

# Teacher to Teacher

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## Teaching Ideas from the OLRC Reading Group

### Bud, Not Buddy



**Author:** Christopher Paul Curtis  
**Title:** Bud, Not Buddy  
 Yearling Books, 1999  
**ISBN:** 0-385-32306-9

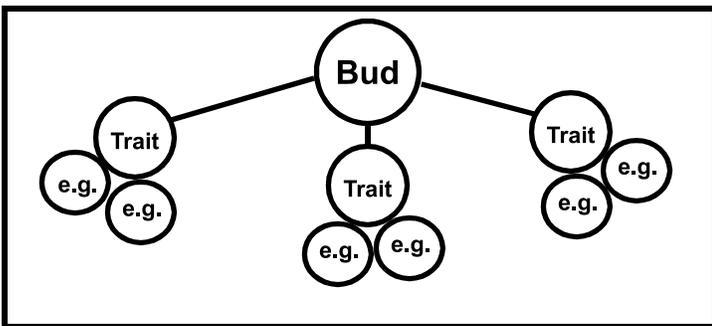
**Summary:** It's 1936, Flint Michigan, and 10-year-old Bud (not Buddy) has run away from foster care to search for this father. (Note: this book won both the Newbery Medal and the Coretta Scott King Award.)

#### Introductory Notes

Any combination of teacher read-aloud and student independent reading is advised. You may want to read aloud for students whose reading ability is below Level 4 (grade 4 or 5). Consider learners' needs and interests when selecting from the suggested activities. All strategies mentioned are described in detail at <http://literacy.kent.edu/eureka/strategies/read-listen.html>.

Reading Group members found the book funny. If your students do as well, they might want to "collect" funny parts and share them every now and then. Discussion or writing might focus on Curtis's use of humor: What role does humor play in the book? How does reading something funny affect you?

Bud's character is developed well. Every couple of chapters, you might want to ask learners to make notes about his character in their reading logs or journals. As new notes are added, invite students to review their previous lists and revise, if warranted. Small-group sharing may enhance this learning. As a culminating activity, ask pairs of students to develop a "character tree" for Bud.



Students may want to share these with others, perhaps deciding as a whole group about Bud's most important character traits (As students share examples of these traits, you'll have a good opportunity to help students see the power of "showing, not telling" in writing).

Curtis' writing is very strong. You may want to ask students to keep track of especially effective sentences. You can invite students to share these occasionally, which will probably lead to effective mini-lessons for writing. It may also lead to a discussion of why this is an award-winning book.

Use the "Agree? Disagree? Why?" activity for each of Bud's Rules and Things. For this activity, simply present the Rule and Thing and ask pairs of learners to a) decide if they agree or disagree with it and b) make notes about their reasons. Whole group sharing or writing can conclude the activity.

#### Chapter-by-Chapter Suggestions

Chapters 1 and 2: Begin with a Pre-Voke word sort. Provide students with the following words. Ask them to work with a partner to place them in one of three categories: Setting, Problem, and Solution. After students have completed this part of the task, invite them to share their thinking with one another. After chapter two has been read, ask students to return to their sorts and reorganize the words based on the text. Invite discussion in which students explain their thinking.

Case workers	depression	Bud	Momma died
Blue flyer	Flint	suitcase	Herman E. Calloway
Giant fiddle	best liar	Mrs. Amos	Rules and Things
Toddy	Home	street urchin	padlock

Chapters 3 and 4: Do a Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (or a Directed Listening-Thinking Activity). Stop for discussion:

- end of last full paragraph, p. 22
- extra space on p. 25
- end of first full paragraph, p. 28
- end of Chapter 3
- end of paragraph 3, p. 33
- end of second full paragraph, p. 34
- end of Chapter 4

Chapters 5 and 6: Do Discussion Web activities with these sentences:

Bud is a typical 10-year-old.

The pretend family did the right thing.

Depending on student interest, you might want to return to the issue of whether Bud is a typical 10 year-old again later in the book. In Discussion Webs, pairs of students brainstorm reasons for agreeing with and disagreeing with the statement. The pairs join into groups of 4, discuss the results of the brainstorming, and attempt to reach consensus about their actual feelings.

Chapter 7 begins with a very powerful description of the smells, especially of a library. After students have read or listened to the chapter, read the first four paragraphs to them. Ask them to close their eyes and imagine the scene. Students may want to sketch and then share their ideas. A good follow-up writing activity would be for students to use these paragraphs as a sort of copy change. They could, for example, select some other place that has a distinctive odor, reread the text, and use Curtis's words as a framework for their own.

Chapter 8: After this chapter has been read, ask students to participate in the Sketch to Stretch activity. Each student should make a quick sketch of something in or about the chapter—a favorite scene, perhaps, or something particularly important to the student. Students then share these sketches with each other and talk about a) why they selected that sketch and b) the chapter.

