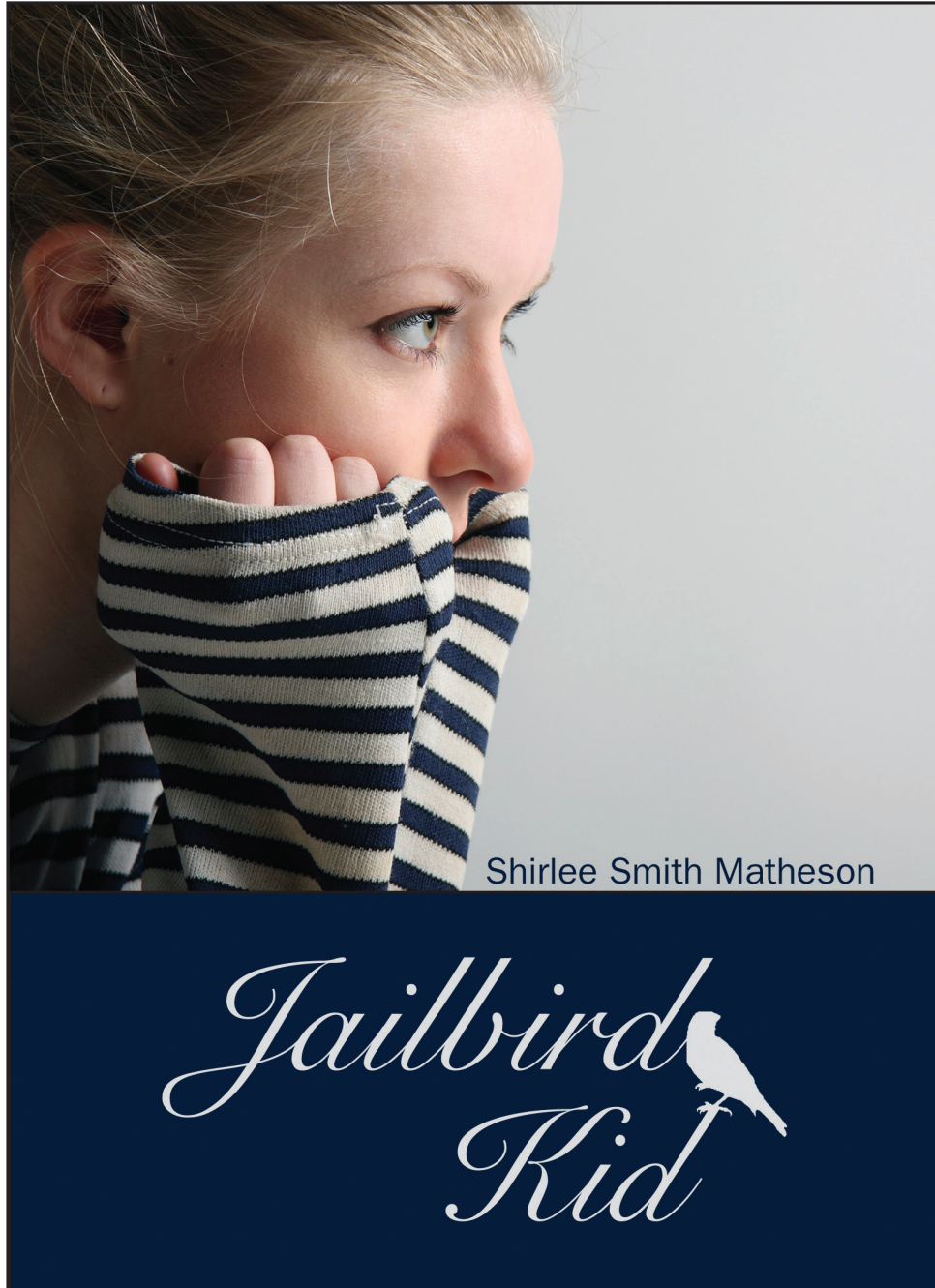


# TEACHER'S GUIDE

Grades 7 & 8



Teacher Resource Guide developed by Cynthia Phillips, O.C.T.



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# I INTRODUCTION

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Angela Wroboski has recently moved with her mother from their small hometown into the city to rid them of a dark past. Her dad, the infamous Nick “The Weasel” Wroboski, has served three jail terms for various crimes, and on June 5, Angela’s 15th birthday, he’s released from a two-year sentence in Fort Gavin Prison.

Arriving home with an attitude and attire that’s sure to mess up her friendships and future, The Weasel tries to prove that this time he’s going straight. But the influence of the old gang — led by notorious Uncle Al who’s now operating an enigmatic “business” that’s more than a little shady — remains a constant threat to Nick’s future as a family man. When Angela learns that a crime is being planned that could blow apart her family, she must quickly decide how to intervene without breaking her father’s code to “never discuss family business outside the home.”

## **Meet the Author**

Shirlee Smith Matheson has lived in all four Western provinces, and presently makes her home in Calgary.

Her nonfiction books bring to life stories of real Canadians - pilots and priests, explorers and engineers, bushmen and prospectors. Her historical teen novels reflect the excitement of phenomenal journeys and major Canadian missions, and introduce readers to very odd places that really existed once upon a time.

