
OLIVER'S SURPRISE

Teacher's Guide

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Preliminary remarks

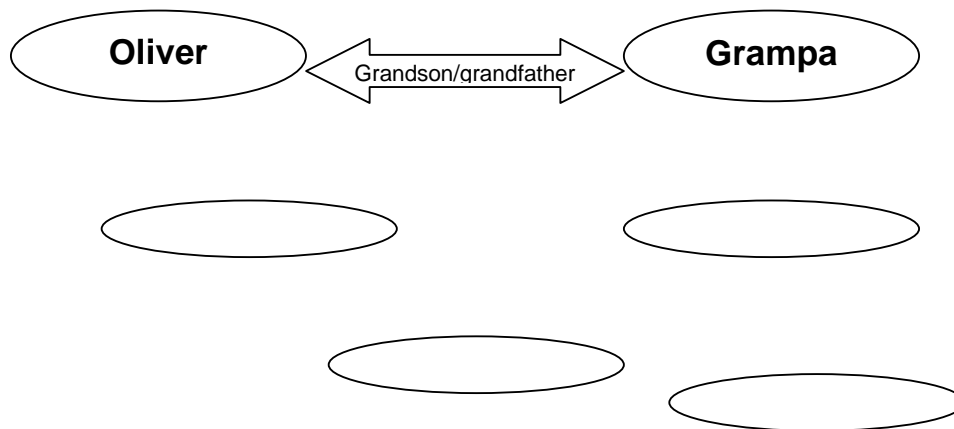
- The following assignments offer tasks and activities, which the teacher or students can choose from.
- Many tasks are suitable for talks or presentations to the class.
- Some tasks overlap with others.
- Since the material can be edited, the teacher may enlarge the tables, diagrams, and charts, or the students may copy them into their notebooks.

Pre-reading activities

- 1 Look at the picture on the **cover** and use your imagination. Who is the boy? Where might he be sailing? What do you think he is thinking about?
- 2 Oliver hits his head and goes back in time. Try to imagine what time you would go back to and what you would learn.
- 3 Ask yourself what past time would be the most fun? The most difficult? Who would you most want to meet?

While-reading activities**1 Constellation of figures**

This is a story about a young boy who steps into a very different world. Fill in the chart below to show how the minor characters are connected to Oliver and Grampa

**2 Titles**

Chapter titles tell you what is coming up next in a book. Can you create a title for each chapter in *Oliver's Surprise*? Here's an example: Chapter One: A Storm Brewing

3 Summaries

Try to write a short summary of each chapter (2 or 3 sentences each.)

4 Narration As you read each chapter, fill in the following columns:

Chapter	Takes place in present or past	What Oliver learns
Example: Ch1	Bonks his head and wakes up in a new place: the past	He is no longer in present-day Jamestown

5 Tension

From the beginning of the story, we know that Oliver misses Grampa very much. At the end of each chapter, explain how Oliver's view of his present has changed as a result of something he's learned about the past.

Chapter	Possible reasons
Example	Surprised to see Grampa as a young man

6 Characterization of Oliver and Grampa

Grampa doesn't know that Oliver is his grandson. Find examples of how he treats him differently:

Chapter	Examples
Example	Pays him for work

Oliver's friend Finn learns about his secret, but still Oliver can't share everything with him. Find examples of things Oliver keeps to himself.

Chapter	Examples of Oliver's silence
Example	Time of the storm

7 Setting

- 1 What is the town in which the story takes place?
- 2 Can you identify big landmarks?
- 3 Find a map and compare it to the one in the front of the book
- 4 What is most important about the setting?

8 Themes

While reading the book, think about these things:

- 1 What **timeless behaviors** of boys and teenagers do Oliver and Finn act out?
- 2 What is **different about their behavior** from two friends of the same time?
- 3 What **changes in his home town** does Oliver notice when he goes back in time?
- 4 Does anything **stay the same** for Oliver between 1938 and the present?

9 Narrator and point of view

- 1 Who is telling the story?

(You can find a definition of narrator and point of view in a library or on the Internet, or your teacher may have one ready for you.)

- 2 What if Oliver's mother told the story? What would she tell someone about his adventure?
- 3 How would Grampa's version be different from Oliver's?

10 Hurricanes

- 1 Has a major storm ever hit the place where you live? What do people remember most?
- 2 How would a hurricane that hits this year be different from the 1938 storm?
- 3 Ask your parents or grandparents if they remember any weather events from their childhood.

11 History

- 1 How do you know what parts of the story came from of history and what parts were made up by the author?
- 2 Where would you look to find out?
- 3 Is there a historical event in your town that everyone still talks about?

