

HEATHER CAMLOT

Switch

“Life, death, love and baseball!
What more could a reader want?
A home run.”

—Kevin Sylvester, author of *MinRS*



EDUCATORS' GUIDE

The word "clutch" is written in a large, bold, black script font. The letters are thick and have a fluid, cursive quality. The 'c' starts with a large loop, and the 'h' ends with a long, sweeping tail. The overall style is modern and energetic.

Educators' Guide

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PREPARING TO READ

About the book

Cover query

What predictions can you make from the cover?

Title tipoff

What does the title of the book mean and what could it signify about the novel?

Back cover copy

What do you learn about:

Setting – where and when does the novel takes place?

Character – who is the protagonist?

Plot – what is the main character's story and what will happen?

Conflict – what will be the main character's biggest challenge?

Wordsplash

Predict what the novel is about using the following key words: Baseball, bar mitzvah, business, death, De Bullion, Jackie Robinson, money, the Plateau, Montreal, Park Avenue, Royals, Westmount

Synopsis

Something incredible is happening in Montreal. Jackie Robinson is playing for the Royals, the Brooklyn Dodgers' Triple-A team. As the first black man to sign a contract in modern organized baseball, Jackie's going to change the world.

But twelve-year-old Joey Grosser doesn't have time for games. Not since his pa dropped dead and left Joey, his ma and his little brother with nothing but bills and a money-losing corner grocery store in Montreal.

Joey vows to earn money any way he can to get his family out of their dump of a neighborhood, where rats nibble on babies' ears and the air smells like liver and onions. But by summer's end, Joey is worse off than when he started and turns to the wrong man for help.

As Joey's bar mitzvah quickly approaches, one decision will determine whether he lives long enough to celebrate becoming a man – and to watch Jackie Robinson make baseball history.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the themes in *Clutch*? Provide some examples of how these themes come through.

2. Why is Joey so desperate to get out of his “dump of a neighborhood”?

3. Why does Mr. Wolfe turn to Joey for help? What techniques does Mr. Wolfe use to manipulate Joey?

4. What lessons can Joey learn from Jackie Robinson’s pivotal year with the Montreal Royals?

5. How would you describe Joey’s relationships with his parents, David, Ben, Mr. Wolfe, Mr. Friedman, and Dr. and Shelly Richter? How do these relationships change over the course of the novel?

6. Have you ever wanted something so badly you would do almost anything for it? How far would you go? How far do you think Joey would have gone had David not shown up?

7. Everyone deals with death differently. How do Joey, David, Ben, Mrs. Grosser and Mr. Friedman deal with losing loved ones?

MAKING CONNECTIONS – THEME

Connect with a text to better understand it.

Text to self: How *Clutch* reminds you of an experience in your own life.

The (scene) in *Clutch* reminds me of the time in my life when...

The (scene) in *Clutch* reminds me of (experience), but it didn't work out the same way because...

Clutch made a lot of sense to me because in my life...

Clutch doesn't make sense to me because in my life...

I'd like to be friends with (name) because...

I'd like to know more about (event/person/place) in *Clutch* because...

Text to text: How *Clutch* reminds you of another story, novel, movie, song, etc.

Clutch reminds me of the (media) because...

The (scene) in *Clutch* reminds me of (media) because...

Although the theme(s) of (media) and *Clutch* are the same, they take a very different turn because...

Text to world: How *Clutch* reminds you of world issues and events – past, present and future.

Clutch reminds me of the (event, issue) that happened in (year) in (city/country), when...

Clutch reminds me of what's happening in the world today because...

Although *Clutch* happened in 1946, its themes and ideas could be a warning about the future because...

UNIVERSAL THEMES

COMING OF AGE

FAMILY

FRIENDSHIP

LOYALTY

COURAGE

DEATH

PHYSICAL ABUSE

HEROISM

DIVERSITY

GREED AS

DOWNFALL

DISILLUSIONMENT
AND DREAMS

MANIPULATION

SELF-DISCOVERY

MAKING CONNECTIONS – CHARACTER

When authors develop a character, they think about how that character looks, speaks, thinks and acts, as well as how others see the character.

Examine a character from *Clutch* by filling in the information below.

Character name:

How the character looks

How the character speaks

How the character thinks

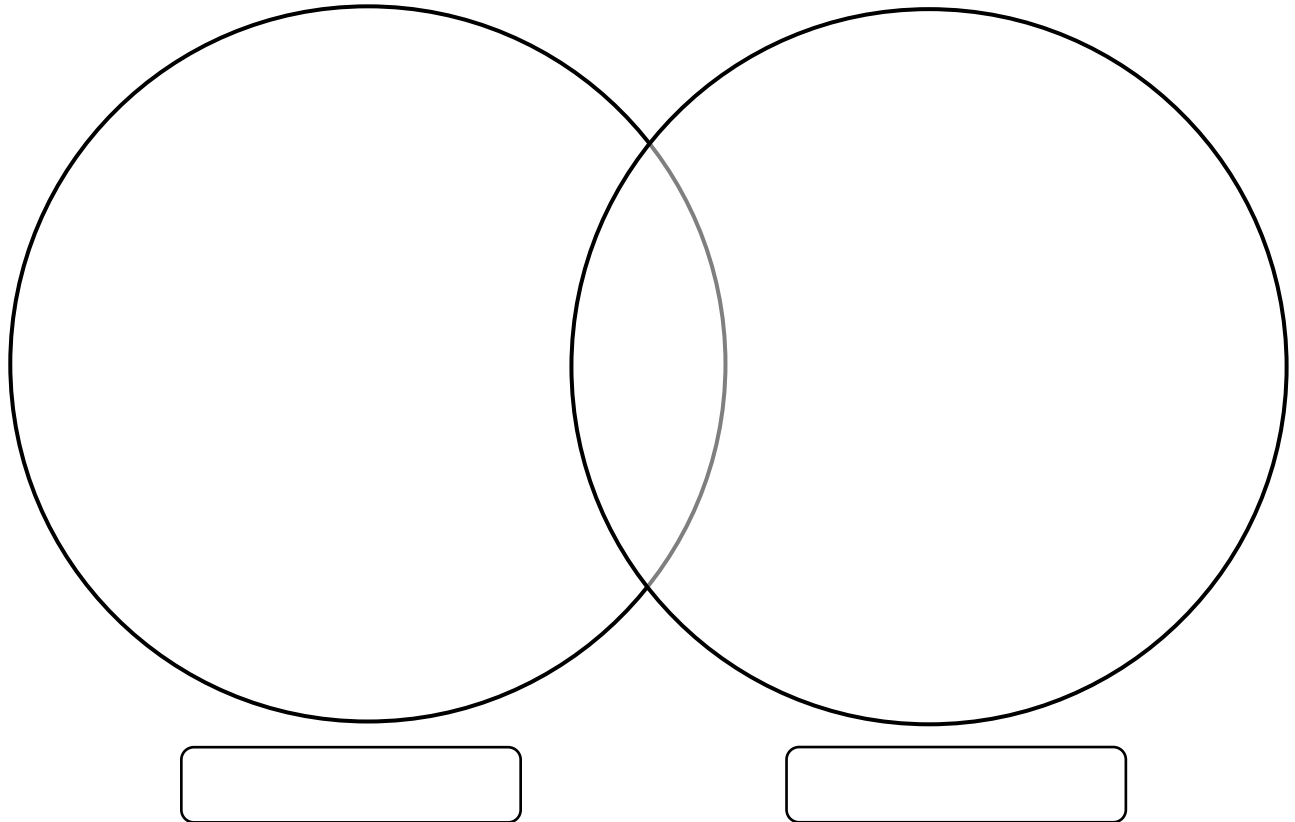
How the character acts

How others see the character

Other notable character traits

MAKING CONNECTIONS – CHARACTER

Compare and contrast two characters from *Clutch*. What do they have in common? What makes them different?

**GETTING INTO CHARACTER**

Pretend you are one of the characters in the novel. Write a letter to another character or compose a diary entry just before or after a big event.

Pick a scene in which you disagree with a character's decision. Why do you disagree? What would you say or do differently? How would the story change?

Create a new character for the novel. Use the trait sheet on the next page to develop the character. How would he or she change the story?

CHARACTER TRAIT SHEET

Though you may not use everything you dream up for your character, the more you know, the richer that character will be on the page.

Name and age	
Physical appearance	
Hair and eye color	
Facial features	
Ailments or habits (fidgety...)	
Outer attitude (easygoing...)	
Inner attitude (self-loathing...)	
Always carries this item	
Afraid of	
Dreams of	
Hobbies/talents	
Favorite sports, books...	
What others admire/despise about the character	
Best/worst quality	
Loves/hates	
Character's history	
How they see the world	

ENDING AFTER THE ENDING

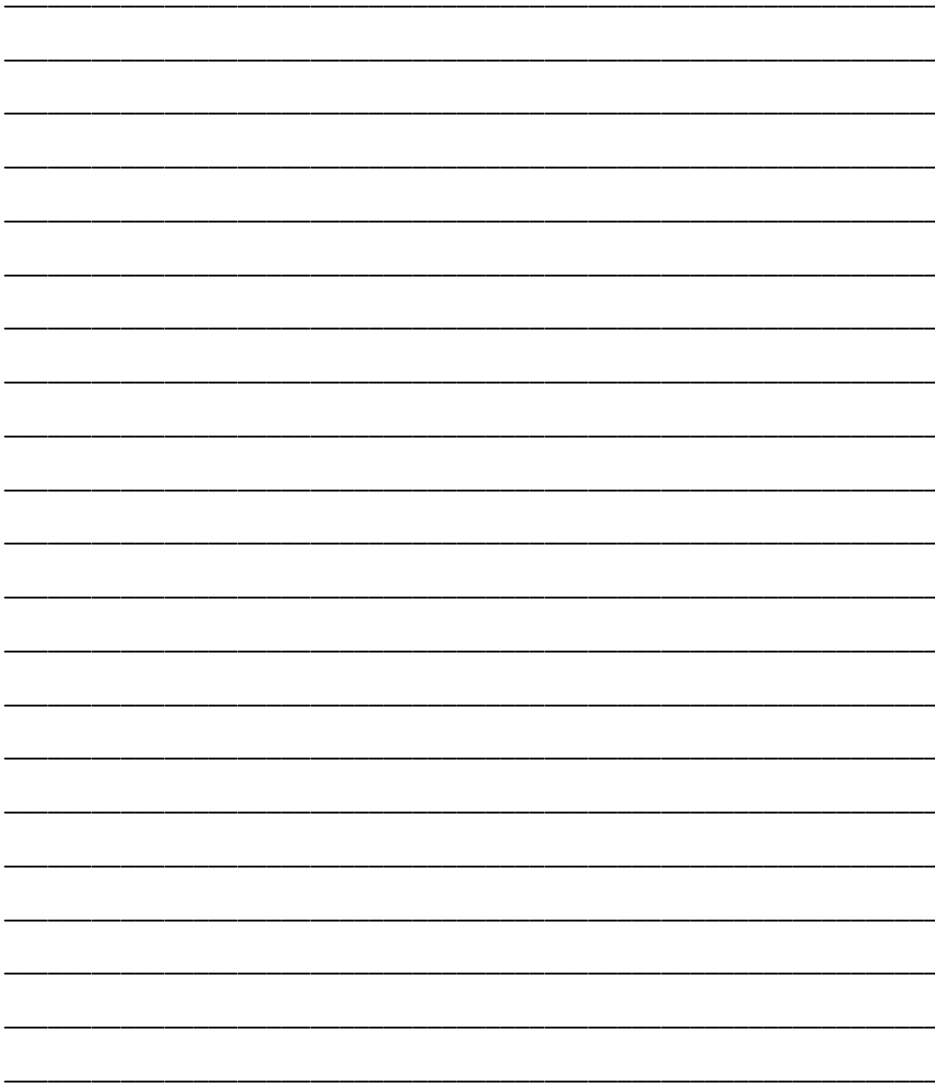
What do you mean the novel ends like that? But I want to know...