Shirlee Smith Matheson is also author of *Prairie Pictures*, *Flying Ghosts*, and *City Pictures*. All three titles were Canadian Children’s Centre Our Choice selections.

## II CHAPTER SUMMARIES

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1. 15-year-old Angela Wroboski is “best friends” with Hannah Singer and Ryan Phelps, but she has a secret she cannot even share with them: Angela’s father is about to be released from jail. She decides not to host a birthday party for herself in order to avoid revealing her family’s secret. Arriving home from school on the day of her birthday, she finds her grandmother waiting to cook her a birthday supper, along with a few troubled friends and family members.
2. Upon arriving home, Angela’s horrified mother, Connie, banishes “friends” Jerry and Mike from the property, due to their involvement with her husband’s criminal past. Later, Grandma Wroboski shares her view that Angela’s father, Nick, is not truly responsible for his crimes, and that he has been the victim of unfair charges. She blames Nick’s trouble with the law on the negative influence of the manipulative and criminally-minded Uncle Al. 18-year-old Aunt Gemma, on the other hand, admires Nick’s criminal lifestyle, and is defensive of her brother’s “right” to associate with Jerry and Mike.
3. Nick fails to arrive on the 7:15 bus, as planned, causing distress and confusion among the family members. The family celebrates Angela’s birthday anyway. Later, Connie copes with the situation by playing the guitar, a career passion denied to her by Nick, out of jealousy toward her male fans.
4. Angela arrives home from school to discover that her father is there, having picked the lock on the front door in order to enter the house. Angela and her father experience an awkward session together, first as Angela is forced to conceal her dislike for the birthday present offered to her by her father, and later as he shows Angela the artwork he has produced while in jail — an extensive (and disturbing) collection of paintings all featuring violent or criminal activity.
5. Connie buys Angela a canary for her birthday, which Angela names “Patsy”, after the singer Patsy Cline. She discovers that Nick has arrived home, and is unimpressed with his decision to take a 3-day detour instead of coming straight home from prison. Nick is horrified to discover Angela’s canary; he explains to the confused Angela that the term “canary” refers to an informant, and that a “patsy” is an individual intended to suffer the blame and punishment for a group’s crimes. Angela fears that her father continues to have a jail and crime-oriented attitude.
6. Nick begins the day in a state of manic energy, furiously flipping pancakes and boasting of his plans to earn wealth by setting and running a yet-undefined business. This makes Angela and Connie uncomfortable, but Nick indignantly rejects their suggestions to begin his path to employment more slowly and conventionally. On the way to school, the frazzled Angela inadvertently blurts out the truth about her father’s jail term to Hannah, but Hannah seems to ignore this outburst and does not comment.

7. Grandma and Gemma arrive at Angela's home to greet Nick for the first time since his incarceration. Gemma admires Nick's new tattoos and magazines, both of which seem to celebrate a "lawbreaking" lifestyle. Partway through the evening, Nick requests to be loaned "beer money", and leaves the home with Grandma's husband Hank. The women remain at the house and relate stories about times gone by on Grandma's farm.
8. Nick returns home with family friends, and the group erupts into a jovial evening of singing and dancing. The atmosphere turns tense, however, when Nick mentions the name of his old partner in crime, Uncle Al. It is felt that the crime was Al's fault, even though Nick took the blame. This tension dissipates with a change of topic, but a verbal slip on Nick's part (break-in instead of break) heightens Connie's fears once again that Nick is plotting another crime.
9. Angela wakes up at 9:30 AM, horrified to discover that she is late for her math exam. As she rushes off to school, she notes that Uncle Al is at her house to visit her father. Angela's bad day is later made worse by Hannah's confession that she had informed her father, a bank manager about Nick's criminal history. Nick had apparently tried to cash a cheque on a closed account at Mr. Singer's bank. Hannah's father subsequently forbade Hannah from visiting Angela's home. There is tension between the two girls at the conclusion of the conversation.
10. Angela comes home from school to discover her father tattooing an image of a bird onto Gemma's hand. Nick discusses his plans to reclaim his old grave-digging job the following day. Gemma insinuates that Nick's criminal career is not yet over, a belief supported by her discovery that Nick has been in contact with Uncle Al. Nick doggedly asserts that his lawbreaking days are past, and makes overt efforts to demonstrate this by pampering Connie.
11. Angela deepens her friendship with Ryan, having confessed the truth about her father's prison sentence and experienced Ryan's sympathy and acceptance. Angela discovers Ryan's interest in comics, as the two study together at Ryan's home. She recalls her father's love of creating "weird artwork", and supposes that he might enjoy a career as a comic book illustrator. Ryan offers his support, explaining that his own father abandoned the family when Ryan was a baby. Ryan and Angela search for support groups that might help Nick find employment, but they find nothing that fits his particular circumstances.
12. Angela arrives home from school to discover her father conducting a secret meeting with Uncle Al in the backyard. Al disparages Nick's plans to pursue a career in comic art, calling it a hobby, and encouraging Nick to "get some dough together" and enter into Al's party-supplies business instead. Surprised to learn that Angela is home and has overheard their conversation, Al gives \$50 to Angela as an "early graduation present". However, Angela perceives the cash to be a bribe, ensuring her silence about the secret meeting.

