

TEACHER'S GUIDE

OUT OF DARKNESS The Jeff Healey Story



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I BEFORE READING

1. Introducing the Features of a Book

Have your students spend some time with the physical text before they start to read. Ask them to flip through the book for a few minutes. Next, either go through the terms as a class, or have them look them up in pairs. Note that *Out of Darkness* does not have examples of everything on this list. For example, there is no index in this book; however, it is a useful term for students to know. Finally, have students find an example from *Out of Darkness* for as many terms as they are able. They could provide the words of a chapter title, the page number, an example of a sidebar and page number etc.. Taking this up as a class will provide useful information for all students.

The worksheet may be found in Appendix 1.

2. Show your students one or two of the many YouTube videos available of Jeff Healey. For example, the first video link shows him at the beginning of his career playing rock & roll, while the second link shows him closer to the end of his career playing jazz:

Rock and Roll: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0kKrWjj6jw&feature=related>

Jazz: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WaaXQ6boLjQ>

Have your students consider the following:

- a) What can you observe about Jeff's guitar playing?
 - b) Why might he play the guitar on his lap?
 - c) What other role does he play in the band?
 - d) What types (genres) of music does he play?
 - e) What sort of location is he playing in?
3. Have your students read the obituary of Jeff Healey published in the Toronto Star (Appendix 2). You might choose to read this aloud with your students. While there is quite a bit of detail in this short obit, the questions are very precise and don't require a detailed understanding of the obituary contents.
 4. Watch the CTV obituary, which can be found online here:

http://www.ctv.ca/CTVNews/TopStories/20080302/jeff_healey_080302/

Ask the students to listen and observe. While the reporter does speak quickly, they could be asked a few questions such as:

- a) When did Jeff start playing the guitar?
- b) What other instrument did he play very well?
- c) What 3 types of music did he play?
- d) Jeff owned a bar called The Roadhouse. The reporter is standing just outside of the bar. In what city is the bar? What clues give you the answer?

II DURING READING

Let's take a look at the book using the three sections it has been divided into. In each section we'll look at:

- ✓ Reading for meaning
- ✓ Reading for language acquisition – idioms & vocabulary
- ✓ Reading for deeper understanding
- ✓ Reading to make connections

Students could be invited to use the Idiom Record and Vocabulary Record (Appendix 3 and Appendix 4)

III INTRODUCTION

1. Who do you think the “I” is in this section of the book? When a book is written using “I” it is called the first person. This is the only section of the book written in the first person.
2. Jeff is described as being “down to earth.” What does this idiom mean?
3. Describe Jeff Healey from a physical point of view. You may use some of the adjectives used in the book on page 12.
4. Find two adjectives which describe his personality not his physical appearance.
5. What caused Jeff’s blindness?
6. How old was Jeff when he started playing guitar?
7. What does the idiom “signature style” mean? (page 13)
8. List four of Jeff’s professional accomplishments (things he was able to accomplish or do as a musician).
9. Jeff said: “I want to be known as a great musician, not a blind musician” (page 13). Why do you think this might be important to him?

IV PART ONE: GROWING UP

1. Why did Jeff's biological mother not keep him?
2. Do you think the rules of Canadian society have changed since 1966 when Jeff was born? Are women today who are not married able to keep their children?
3. What is the social tradition from your culture? Can unmarried women raise their children?
4. Later Jeff is adopted by a couple. What was their name?
5. At three months of age, Jeff was adopted and his name changed. What was his birth name? What name did his new parents give him?
6. In the sidebar or box on page 21, Jeff talks about the importance of family. He uses words such as values, traditions and love.
 - a. What are things your own family values or holds very important?
 - b. Explain one tradition your family keeps.
7. What does the term "adoption" mean? In Canada, adoption is a legal process not an informal one. Does adoption exist in your country of origin? In what ways is it different to the process of adoption in Canada?
8. Sometimes in North American culture there are mixed feelings about adoption. List a few feelings a person might have when they discover they have been adopted.
9. Take a close look at the pictures of Jeff with his parents. Without reading the boxes beside them, what can you guess about the relationship Jeff had with his Mom and Dad?
10. What is the name of the cancer Jeff had as a child?
11. The box on page 28 refers you to the Canadian Cancer site at www.cancer.ca. Take a look at this site online. Sometimes information on the internet can be very difficult to read if your first language isn't English. However, sometimes it is available in other languages.