Have ideas of what happens next to Joey, David, Ben and the others? Write an epilogue for *Clutch*.

Chapter title:

Chapter quote:

New author name:



A large rounded rectangular box containing 20 horizontal lines for writing an epilogue.

EXTENDING YOUR READING

Pick your favorite subject to get up close and personal with *Clutch*.

Humanities

- At a bar mitzvah ceremony, boys give a speech about what turning 13 means to them. Imagine Joey's bar mitzvah celebration is the last chapter of the novel. Write his speech. Discuss what he's learned over the summer and how these lessons have shaped his "becoming a man."

Geography

- Joey wants to move to the west side of Park Avenue. Create a travel journal/board of a place you want to visit or move to.

Media literacy

- Film a trailer for the book.
- Write your own play-by-play of the final game in the Little League World Series and record it for radio or film it for television.
- Find newspaper or magazine articles that relate to *Clutch* and discuss as a class.

Physical education

- Create a stress management plan for Joey.
- Create a baseball development plan for David.

Technology

- Using Google maps, create a tourist guide for the real locations in the novel.
(https://www.google.ca/intl/en/earth/outreach/tutorials/mapseng_lite.htm)
- Pick one of the quotes from the Montreal Gazette or the Baltimore Afro-American, find it in Google News Archives and explain its context.
(<https://news.google.com/newspapers>)

Family studies

- Bake some regulach!

English & literature

- Write a letter to the author.
- Research other Montreal writers and their contributions to culture and to promoting their city.
- Read *The Red Pony* and explain how it relates to your life, just like Joey did.

Visual arts

- Create a collage of “degenerate art.”
- Make posters or murals condemning racism in sports.
- Turn an important scene into a comic strip or cartoon.

History

- Create a timeline of the integration of sports.
- Write a scene in which a character travels out of 1946 Montreal and into today's world.

GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS

Joey follows the success tactics in the second-hand book *Get Busy, Get Rich: 10 Business Basics* to help the grocery store. Have students come up with a business idea and create a marketing plan/campaign. Add business basics the list.

Business basic #1: Look professional at all costs.

Business basic #2: Meet a need.

Business basic #3: Build up your business.

Business basic #4: Protect yourself and your money.

Business basic #5: Expand your reach.

Business basic #6: Sell complementary products.

Business basic #7: Diversify—expand into new areas of business.

Business basic #8: Take over another business.

Business basic #9: Create a want.

Business basic #10: Promote, promote, promote.

Business basic #11:

Business basic #12:

Business basic #13:

Business basic #14:

Business basic #15:

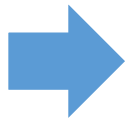
My business idea and marketing plan:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

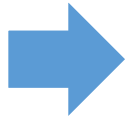
WRITING A NEWS STORY OR A FICTIONAL ACCOUNT

Joey reads the newspaper daily, the business section for himself and the sports for his brother, David. Using the true events below, create your own news story or short story.

In May 1939, passengers totaling 937 boarded the SS St. Louis in Hamburg, Germany, and set sail for Havana, Cuba. When they arrived, only a handful were allowed to disembark. They were denied permission to enter the United States and Canada as well.

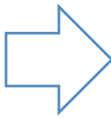


REPORTER: Report on the SS St. Louis's journey to Cuba and its return to Europe.

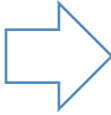


AUTHOR: Pretend you are a passenger on the SS St. Louis. How do you feel at the start of the journey? How do you take the news the ship will return to Europe? What will happen to you?

Jackie Robinson signed with the Montreal Royals in October 1945, in what was called the Great Experiment.

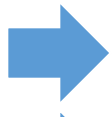


REPORTER: Write an opinion piece about the Great Experiment, what Jackie Robinson had to go through and what his playing meant for the integration of baseball.

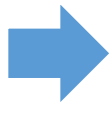


AUTHOR: Pretend you are in the stands watching Jackie Robinson stepping onto the field for the first time. What are you thinking? How do you feel? What do you hope happens?

The Degenerate Art Exhibit included over 650 works of modern art that Hitler deemed un-German, Jewish or non-ideological and which targeted some of the most important artists of all time.



REPORTER: Profile one of the artists targeted.



AUTHOR: Pretend you are one of the "degenerate" artists. How does the label affect you, your work, your life? What do you do?

BASEBALL VOCABULARY

Why did the author choose the following baseball terms to begin each chapter?
How do they relate to the story?

Chapter 1 - At bat

A hitter's appearance at home plate.

Chapter 2 - Bases empty

No runners on the field, the only scoring opportunity being with the hitter at bat.

Chapter 3 - Ground rules

Special rules for a particular baseball field.

Chapter 4 - Patient hitter

A batter who waits for pitch he thinks he can hit.

Chapter 5 - Brushback

A pitch with the intention to intimidate.

Chapter 6 - Pink hat

An opportunistic rather than loyal fan.

