

Teachers' Guide

The Metamorphosis of Bunny Baxter



About the Book

Bunny Baxter thinks nothing could be worse than starting seventh grade at a school where she knows no one. But after her first day, she realizes things can actually get much worse.

If Bunny Baxter were an insect, she'd have so many ways to slip through seventh grade unnoticed. But she's tall instead of tiny, has flaming red Medusa hair instead of camouflage, and she suffers from social anxiety, which makes it hard to be part of a swarm. Worst of all, she's been redistricted to a new middle school away from her best friend who she could always hide behind when her anxiety got the best of her.

The first day at E.D. Britt Middle School does not go well. Bunny trips on the steps, falls into the cutest boy in the school, and causes a kid domino pile-up. At lunch, she unintentionally causes an uproar in the cafeteria, which lands her and another girl in the principal's office. Bunny decides there is only one option: to get expelled so she can transfer to the school her best friend attends.

She soon discovers that it isn't that hard to get in trouble—don't turn in your homework, walk around the track instead of run in P.E., pretend you deliberately hit someone with a badminton birdie. What isn't so easy for Bunny is realizing she now has a reputation as a troublemaker. And even more confusing, when it looks like her plan to get expelled might work, she's no longer sure what to do.

The Metamorphosis of Bunny Baxter is a heartfelt coming of age story about an insect-loving girl who is learning to grow into herself—quirks and all.



A Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection

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also available as an e-book and audio book



About the Creator

Barbara Carroll Roberts's books for young readers include the novel *Nikki On the Line*, a finalist for two state children's book awards, and the picture book *A Rose Named Peace*, a Junior Library Guild Gold Standard selection and Texas Topaz Nonfiction Gem. She has two grown children and lives in Virginia with her husband, two cats, and one goofy springer spaniel.



About This Guide

The questions and classroom extensions in this guide correlate to Common Core English Language Arts Standards for reading and writing: Ideas and Details R.1-3; Craft and Structure R.4-6; Comprehension of Complex Texts R.10; Writing Composition W.4, W.5; Building Research Skills W.7.

Discussion Questions

Use these questions as reading check-ins, writing prompts, or classroom discussions throughout *The Metamorphosis of Bunny Baxter*.

1. Throughout the book, Bunny imagines herself as an insect. Looking at the times she does this, why does she wish she was an insect?
 - If you could be any insect, what insect would it be and why?
2. What are some of the biggest changes between elementary and middle school? And how would switching to a school without friends make this change harder?
3. Box-breathing and worry stones are the calming exercises that Bunny uses when she is having an anxiety attack. What other calming techniques do you know?
4. Bunny and Sylvia are so very different, but they work together as friends. How do their differences make them strong friends?
5. How did Bunny's choices on the morning of the first day of school cause some of the chaos she had that day?
6. Why is Paige so focused on Bunny? Why do bullies bully?
7. What is Bunny not considering when it comes to her get expelled plan?
8. What is your favorite book? Share why it is your favorite.
 - What does someone's favorite book tell you about them?
9. What is the difference between a book report and an essay? Why does Ms. Clodfelter want an essay and not a book report?