13. Hannah apologizes to Angela for having disclosed the truth about Nick to her own family, but there continues to be tension in the girls' friendship. Angela is concerned over her father's behaviour; not only is he failing to put much effort into a search for employment, but he spends his days poring over "gangster" magazines, and admiring criminals as heroes. Angela determines to embark on a project of re-educating her father, and of directing him to admire more wholesome celebrities. Later, Al visits the home, and, admiring Nick's ability to sketch rooms and objects from memory, convinces Nick to apply these skills to conduct a bank robbery with him. In despair, Angela resolves to consult her grandmother for advice.
14. Angela gains permission to visit her grandmother and Hank for the weekend. Grandma Wroboski reveals that, despite his flashy lifestyle, Uncle Al is hardly rich; he has borrowed money from them and, according to Hank, will likely do it again. Angela gets caught up in the idyllic country lifestyle she experiences at her grandparents' home. When Uncle Al visits for supper, he brings gifts and makes a request for another loan, in order to purchase a car for his business. Swayed by Al's manipulative speech, Angela chooses not to tell her grandmother about Al's visits with her father.
15. Nick responds to an advertisement and accepts a job hoeing sugar beets. However, he is completely unprepared for the physical requirements of the job, and ends up in the hospital being treated for severe sunstroke. He does not return to the sugar beet field.
16. Hannah's mom and Angela's dad seem to connect through their mutual interest in art, as they watch their daughters' sporting event, however, the relationship between Hannah and Angela remains tense. As the summer holidays begin, Nick chooses to stay home with Angela during the day, rather than going out to seek employment. Angela assumes the role of housekeeper and caretaker as her father sleeps in late and makes messes. One day, Angela accompanies Nick to the Employment Centre. Nick is disappointed to learn that he is not eligible for Employment insurance, since he has not recently been employed. The clerk at the Employment Centre assesses Nick's lack of skills, education, and employment experience, and advises him that the only available job for him would be at the meat packing plant, but this thought horrifies Nick. Nick then determines to reclaim the job he held as a grave-digger six years previously, but the new foreman informs him that, not only are his machine-operating skills out of date, but that the licensing courses are available only to individuals with Grade 11 education, which Nick does not have.
17. Uncle Al and Nick have been holding clandestine meetings in Connie's absence, provoking resentment in Angela. One day, Al advises Angela of a job opportunity on a ranch, which she passes on to her parents, pretending to have noticed it herself. Nick accepts the job reluctantly. Meanwhile, Angela meets with Hannah at an ice cream parlour, where they reconnect, but not without tension. Hannah reveals that her father, in his capacity as a bank manager, has access to information about both Nick and Uncle Al. Her family perceives them both to be criminals.

Angela responds with a defensive description of Nick's ranch job, and of his plans to return to school, but Hannah is sceptical. Hannah finally relents, however, and offers her brothers' textbooks to aid Nick's study.

18. Nick arrives home at 10 pm, looking dejected and reeking of skunk. He explains that the ranch job involved following the hay baler, and lifting stacks of hay bales off the back, which turned out to be beyond Nick's physical capability. Nick is traumatized as the hay baler ran over and killed a family of skunks. The family sympathetically agrees that Nick should not take any more odd jobs. Angela suggests that her father develop his computer skills.
19. Ryan visits Nick to teach him computer skills, which Nick enjoys. Gemma visits, however, and communicates scepticism about Nick's new life plans. Angela experiences a mixture of hopefulness and doubt about her father's ability to realize his ambitions.
20. Connie expresses anger and resentment at Nick for squandering his days, and for failing to search for gainful employment. Later, Angela reveals to Connie that Al has been visiting Nick. Nick, in turn, accuses Angela of having "double-crossed" him. Two weeks later, Angela returns home early from a babysitting job, to discover that her father is not home—presumably up to no good, in the company of Uncle Al. Later that morning, Nick and Al return to the home. Unaware that Angela is listening, they reveal through their conversation that they attempted to execute a bank robbery that morning—an attempt that resulted in defection on the part of Jerry and Nick, and in Al shooting a bank employee with his gun. Al is enraged with Nick, and declares that their "working relationship" is over. Angela emerges from her room, and Al points the gun at her.
21. Angela faints with shock from the sight of the gun. When she awakes, Nick explains to her and to Al that, instead of completing the robbery as planned, he went to a local coffee shop, in order to obtain an alibi. He cites certainty of being caught, and regret over the thought of once again being separated from his family as his reasons. A knock sounds at the door, causing Al to run in panic, but the visitor turns out to be Hannah's mother, asking to see some of Nick's artwork. Al returns after Hannah's mother leaves, and declares that he plans to leave town in order to avoid the police. Before Al can leave, Nick, Angela, and Connie confront him, and insist that he sign over his Dial-A-Dream business for Nick and his family to run in Al's absence. Al reluctantly agrees, after Nick points out that he has served two jail terms on account of Al, and threatens to inform the police of Al's role in the shooting from earlier that day.
22. Newspaper reports reveal that the employee shot during the bank robbery had suffered a leg injury, but was recovering in hospital. Police have connected the robbery with the individual who has been robbing the bank machines, but neither theft has been attributed to either Nick or Al. The police arrive at the Wroboski home in order to ask questions of Nick, but he refuses to reveal information to