Chapter 7 - Charging the mound

When a batter runs up to the pitcher to get retribution after being hit by a ball.

Chapter 8 - Freeze the hitter

A pitch so unexpected that the batter doesn't have a chance to react.

Chapter 9 - Force play

When a runner has no choice but to move to the next base so the batter can go to first.

Chapter 10 - One-game wonder

A player who only gets to play one major league game, and does well, before being sent back to the minors or benched.

Chapter 11 - Hit the deck

Batter gets out of a pitch coming right at him by dropping to the ground.

Chapter 12 - Intentional walk

Batter gets a free ride to first base, on purpose.

Chapter 13 - Interleague play

Games played by teams outside their regular major league, like one team from the National League and the other from the American League.

Chapter 14 - Hot stove league

Talking baseball during the winter

Chapter 15 - Sacrifice hit

A batter intentionally bunts and gets out so a runner can advance.

Chapter 16 - Screaming line drive

A hard, low hit that moves fast enough to hit the pitcher or strong enough to knock off a fielder's glove.

Chapter 17 - Lock him up

Signing a player long-term.

Chapter 18 - Stayed alive

When a batter with two strikes fouls and gets another try at bat. Also, when a team finally wins in the face of elimination and will live to see another game.

Chapter 19 - Pinch hitter

A substitute batter brought in when the lineup's current hitter isn't up to the job.

Chapter 20 - Productive out

When a batter strikes out but runners still move forward.

Chapter 21 - Losing streak

Loss after loss.

Chapter 22 - Crosstown rivalry

When two teams are located in the same city.

Chapter 23 - Money pitch

The golden throw reserved for a critical moment in a game.

Chapter 24 - Circus catch

A spectacular, very acrobatic, catch.

Chapter 25 - Visiting team

The team that goes to play at another team's stadium.

Chapter 26 - Jelly legs

When a hitter is tricked out of proper batting stance.

Chapter 27 - Called up

Promoted from the minor leagues.

Chapter 28 - Expanded roster

When the number of players on a team increases under special circumstances.

Chapter 29 - Grand slam

A home run with bases loaded.

Chapter 30 - Appeal play

When a defensive team player tells the umpire about an unseen infraction.

Chapter 31 - Curtain call

A player's return to the field to take a bow after an outstanding play.

Two more definitions

Governor's Cup: The trophy awarded to the International League champion, a farm club/minor AAA team in the MLB. The Montreal Royals won it seven times.

Little World Series: The championship playoff between the leading minor league teams in the International League and the American Association. The Montreal Royals this won three times.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUIZ – CHAPTERS 1-4

1. What does Joey need at the drugstore?
 - A. Face cream
 - B. Aspirin
 - C. Hair tonic
 - D. Bandages
2. What does Ben eat for breakfast?
 - A. Bagel and cream cheese
 - B. Smoked meat sandwich
 - C. Cracker Jack
 - D. Milkshake
3. What's the name on the store window?
 - A. Bernier et fils
 - B. Grosser and sons
 - C. Tremblay et famille
 - D. Friedman and family
4. Where does Joey want to move?
 - A. Outremont
 - B. Toronto
 - C. Westmount
 - D. The Plateau
5. What does David smell like?
 - A. Liver and onions
 - B. Rugelach
 - C. Sweat
 - D. A pig
6. What does the smell of sweat mingle with near the Schubert Bath?
 - A. Smoked meat
 - B. Freshly baked bagels
 - C. Pickling pickles
 - D. Garlic
7. What street does Joey live on?
 - A. Roy
 - B. De Bullion
 - C. Saint Lawrence
 - D. De Lorimier
8. What is Montreal the world capital of?
 - A. Crime
 - B. Hockey
 - C. Gambling
 - D. Civil Aviation
9. What does Mr. Friedman call Joey?
 - A. Boychik
 - B. Joseph
 - C. Kid
 - D. Son
10. What newspaper does David carry?
 - A. Montreal Gazette
 - B. Montreal Daily Star
 - C. Montreal Evening Standard
 - D. Keneder Adler

Answer key: 1B, 2C, 3A, 4C, 5D, 6A, 7B, 8D, 9A, 10B

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUIZ – CHAPTERS 5-9

1. Who is waiting for Joey outside the store?
A. Mrs. Abelson
B. Ben
C. Mr. Wolfe
D. Mrs. Grosser
2. What are the IOUs written on?
A. Notepad
B. Brown paper bag
C. Countertop
D. Cereal box
3. What's the name of Ben's magazine?
A. Movie Life
B. Seventeen
C. Movie Screen
D. Business Basics
4. What does Mr. Wolfe call Ben?
A. A doer
B. A napper
C. An actor
D. A dreamer
5. What does Joey find in the closet?
A. His father's cologne
B. His brother's baseball bat
C. His father's cigarettes
D. His brother's baseball
6. How does Joey upset Ben?
A. By skipping out on the party
B. By talking to his father
C. By wanting to walk
D. By ripping his magazine
7. What is David waiting to listen to?
A. The Green Hornet
B. Abbott and Costello
C. The baseball game
D. The sports report
8. Who made the deal about Mr. Wolfe?
A. Mrs. Grosser and Mrs. Wolfe
B. Mrs. Grosser and Mr. Wolfe
C. Mr. Grosser and Mr. Wolfe
D. Mr. Grosser and Mrs Wolfe
9. What is Ben's ultimatum?
A. Me or him
B. Me or her
C. Me or David
D. Me or Shelly
10. What does Joey compare his sprinting to?
A. Jackie Robinson rounding third for home
B. Robinson running for first
C. Robinson stuck between second and third
D. Robinson catching the bus

