

Our School Garden

BY RICK SWANN



MATERIALS & RESOURCES:

- [Copies of the Title](#) for the student in the group
- Our School Garden!: Student Guide printable
- Students will need to access the internet for web articles and video links
- [Poetry.org Found Poem](#) -- an article for educator
- [Found Poetry Examples with Pictures](#) -- an article for educator
- [Found Poems - Facing History and Ourselves](#) -- an article for educator, including how to write a found poem
- Letter Template

Special Note to the

Educator: This book is special because it encourages children to grow their own gardens for a variety of reasons. It is easier than you think to get students to grow things in the classroom! Consider this article from Clemson Cooperative Extension as an option for growing microgreens that follow food safety regulations requiring minimal supplies. [HGIC Growing Microgreens](#)

SUMMARY AND DETAILS

Michael is feeling all alone in a new city and new school until Jesse, a fellow student, introduced him to the school garden! Working with new friends, exploring tastes, harvesting vegetables, nicknaming insects, and solving garden riddles are just a few of the ways that the school garden helps Michael feel like he is growing roots. This Found Poetry style picture book is perfect for introducing a unique modern style of poetry while incorporating history, cooking, word study, and a love for the outdoor classroom.

Grade Level: 2nd-5th

Lexile Level: Not available

Guided Reading Level: Not available

Genre: Fiction, poetry

HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE HIGH FLIERS BOOK CLUB

- Determine if this book is the correct reading level for the students by grade level and reading ability.
- Create a schedule with the students for assignments, including how many pages need to be completed along with the questions and activities in the Student Guide at each book club meeting.
- Make a plan of how students will make up the work if they miss an assignment.
- All content can be assigned digitally through LMS.
- The educator should become familiar with the concept of Found Poetry by reading the articles in **Resources**. This modern style of writing poetry is a different experience from typical poetry styles.
- The educator should also read the **Author's Note and Resources** at the end of the book before starting the lesson for perspective about the importance and history of school gardening.

The High Fliers Book Club - Farmer Allen and the Growing Table

ELA COMMON CORE

WRITING STANDARDS FOR LITERATURE

3rd Grade: RL.3.1, RL.3.2, RL.3.3, RL.3.4, RL.3.5, RL3.6, W.3.2, W.3.2a, W.3.2b,
W.3.2d, W.3.4, W.4.7

4th Grade: RL.4.1, RL.4.2, RL.4.3, RL.4.4, RL.4.5, RL.4.9, W.4.2, W.4.2a, W.4.2b,
W.4.2d, W.4.2e, W.4.4, W.4.7

5th Grade: RL.5.1, RL.5.2, RL.5.4, RL.5.5, RL.5.6, RI.5.7, W.5.2, W.5.2a, W.5.2b,
W.5.2d, W.5.2e, W.5.4, W.5.7



Name: _____

High Fliers Book Club Student Guide

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Why do you think the author wrote the text for *First Day* in short groups rather than a paragraph?
What is he trying to communicate to you with this style of writing?

Use a resource to research *stanza*. Explain what it is and how the author uses stanzas in this book.

What are you drawn to in the school garden picture? Why? What is your gardening experience?



"Butterfly in vegetable garden" by [septicbreath](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#)

Choose one of the following vegetables growing in "Our School Garden;" research and describe the role pollinators play in the plant's lifecycle: peas, onions, cauliflower, cabbage, rhubarb, corn, squash, beans. .

Why do you think the page with Julie and Michael is titled *Scavenger Hunt*?

Michael's mama says you've got to have a little spice in your life. What does that mean?



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On the page titled *The Enormous Carrot*, how has Michael changed since the beginning of the book? What is the evidence that proves there he has changed?

Research at least 3 of the following foods and explain to the group what part of the plant we eat: corn, peas, blueberries, radish, rhubarb, beets, broccoli, celery, squash blossom, onion, pumpkin, cauliflower, grapes, lettuce, cabbage, apples, spinach, asparagus.



"Squash flower with bee. Flowers can be eaten raw or dipped in batter and fried." by [Swallowtail Garden Seeds](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC 2.0](#)

For *School Garden Stone Soup*, what poetic tool has the author used to make this recipe read like it is a poem?

Read the story of Stone Soup. Explain the moral of this story in your own words.

How do you think the children at Michael's school would react if someone came to their school who was hungry? What evidence do you have from the book to support your thoughts?

Research one of the following festivals and share at least 5 facts that you learned: American Thanksgiving, Jewish Sukkoth, Chinese Moon Festival, Indian Pongal.

Plants that grow in the garden are called *producers*, or *autotrophs* because they make their own food through photosynthesis. Insects like the woodlouse or *Pill Bug* as the kids call it in the story are the next level in the food chain. What level is the woodlouse and how does it help the garden? Use a resource to research and share.



"Healthy spinach in a school garden (urine fertilised)" by Sustainable sanitation is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/)

Michael learns about *homonyms*, words that have more than one meaning but are spelled the same. Research three more homonyms to share with the group. Don't forget to write the meaning of each word!

In *Found Poem*, Michael says, “the garden sleeps in winter.” This is a type of figurative language called personification. Use a resource to find what personification means to help you explain what Michael means.

There is another set of homonyms in *Found Poem*, can you find the two words and share with the group what they mean when used in different ways?



"A Victory Garden poster from WWII." by [polkbritton](#) is marked with [CC-PDM 1.0](#)

Watch this video link of the [White House Garden Tour with The First Lady Michelle Obama](#). Why do you think it is important to have kids working together in a garden?

Use the three vegetables or fruits that you have already researched to write your own *Garden Riddles*. Share your three riddles and see if the group can guess them correctly. Think about how Mr. Roberts tries to stump Michael with his riddles as you write your riddles.

Watch this video link [The Old Farmer's Almanac - 3 Sister's Garden](#). Why do you think that Michael compares himself and his friends to the three sisters' garden?

How do Michael’s feelings change about his new school from the beginning to the end of the story? If appropriate use quotes from the text to explain your answer.

There are six common themes in literature: Good vs. evil, love, redemption, courage/perseverance, coming of age, and revenge. What do you think the theme of this book might be? What is the evidence from the book that would prove that?

Does your school have a garden?

If not, now’s the time to take the author’s advice and contact your teachers, principals, parents, and friends to gather together and create one! Write a letter to someone in your school community who could help you and your friends start a school garden. Be sure to include why this is important to you, how it could help your school, and what you might be interested in growing! Use the letter template below for your letter.

If you DO have a school garden, write a letter to a friend or family member to tell them about your school garden. Include why it is important to you, what you have grown, and how working in the garden makes you feel! Use the letter template on the next page for your letter.



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