Click on our province of "Ontario." Click on "publications" – note how many different languages this information is available in. Is your language listed? How many languages are listed?
12. Jeff's parents also adopted twins when he was 4 years old. What are the names of his twin sisters?
13. On pages 31-33 Jeff's sisters talk about what it was like growing up with Jeff. Just as in any family, there was some "rivalry" between the sisters and their brother. This is termed "sibling rivalry." What does that expression mean?
14. At an early age, it was discovered that Jeff was a "prodigy." What is the meaning of that word?
15. Some believed Jeff's method of playing was "unorthodox." What does that word mean?

16. Jeff was able to “think outside the box.” By reading pages 36 and 37 come up with your own definition of that expression.
17. The author states that “it takes courage to believe in yourself, to take risks, to follow your dreams, especially when everyone laughs at you or insists you’ve got it all wrong.” Think of a situation when you have had to believe in yourself, to follow your dreams. Were you criticized? Did others laugh at you? What did you do?
18. Read the sidebar entitled “Think Outside The Box” on page 38. Try the test yourself. Can you do it?
19. Read the sidebar entitled “Eyes Are The Window To The Soul” on page 44. What do you think this expression means in North America? The example given in this book is from the Christian Bible. Do you have a saying from your religion or culture which means something similar? Record the saying in your own language and provide an English translation.
20. Take the challenge given on page 45 and ask yourself: if you were forced to make a choice would you rather be born blind or lose your sight later in life?

V PART TWO: SCHOOL'S OUT

1. This chapter (page 49-50) identifies Jeff as being very smart, perhaps even a genius. However, many of the words used to describe him have a negative meaning. Define the following words used to describe Jeff:
 - a. Impatient
 - b. Intolerant
 - c. Opinionated
 - d. Critical
 - e. Stubborn
 - f. Defensive
2. Some of those words might seem to have a negative meaning but they can also have a positive side to them. Which words from the above list could also be interpreted as positive descriptions and why?
3. The sidebar on page 52 lists ways to make a classroom ready for a person who is blind. Let's turn the situation around and imagine preparing not for a blind student but for an ESL student. List three ways you might prepare a classroom for a person who speaks no English.
4. Jeff went to the W. Ross Macdonald School for the Blind. Macdonald was the lieutenant governor of Ontario from 1968-1974. Look up Lieutenant Governor online to answer these questions:
 - a. Who does the Lieutenant Governor represent?
 - b. Is the Lieutenant governor elected?
 - c. Who is the current Lieutenant Governor of Ontario?
5. What is the CNIB?
6. Try the "sensory scavenger hunt" on page 56 with your class. Some things may need to be prepared in advance
7. What is the connection between music and math?
8. Do you play an instrument or sing in a choir? Explain. Is music important to you? Explain.
9. What does the word "transition" mean? Can you provide an example of a transition in your life?
10. How do you define bullying?
11. Jeff was "singled out and tormented" (page 59) at his new school. Why do you think he was bullied?
12. Jeff's Dad wanted him to be a lawyer and not a musician. Why do you think parents might not want their children to pursue careers such as music?
13. Did Jeff Healey graduate from high school? Did he graduate from college?

14. It is a tradition in North America to award people who excel with “honorary degrees.” What is meant by an “honorary degree”?
15. Name two honorary degrees awarded to Jeff.

VI PART THREE: MAKING MUSIC

1. Pages 73-77 give a lot of background which is specific to the music “scene” of the time. Sometimes it is wise to skim over details such as names and dates to concentrate on the key ideas. For example, this chapter explains the power of Jeff’s playing, his success as a young player and his comparison to other guitar “greats.” Sometimes the main ideas can get buried under too much detail. One key idea in this chapter is to understand that this incredibly talented guitarist was very young. How old was he when he first gained critical success?
2. Jeff won a Juno for Canadian Entertainer of the Year in 1989. What do you think the difference is between a Juno award and a Grammy?
3. What was the most important thing for Jeff: success and being a star or playing music? Explain your answer.
4. The world of rock music left a “bitter taste in his mouth” (page 95). This is an expression that is very easy to understand. Do you have a similar expression in your first language? Write it down.
5. Jeff returned to a genre of music that he loved – what was it?
6. Who was Jeff’s jazz hero? Skim page 99 to find out.
7. Jeff’s work on his CDs was called “a labour of love” (page 99). Can you guess what this expression means?
8. What is the meaning of the word “legacy?”
9. It is not only famous people who leave a legacy. Can you think of a person in your life and describe the legacy they have left behind? This person might be a relative, a person who has influenced you, but must be a person who is no longer alive.
10. What does Cristie Healy (Jeff’s wife) believe should stand as Jeff’s legacy? See page 99 for her answer.
11. What is the meaning of the word “adversity?” It’s found on page 103.
12. Adversity comes in many forms. Jeff did not believe his blindness was an adversity he had to overcome. Can you think of ways in which a physical disability might actually be a positive?
13. Do you believe you have had to overcome adversity in your life? Adversity might take the form of a handicap, a situation, a life experience, or a loss. Explain your answer.
14. Jeff is described by friends as an optimist. How would you define that kind of personality? What is an optimist?
15. What is the opposite of an optimist? (Note to teacher: you might take the opportunity to discuss the

values within a word e.g. if your students come up with 'pessimist' or 'realist').