Answer key: 1C, 2B, 3A, 4D, 5A, 6B, 7C, 8D, 9A, 10A

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUIZ – CHAPTERS 10-14

1. Who does Joey meet at the party?
A. Mr. Friedman
B. Adele Abelson
C. Mr. Bernstein
D. Jackie Robinson
2. How do Joey and Ben get home from the party?
A. Bus and streetcar
B. A ride from Adele Abelson
C. Walk over Mount Royal
D. Trolley and walk
3. What do rich people have, according to Ben?
A. No taste
B. Amazing taste
C. Better flowers
D. Scary dogs
4. What is Ben looking for?
A. A fight
B. Flowers
C. His jack knife
D. Money on the sidewalks
5. How do Ben and Joey lose the dog?
A. Hide in a tree
B. Jump on a streetcar
C. Run into Shelly's house
D. Climb a statue
6. Why can't Shelly and Joey study together?
A. Joey's always staring at her
B. Shelly's too far ahead
C. They can't stand each other
D. Shelly's parents won't allow it
7. Why does Shelly's sister go to university?
A. For her BA
B. For her MA
C. For her PhD
D. For her MRS
8. What does Joey read to David at bedtime?
A. Picture books
B. Superman comics
C. Baseball stats
D. Business books
9. Whose artwork hangs on Mr. Friedman's wall?
A. Pablo Picasso
B. Norman Rockwell
C. Marc Chagall
D. Marc Rothko
10. Why did Mr. Friedman clean up?
A. He found a dead rat
B. He saw a cockroach
C. His Life Savers melted on the table
D. He couldn't find his glasses

Answer key: 1C, 2C, 3A, 4B, 5D, 6A, 7D, 8C, 9B, 10A

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUIZ – CHAPTERS 15-19

1. What happened to Mr. Friedman's family?
 - A. They stayed in Europe
 - B. They moved to Cuba
 - C. They died in the Holocaust
 - D. They were lost at sea
2. What does Mrs. Grosser like to bake?
 - A. Chocolate chip cookies
 - B. Rugelach
 - C. Mandel bread
 - D. Apple pie
3. What word is in the newspaper near Jackie Robinson's?
 - A. Major leaguer
 - B. Phenomenon
 - C. Trouble
 - D. Pressure
4. What does Joey do with Pa's piggy bank?
 - A. Smashes it on a wall
 - B. Cashes it at the bank
 - C. Gives it to David
 - D. Breaks it with a hammer
5. Who pays Mrs. Grosser's hospital bill?
 - A. Mr. Wolfe
 - B. Mr. Richter
 - C. Mr. Friedman
 - D. Joey
6. Why is David's scarf and hat blue?
 - A. It's his favorite color
 - B. To match the Royals uniform
 - C. To match his eyes
 - D. That was the only color available
7. What delays the start of school?
 - A. Measles epidemic
 - B. Snowstorm
 - C. Jewish holidays
 - D. Polio epidemic
8. What does David accidentally cut up?
 - A. The newspaper
 - B. The tablecloth
 - C. His new hat and scarf
 - D. Ben's movie magazine
9. Why is David mad at Joey?
 - A. Joey won't give him candy
 - B. Joey stops reading to him
 - C. Joey screams at David
 - D. Joey forgets his birthday
10. Who is talking to David?
 - A. Pa
 - B. Jackie Robinson
 - C. Mr. Bernstein
 - D. Mr. Wolfe

Answer key: 1C, 2B, 3D, 4A, 5A, 6B, 7D, 8B, 9D, 10A

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUIZ – CHAPTERS 25-28

1. What reaction does Mrs. Wolfe have to seeing Joey?
 - A. She's happy and hugs him
 - B. She's surprised and scared
 - C. She pretends she doesn't know him
 - D. She immediately invites him in
2. What is Mr. Wolfe's new business?
 - A. Armed robbery
 - B. Running a gambling den
 - C. Selling cars
 - D. Aviation
3. What does Mr. Friedman tell Joey he must be?
 - A. Strong
 - B. A man
 - C. Positive
 - D. Brave
4. What does Joey put on before his bar mitzvah?
 - A. Pa's tallis
 - B. Pa's cologne
 - C. Pa's suit
 - D. Pa's tie
5. Whose wish comes true?
 - A. Joey's
 - B. Ben's
 - C. Mrs. Grosser's
 - D. Mrs. Abelson's
6. What does Shelly directly read from at the bat mitzvah?
 - A. The Torah
 - B. The scriptures
 - C. A piece of paper
 - D. The bible
7. Where does Joey go after the bar mitzvah?
 - A. Home
 - B. Ben's
 - C. Mr. Friedman's newsstand
 - D. The movie theatre
8. What does Joey do for the first time in his so-called adult life?
 - A. Cry
 - B. Beat up a bird
 - C. Climb a statue
 - D. visit the cemetery
9. What painting does Joey's home remind him of?
 - A. Freedom from Fear
 - B. Freedom from Want
 - C. Freedom of Religion
 - D. Freedom of Speech
10. What do Joey and Shelly drink?
 - A. Wine
 - B. Apple juice
 - C. Grape juice
 - D. Orange soda