them, and demands that his family likewise refrain from “singing”. Later, the family wades through the chaotic, badly-managed mess that is Uncle Al’s Dial-A-Dream business. They establish themselves as legitimate managers, and prepare to meet the demands of the many customers. Hannah questions Angela about Nick’s role in the robbery at her father’s bank, but Angela chooses to untruthfully claim no knowledge of the events, fearing that her father might be arrested if the truth was revealed. Hannah tells Angela that Hannah’s mother wants to hire Nick to give art lectures to her still life class.

23. Grandma Wroboski announces that she, too, is part of the Dial-A-Dream team, since she now legally owns the Cadillac for which Al had never paid her back. The family remarks on the irony of their now-victorious situation with respect to Uncle Al. They express hope for the future and confidence in their ability to work at the business, as a team.

# III PRE-READING STRATEGIES

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## Exploring the Themes

### 1. Justice and the Experience of Incarceration

*Jailbird Kid* explores the theme of justice from the perspective of a man who has been incarcerated, as well as that of his mother, wife and daughter, who have been affected by the stigma and by the economic losses associated with having a father in prison. You may wish to have students compare their views of our justice system, before and after reading *Jailbird Kid*. *Jailbird Kid* presents an opportunity to compare the concept of legal justice, with that of social justice. Concerning the bank robberies described in this novel, the victims are represented in the text by Hannah, the shallow, privileged daughter of the bank's manager. The perpetrators, however, are represented by the much poorer Wroboski family, and by Nick in particular, for whom viable alternatives to a life of crime prove to be largely elusive. Students might explore whether it is possible to have legal justice in the absence of social justice, and vice versa.

### 2. Choices and Consequences

Nick has made many poor choices, with enduring effects on his own life and on the well-being of his family members. Students might identify the points in his life when he might have chosen differently, avoiding the negative effects “he suffers as the novel unfolds. You may ask your students to consider whether factors such as “being influenced by Uncle Al” affect Nick’s responsibility for his own choices. Students might also explore the adult effects of adolescent choices through the character of Connie. The novel explicitly states that she is 31 years old, suggesting that she began her marriage and family at a tender young age. The effects, on Connie’s life, of her relationship with Nick include the loss of her connection with her own parents and the loss of her musical career dreams due to Nick’s jealousy, in addition to the social and economic impact of his criminal behaviour and jail terms. You might guide your students to explore the extent to which her sacrifices are laudable, contributing beneficially to the well-being of her family, and perhaps the extent to which her suffering represents destructive co-dependency.

Although Connie holds a job, neither she nor Nick has a very rewarding career that matches their aptitudes and interests, although the novel does suggest the hope of this possibility for the future, at least for Nick. Students can explore this theme of careers and decision-making in Post-Reading Assignment.

A contrast to the poor, impulsive and often destructive choices made by her parents is the mature, level-headed and responsible character of Angela. Angela makes wise academic and personal decisions, and seeks to correct mistakes and problems before they become overwhelming. Forced to compensate for the lack of support available in her father, Angela seeks out strong peers and role models as friends and mentors (most notably, Ryan, and her grandmother), and seems almost impervious to the legacy of self-destruction often associated with adolescent daughters whose parents face poverty and criminal behaviour problems. Students may decide that Angela’s loyalty to her father causes her to make morally ambiguous decisions, in particular, her decision to avoid communicating information

about her father's involvement in the final bank robbery to anyone who might relate that news to the police. However, even in this decision, Angela's moral reasoning is clear and carefully considered, if not beyond reproach.

Identifying with the character of Angela may be particularly helpful for the students in your class who find themselves identified as "at risk", and may similarly recognize their own abilities to transcend the expectations that they too will be vulnerable to making poor choices.

### 3. Loyalty and Moral Reasoning

Many of the characters in *Jailbird Kid* face dilemmas in which maintaining loyalty to a particular person or cause seems at odds either with their own interests, or with morally good behaviour. The novel also explores situations in which loyalty to one group of people conflicts with loyalty to another.

Modern psychology generally recognizes that making moral decisions based on loyalty represents a more mature way of reasoning than does making decisions with the sole motivation of avoiding punishment (a way of thinking represented by Uncle Al). A more challenging tension in the novel is found in the competing demands of loyalty and legal justice. Nick and Gemma are two characters for whom loyalty is the highest possible source of moral reasoning. Gemma is loyal to her brother Nick, essentially without consideration for the fact that his criminal lifestyle might be morally erroneous. Similarly, Nick places such a high value on loyalty, that he serves several prison terms rather than "sing" to the police. Do your students view Nick's actions to be heroic, or ridiculous? Even as Nick chooses to change his lifestyle for the better, he does so not because he regrets the pain caused by his crimes, but rather because he wishes to do right by his family and exhibit loyalty to them. His views are encapsulated at the end of the novel by his assertion that "the cops are on a canary hunt for singers"; he seems unable to imagine that the police might serve moral needs and interests outside the loyalty/disloyalty question inhabited by his "criminal" circle.