16. Read the sidebar on page 109 to learn about guide dogs. You might also ask your students to read the excerpt from the Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind Website and answer the following questions:
 - a. Are guide dogs considered pets?
 - b. Is it appropriate to pat a dog you might see on the street or on the bus who is wearing a harness? Why or why not?
 - c. What colour of harness do guide dogs wear?
 - d. Although the article doesn't tell you the answer, do you think guide dogs might be allowed into places that regular pets would not be such as libraries, public transit, stores etc?
 - e. Is there reason for people to fear guide dogs?
17. What is Braille?
18. Have you ever seen Braille before? Perhaps in a library, school or government building?
19. Read the sidebar "Eight Things You Should Know About Being Blind" are there any of these that might apply to being a newcomer to Canada? What are they?
20. The expression "pet peeve" is used on page 116. What does this mean?
21. Create a list titled "Eight Things You Should Know About Being A Newcomer to Canada."
22. The "Six Advantages of Being Blind" are written with humour. Can you come up with a list of "Six Advantages of Being A Newcomer to Canada?"
23. When Jeff's cancer returned he faced it with courage. After his death his friends listed some of his strengths (page 125). Some of these words we have seen before, but there are several which are useful to know. Define the following words:
 - a. Independence
 - b. Loyalty
 - c. Determination
 - d. Generosity
24. In Canada it is common to have a friend or family member speak at the funeral. The speech celebrates the person who has died. This is called a "eulogy." This might be done in a church or in a funeral home. What tradition do you have at a service for the dead that might be similar to a eulogy?
25. When a person dies it is common to offer your "condolences". Sometimes you may hear this expressed by our political leaders in the media – offering "condolences on behalf of Canadians". What does this word mean to you?

VII AFTER READING

1. Because of the way Jeff lived his life, he left many life lessons for others to learn from. Of all the lessons listed on page 128 which one has the most meaning for you and why?
2. Write a short reflection on what you learned from reading *Out of Darkness*.
3. Take one of the issues raised in the book and research it online. Find some Canadian resources on the topic and explore the issue from a Canadian point of view. Choose one of the following topics or suggest your own:
 - a. Bullying
 - b. Adoption
 - c. Physical handicaps
 - d. Famous guitarists
 - e. Celebrity & awards
 - f. Family values
 - g. other

VIII APPENDIX 1

Term	Meaning of this term in your own words	Example from <i>Out of Darkness</i> – specific words, page number or description
Acknowledgements		
Author		
Blurb or Summary		
Boxes or Sidebars		
Captions		
Chapter titles		
Chapters		
Date of Publication		
Endorsements		
Front cover		
Illustrations		
Index		
Introduction		
Overall Organization e.g. by theme, by subject, by order or events (chronological)		
Photographs		
Spine		
Table of contents		
Title page/copyright page		

IX APPENDIX 2

Jeff Healey, 41: Canadian musician

Toronto Star Monday March 03 2008 By Greg Quill Entertainment Reporter

Legendary Toronto blues guitarist and old-style jazz aficionado Jeff Healey died yesterday in Toronto's St. Joseph's Hospital after a lifelong battle with a rare form of cancer – retinoblastoma – that blinded him in his first year. He was 41.

"Discovered" in a Toronto club in 1982 by Texas blues guitarist, the late Stevie Ray Vaughan, Healey astonished music fans with his outrageous technique. Self-taught by age 4, he laid the electric guitar across his lap and played it in much the same way as a pianist manipulates a keyboard.

Though he specialized in blues-based rock and sold more than a million copies of his Grammy-nominated 1988 debut album *See the Light* – released after a cameo performance in the Hollywood movie *Road House* with Patrick Swayze – Healey's real passion was vintage American jazz.

Healey hosted a long-running CBC Radio series, *My Kinda Jazz*, before moving the program to Toronto's Jazz-FM station, relying solely on his personal collection of 35,000 rare and obscure 78 rpm recordings and an encyclopedic knowledge of the music and personalities he featured in the show.

