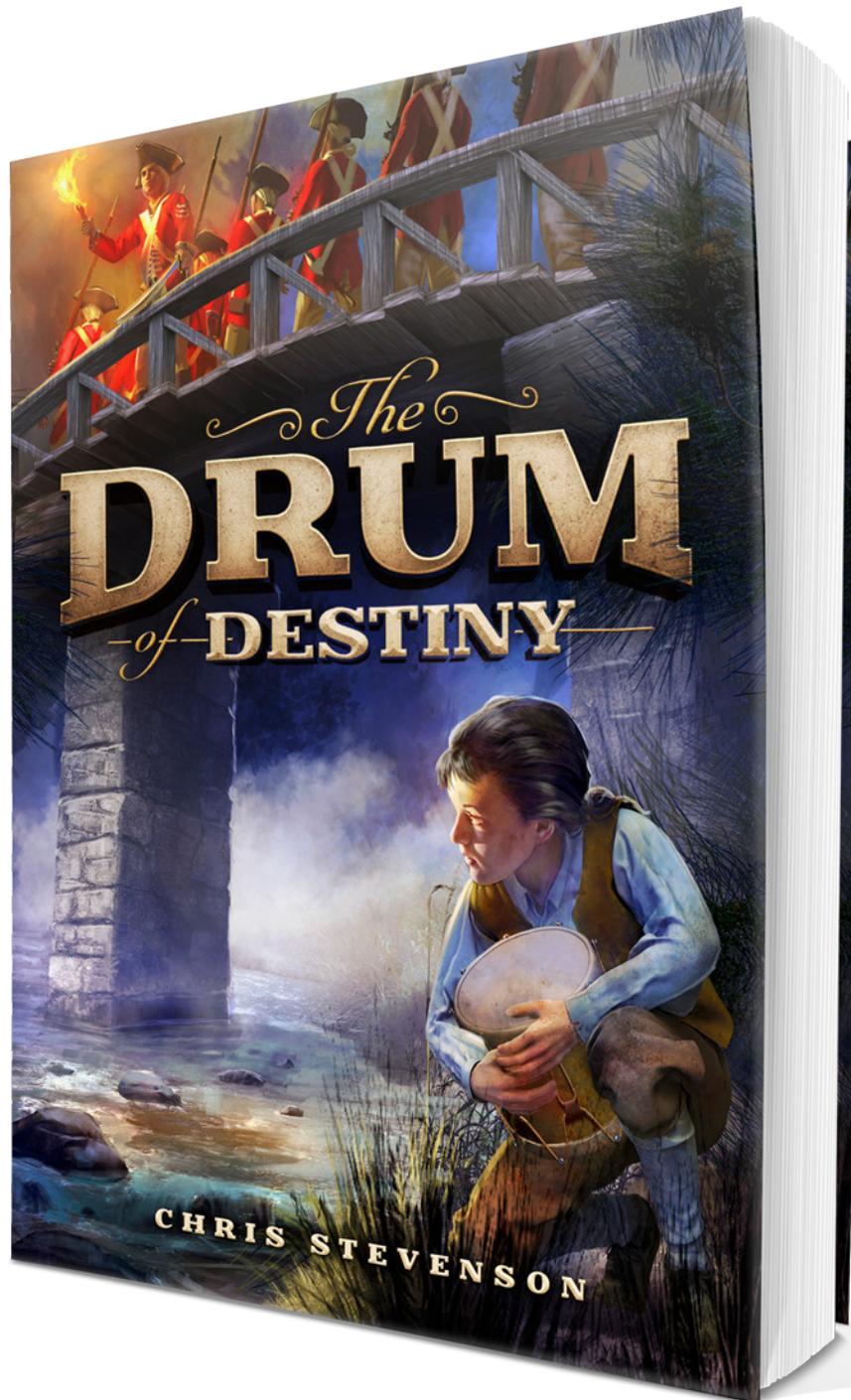


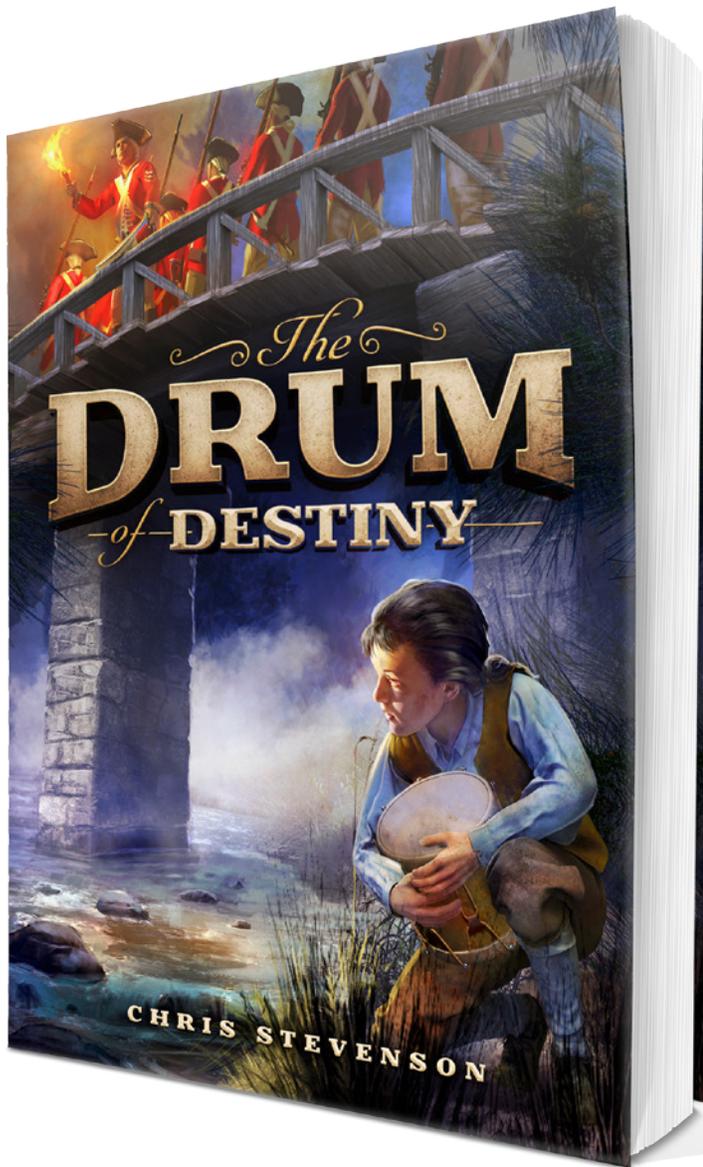


Teaching Guide content for Gabriel Cooper

The Drum of Destiny by Chris Stevenson

Prepared by Laura Williams McCaffrey





★ ABOUT THE BOOK ★

At the eve of the Revolutionary War, twelve-year-old Gabriel Cooper's parents have died, and he's been taken in by the Loring, who think patriots are traitors. He runs off, not sure where to go. Then he finds a drum, which seems to be a sign that he should travel from New York to Boston and join the patriot cause as a drummer. Yet Gabriel soon discovers that the journey will be very long and arduous. Will he truly be able to reach the patriots?

★ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ★

1. How would you characterize Gabriel Cooper? What are his strengths? What are his flaws? How do these influence his choices over the course of the story? How do his actions affect other characters, and how do they affect him? How do his actions influence the events of the overall story, from the beginning, through the middle, to the resolution? *Common Core State Standards (Reading: Literature): RL.5-8.3*
2. What would you say are Gabriel's primary motivations in the story — patriotism, the desire for family, or both? Explain your answer. How do his motivations influence his actions each time he encounters a new person on his journey? Do his motivations switch over the course of the story? How? Use examples to support your answers. *Common Core State Standards (Reading: Literature): RL.5-8.1.*

