

# *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*

by Mark Haddon

(published in 2003)

## Approved for use in English IV

### Summary of the Work:

Christopher Boone is a 15-year-old boy who suffers from Asperger's Syndrome, a form of Autism. The novel opens with Christopher's discovery of a murdered dog, Wellington, Mrs. Shears' poodle. Because he loves detective stories, Chris decides to solve Wellington's murder, and his teacher, Siobhan, encourages him to write a book about his experiences. Thus, the novel is told from Christopher's point-of-view, which gives the reader insight into idiosyncrasies of his disorder. Through Christopher's investigation, he stumbles on to some life-changing information that rocks his order. This discovery thrusts him towards an unexpected quest, and by the end of novel, he demonstrates his resiliency and ability to overcome his biggest fears.

### Rationale:

The novel provides insight into the many complexities of Asperger's Syndrome. After reading the book, students will have a better understanding of what life is like for someone living with Autism, as well as appreciate the joys and frustrations for the people working or living with the Autistic individual. The novel promotes tolerance and understanding, which is especially important considering that in our society today, 1 in 150 children are diagnosed with Autism ([Autismspeaks.org](http://Autismspeaks.org)).

Literary devices such as style and diction can be studied in the context of the novel. The hero quest and hero traits can be applied to Christopher and his circumstances.

### Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

*Booklist*. April 1, 2003. p. 1376.  
*New York Times*. June 15, 2003. p. 5.  
*Economist*. May 24, 2003. p. 84.  
*Publishers Weekly*. April 7, 2003. p. 42.  
*Publishers Weekly*. November 17, 2003. p. 25.  
*Library Journal*. January 15, 2004. p. 49  
*School Library Journal*. October 2003. p. 207.

\* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.

\* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

### Noted Distinction:

- Whitbread Book of the Year (2003)
- Commonwealth Writers' Prize (2004)
- West Australian Young Readers Book (2005)

### Readability:

- Lexile Score: 1800
- Readability Level: 6.3

### Learning Resources Guidelines:

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

### Standard Alignment: ([link](#))

### Approval:

Submitted to Committee:

Approved for Adoption: May 2005

### Notes on the Text:

*(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)*

The novel's unique style will interest the students, as it is something off the beaten track. Having Christopher as the narrator creates a distinct approach. The random nature of how he tells the story is fresh and catching. It provides an authentic feel for the thought pattern of a person with Asperger's Syndrome. Chris is very blunt so at times the language can be explicit. Issues of verbal and some physical abuse surface as well.

The fact that Christopher's shocking discovery leads to a quest is appropriate and relatable for seniors as they themselves are preparing for their own personal quest after graduating from high school.

### Connection to the Curriculum:

The novel connects to the curriculum as students will recognize and understand conventions and devices used by the author to present ideas and themes. For example, the writing style is a great example of stream of consciousness. The hero quest and hero traits are also a focal point of the unit.

### Additional Connections:

*(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)*

The 1988 film *Rain Man* makes an excellent media literacy connection to the novel.