Answer key: 1B, 2A, 3D, 4B, 5D, 6C, 7D, 8A, 9B, 10C

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUIZ – CHAPTERS 29-31

1. What does Mr. Friedman give Joey?
A. Baseball tickets
B. A book and a painting
C. Advice and a handshake
D. Money
2. What does Mrs. Grosser do for the first time since Pa died?
A. Laugh
B. Dance
C. Go to a movie
D. Go on a date
3. How did Pa and Dr. Richter meet?
A. At the hospital
B. At the free clinic
C. At the park
D. On Saint Lawrence
4. What gives Joey the shakes?
A. The gift from Mr. Richter
B. A kiss from Shelly
C. A letter from Pa
D. A visit from Jackie Robinson
5. Why do doctors think Ben's crazy?
A. Because he robbed a bank
B. Because he's happy his dad's dead
C. Because he wants to move away
D. Because he wants to drop out of school
6. What does Ben call Joey?
A. His best friend
B. A real mensch
C. Boychik
D. His twin
7. What skill did Mr. Wolfe teach Ben?
A. To drive a car
B. To gamble
C. To shoot a gun
D. To crack a safe
8. How many people attend the ballgame?
A. 20,000
B. 10,000
C. 50,000
D. 35,000
9. What advice does Joey give David?
A. Save your money
B. Stay in school
C. Learn to read
D. Never grow up
10. Whose photo appears in the paper?
A. Joey and David
B. Joey and Jackie Robinson
C. David and Jackie Robinson
D. Joey, David and Jackie Robinson

Answer key: 1B, 2A, 3C, 4C, 5B, 6B, 7D, 8A, 9D, 10C

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – CHAPTERS 1-4**At Bat 9-10**

- Why is Joey having a hard time running?
- Why does Mr. Kis tell Joey to run home? What does he know about the symptoms that Joey doesn't?

Bases Empty 11-14

- Why does Ben show up at the store? What does this tell us about him?
- Why does Joey believe he can run the store by himself? What does this tell us about Joey?
- Why does Joey want to get out of the Plateau?

Ground Rules 15-19

- If Montreal is a hockey town, why is David practicing to be the next Jackie Robinson?
- What does “a great experiment in equality and justice” refer to?
- Why does Joey follow the rules in the book *Get Busy, Get Rich: 10 Business Basics*?

Journaling: What business do you want to start and what advice would you give to others about running a business?

Patient Hitter 20-31

- How does Joey compare and contrast the Plateau to the rest of Montreal?
- How does he feel about his neighborhood?
- How does Joey react to Mr. Friedman and Danny not pay for the groceries? Why are his reactions different?
- Why does Joey say David can talk about Pa even though he really doesn't want him to?

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – CHAPTER 5-9**Brushback 32-37**

- Why does Mrs. Abelson wish Mr. Wolfe a horrible death?
- Why does Mrs. Grosser say people like the Abelsons need kindness?
- Why do you think Mrs. Grosser take the list of IOUs away from Joey?
- Why does Mrs. Grosser call Joey “Mr. Bernstein”?

Pink Hat 38-45

- Why are Joey’s muscles really sore?
- Where does Ben go after the store? How does Joey react to this and why?
- What kind of impression does Mr. Wolfe make on David and Joey? What kind of impression do David and Joey make on Mr. Wolfe?
- Why does Mr. Wolfe turn to Joey and not Ben for his new business venture?

Charging the Mound 46-51

- Describe Joey’s appearance. Why does he hate the way he looks?
- “As my eyes narrow and my mouth tightens, his face quickly disappears.” Why does Pa’s face disappear from the mirror?
- Why does Joey think David should become the next Royals manager?
- “I doubt it has any meat on it, though.” What does Joey mean by this?

Journaling: The Old Spice bottle reminds Joey of his Pa. What item reminds you of someone you lost and how?

Freeze the Hitter 52-56

- Why does Joey say “Like father, like son”? What does he mean by it and why does it make Ben so mad?
- “They’re all changing their minds about Jackie! They didn’t like him one bit, but now they’re figuring what we knew all along!” Why is everyone changing their minds about Jackie Robinson?
- Why did Mr. Grosser and Mrs. Wolfe make a secret deal? Do you think it was a good or bad idea? Why?

Force Play 57-59

- “Why does everyone think they can just leave?” Who is “everyone” that Joey is referring to?

- Describe Joey's physical reaction to Ben jumping on the bus. Why did the author describe him this way?

Journaling: Have you ever felt a terrible physical reaction to something someone said or did? If so when and why?

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – CHAPTERS 10-14**One-game Wonder 60-66**

- Why is Ben all goofy when leading Joey to the mansion?
- Describe Joey's reaction to the mansion and to Mr. Bernstein.
- Why does Joey remind Mr. Bernstein of himself?

Journaling: Did you ever try to get into a party or event that you didn't have a ticket or invitation for? Did you get in? How?

Hit the Deck 67-73

- Why does the pit bull chase Joey and Ben? How do they escape?
- Has the incident changed Joey's opinion of Ben?
- What do the flowers tell us about Ben?

Intentional Walk 74-81

- Describe Shelly, including her physical characteristics, her personality and how she interacts with Joey.
- Why do you think Mr. Wolfe is following Joey?
- "It's like Jackie Robinson, who's been working real hard to prove himself and win over the haters." Why is it important for Jackie Robinson to work hard and win over the haters?
- How does Joey describe Outremont and the Plateau?
- "I wonder what Pa would think of that." Why does Joey bring up Pa?

Journaling: How would you describe your neighborhood?

Interleague Play 82-90

- Why does Joey want to make a good impression on Dr. Richter? What are some of the things he does?
- Why does Joey thank Ben twice?
- What is Joey's destiny? What does Dr. Richter think of this destiny?
- Why does Dr. Richter ask Joey about his summer and tell him he has to make time for fun?
- What is Joey's impression of Dr. Richter? Support your answer with passages from the chapter.

- “But then, he’s only six.” Why does Joey need to mention David’s age? What does David’s age have to do with what he reads?

