

Mall Girl Meets the Shadow Vandal

Teacher's Guide/Answer Key

The educational materials for *Mall Girl Meets the Shadow Vandal* may be combined into a comprehensive curriculum or used à la carte. Teachers may rely solely on the content provided or embellish it with supplemental materials or lessons. Printable and electronic versions of the exercises (**Reading Guide** and **Elements of a Story**) are available at www.kimberlybaer.com/mall-girl-curriculum.

Curriculum components consist of the following:

- **Reading Guide:** Is designed to develop students' comprehension skills and critical reading ability. The Guide is broken into comprehension questions and discussion questions, grouped in sections of five or six chapters. Readers will find some of the answers spelled out in the text but will need to read between the lines and make inferences for others. The questions are meant to immerse students in the story by having them speculate about character motivations, imagine what they would do in similar situations, brainstorm with other students to solve the story's mysteries, and more.
- **Elements of a Story:** Provides short lessons to acquaint students with six story elements (setting, exposition, plot, figurative language, characters, and theme) as they relate to *Mall Girl*. Students will read textual information, watch videos, and complete exercises.
- **Final Project list:** Presents ten ideas for a final project related to the book. Student will have the chance to flex their creative or scientific muscles as they undertake such projects as writing a short story, designing a new Mount Rushmore, creating a board game, or conducting a science experiment.
- **Vocabulary List:** Provides a list of words from *Mall Girl* that might be unfamiliar to readers. The electronic version of the document links each word to its definition, pronunciation, and usage examples at [The Britannica Dictionary](http://TheBritannicaDictionary.com).

The time frame for the study will vary depending on the length and frequency of lessons and whether students complete the exercises in class or at home. One possible approach is a four-week plan:

Week #1

- Homework: Read chapters 1-10.
- *Reading Guide:* Answer questions for pre-reading section, chapters 1-5, and chapters 6-10.
- *Elements of a Story:* Complete Lessons 1 (Setting) and 2 (Exposition).

Week #2

- Homework: Read chapters 11-21.
- Reading Guide: Answer questions for chapters 11-15 and 16-21.
- Elements of a Story: Complete Lessons 3 (Plot) and 4 (Figurative language).
- Final Project: Each student chooses a project from the Final Projects list.

Week #3

- Homework: Read chapters 22-31.
- Reading Guide: Answer questions for chapters 22-26 and 27-31.
- Elements of a Story: Complete Lessons 5 (Characters) and 6 (Theme).
- Final Project: Continue to work on the final project.

Week #4

- Homework: Read chapters 32-37.
- Reading Guide: Answer questions for chapters 32-37.
- Final Project: Present final projects to the class.

The format for administering the lessons can vary according to teacher preference.

Reading Guide:

- For the comprehension questions, students may work alone or in small groups. Alternatively, they might complete the questions as a homework assignment. The teacher will decide when and how to go over the answers.
- For the discussion questions, students may break into small groups or the teacher may lead a class-wide discussion.

Elements of a Story:

- Students may work through the exercises independently or work together in small groups. Alternatively, the teacher may take a more active role by guiding the class through each lesson, fielding questions, and facilitating discussions.

Alternative approach: In lieu of a class-wide study, individual students can work through some or all of the materials independently to enhance their reading experience.

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Answer Key for Reading Guide exercises

Pre-reading – Answers will vary.

Chapters 1-5

Answers to comprehension questions:

1. People throw coins and other items down the Lamonts' chimney.
2. Chloe wants to move out of the mall; Mom wants to stay.
3. (Answers may vary.) Reads mystery books, hates her curly blonde hair, is a jeans and T-shirts kind of girl, her dad is dead, lives at the mall with her mom but hates it, likes bananas, has only one friend.
4. According to Jack, Ursula had both motive and opportunity.
5. She's not entirely sure Chloe is innocent.

Discussion questions – Answers will vary.

Chapters 6-10

Answers to comprehension questions:

1. No. Ursula was upset about losing her job.
2. “Neighborhoods—not malls—are where friendships are born. You have to be within walking distance of people.” (Page 39)
3. Lindy makes friends easily. If Chloe isn’t in her classes, she will simply make friends with the people who are, and Chloe will be “bumped out of her life.”
4. She knows Lonnie isn’t interested in her as a friend but was just showing off to her cousin that she knows “some weird girl who lives at the mall.”
5. Despite knowing half her classmates, she has no real friends among them.

Discussion questions – Answers will vary.

Chapters 11-15

Answers to comprehension questions:

1. He didn’t see her talking to anybody.
2. It suggests their friendship is over. The previous year, Chloe and Lindy showed up on the first day of school wearing identical shoes, which suggested they had things in common. The fact that their shoes are now different indicates they’ve grown apart.
3. She hates being stuck inside the mall and longs to be outdoors, in nature. Pretending the clothing department was a forest allowed her to satisfy that need in a small way.
4. She tells him about the mall eggings and agrees to let him come home with her to look for clues.
5. She figures that since they’ve read a lot of mystery books, they might be able to solve the mystery.

