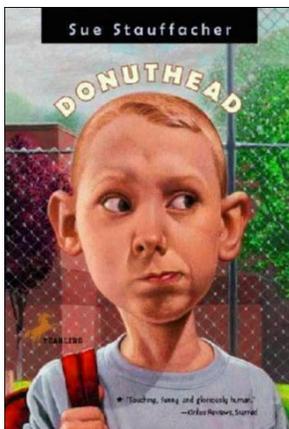




# CONNECTING *DONUTHEAD* TO THE CURRICULUM

## LANGUAGE ARTS: READING



### Analyzing Author's Craft and Voice:

Both Franklin and Sarah have very distinct voices. Give students these prompts and have them write the answer in either Sarah's or Franklin's voice. When they read their answers aloud, let the other students guess. Take the lesson one step further by having students articulate why their word choice was appropriate for the character.

The Modern Hardware Team baseball uniforms are pink and white.

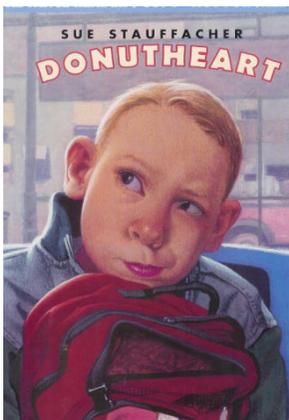
The class takes a trip to the Humane Society.

Julia stops at a fast food restaurant after a baseball game.

Some kids are betting on the outcome of the first baseball game.

### Distinguishing Between Facts and Opinions:

"Donuthead" is full of both facts and opinions. Fact: Drowning is the number two way to die as a kid. Opinion: Girls fill me with so much stress they ought to come with warning labels. Split kids into groups and ask them to highlight both facts and opinions in the text. See if



they can determine where they might be able to verify the facts. Have fun discussing whether they agree with Franklin's opinions.

## LANGUAGE ARTS: WRITING

### **Using Supporting Details:**

Give the students a hypothetical situation such as this: Imagine that Ms. Linski has brought a new kind of candy to class for the students to try. Write a paragraph about what Donuthead would do when he is offered a piece. Make sure to use details from the text to support your opinion.

Other hypothetical situations include: What would Sarah do if someone cut in front of her in line? What would Franklin's mom do if he came home and asked her to hire him a bodyguard? How would Franklin react if his mom brought home a dog?

### **Writing Answers Based on Your Knowledge and Experience:**

Since the classroom, the bus and the school grounds are settings that all students have in common, it is easy for them to generate writing in response to situations that happen in "Donuthead." Here are some examples: Write about the most frightening experience you've had or you've witnessed that involved a school or neighborhood bully. Write about a time when you met someone who was really different from the other kids. How was he or she different? Were you able to become friends?

### **Responding To Open-Ended Writing Prompts:**

At the conclusion of the book, "Donuthead," Franklin takes a daring step (for Franklin), and tries something new and difficult. Have the students write a few paragraphs on what they think might happen after the book is over. Will Franklin and Sarah remain friends? Will Franklin change any of his normal routines? How will Sarah fare in middle school?

# SCIENCE

## **Understanding Scientific Inquiry:**

"Donuthead" gives students an excellent opportunity to better understand the process of scientific investigation. Often, scientists will begin with a hypothesis or 'hunch' about something. They may base their hypotheses on objects or events that they've observed. There are many ways to test these hypotheses. Scientists can seek out new information and record their findings, collect specimens, and conduct experiments, among other things. A scientist's current knowledge will guide the course of his or her further investigations. Ask students to list the events that Franklin observes about Sarah during reading period. What does he conclude about these events? In what other ways does Franklin draw conclusions based on his observations? What information does he give the reader about Glynnis or Mrs. Boardman, for example? In what way do his observations lead to the correct conclusion? When is he wrong? In addition to observing other humans, how does Franklin use scientific investigation to further his knowledge? (He measures his arms and legs and records the findings, he searches the internet for information on traffic fatalities, to name a few.)