3. Gabriel carries a number of things with him: a ring, a knife, a flask, a flint rock, a pouch of money, and a letter from his mother. Why are each of these important to him? How do they help him in practical ways? What do each symbolically or metaphorically represent to him during this journey? *Common Core State Standards (Reading: Literature): RL.5-8.1.*
4. In the story's first pages, the author provides the perspective of the patriots on events and the perspective of loyalists — those who support King George III. What are the differences in their perspectives? Why do they seem to believe as they do? How does the author show their differing points-of-view? What effect do these point-of-view differences create in the story? In what ways does the narrator's perspective on events influence yours? *Common Core State Standards (Reading: Literature): RL.5-8.6.*
5. Consider Gabriel's situation at the Loring's house and the situations he encounters as he travels. How are the expectations of him as a 12-year-old similar to and different from the expectations of 12-year-olds today? Use examples from the story and from your own experience to support your opinion. *Common Core State Standards (Reading: Literature): RL.5-8.1.*
6. At the beginning of Chapter 10, Mr. Fleming tells Gabriel: "be true to yourself. Don't let others discourage you from taking the path chosen for your life. You are the only one who can know the path. Find it, and then hold on to it with all your heart." What does he mean by this? Does Gabriel follow his advice or not? How? Is Mr. Fleming proven right by the story's end? Why or why not? *Common Core State Standards (Reading: Literature): RL.5-8.1.*
7. Over the course of the story, the author describes the landscape between New York and Boston. He also describes roads and towns. How do the descriptions influence your understanding of the region during this era? How does this setting affect the characters, particularly Gabriel? How does it affect the story overall? *Common Core State Standards (Reading: Literature): RL.5-8.1.*
8. Gabriel learns a series of stories during his journey, told to him by various people. How do these stories contribute to his understanding of his situation? How do they contribute to his understanding of himself and the journey he's on? How does the sequence of stories contribute to your understanding of the setting, the plot, and the story's themes? Why do you think the author chose this structure for the story? *Common Core State Standards (Reading: Literature): RL.5-7.5.*
9. Reread the letter Gabriel's mother gave to him. Why do you think Gabriel is confused by it? What do you think it means? Why? How does the meaning become clearer to Gabriel over time? How does what's said in the letter seem to connect to the overall story? *Common Core State Standards (Reading: Literature): RL.5-8.1.*
10. Who or what do you consider the antagonist in this novel? For example, would you say it's the British? Would you say it's the setting and the length of the journey? Would you say it's Gabriel's situation? Would you say it's a combination of things? Which things? Use examples from the story to support your answers. *Common Core State Standards (Reading: Literature): RL.5-8.1.*
11. What would you identify as the story's primary themes? What in the tale creates the themes — for example, the historical setting, character actions, descriptions of details, or a sequence of events that form the plot? Do multiple aspects of the story form the themes? How? *Common Core State Standards (Reading: Literature): RL.5-8.2.*
12. What genre is this novel? How does it compare and contrast to other books in the same genre that portray similar events and themes? How does it compare and contrast to stories in different genres that depict similar themes? Gabriel's story also incorporates historical characters and events. How does it compare and contrast with historical nonfiction that portrays the same events? *Common Core State Standards (Reading: Literature): RL.5-7.9.*

Common Core State Standards (Speaking and Listening) also addressed by all questions: SL.5-8.1a-d., SL.5-8.6.

★ EXTENSION ACTIVITIES ★

Speak from the Past. Who was George Washington? What was he like as a person? What effect did the Revolutionary War have on his life? Why is he important to the study of American History? Once you complete research to answer these questions, develop a speech that contains all you discover. Dress as Washington, and perform your speech for your classmates — so they'll learn more about this fascinating man. *Common Core State Standards (Writing): W.5.2a-e., W.6.2a-f., W.7.2a-f., W.8.2a-f.*

American Revolution Guide. A number of figures from the Revolutionary War era are mentioned in this novel, including Benedict Arnold, Paul Revere, John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, and the Sons of Liberty. Research each of these historical figures, and then create a compelling guide that explains who each was, as well as his role in the conflict. Display your guide in your classroom or library, so others can learn from your hard work. *Common Core State Standards (Writing): W.5.2a-e., W.6.2a-f., W.7.2a-f., W.8.2a-f.*

What's Your Drum? Consider the drum Gabriel discovers. What does it represent to him? Then think about an item in your life that might be your drum. How does this item represent you? Has its meaning to you changed over time? How? Tell the story of your 'drum' and why it matters to you. Maybe illustrate this story, and, with help from your teacher, publish or display it in your classroom. *Common Core State Standards (Writing): W.5.3a-e., W.6.3a-e., W.7.3a-e., W.8.3a-e.*

A Treasure Tale. Pretend you go in search of the treasure discussed in the story. Consider where you might look for it and why. Does anyone help you? How? Include the dangers you face, as well as your struggles to overcome the dangers. Also, don't leave your readers in suspense — describe if you find the treasure or not! Once you complete your tale, post it on your class website or blog for all to enjoy. *Common Core State Standards (Writing): W.5.3a-e., W.6.3a-e., W.7.3a-e., W.8.3a-e.*

Common Core State Standards (Writing) also addressed by all activities: W.5-8.4., W.5-8.5., W.5-8.6.