Students may also be interested in Hoovervilles, or you may want to link reading this book with study of the Great Depression. In either event, the following sites contain interesting supplemental information:

Hoover Presidential Library and Museum  
<http://www.hoover.archives.gov/exhibits/Hooverstory/gallery06.html>

PBS American Experience: Teenagers Riding the Rails  
<http://www.pbs/wgbh/amex/rails>

"We Made Do": An Oral History Project  
<http://www.mcsck12.in.us/mhs/social/madedo>

American Cultural History, 1930-1939  
<http://nhmced.edu/contracts/lrc/kc/decade30.html>

Students might explore one or more of these sites to find information about life during the Great Depression that is consistent with or inconsistent with the portrait Curtis paints. Discussion could then focus on reasons for differences.

Chapter 10 and 11: Ask students to complete Venn diagrams that compare ML Lewis and the Sleet family with the Amos family (from chapters 2-4). Students might want to work in pairs. After diagrams are complete, they can be shared with the whole group.

Chapter 12: Ask students to consider the following, using the Think-Pair-Share format: students first make individual notes, then share their ideas in a small group, and finally share ideas with the whole group.

Why would the Flint police be so concerned about labor union organizers in Grand Rapids?

Chapter 13: This would be a good chapter for you to read aloud. After reading, ask students to brainstorm about the

ways the band is and is not like a family. Ask students to save these notes. After chapter 16 is completed, ask students to revise their notes based on additional information in the text.

Chapter 14: Ask students to develop a character sketch for Miss Thomas. You may want to Reread the description of Miss Thomas' singing (p. 170, "All the while...Miss Thomas' chest," p. 171). Ask students to develop a copy change of this section for the sounds of some other person or thing.

Chapter 17: This is another good chapter to read aloud. You may want to supplement with jazz recordings. You might want to read the section that describes the interplay among the instruments, play a recording of the same, and then read again. Then invite students to react either in writing or through discussion.

Chapter 18: Ask students what they think about the rationale for having a white guy in the band.

Chapter 19: Read aloud to students.

### Culminating Activities

Ask students to consider the effect of setting (especially time) on the story by completing a "then-and-now" matrix:

	Then	Now
Orphaned children		
Social services for poor people		
Friendship		
Transportation		
Families		

Ask students to select the adult in the story whom they believe to have been the best parent figure for Bud. Ask them to develop a written or oral rationale for their choice. Share.

Students who are interested in music might want to learn more about jazz and/or the songs of the Depression. The following sites may prove useful:

Big Band and Jazz Hall of Fame  
<http://www.jazzhal.org>

All about Jazz  
<http://www.allaboutjazz.com/timeline.htm>

Songs from the 20's and 30's  
<http://fortunecity.com/tinpan/parton/2/depress.html#top>

Ask students to conduct individual (or small group) inquiry about some aspect of the story: the Great Depression, the labor movement, Michigan in the 1930's, race relations in the 1930s, opportunities for African Americans in the 1930s, and so on. Suggest that students frame the inquiry by generating questions and then using websites and traditional sources to find answers. Arrange an opportunity for students to share what they have discovered with others.

Many of the scenes in the book lend themselves to Reader's Theater. Ask small groups of students (3 or 4) to a) identify a favorite or powerful scene, b) rewrite it into a format suitable for Reader's Theater, c) decide on and practice parts, and d) perform the Reader's Theater for others in the group.

**WWW Sites for More Teaching Ideas:**

<http://www.plainfiled.k12.in.us/hschool.webq/webq106>

<http://educscapes.com/reading/bud>

[http://eduplace.com/readingscene/archive/june2001/grades8-8/book\\_links7-8.html](http://eduplace.com/readingscene/archive/june2001/grades8-8/book_links7-8.html)

<http://faculty.ssu.edu/~elbond/bud.html>

**Field Testing**

Field-testing the book *Bud, Not Buddy* took place in very different learning environments: an urban maximum-security jail and in a tutoring situation in an ABL program. All students enjoyed the humor in the book. Interestingly, teacher at both sites read the book aloud.

**Jail:** The 12-14 highly motivated women ranged in age from 18 to 40+ and in reading levels from non-reader to those with GEDs who wanted to refresh their skills. The racial composition included whites, African-Americans but no non-native speakers. They read the book aloud during eleven class sessions of 2 hours each, completing most of the chapter activities as a large group rather than small groups. The chapter 2 Pre-Voke word sort caused difficulties because they were not familiar with the term "setting." Although they initially resisted the Sketch to Stretch in Chapter 8, the women produced elaborate drawings that they enjoyed sharing. The "then-and-now" discussion elicited strong student interest.

**Tutoring:** The African-American male student, who reads at the 4th grade level, found the book "comfortable to read, but not too easy." Although the teacher had reservations about the point-of-view of a boy and the inaccurate spelling and grammar of the "street language," the student was able to figure out the meaning and pronunciation of the words and identified with the language and expressions. He did not find the book too juvenile.

Reading the book was his favorite part of the tutoring session. He enthusiastically recommended the book to other adult readers who had similar interest and experiences.