10. How is Ms. Clodfelter a good teacher?
11. Why is Bunny so upset about her dad being in Delaware during the week?
12. What does Bunny's family show us about adoption?
13. How does Bunny's participation in badminton change so much for her?
14. What did Dr. Quintela mean when she told Bunny "I hope, one day, you'll find your voice, too, Bunny."? When in the book do you feel that Bunny finally found her voice?
15. Why is it so hard to stay friends with someone you don't see often? How does Alex and Bunny's relationship support this?
16. When Bunny overhears what Paige says in the bathroom, how does this change Bunny?
17. Why was it smart to finally, in chapter 16, tell her mom about her expulsion plan?
18. When Bunny's expulsion plan comes to light and Sylvia and Elena find out about it, they are hurt. Why was Bunny unable to see what she had right in front of her?
19. Bunny tells Kyle it is okay that he is friends with her bullies, but how could Kyle have dealt with the situation differently?
20. Bunny made a first impression at E.D. Britt that is very different than how she truly is. Why is it so hard to change first impressions?
21. What does Bella show the reader about school and fitting in? How do she, Kyle, and many other characters show that people are multidimensional?
22. What is your favorite picture book? Share why it is your favorite.
 - What would be the benefits of having loved picture books in a middle school library for middle schoolers to browse and borrow?
23. How is making a garden interdisciplinary and cross-curricular?
24. Why is it important to put native plants and plants for pollinators in your garden?
 - What plants are native to your area? Use the National Wildlife Federation native plant finder to assist you: <https://nativeplantfinder.nwf.org>
25. What would you have worn or done for your photo to show who you are?
26. For Bunny, what are the pros and cons for each middle school? Did she choose what you would have if you were her?
27. Why did the author choose the title for this book? How did Bunny metamorphosize? Did any other characters change throughout the book as well?
28. Barbara Carroll Roberts uses figurative language, specifically similes and personification, throughout the book. Why do you think the author uses figurative language? How does it affect your experience as a reader?
 - Find examples throughout the book to use as evidence for your answer.



Classroom Extensions

Use these activities to extend your students' thinking and experience with *The Metamorphosis of Bunny Baxter*. These activities are written for your students.

1. Chapter Titles

- ▶ The chapters in *Bunny Baxter* do not have titles. For each chapter, create a title and share why the title fits the theme/central idea of the chapter.

2. Insects

- ▶ Bunny educates her peers throughout the book about the importance of many insects including cicadas, flies, monarch butterflies, ladybugs, and dung beetles. As she shares in the book, humans could not live without insects. Pick your own insect and research how they are helpful to the Earth and humans then share your findings with your peers through a presentation, infographic, or essay. Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation (<https://xerces.org>) is a great resource for this activity.
- ▶ Further extension: Visit <https://monarchwatch.org> to be part of their research either by tagging monarchs, taking part in their research partnerships, or reading more research to become more knowledgeable about monarchs.

3. Proposal

- ▶ The students in Ms. Clodfelter's class each came up with an idea to better their school, come up with a detailed plan, and complete a proposal.
- ▶ Complete your own proposal for your school including all aspects that Ms. Clodfelter expected for her proposals.



4. Outdoors

- ▶ In Chapter 29, Bunny sits outside and listens around her, hearing a cardinal and a mourning dove and imagining all the changes happening around her that she couldn't see or hear.
- ▶ Find a place, near nature if you are able, to sit and listen. Take a notebook with you and make a list of things you hear, see, and can imagine happening around you. After you are done listening, write a descriptive creative piece sharing what you observed and imagined.

The Common Core Standards push readers to look closer when reading a text including examining key ideas & details, craft & structure, and integration of knowledge & ideas. This educators' guide for Roberts's *The Metamorphosis of Bunny Baxter* includes discussion questions and activities to be used in grades 5 through 8 as this text is read as a whole group, small group, or a combination. This guide could also be modified to be used with a student who is reading the novel independently.

This guide was created by Kellee Moyer, a middle school librarian in a Florida Power Library designated school in Orlando, FL. Kellee is the author of various educators' guides for all levels; the co-author of the blog *Unleashing Readers*; Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of NCTE (ALAN) 2024 President and a member of the 2016-2018 ALAN Board of Directors; administrative assistant for the 2026 Caldecott Award Committee; a jury member then co-chair of the 2020-2021 Schneider Family Award Jury; a member then chair of the Amelia Elizabeth Walden Book Award committee from 2012-2014; and a member of ALAN, AASL, ALA, and FAME. Kellee can be reached at Kellee.Moyer@gmail.com and [@kelleemoyer](https://twitter.com/kelleemoyer).