Hot Stove League 91-97

- “The writer says there’s nothing left for Jackie to prove anymore.” What does Joey mean by this?
- Why do you think the author included Norman Rockwell’s *Four Freedoms* paintings?
- Joey thinks only rich people own real paintings. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

Journaling: Have you ever felt like someone knew exactly what you were thinking, like Mr. Friedman knows with Joey? Discuss that situation.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – CHAPTERS 15-19**Sacrifice Hit 98-102**

- What is degenerate art? What did the Nazis do with artworks?
- Describe the voyage of Mr. Friedman's family. Where did it start? Where did it end? What happened to his family?
- Why does Mr. Friedman pay the grocery bill early?
- Why does Mr. Friedman consider David and Joey his family?
- "Our dump of a neighborhood may be a ghetto, but it's not that kind of ghetto." What does Joey mean by this statement?

Screaming Line Drive 103-112

- What is anxiety neurosis and what are the symptoms? Why might this be what Mrs. Grosser is suffering from?
- Why does Dr. Richter ask Joey how he's feeling? What symptoms does he see in Joey?
- Why won't Joey let Dr. Richter pay the hospital bill?

Journaling: Have you ever been under tremendous pressure? Describe Joey's, Jackie Robinson's and your own.

Lock Him Up 113-120

- "But I get why she keeps it." Why does Ma keep the ugly blanket and Pa's clothes?
- What is Ben's definition of "peace and quiet"? What is Joey's?
- Is Mr. Wolfe honest or insincere during his latest encounter with Joey? List evidence to support your case.
- What does Joey mean by "I don't give credit and I don't take credit"?

Journaling: Joey believes his father didn't have a single plan for a rainy day. What is your plan for a rainy day?

Stayed Alive 121-125

- Describe Mr. Abelson, including a physical description, his personality and how he interacts with Joey, David and Ben.
- Why does Joey want Mrs. Abelson to come by the store?
- How has Mr. Wolfe taken care of the people his family associates with?

Pinch Hitter 126-131

- Why does Joey refer to Robin Hood?
- What is David's definition of being taken care of? What is Joey's?
- What does Joey forget and how does he react?
- Why does Shelly give Joey her present?

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – CHAPTERS 20-24**Productive Out 132-140**

- What book did Joey have to read for his book report? What did he think of it and why?
- Everyone reacts differently to the death of a loved one. How did David, Joey, Mrs. Grosser, Mr. Friedman and Jody – the boy in the book-report book – react?
- What big event was featured in the newspaper?
- “All children want to do better than their parents, and all parents want their children to do better than them.” What does Mrs. Grosser mean by this? Give examples from the chapter.
- How does Joey’s life parallel Jody’s from *The Red Pony*?

Journaling: “Just don’t ever forget who you are along the way.” Who are you and what do you want to accomplish?

Losing Streak 141-151

- What secrets are Ben and Joey keeping from each other?
- What does Joey mean when he says David is so happy to be a kid again?
- Why kind of trouble is David having at school?
- Why is David hopeful and Joey not about the Royals? What’s really bothering Joey?
- Ben says, “I think things get better when they can’t get any worse.” What do you think this means?
- Why does Joey think Mr. Friedman is smiling today?

Journaling: “Goddamn, David, stop whining and grow up!” Write about a time you were told to just grow up.

Crosstown Rivalry 152-157

- Describe Joey’s home and how he feels about it.
- What is Shelly’s opinion about Joey’s home? What does this say about her?
- Why does Joey take out his anger on Shelly?
- How does she react?
- How does Mr. Wolfe refer to Shelly?

Money Pitch 158-162

- What do Mr. Wolfe and Joey eat at Schwartz's?
- How does Mr. Wolfe explain his statement about Dr. Richter killing Joey's pa?
- What does Mr. Wolfe ask Joey to do?
- What do you think "If you want to be in the majors, you gotta play like you're in the majors" means?
- Who does Joey compare himself to and why?

Circus Catch 163-172

- What happened when Adele and Mrs. Abelson got home from the movies?
- Who does Joey run into for the first time since his father's death? How does it go?
- How does Ben react to seeing Joey?
- What does Joey learn about Ben's relationship with his father? What incident suggested this type of relationship earlier in the novel?
- Who told David to go after Joey?

Journaling: "Whatever I choose, I lose." Write about a time you had a major decision to make.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – CHAPTERS 25-28**Visiting Team 173-176**

- What does Joey ask his mother for and why?
- How does Mrs. Wolfe react to seeing Joey?
- Where does Joey go after speaking with Mrs. Wolfe and why?

Jelly Legs 177-186

- What's the most beautiful thing Joey's ever seen?
- What's the headline at Mr. Friedman's newsstand?
- Where were Ben and Mr. Wolfe the day before? What happened to them?
- What does Joey mean by "I feel like a kid who's coming undone."
- Why did Mr. Wolfe pay the hospital bill?
- What does Joey put on before leaving for the bar mitzvah? Why?

Journaling: "There are good people and bad people in this world, brave people and cowardly. You must be brave." Write about a time you had to be brave.

Called Up 187-191

- What was Mr. Wolfe's new business venture?
- Where does Joey go after the bar mitzvah?
- Why does Adele let Joey into the movie theatre?

Expanded Roster 192-195

- What does Joey see when he arrives home? What does it remind him of?
- "Ben's sorry he couldn't make it to the bar mitzvah." What does this tell you about Ben?
- Why does Mrs. Grosser gasp when Joey smiles?
- What is in Shelly and Joey's wine glasses? How come?

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – CHAPTERS 29-31**Grand Slam 196-207**

- Why does Ben live on the east side of Park Avenue?
- What does Ma do for the first time in a long time?
- How does Joey describe the painting from Mr. Friedman?
- “So you’re saying he worked himself to death.” When did this come up before? Why was it used then and now?
- What gift does Joey receive from Dr. Richter?
- Why are Joey and Mr. Wolfe like Jody from *The Red Pony*? What differentiates Joey from Mr. Wolfe?
- What gift does Joey receive from his father? What does this reveal about Mr. Grosser?
- Who pushes Joey to kiss Shelly?