## **Using Evidence to Make Scientific Decisions:**

Franklin bases much of his life on the statistics that he gathers about health and well-being. Discuss with students how the use of statistics helps Franklin stay healthy. Are there times when he goes too far? How do they know? When does Franklin's obsession with statistics contribute to poor life decisions?

## **Reproduction and Heredity:**

Talk about what is passed on from parent to child. An egg and sperm unite to begin development of a new individual. That new individual receives genetic information from its mother (via the egg) and its father (via the sperm). Sexually produced offspring never are identical to either of their parents. Given the personality of

Franklin's mom, ask kids if they can guess what tendencies he may have inherited from his father's genes.

### **Physics--Motions of Objects:**

"Donuthead" is a great opportunity for kids to study the physics of baseball. Using Franklin's natural interest in science and his poor performance on the ball field, kids can experiment and learn about some of the most basic principles of classical physics, including these three laws developed by Sir Isaac Newton.

Law #1: An object continues in its initial state of rest or motion with uniform velocity unless it is acted on by an unbalanced or net external force. Basically, that means that unless you do something to an object, it will not move.

Law #2: The acceleration of an object is inversely proportional to its mass and directly proportional to the net external force acting on it. This can be expressed in an equation:  $\text{force} = \text{mass} \times \text{acceleration}$ . Basically, this means that the harder you push something, the further it will go. But it also takes into account that the mass of an object affects this relationship. If you push two objects with different masses, that will affect acceleration. (Imagine pushing Marvin Howerton as opposed to Franklin, for example).

Law #3. Forces always occur in pairs. Or, if you push something, it will push back. The physics of baseball is very clearly explained on the following web site:

<http://library.thinkquest.org/11902/physics/batting.html>. Teachers and students will learn a great deal about choosing a bat: wooden or aluminum or (gasp!) corked, how to stand and swing, and the importance of 'follow through.'

## MATH

### **Graphing Data:**

"Donuthead" is full of fun data collection and representation projects. Students can make a pie chart of Franklin's brain, drawing relative 'pieces' to represent the amount of time he thinks about certain subjects.

They could make a bar graph to represent the things that Franklin fears.

Measuring their own arms and legs, they could record the information on a spreadsheet. Older students could create a scatter plot and trend line to compare height vs. arm length and try to discern any connections between the two.

### **Drawing Conclusions from Statistical Data:**

In the first chapter, Franklin recites the most likely way to die as a kid. Ask students how learning this is helpful to them. What conclusions can they draw from it? Are their conclusions the same as Franklin's? Statistics are reported throughout the book (about coming from a single parent home, about skin cancer, about the location of most fatal accidents). Ask students if these statistics help them make good choices about their own lives. Why or why not?

## HISTORY

### **Historical Thinking:**

Helping students to understand the role of history involves teaching them to see how past decisions affect modern issues and thinking. It also involves working with the context in which historical decisions are made. As we face belt-tightening times today, it's instructive to look back at the period of the Great Depression.

There are many lessons to be learned from the time in which Franklin Delano Roosevelt led our country. Generally, the quotes in the book encourage a cooperative, optimistic and altruistic attitude in the face of very real difficulties. After studying a little about FDR's life and times through the books or web sites noted below, ask students what components of FDR's philosophy can be used to help solve problems today.

### **American History:**

Teachers can bring in "Franklin Delano Roosevelt" by Russell Freedman, a biography with lots of great photos, to share with students, or have them page through "America in the Time of F.D. Roosevelt," by Sally Senzell Isaacs, which will give them an excellent overview of everyday life during the depression and WWII.

On the web, look up <http://www.feri.org>, home of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute web page to learn more about these two fascinating people in American history.

<http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/educat33.html> will take students to the education page of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum web site.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **Formation of Society:**

Read Franklin's description of the laws that govern the playground in Chapter 1. Talk about the kind of society that exists at Pelican View Elementary. How are leaders chosen? Could it be considered a democracy? Why or why not?

\*This handout was developed with input from The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), The National Center for History in the Schools, and The National Academy of the Sciences (NAS) Education Standards.