Students may identify Angela's final decision to avoid informing the authorities about her father as an act of loyalty. Conversely, they may decide that she is beyond this way of thinking, and makes her choice with the principle of reducing her family's pain and suffering in mind, confident that both the bank and the injured employee will recover and are not in deep need of correctional action on the part of the police. This would represent a much more mature way of reasoning indeed, more mature even than an unquestioning commitment to legal justice.

Finally, however, Angela is not without a desire that friends and family act out of loyalty to her. There is tension between Angela's expectation that Hannah will keep her secret within the bonds of their friendship, and Hannah's decision to inform her father about Nick's criminal past, out of a sense of loyalty to her family.

This theme of loyalty connects profoundly to the lives of many adolescent readers, who may be faced with demands that they be loyal to groups sharing their cultural heritage, to family, to friends, to groups or peers, or to gangs.

## Decoding the Questions

The chapter response questions are divided into three major literacy skill areas: Understanding the Text, Making Inferences, and Personal Response. It is helpful to call the student's attention to these categories, and to the response strategies that lead to success at each type of question. In general, the answers to Understanding the Text questions can be found directly in the text, and are effectively answered through close reading and attention to detail. Making Inferences questions are answered by drawing conclusions from clues, insinuations, or suggestions made in the text. The answer is one clearly communicated by the author, yet it is communicated indirectly rather than explicitly. Personal Response questions require the student to connect the themes and ideas of the text with their own opinions and experiences. The answer to the question is not found in the text, although an effective answer will relate the ideas to content from the text. A good image to keep in mind when answering this type of question is that of a conversation: You are having a conversation with the text. When you converse with someone, you do not parrot back what the other party is saying, nor do you add your own thoughts in disconnected way, ignoring what was just said. Rather, you listen attentively, and show that you have understood. You then add your own thoughts, showing how they connect, relate, compare, or differ from the thoughts just expressed by the speaker. For this reason, questions of the Personal Response type often insist on the inclusion of "evidence from the text", even though they are asking for a personal opinion.

If a student is stuck on a question, ask him or her: "What type of question is it?" "Where can you expect to look for the answer?" When taking up answers, you might also ask "How would you know that this is a Personal Response question, even if it were not labelled?" or "Can you create three more questions about this chapter—one of each type?". Teaching students "question-literacy" will assist them greatly when they encounter reading response questions on future assessments, including the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test, as most questions we can ask about prose literature fall into these three categories.

# IV CHAPTER QUESTIONS

## Chapters 1-2

### Understanding the Text

1. Why does Angela choose not to have a party for her 15<sup>th</sup> birthday?

### Making Inferences

2. How does Connie seem to feel about her husband's return home from jail? Use evidence from the text to support your thinking.

### Personal Response

3. How does Grandma Wroboski explain Nick's tendency to get into trouble with the law? In your opinion, do her ideas seem to realistically explain why a person might commit crimes? Why or why not?

## Chapters 3-4

1. Why did Angela's mom quit her career in music?

2. Describe the events surrounding Nick's return home that make Angela feel awkward and uncomfortable.

3. This story is told from Angela's point of view. How might the events on pages \_\_\_\_\_ appear from Nick's point of view? Write a paragraph in the first person (using the word 'I'), summarizing the way Nick would see and feel about his return home.

### **Chapters 5-6**

1. Why does Nick become upset when he sees Angela's new pet canary?

2. Describe Nick's plans for re-entering the workforce. How do Angela and her mom feel about his ideas? How might Nick feel before, during, and after the conversation they have while making breakfast, on pages \_\_\_\_? Support your ideas using clues from Nick's words and body language.

3. How does Hannah respond when Angela blurts out, "my dad just got out of jail"? Suggest some reasons why Hannah might have responded this way. Based on what you have learned about Hannah so far in this novel, do you feel that she is a good friend to Angela? Why or why not?

## **Chapters 7-8**

1. How did Grandma Wroboski adapt to the challenges of her rural lifestyle as a girl and as a young mother?
2. Considering evidence from this section as well as earlier chapters, do you feel that Nick is ready to commit to the crime-free life that he keeps on promising to his family?
3. Why, according to Connie, did she first fall in love with Nick? Overall, do you feel that Nick's impact on Connie's life has been positive or negative? Would you advise Connie to make any changes in the way she relates to Nick? Explain your thinking.

## **Chapters 9-10**

1. Why is it particularly unfortunate that Angela was late for school today?
2. Why does Connie not want Nick to call her, "Con" (page 63)?

3. Describe Hannah's dilemma, in choosing whether to honour Angela's interests, or those of her father. How do you feel about her statement, "I can't lie to [my dad], not even for a friend. It's not right" (page 56)? Could Hannah have approached either the conversation with her father, or the one she had with Angela, differently?