Discussion questions – Answers will vary.

Chapters 16-21

Answers to comprehension questions:

1. She doesn’t want to switch schools. She realizes she likes her school, her English teacher, and hanging out with her new friend Robby. She’s also excited about the Creative Endeavors contest.
2. She probably figures it was used in the most recent attack. The police are at the door, and she wants to avoid the hassle that would result if they saw it.
3. **Chloe:** Freezes when she sees Officer Sanford, knees go weak, feels as if she can’t breathe, voice trembles.
Ursula: shrieks, speaks in a tremulous voice, face is white, clenches her bathrobe belt, gives a nervous laugh.
4. She’s becoming a fully fleshed-out character, someone who seems almost like a real person.
5. They’re costing him money. If they left the mall, he could put several money-generating kiosks where their house is.

Discussion questions – Answers will vary.

Chapters 22-26

Answers to comprehension questions:

1. It makes sense. Robby is a happy, optimistic guy who sees the good in any situation.
2. The doors were bolted from the inside and all the windows were locked.
3. The spray paint can and a dark-colored sweatshirt, possibly with pink paint splashes on it.
4. If Chloe's poem got disqualified, Prisha would become the first-place winner and Carlie would move into second place
5. He refers to Carlie's poem as "that dead flower thing" and says it's not as good as Ash's poem.

Discussion questions – Answers will vary.

Chapters 27-31

Answers to comprehension questions:

1. An unopened greeting card that her mother marked "Return to Sender."
2. They wanted to look for clues related to the Shadow Vandal case.
3. They both have big holes in their lives where a father should be.
4. A guard probably knocked on the door to warn them, but the music on the stereo was so loud they didn't hear his knock.
5. The twins aren't used to being apart.

Discussion questions – Answers will vary.

Chapters 32-37

Answers to comprehension questions:

1. The spray paint can in the tunnel.
2. She realizes he thought briefly about murdering her to keep her from talking.
3. He planned to sell the stolen merchandise so he could pay his tax debt.
4. She realizes her hair is beautiful just the way it is. Further, it's a connection to her deceased dad that she cherishes.
5. They lived at the mall and were "separated from [their] own kind, living lonely, isolated lives."
(Page 187)

Discussion questions – Answers will vary.

Answer Key for “Elements of a Story” exercises

Lesson 1: Setting

Name the setting: Answers will vary

Activity – write an essay or discuss the questions: Answers will vary.

Lesson 2: Exposition

“Once upon a time...” = **Cinderella**

Examples of exposition: Answers will vary

Lesson 3: Plot

Summarize plot elements from a book or movie: Answers will vary.

Lesson 4: Figurative language

Write a sentence that illustrates **personification** – answers will vary.

Examples of **onomatopoeias** – answers will vary. A comprehensive list of onomatopoeias can be found at <https://literarydevices.net/a-huge-list-of-onomatopoeia-examples/>.

Write a sentence that illustrates **hyperbole** – answers will vary.

Write a sentence that includes an **oxymoron** – answers will vary.

Passage from *Mall Girl*:

- **Metaphor:** “mine [hair] is thousands of yellow wires”
- **Simile:** “like dysfunctional bedsprings”

Activity: find similes/metaphors in *Mall Girl* – answers will vary.

Rewrite sentences using figurative language – answers will vary.

Lesson 5: Characters

Descriptive adjectives for characters: Answers will vary.

How did characters change: answers may vary; possibilities include the following:

Chloe: Is no longer bitter and lonely now that she’s opened herself up to friendship. She is happier with her life now that she lives in a real neighborhood. She has learned to love her curly hair after seeing a photo of her dad with the same curls.

Chloe’s mom: After nine years of widowhood, Ursula is ready to love again. Although she was committed to staying at the mall at the beginning of the story, she eventually decided it was time to leave, possibly because she realized the move would be the best thing for Chloe. She has also let go of a long-ago grudge and reconciled with her parents.

Ash: Is trying to improve her image. She has started going by “Ash” instead of “Ashley Elizabeth” to seem friendlier. She has new friends (Chloe, Prisha, Carlie, etc.) and is happier now that her bully of a father has moved out of the house.

Write an essay or discuss the questions: answers will vary.

Lesson 6: Theme

Themes in Mall Girl – possible answers (wording may differ):

1. Crime doesn't pay.
2. Friendship makes life sweeter.
3. Two heads (or five) are better than one.

Other themes in Mall Girl – answers may vary.

Themes from favorite book or movie – answers will vary.