Based on

**Hoot**

By Carl Hiaasen

**About the Book:**
Teenager Roy Eberhardt is a good kid who is used to moving because his dad works for the government. He is also used to getting settled into a new school every few years, but moving from Montana to Florida becomes his biggest challenge ever. What starts out as a major curiosity when he sees a strange boy running off into the woods becomes a life-changing experience. And, it’s all about a rare breed of very small burrowing owls. This is a classic Carl Hiaasen novel with his quirky characters embroiled in a mysterious situation that exposes political corruption in a humorous but serious manner. It all takes place in Hiaasen’s beloved state of Florida.

**Set the Stage:**
Use the following to get the students ready to read:

- Ask students: Who likes pancakes? Who likes owls? If you had a choice, would you rather have a stack of pancakes or go see some unique owls that live in underground burrows? Now, who would be willing to kill those owls just so they could have those pancakes? It sounds bizarre, but that is basically the situation that arises in *Hoot*. It’s about people who are willing to destroy something as precious as the lives of rare owls just to have the opportunity to make some money selling pancakes. The book is also about corrupt politicians who abuse the system and the average citizen who steps up to the plate to keep things honest.

**Review:**
After reading the book, discuss the following:

- Where does this story take place?
- How did Mullet Fingers get his name?
- What are some of the tactics used by Mullet Fingers to stop the construction of the pancake house?
- What does Beatrice do to Roy’s bike that really sets her apart from the average person?
- Where does Jo-Jo’s Ice Cream and Sno-cones truck come into the story?
- How did Roy and Beatrice get Mullet Fingers admitted into the hospital?
- How did Officer Delinko know that Dana wasn’t the person who put the alligators in the portable toilets?
- Beatrice called Roy by three different names. One was Eberhardt. What were the other two names and where did they come from?
- How did Mullet Fingers stop the groundbreaking ceremony?
- At the end of the book, Roy is out by the Molly Bell crab boat. What incident occurred that told him Mullet Fingers was nearby and watching?
- What is Mullet Fingers’s real name and how does the reader find this out?
- What does EIS stand for? What is it?
Student Activity (found on the last page of this PDF):
Students will write a character analysis on several of the quirky characters found in the novel. They will include the relationships they have to each other and (if noted in the story) tell about the characters’ aspirations.

Related Activities:
To extend students’ enjoyment of the book, try these:

• Are You for Real? Carl Hiaasen claims that his characters come from real-life people who he has encountered during his newspaper days. He has a lot of fun creating their names; those, too, come from real-life scenarios. Comical names and unusual knucklehead characters have become Carl Hiaasen’s trademark. Just for fun, have students create five funny characters.
  1. Give them a wacky name.
  2. Give them an unusual profession.
  3. Try to connect them all in some way either by being related, good friends, co-workers, school buddies, etc.

Example: Grady Grantzwinger is a salesman for the Hedgewood Toothpick Company. He carries around a lavender leather sample case of toothpicks and business cards in case he runs into an interested client. He also chews hard breath mints for this same reason. Because of this, people can always hear him coming … and they hide. He marries Ratanya Oglethorne, who insists on using her hyphenated name, Ratanya Grantzwinger-Oglethorne.

• Vocabulary: Ask students to define the following: wrangler, truancy, kiosk, mullet (not the haircut), raptor, cowl, saw grass, mangrove, reconnaissance, dignitary.

• Worth Saving: The Florida Everglades are filled with several species of rare animals, many of which are endangered. Have students research some of these creatures and write a short description of each. Include habitat and food source. Include if they are endangered and whether they migrate. Also, note that sometimes an animal might not be endangered but their environment is in jeopardy, causing them future endangerment.

Alternative: Have students pick an endangered animal and write a report on it. They can write about an animal species of concern even if it isn’t on the official endangered list. Ask them to include a drawing of the animal and its habitat. If they are writing about a local animal, have them try to get photographs of the creature in its environment.

• America’s Best Idea in Florida: Have students write a report on the history of the Everglades National Park. How did it become a National Park and why? What sets it apart from other Florida parklands? What are some of the animals that live in the park? What are some of the unusual plants protected there?

Ask students to bring in and share a current event that is an example of one of the following:
  1. A concern about the environmental impact of a project that is about to take place or is in progress.
  2. An environmental situation caused by nature that will worsen if something isn’t altered.
  3. A concern for a species of animal or plant.
  4. The desire to set aside land for park use.
  5. Anything that they noticed locally that they are questioning in terms of the effect on the environment.
Very Strange Strangers
Based on Hoot by Carl Hiaasen

Few authors create more interesting characters than Carl Hiaasen.

Directions: Do a character analysis of the following characters. Include their relationship to each other and (if noted in the story) their aspirations.

Officer Delinko: __________________________________________

Dana Matherson: __________________________________________

Beatrice Leep: __________________________________________

Mullet Fingers: __________________________________________

Viola Hennepin: __________________________________________

Leroy “Curly” Branitt: __________________________________

Kimberly Lou Dixon: ______________________________________

Lonna Leep: _____________________________________________

Chuck Muckle: __________________________________________