Appeal Play 208-216

- How has Mr. Wolfe’s death affected Mrs. Wolfe?
- Why do doctors think Ben might be crazy?
- Why didn’t Ben ever tell Joey about his home life?
- What is a *mensch*?
- What does Ben hide in his mattress?
- Why isn’t Ben worried about the future?

Curtain Call 217-227

- How does David react to being at Delorimier Stadium?
- What business basic does Mr. Bernstein likely follow?
- Joey says “Life’s about more than just money, David. You gotta have some fun.” How has Joey changed?
- “Don’t ever grow up.” When and why did Joey say the opposite to David?
- How do baseball fans react to Jackie Robinson after the game?
- Who taught David to read?
- Why does Joey want to buy season’s tickets one day?

Journaling: “Do you know what rapture sounds like?” Describe what rapture sounds like to you.

HISTORICAL FACTS

Jackie Robinson and the Integration of Baseball

In October 1945, Jackie Robinson became the first black man to sign a contract to play in modern organized ball. The Montreal Royals were the Triple A-farm team for the Brooklyn Dodgers, and Branch Rickey, president and general manager of the Dodgers, thought Montreal would be the safest place for his “great experiment” of breaking the color barrier. Things were far from easy for Robinson – he endured threats, abuse, racial slurs...discrimination at every turn from the first day of spring training, but he promised Rickey he would ignore it all and focus on the game. It didn’t take long for Robinson to prove his worth as a player with the 1946 Royals. And one year later, he would make his debut for the Brooklyn Dodgers and break the color barrier of Major League Baseball.

While Robinson was the first to sign and all eyes were on him, he was not the only black player in the 1946 minors. There was Johnny Wright and later Roy Partlow, both with the Royals but demoted soon after they were hired. In the United States, Roy Campanella and Don Newcombe played with the Nashua Dodgers. They would join Robinson and the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1948 and 1949, respectively.

The Third Solitude

Within a city already divided into Anglo-Protestant and French-Catholic lay a “third solitude”: Montreal Jewry. Although Jewish Montrealers settled in various parts of the island -- including the posh neighborhoods of Westmount and Outremont, as well as the working-class Mile End and the Plateau – experience, history and the Yiddish language remained a common bond.

Degenerate Art

In July 1937, The Nazi regime held the Degenerate Art Exhibition, featuring works that were considered modern, abstract, blasphemous or created by Jewish artists. The idea was to show works that were deemed corrupt and a plot against Germany. Some of the most famous artists the world has ever known had works hung at the exhibit, including Marc Chagall, Paul Klee, Max Beckmann and Wassily Kandinsky.

For more information on degenerate art visit:

Victoria and Albert Museum, England:

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/e/entartete-kunst/>

Freie Universität Berlin, Germany: http://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/en/e/db_entart_kunst/datenbank/index.html

The Voyage of the SS Saint Louis

In May 1939, 937 passengers boarded the SS St. Louis in Hamburg, Germany, and set sail for Havana, Cuba. When they arrived, very few were allowed to disembark. The ship's captain, Gustav Schröder, sailed north, but both the United States and Canada refused to take the remaining 907 passengers. Captain Schröder had no choice but to return to Europe. Although the passengers split among Belgium, France, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, 254 would die in concentration camps.

The Four Freedoms

Norman Rockwell's iconic set of four paintings for the *Saturday Evening Post* was his way of contributing to the American war effort. Each painting was named for the four basic human freedoms as voiced by then president Franklin Delano Roosevelt: *Freedom of Speech*, *Freedom of Religion*, *Freedom from Fear* and *Freedom from Want*. In fact, the paintings were such a success, they became part of a travelling exhibition to sell war bonds and stamps; some \$133 million was raised.

The Red Pony

John Steinbeck's classic coming-of-age story is about Jody and the love he has for Galiban, the red pony his father gives him. Though Jody cares and trains Galiban with the help of ranch hand Billy Buck on their Northern California ranch, Galiban falls ill and dies, and Jody must learn just what it means to grieve, to forgive and to grow up. *The Red Pony* was written in 1933 and appeared with three other short stories in the book bearing its name in 1937.

EXTERNAL LESSON PLANS

Holocaust Museum of Montreal – Teaching the History of the Holocaust for elementary and secondary students: <http://museeholocauste.ca/en/secondary-education/>

A Teacher's Guide to the Holocaust – Degenerate Art: <http://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/arts/artDegen.htm>

Monuments Men – Degenerate Art: <http://www.monumentsmen.com/lesson-plans/degenerate-art>

Historica Canada: Jackie Robinson: <http://education.historicacanada.ca/en/tools/70>

The Norman Rockwell Museum – Four Freedoms: <http://www.nrm.org/2016/08/wwii-homefront-four-freedoms/>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Heather Camlot grew up in Montreal and was raised on Expos baseball and Canadiens hockey. Oddly, she was never a sporty child. She preferred reading, drawing and dreaming.

Heather graduated from Concordia University with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies and from New York University with a Master of Arts in Journalism.

Her work has appeared in various publications, including *Quill & Quire*, *Style at Home*, *Canadian Living*, *The Globe and Mail*, *Homemakers* and *TV Guide Canada*.

After fifteen years in journalism as a writer, editor and translator, she longed to get back to fiction, something she used to write as a teenager.



Her short story, *The Boys of Summer*, won the 17th Annual Writing for Children Competition held by CANSCAIP and The Writers' Union of Canada.

Clutch is her first novel. She lives in Toronto with her husband and children, but still calls Montreal home.