Healey also played trumpet and clarinet, and in the past decade recorded three albums of vintage jazz with Jeff Healey's Jazz Wizards, including *It's Tight Like That*.

Healey was an internationally known star who shared stages with B.B. King and Vaughan, and recorded with George Harrison, Mark Knopfler and blues legend Jimmy Rogers.

At the time of his death Healey was planning to release his first rock/blues album in eight years, *Mess of Blues*, recorded in studios in Toronto, in concert in London, England, and at the popular Entertainment District club that bore his name, Jeff Healey's Roadhouse. It goes on sale in Europe March 20, and in Canada and the U.S. April 22.

"Jeff was an amazing colleague and as a musician and a personality, in a league of his own," the Jazz Wizards' drummer Gary Scriven said last night. "It was always game on for him. His generosity and sense of humour lasted till the end. He was brave without ever being dramatic. In a word, Jeff was inspirational."

In 2007 Healey underwent surgery to remove cancerous tissue from his legs and both lungs. Radiation and chemotherapy failed to halt the spread of the disease, as did alternative homeopathic treatment in the U.S. this year.

Despite his illness, Healey continued to perform across Canada with both his blues band and jazz ensemble, and had scheduled a tour of Germany and the U.K., including an appearance on BBC's *Jools Holland Show*, in April, his publicist said.

"I'm so sad to hear this news," award-winning Canadian guitarist and music producer Colin Linden said on the phone from New York. "There was a quality of genius in the way Jeff harnessed that distinctive technique. He

was such a natural musician.”

Veteran Toronto guitarist Danny Marks, who fronts the Jeff Healey Band at the Roadhouse on Tuesday nights, said “Jeff was a tremendous musician and always so kind. He always knew the odds were against him, but it never ruined his sense of humour. I used to love to watch him having fun – he’d throw his head back and laugh like a little child.”

Healey leaves his wife, Christie, daughter Rachel, 13, and son Derek, 3, as well as his father and stepmother, Bud and Rose Healey, and sisters Laura and Linda.

Questions for Obituary

1. What is the definition of the word obituary?
2. When was Jeff Healey born and when did he die?
3. What was the cause of his death?
4. What was he famous for?
5. List three achievements of Jeff Healey.
6. Was Jeff married?
7. How many children did he have?
8. List four adjectives used by his friends to describe Jeff.
9. In which newspaper was this obituary originally published?
10. Who wrote this obituary?

X APPENDIX 3

English Idiom or Expression	Meaning in my own words	Similar expression in my first language
down to earth		
signature style		
sibling rivalry		
think outside the box		
eyes are the window to the		
soul		
bitter taste in the mouth		
a labour of love		
pet peeve		

XI APPENDIX 4

English vocabulary word	Meaning - written in my own words
adoption	
prodigy	
unorthodox	
Impatient	
intolerant	
critical	
stubborn	
defensive	
transition	
legacy	
adversity	
independence	
loyalty	
determination	
generosity	
eulogy	

XII APPENDIX 5

What Everyone Should Know About Guide Dogs For The Blind From: Canadian Guide Dogs Website www.guidedogs.ca/

A working Guide Dog provides mobility and independence to the visually-impaired user.

A Guide Dog is not a pet dog when it is working; therefore, other people must not distract the Guide Dog. Guide dogs wear harnesses when working, and upon seeing this, others should first ask the user for permission before touching or distracting the Guide Dog. To distract a working Guide Dog in any way means the animal cannot concentrate fully on avoiding potentially dangerous situations.

Some of the qualities required to make a good Guide Dog are: a quiet and calm disposition, a high level of initiative, a high level of concentration while working, as well as a high level of willingness to work and a strong desire to please the user.

At Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind, puppies of 7 weeks of age are placed with foster families called “puppy walkers” who raise the pups. The puppy walkers socialize the puppies, which are mainly Golden Retrievers and Labrador Retrievers, to as many different, everyday environments as possible. The outdoor socialization begins in quiet residential areas and slowly works up to restaurants, shopping malls, public transit, elevators and so on.

Between 12 to 18 months of age, the dogs are brought to the Training Centre to begin five to eight months of professional training. The dog and its new handler are then matched and are trained together, in residence, as a team.



The Guide Dog does not have any unusual gifts or powers. The dog does not “watch” for stop lights to turn green, but rather waits for a change in traffic direction. The animal has been taught to respond to commands from the owner, such as “Forward”, “Left”, “Right” and “Straight on”, and will only disregard a command when it could lead to a dangerous situation for the Guide Dog team.

Guide dogs in general can be recognized by a harness and a handle which is held in the owner’s left hand.
Guide dogs from Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind wear a white harness.