### **Chapters 11-12**

1. Describe the idea devised by Angela and Ryan, to help Nick embark on a new career?

2. In this section, Angela tells Ryan the truth about her father's recent incarceration. How is Ryan's reaction different from Hannah's?

3. Why does Angela call the \$50 given to her by Uncle Al, "hush money"?

4. Describe your impressions of Uncle Al so far, by choosing three character traits, and citing evidence from the text to support your choices.

Considering that Al has been such a negative influence on Nick, and that Grandma and Connie have forbidden Al and Nick from meeting together, suggest why Nick might continue to have encounters with Al, as he has been doing since his return from prison.



### **Chapters 13-14**

1. What does Uncle Al want Nick to do for him? Why does he feel that Nick is the best person for the role?
2. Describe the feelings that Uncle Al evokes in Angela and her grandmother in this chapter, as well as the strategies that Al uses to make them feel this way.
3. How does Angela feel about Hannah, at the beginning of Chapter 13? How do you know? Would you advise Angela to continue being friends with Hannah? Why or why not?

### **Chapters 15-16**

1. What would Nick need to do, before he could work for the city as a gravedigger?
2. What happened to Nick the day he went out to hoe sugar beets? How might this affect his attitude toward searching for and getting a job?

3. Nick has encountered many frustrations so far in his job search. What might you advise Nick to do in order to earn an income for his family?

### **Chapters 17-18**

1. Describe the event that upsets Nick most about his work on the ranch.

2. Angela describes the cash she is given for winning sports ribbons as “a lot of money”, to which Uncle Al replies, “Get used to it, kid. There’s more where that came from. Lots more.” Is this true? How do you know?

3. How does Uncle Al feel about Nick’s chances of securing a decent job? What does he try to convince Nick to do, instead? In light of this, explain why Al might have given Angela the secret job tip (page 112) to pass on to Nick?

### **Chapters 19-20**

1. What is Ryan’s new role in helping Nick? How does Angela feel about her dad’s new “employment preparation strategy”? How does Connie feel about it?

2. We never see directly what Nick and Al were planning or doing together, but we do have clues throughout Chapters 19-20. Use the material in these chapters to answer the following questions, supporting your answers with quotations from the text.

		Evidence from the Text
What were Al and Nick planning to do?		
What was Nick's role in the operation?		
Why did events turn out differently than planned?		

3. Nick angrily sketches a canary, and accuses Angela of double-crossing him (page 135). How do you feel about Nick's response to Angela's decision to tell her mother about Uncle Al's visits?

### **Chapters 21-23**

1. What did Nick do, instead of performing the bank robbery that he had planned with Uncle Al?

2. How does Angela answer Hannah's question about her family's involvement with the bank robbery? Do you feel that Angela was wise to answer this way?

3. At the end of the story, Nick and his family take over the Dial-A-Dream business while Al temporarily hides, out of town. Do you see this ending as a good outcome for Nick? For Angela? For Connie? Why or why not?

# V GRAMMAR AND SENTENCE CRAFT

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## Simple and Compound Sentences

A sentence needs to include a subject and a verb, and to express a complete thought. A sentence expressing one complete thought is called a simple sentence. Here are some examples of simple sentences from Chapters 1-4 of *Jailbird Kid*:

She was very classy. (6)

Her silver belly button ring gleamed in the sun. (8)

They were waiting on the lawn. (13)

He was part of a famous gold robbery. (27)

Have you drawn any more pictures? (30)

Simple sentences may be very short, or they may be relatively long, and contain adjectives. However, simple sentences all have one thing in common: They each express a single thought and they cannot be split into two shorter sentences.

Other sentences express more than one complete thought, and often take the form of compound sentences. Here are some examples of compound sentences from Chapters 1-4 of *Jailbird Kid*:

My friends and I were all really different, but it was just us three that hung together. (5)

I called him Grandpa Hank, and he was nice. (16)

Nicky wasn't a momma's boy, but he was always thoughtful. (19)

We sat on a bench outside the bus depot, and Gemma pulled out a pack of cigarettes. (24)

I'm home, so clocks are okay. (30)

With a partner, discuss the elements that compound sentences seem to have in common, and discuss the ways in which they are different from simple sentences. Using these ideas, write a definition for compound sentences. Compare your definition with the one provided by your teacher.

**(My definition)** A compound sentence is

---

**(Teacher definition)** A compound sentence is

---

Return to the five examples of compound sentences provided above. For each one, underline the two or more independent clauses (complete simple sentences). Circle the co-ordinating word that joins the two clauses together.

The following words are co-ordinating words, and may be used to create compound

for	and	nor	but	or	yet	so
-----	-----	-----	-----	----	-----	----

Join each pair of simple sentences by creating a compound sentence. Use co-ordinating words from the box above.

Jerry was an “old family friend”. Connie did not trust him.

---

Nick’s incarceration was a secret. Angela lied to her friends.

---

Nick hugged Angela. Nick gave Angela a birthday present.

---

Why is it important for authors to vary sentence length and type in their writing?

