

# *Hazel and the Spooky Season*



## **EDUCATION GUIDE**

### **About this guide:**

This education guide contains classroom discussion questions and extension activities to help teachers, librarians, and parents help their students and children to consider and expand on the learning themes presented in *Hazel and the Spooky Season*. This guide will help students meet several of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts.



© 2023, Hazy Dell Press

## About the book



### **HAZEL AND THE SPOOKY SEASON**

ISBN: 9781948931465

Lexile: 760L  
F&P: M  
Grade Level Equivalent: 3

### **LEARNING THEMES**

- **Self-confidence**
- **Belonging/Identity**
- **Making friends**
- **Self-empowerment**

When nobody seems to share her love of the spooky season, Hazel is left feeling alone and unable to express herself. Everything changes when Hazel receives a visit from Ronnie Pumpkinseed, a supernatural ambassador for all things spooky. Ronnie teaches Hazel a special word for what she feels inside—Halloween!—and helps Hazel find the courage to be herself and follow her heart, even when it's scary.

### **About the author:**

Kyle Sullivan is a writer and creative director based in Portland, OR. He holds an MA in English Literature from the University of British Columbia, and a BA in Creative Writing from the University of Washington. His works for children include the board book *Goodnight Krampus*, the picture book *Werewolf? There Wolf!*, and the chapter book, *The Mirror People*.

## Discussion Questions

1. Hazel isn't afraid of being scared by traditionally "scary" things like ghosts and banshees and goblins. Instead, at the beginning of the story, Hazel is afraid of something else. What is it that Hazel is afraid of?  

---
2. To have "self-confidence" is to like yourself and feel proud of the special qualities that you bring to the world. In *Hazel and the Spooky Season*, Hazel gains a lot of self-confidence throughout the course of the story. What actions do Hazel and Ronnie take to help Hazel increase her self-confidence?  

---
3. At the beginning of the story, Hazel feels unable to express herself out of fear that nobody will understand, or even worse, that she would be ridiculed for her feelings. If Hazel knew how the book ends, how might she have acted differently at the beginning of the story?  

---
4. What happens when Ronnie switches on the pumpkin searchlight over the town? Do you think Hazel is surprised by what happens next? Why or why not?  

---
5. At the beginning of the story on page 12, Hazel feels unable to describe her feelings about the spooky season:

"She wanted to share how she loved to be scared, but baring her feelings was more than she dared.

So, she walked away, sad, downcast, and alone. 'I just can't explain it,' she said with a groan."

At this point in the story, what advice would you give Hazel to help her learn to express herself? Are there any exercises you can think of that would help Hazel practice so she can gain confidence expressing her feelings?  

---



## Discussion Questions

6. What is Hazel’s immediate reaction to meeting Ronnie Pumpkinseed on page 20? Is she accepting or skeptical of Ronnie Pumpkinseed’s appearance? Why do think her reaction is appropriate, given the circumstances?
- 

7. Regarding the concept of Halloween, Hazel tells Ronnie on page 22: “But we surely can’t explain it—we’ll just sound absurd!”, to which Ronnie replies:

“We’ll show them, not tell them!  
There’s not much to discuss!  
We’ll put on a frightful show  
and then they’ll come to us!”

Why do you think it’s Ronnie’s plan to “show” instead of “tell”? What are the advantages for Hazel to show how she feels about the spooky season instead of putting it into words?

---

8. On page 31, Hazel expresses concern that she will become lonely again as soon as Ronnie leaves. What advice does Ronnie give her? Do you think following Ronnie’s advice will work out for Hazel? Why or why not?
- 

9. In drama, the “fourth wall” is the imaginary wall that separates the audience from the stage. In a play, when a performer speaks directly to the audience, does something to the audience, or even notices the audience, it is known as “breaking the fourth wall.” At the very end of the book, how does Ronnie Pumpkinseed break the fourth wall? Is this ending a surprising and exciting way to end the book? Why or why not?
- 



## Extension Activities

1. Hazel has feelings that she's afraid to share because she's certain that nobody would understand.

“She wanted to tell them with all of her heart,  
but what were the words? And how could she start?  
What if they snickered, and what if they sneered?  
What if they thought she was cringey and weird?”  
– Pg. 11, *Hazel and the Spooky Season*



Ask your students to write their own story about a character who is afraid to share their feelings but somehow finds the courage to express themselves. Ask them to use dialogue, descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop the character's experiences and the story's events.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Writing

CCSS.ELA.Literacy.W.3.3.B

Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.

## Extension Activities

2. Artist Jess Mason introduces a major shift in color palette and mood after Hazel meets Ronnie Pumpkinseed. Ask students to select one page from before Hazel meets Ronnie and one page from after. Then ask them to write down the ways in which the artist uses details in the illustrations to depict the shift in Hazel's life before and after she meets Ronnie.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Reading & Literature

CCSS.ELA.Literacy.RL.3.7

Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).

3. Extend on the activity above by asking students to present their ideas and analysis in small groups. Then, as a group, ask them to discuss what the illustration details imply about Hazel's emotional journey from the beginning of the book to the end. Further, how does Hazel's physical appearance shift throughout the book?

### Speaking & Listening

CCSS.ELA.Literacy.SL.3.1.D

Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.



## Extension Activities

4. With her new sense of self-acceptance and a group of likeminded friends, Hazel’s spooky season is going to look much different next year. Ask your students to write a well-elaborated account of Hazel’s spooky season in the following year, including providing details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, using temporal words to signal event order, and providing a sense of closure. Ask them to consider how and with whom Hazel will prepare for Halloween, and the ways it will differ from last year.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### Writing

CCSS.ELA.Literacy.W.2.9

Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.



## Extension Activities

5. *Hazel and the Spooky Season* features many fun Halloween monsters and vocabulary words. Ask students to use a dictionary or encyclopedia to clarify the meanings and origins of these terms, and then create a story that 1) uses each vocabulary word, and 2) employs details for each word that they learned from the specifics and nuances of the dictionary definitions or encyclopedia entries.

Headless horseman	Banshee	Goblins
Cerberus	Mummy	Werewolf
Vampire	Skeletons	Witch
Ghosts	Jack-o'-lantern	Bats

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Literature

CCSS.ELA.Literacy.L.3.4.D

Use glossaries or beginning dictionaries, both print and digital, to determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.