12 Schooners

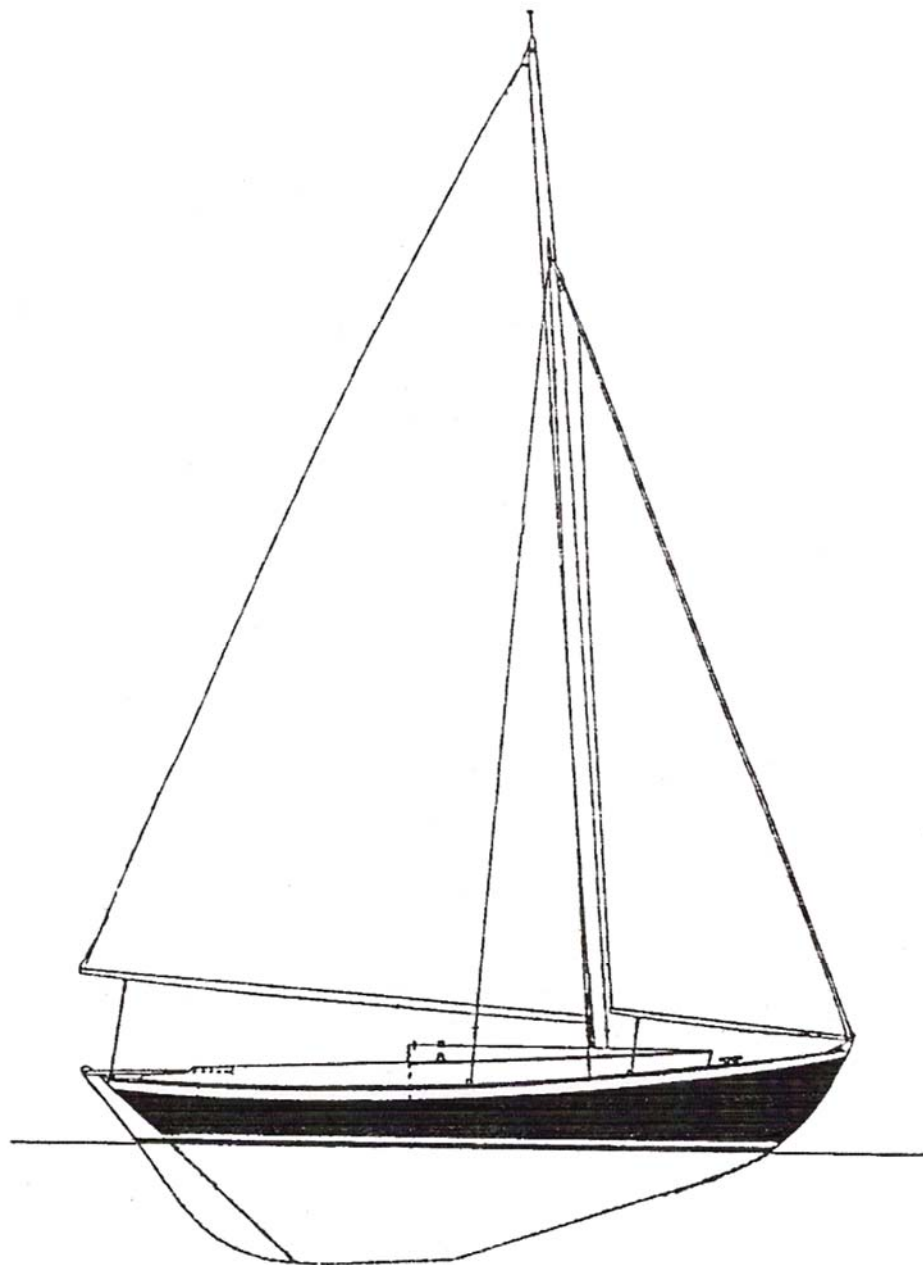
- 1 Draw two pictures of Surprise, one as she was in the past and one as she is in Oliver's time.
- 2 Draw a picture of Sparky. Can you add a sail?
- 3 Name the sails on Surprise without looking at the glossary

13 Style, dialogue and art

- 1 What do you notice about the sentences? Are they long or short?
- 2 How does the author convey what the characters are saying?

3 How do the pictures help tell the story?

4 This boat is smaller and simpler than Surprise but still has many of the same parts. Name as many parts as you can, including the corners and edges of the sail. (Completed on page 7.)



Post-reading activities**1 Book review**

Write a book review to tell your friends what you think of the story. Does it make sense?

Does the book make you interested in sailing? In the history of your area?

(If you liked the book, you may encourage other students to read it.)

2 Letter writing

Imagine that after he returns to his own time, Oliver writes a letter to his grandfather. Can you write that letter for him? What would you tell Grampa?

3 Ending

Imagine that Oliver actually stays with his grandfather in the past. Write a different ending to the story.

4 Gossip

Imagine you are Cap'n Eli describing the hurricane a few weeks after it hit. Try to make the story interesting. You may exaggerate and change or add a few things.

5 Comment

1 Write a short comment on the following topic: "You can never escape your past."

2 Explain the inclusion of John Masefield's poem, *Sea Fever*.

6 Summary

Write a summary of the story in 90–100 words or 180–200 words or 270–300 words.

(It is more difficult to summarize a story like this in 100 words than in 300 words.)

7 Book cover

Design your own book cover.

(Your teacher may hold a contest for the best entry.)

8 Title

Think of other titles for the story.

(Your teacher may hold a contest for the best suggestion.)

Boats and sailors have their own language. Here is the diagram from page 5, with parts of the boat and sails filled in.

