even when the coach is strict? (Name two qualities):

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Activity 2: After Viewing – Character Analysis and Thematic Depth

This activity focuses on the transformation of the key characters, the powerful quote used in the film, and the theme of class differences.

Growth, Sacrifice, and Empowerment

Instructions: Now that you have watched Akeelah and the Bee, answer the following questions to analyse the characters and themes.

Part 1: Character Transformation

Describe the major change or growth experienced by the following characters over the course of the film:

| Character | Beginning of Film (Motivation/Attitude) | End of Film (Transformation/Action) |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Akeelah Anderson | Fears being labeled a "brainiac" and skips school. | |
| Tanya Anderson (Akeelah's Mom) | Overworked, unsupportive of the spelling bee, and focused on Akeelah's basic academic stability. | |
| Dr. Larabee | Reclusive, emotionally cold, haunted by the death of his daughter. | |

Part 2: The Power of Words (And Quotes)

Dr. Larabee asks Akeelah to read a quote: "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure..."

1. How does Akeelah initially demonstrate that she fears her power (her brilliance) rather than her inadequacy? Give a specific scene or action.
2. How does the climactic ending, when Akeelah and Dylan work together, demonstrate that Akeelah has finally embraced her power? What did she choose over winning?

Part 3: Race, Class, and Prejudice

The film deliberately contrasts Akeelah's community (South L.A.) with the world of her competitors (like Javier and Dylan).

1. Identify two distinct ways the film highlights the difference in socioeconomic class between Akeelah's life and the lives of the other competitors she meets.
1. _____
2. _____
2. A key moment of prejudice occurs when Dylan's father insults Akeelah. Explain how this moment challenges Akeelah's idea that she is only representing herself, and forces her to realise she is carrying the burden of her entire community.
- _____

Activity 3: Choose the best answer for the following questions.

1. At the beginning of the movie, while Akeelah was having dinner with her family, her mum asked her to turn off the TV. When she was about to turn the TV off, she saw a spelling bee competition. The girl who was competing had to spell one last word to be the champion. What was the word she had to spell?

- a) Brunizem
- b) Brunneous
- c) Brownette
- d) Bruiting

2. Dr. Larabee asked Akeelah to spell some more complicated words after she won the spelling bee competition at her school. One of the words was “pulchritude”, and she did not spell this word correctly. The pulchritude means beauty. Which one of the below can be used as a synonym for pulchritude?

- a) Allure
- b) Repulsiveness
- c) Blemish
- d) Vileness

3. When Akeelah ran away because she spelt one word wrong and her friends started laughing at her, Dr. Larabee said, “They laughed because you intimidated them, but if you had stood your ground, you would have.....”. What is the most appropriate ending for this sentence?

- a) Got their attention
- b) Not been intimidating
- c) Earned their respect
- d) Proved to them that you are very good

4. Akeelah’s brother Devon tried to encourage Akeelah to continue competing by saying: “Your has to be smarter than your ...”. Fill in the blanks.

- a) Heart, brain
- b) Brain, body
- c) Body, heart
- d) Brain, heart

5. Akeelah spelt the word “Fanciful” during the spelling bee at school. Fanciful means “over-imaginative and unrealistic” What would be the appropriate antonym for this word?

- a) Flaky
- b) Illusory
- c) Ordinary
- d) Absurd

6. While Akeelah was practising with Dr. Larabee, he showed her the word “Soliterraneous” and separated it into two parts. Given that the first part of the word “Sol” means the Sun, and the second part “Terraneous” means the earth, what would be an appropriate definition for “Soliterraneous”?

- a) The sun and the Earth working together
- b) The sun and the Earth are dependent on each other
- c) The Earth would disappear if there were no sun
- d) The sun and the Earth rotate around each other

Unit 3: Focus Value – Honesty

Activity 1: Vocabulary and Foundational Concepts

Instructions: Read the article “***Keeping It 100: A Teen’s Guide to Honesty***” and answer the questions below.

Part 1: Defining the Virtues

The article introduces three core virtues related to "Keeping It 100." Define each one in your own words, based on the text.