---

### **Punctuating Compound**

Compound sentences require punctuation in order to be understood clearly. There are two ways to join independent clauses together to form a compound sentence.

**1. Use of a comma, and a co-ordinating word.**

Examples (from Chapters 5-8 of *Jailbird Kid*):

Mom still said nothing, but I could tell she was hurt and angry. (35)

I got a ride here with a guy, so it didn't cost me bus fare. (35)

This magazine came out, and I bought every copy in town. (44)

**2. Use of a semi-colon.**

Mom still said nothing; I could tell she was hurt and angry.

I got a ride here with a guy; it didn't cost me bus fare.

This magazine came out; I bought every copy in town.

If two or more independent clauses are joined without the use of proper punctuation, the result is a run-on sentence.

**Example:** Angela and Hannah are close friends today they are arguing.

A comma splice is a type of run-on sentence. It occurs when a comma is used to join two independent clauses.

**Example:** Angela and Hannah are close friends, today they are arguing.

Comma splices can be corrected by adding a co-ordinating word, or by replacing the comma with a semi-colon or a period.

**Examples:** Angela and Hannah are close friends, but today they are arguing.  
Angela and Hannah are close friends; today they are arguing.

Correct each of these run-on sentences by creating a compound sentence:

1. Nick returned home three days late Connie is angry with him.
- 

2. Angela told Hannah the truth about her father, Hannah pretended not to hear her.
- 

3. Connie took out her guitar, the whole family celebrated joyfully.
- 

4. Angela should not stay up too late she will sleep in tomorrow.
- 

### **Complex Sentences (9-12)**

In addition to simple sentences, and compound sentences, there is a third type of sentence: the complex sentence.

Like compound sentences, complex sentences are made up of two or more clauses. In complex sentences, the clauses are joined by words such as: because, if, since, after, although, when, since, unless, until and whenever. These words show a more precise relationship between the two clauses in the sentence. They show how one idea or event depends on, affects, or causes the other one.

The following examples of complex sentences are drawn from Chapters 9-12 of *Jailbird Kid*:

When the bell rang, we all handed in our papers. (55)

It wouldn't be enough to pass, because I probably hadn't gotten everything right. (55)

The front door to our house was wide open when I returned from school. (59)

I'll go down to the city yard office tomorrow, after Connie gets my pants pressed. (63)

There groups will help if someone's on parole. (68)



The joining words are called subordinating words. This is because, when you add it to one of the phrases, that phrase can no longer stand on its own as a simple sentence. For example, consider the first complex sentence in the above list:

When the bell rang, we all handed in our papers.

The bell rang is a valid simple sentence, all by itself. When the bell rang is not. It becomes the dependent clause. The second clause,

We all handed in our papers

is also a valid simple sentence. This is not affected by the word “when”. It is called the independent clause.

For each of the examples of a complex sentence listed above, use a single underline to highlight the dependent clause (the one that does not stand on its own as a sentence). Use a double underline to highlight the independent clause (the phrase that could be a simple sentence all by itself). Circle the sub-ordinating word.

Combine each pair of simple sentences to make a complex sentence. Choose words from the word box to connect the sentences. (These are helpful suggestions and not a complete list of all the words that can be used to make a complex sentence). You may need to alter the wording slightly in order to make your sentence concise and grammatically correct.

because	if	since	after	although	when	since	unless	until	whenever
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People notice and admire you.  
You use a fancy lipstick.

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Ryan is able to make jokes about Nick’s prison term.  
Angela is relieved.

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A former convict is on parole.  
The John Howard Society cannot help him.

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Nick talks about the people he met in jail.  
Connie gets upset.

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Including complex sentences in your written work makes your writing more efficient, clear, and mature than it would be if you relied mostly on simple and compound sentences. Explain why this might be true, including an example:

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### **Punctuating Dialogue (15-18)**

*Jailbird Kid* is a novel rich in dialogue. When including dialogue in your own writing, it is important to punctuate it properly in order to specify which words are spoken aloud, and to clarify the identity of the speaker.

Find the following phrases, on pages 94-95, and adjust the punctuation to match the way the sentences are punctuated in the text:

1. I have to be in front of the hotel at five o'clock tomorrow morning Dad said
2. What's the job Grandma asked
3. It'll get me back in shape I need to be out in the sun more anyway
4. I saw this ad tacked up in the lobby of the Winchester Hotel he said so I phoned the guy and he hired me just like that
5. Well it's not much but it's a start dad said

Observe the way you punctuated these sentences, and use this knowledge to describe the rules for punctuating dialogue. Apply your knowledge to correctly punctuate the example sentences for each question:

1. How do you punctuate a sentence of dialogue, followed by a note as to who spoke the words?

**Rule:**

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**Example:** You are truly a good friend said Angela

2. How do you punctuate two sentences spoken in a row, by the same speaker?

**Rule:**

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**Example:** You are not eligible for employment insurance You have not recently held a full time job explained the clerk

3. How do you punctuate a spoken question?

**Rule:**

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**Example:** Shouldn't your dad already know how to drive asked Hannah

4. How do you punctuate a sentence of dialogue that is interrupted by a note as to who spoke the words?

**Rule:**

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**Example:** I was embarrassed to be seen by Hannah's parents explained Angela so I arranged to meet Hannah at the ice cream parlour

Examine the dialogue on pages 114-115. Why are there so many short paragraphs?