1.Honesty: _____

2.Trustworthiness:_____

3.Integrity:_____

Part 2: Vocabulary and Analogy

1. Matching: Match the following words from the article with their correct definitions:

Word

1. Authentic
2. Foundation
3. Deception
4. Ruin

Definition

- A. A trick or scheme, often involving hiding the truth.
- B. The destruction or collapse of something.
- C. Genuine, real, or true to oneself.
- D. The base or underlying support structure of something.

2. The Trojan Horse Analogy: The article mentions the Trojan Horse as an example of deception in history.

- What was the short-term gain for the people who used the Trojan Horse?

- What was the long-term consequence (the ruin) of the lie?

Part 3: Short Answer

1. According to the article, lying can offer short-term gains (like getting you out of trouble). Why does the article argue that these short-term gains are ultimately not worth it?

2. The text states: "Honesty is the foundation of respect." In your own words, what does this phrase mean in the context of friendships and community?

Activity 2: The Mirror Test and Real-World Application

Instructions: Refer to the article "Keeping It 100: A Teen’s Guide to Honesty" to complete this worksheet.

Part 1: Self-Honesty (The Mirror Test)

The article says self-honesty (the Mirror Test) is *"tougher than it sounds."*

1.What two things does the text say you must be able to do to pass the Mirror Test (i.e., to be truly honest with yourself)?

- -----
- -----

2.Why is being honest with yourself necessary before you can be honest with others?

Part 2: Arguments for Honesty

1.True or False: Read each statement and circle True (T) or False (F) based on the article's arguments.

2.

| <u>Statement</u> | <u>T/F</u> |
|---|------------|
| A. Honesty complicates life and creates more arguments. | (T / F) |
| B. Integrity means doing the right thing only when someone is watching. | (T / F) |
| C. The Golden Rule suggests you should not lie to others because you wouldn't want to be lied to. | (T / F) |
| D. Lies might protect your future, but honesty only protects you in the moment. | (T / F) |

Part 3: Real-World Application

1.Ethical Codes: The article mentions two global ethical concepts: Buddhism's "Right Speech" and the Golden Rule.

- Name one thing "Right Speech" advises followers to avoid, and explain why this avoidance makes a person more trustworthy.

-----2

2. Scenario: Imagine you accidentally broke a valuable item belonging to your younger sibling, and you know you could blame it on the family pet.

- What would be the short-term gain of lying (blaming the pet)?

- What would be the long-term cost to your integrity and your relationship with your sibling/family?

- How would you "Keep It 100" in this situation?

Activity 3: The Science and Strategy of Honesty

Instructions: Watch the videos provided by your teacher (Harmful Disadvantages of Telling a Lie, Integrity, Why Do We Lie?, and How Habits of Honesty and Transparency Can Transform Your Life) and use the content to answer the questions below.

Part 1: Video Check-in (Factual Questions)

Answer these questions with information directly from the videos.

- 1. **Consequences:** According to the video "Harmful Disadvantages of Telling a Lie," what is the most significant relationship consequence that occurs when a lie is told?
 - o The lie destroys _____.
- 2. **Integrity:** The video about "INTEGRITY" suggests that true integrity is about doing the right thing, even when:
 - o _____.
- 3. **The Science of Lies:** According to the "Why Do We Lie?" video, what is one of the primary reasons the human brain motivates us to tell a lie? (Choose one)
 - o To _____ or to protect our _____.
- 4. **Transformation:** The video on "Habits of Honesty and Transparency" suggests that building honesty is not a single action but a _____—a consistent practice over time.

Part 2: Analysis and Application

Answer these questions using critical thinking based on the ideas presented in the videos.

- 1. **Chain Reaction:** The video on the disadvantages of lying describes a "chain reaction" that often starts with a small lie. Describe how one small, initial lie can force a person to tell two or three larger lies later on.

- 2. **Dr. Larabee's Lesson:** In the movie Akeelah and the Bee (as referenced in the article), Akeelah had to be honest with herself about her talent. Using the concept of integrity, explain why hiding your true abilities (like acting less smart to fit in) is an act of dishonesty against yourself.

- 3. **The Transparency Habit:** The Jennah Dohms video discusses the habit of transparency. In the context of a team project, how can transparency (openness about your progress, mistakes, and struggles) help the entire team succeed, even if it feels difficult in the moment?

- 4. **The Golden Rule:** Both the article and the video series reference "The Golden Rule." Apply this rule to online communication: If someone sends you an untrue rumour about a friend, how should The Golden Rule guide your response?