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### **Review: Proofreading a Passage (19-23)**

A fellow student has submitted this paper to you for peer editing. Rewrite the opinion piece, correcting any grammar and punctuation errors that you find, and editing for style and clarity by recombining this student's sentences into an effectively balanced variety of simple, compound, and complex sentences.

There is more than one right way to revise and edit this piece. Compare your new version with that of a classmate, and discuss your editing choices.

### **Why I Admire Angela**

I admire Angela for many reasons she always makes good choices and she tries to help her friends and family. First, Angela tried to help her father to find a job. Angela walked around the city with her dad. They went to the Employment Centre. They went to City Hall. Nick could not get a job with the city. Nick did not have enough skills, education or job experience. He felt frustrated. Angela tried to encourage him. Angela talked to Ryan. Ryan came over to Angela's house. He worked with Angela's dad. Angela said Dad you could really get a cool job if you learn about computers.

Secondly, Angela continues to believe in her dad she never says anything mean about him behind his back. Angela's dad keeps on disappointing his family. Hannah calls Nick a criminal. Angela defends his reputation. She explains that her dad is working hard to learn some new skills he also has a new job at the ranch. Nick's style of dress and way of talking are embarrassing to the family. Angela walks beside him anyway she helps him not to be afraid of official-looking people who are rude to Angela and her dad.

Third, Angela is a responsible person. She makes good choices. She works hard in school I know this is true she studies with Ryan she talks to Mrs. Marsden about the math test that went badly instead of just saying forget it. Angela's father stays home during the summer to help look after Angela. This is a joke. Angela is more of an adult than her father is. Angela does all the cooking and cleaning. Angela takes care of herself.

Finally, Angela defends her father she stands up to Uncle Al. Uncle Al always takes advantage of Nick. For example, My dad has a jail record Angela yelled because of what you did Uncle Al! Angela made Al sign a paper. The paper said that Nick would manage Dial-A-Dream. Al had to leave town to avoid getting arrested. Standing up to Uncle Al is not an easy thing to do. Uncle Al is very intimidating. Everybody thinks that he is rich and important. Angela put herself at risk. She yelled at Uncle Al. Now her family will be able to make money.

All of these events from the story demonstrate that Angela makes wonderful, brave choices. Angela is a true role model.

# VI POST-READING ASSIGNMENT

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## Exploring Career Options

Choosing a career that suits your needs, goals, aptitudes and interests can be an enormous challenge! For this assignment, you will use the Internet to identify possible career paths that you may wish to follow, and to find specific information on one particular career.

### **Instructions:**

1. Your teacher will direct you to a particular website designed to profile your personality and to suggest possible career options.  
URL: www.\_\_\_\_\_
2. Complete the personality profile quiz as presented on this website. Print a copy of your results. There may be two separate pages of results—one for your strengths and interests profile, and a second page with possible career suggestions.
3. List, in detail, three strengths, traits, or areas of interest that appear in your personality profile. For each, explain why you feel they do or do not genuinely describe you.

Description of Trait	How does this apply to me (or not apply to me)?

Choose one career from the list of suggested matches, and research it in detail. Answer the following questions with respect to your chosen career. Use the Internet to conduct your research, and, for each question, make a note of the websites used to glean information.

1. Describe the typical job requirements of a person on this career field. What is it like, to have this job?
2. Describe the education requirements for this job. Would a person in this field need to complete a college program? A university degree? An apprenticeship program?
3. List three colleges, schools, universities, or other programs in your area that offer an educational program that could prepare an individual for a career in this field.
4. What is the typical salary range for this career field?
5. List three reasons why this career might appeal to you.
6. List one or more reasons why this career might not appeal to you.
7. List three goals that you can begin to act on now, in order to make your career goals a reality.

## VII POST-READING STRATEGIES

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In addition to discussing the novel's micro-theme of career preparation and having students complete the Career Exploration assignment, the following are suggested post-reading activities for *Jailbird Kid*:

- Have students conduct research on the transition-to-community groups mentioned in the novel: The John Howard Society, and the Seven Steps program. You might also include local programs available in your community as part of the study.
- Invite a former convict, a police officer, or a community worker to speak to your students about issues surrounding involvement with the law. Optionally, have your students prepare interview questions for the speaker beforehand.
- Have students read one or more of the books mentioned in Angela's Web search: *Waiting for the Ice Cream Man*, *Shaking it Rough*, *Prisoners of Isolation* (textbook). These are books about Canadian prison experiences. Including U.S. prison experiences in your search may increase the number of accessible books on the topic.
- Artwork is a prominent feature in *Jailbird Kid*, particularly marginal art, such as tattoo art. Have students design a tattoo to symbolize the identity and values of one particular character in *Jailbird Kid*, explaining how the design features of the tattoo relate to that character.

