FATTY LEGS

NOVEL STUDY

- Residential Schools + Orange Shirt Day
- Memoir Questions
- Vocabulary
- Themes + Key



GRADES 4-6

29 STUDENT PAGES

Bright Path Sped

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Print at 100 percent

Turn off fit to page and shrink to fit so the ruled lines stay 0.34 inch apart. Every student page is black and white inside a colored border, so it prints well on any printer.

About the book

You need your own copy of Fatty Legs. All questions, words and pages here are original and contain no text from the book. This resource is not affiliated with or endorsed by the authors of Fatty Legs, its illustrator, the publisher, or the owners of the book.

Student work

A filled-in page carries a real student's name. Keep it in your records folder, and use a first name only on any page that leaves your hands.

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PREVIEW

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How to Run the Novel Study

One plan for the whole book in 4 parts, a question page for each, and pages for the character, feelings, fairness and strength. Editions differ, so write your own chapter breaks in the table.

A plan for the whole book

Read	Part	My chapters	Page	Talk about it
Part 1	A Wish to Read		7	What do you want to learn so much that you would work hard for it?
Part 2	Going to School		8	What helps a person feel safe when they are far from home?
Part 3	The Red Stockings		9	How can words hurt, and how can words help?
Part 4	Standing Up for Herself		10	Why is it important to listen to a person who lived through something?

The routine

- **Read the note first** (page 5). This is a true story about a hard time in history. Read the book yourself before your class does.
- **Read a part** aloud, in small groups, or on their own. Split the book into four parts of about the same length and write your chapters in the table above. The part names are ours, not the book's chapter titles.
- **Students answer** that part's question page (pages 7 to 10). Each page has recall, think, prove-it and your-view questions, and each question page says it is okay to pass.
- **Keep the organizers going** alongside: the character map (page 12), how she feels (page 15), cause and effect (page 18) and staying strong (page 19).
- **Talk about fairness and respect** with the memoir detective (page 14), the fair-or-unfair cut-and-sort (page 17) and the guide (page 35).
- **Teach the vocabulary** with the three word pages (pages 22 to 24) and the match (page 25).
- **Finish** with the final review (page 28), the essay (pages 29 to 31) the final project (page 32) and the Orange Shirt Day page (page 34).

Ways to use it

- Whole class: read together, answer on paper, then talk.
- Literature circles: one group per part or per page.
- Independent work: a question page and a cause-and-effect page need no prep.
- More support: use the starters and talk it through with a partner first.

Spoilers and your answer key

The answer key (pages 36 to 39) gives away how the story goes. Keep it away from students until the book is finished. Most questions ask for an opinion or a detail from the student's own copy, so the key says Varies and tells you what to look for.

PREVIEW

A Note Before You Begin

For the teacher. Fatty Legs tells about a hard part of history, and your students may include people it touches. Take a few minutes with this page first.

What this book is

- Fatty Legs is a true story (a memoir) by Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton, published in 2010. Its main character, Olemaun, is a young Inuvialuit girl from the western Arctic who wishes to learn to read. At age eight she goes to a Catholic residential school in Aklavik, where she is renamed Margaret.
- A residential school was a church-run boarding school that Indigenous children were sent to, far from home.
- Many classes read this book near Orange Shirt Day, observed every September 30 (page 34).

How this study handles it

- Every question is a talking question. There is no graphic detail on any page, and nothing here asks students to imagine or act out harm.
- Each question page says it is okay to pass, and any student may skip a question. A student or family may be personally connected to this history; nobody has to share.
- No text from the book is copied here. Your own copy of the book, and your own judgment, are the source for every fact.
- Please do not ask students to role-play scenes from the book.

Before you teach it

- Read the whole book, its introduction and its notes first. Use the names of people and places that your edition uses.
- Find out whose homelands your school stands on, and ask a local Indigenous educator, elder or education office for guidance. Invite them in if they are willing.
- Tell your school counselor or support staff that you are teaching it, so a student who needs a conversation has someone to go to.

Where to learn more (we do not reproduce these)

- The Government of Canada: search for residential schools on canada.ca.
- The national truth and reconciliation archive at the University of Manitoba, and the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.
- Your province or territory's education department, and local First Nations, Inuit and Metis education offices.
- In the United States: your state or local tribal education office, and the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition.

A local Indigenous educator or office I can ask (your wording)

The support person at my school (your wording)

PREVIEW

My name _____ Date _____



Before You Read

Think about Fatty Legs. Then write your ideas.

This book tells a true story about a hard time. It is okay to pass on a question.

1. Look at the title, Fatty Legs. What do you think this book is about?

2. What does it feel like to want to learn something very much?

3. A memoir is a true story told by the person it happened to. What do you think makes a memoir special?

4. Agree or disagree: everyone deserves to be treated fairly.

☐ I agree ☐ I disagree

Why do I think so?

5. What do you want to find out as you read?

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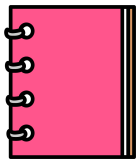
My name _____ Date _____



Part 2: Going to School

Read this part of Fatty Legs. Then answer each question.

Questions about Fatty Legs, Part 2. It is okay to pass on a question.

1. Recall: How old is Olemaun when she goes to school? What kind of school is it, and where is it?

2. Recall: What does she leave behind to go to school? Who runs the school?

3. Think: At school she is given the name Margaret. Why might a new name feel hard? What does a name mean to a person?

4. Think: The school's rules and her home's ways are different. Why might that be hard for an eight-year-old?

5. Prove it: Find a moment of hope and a moment of worry for Olemaun in this part. Use one detail for each.

6. Your view: What helps a new person feel welcome? Give two ideas.

Starters: The book says ____. This shows ____. I think ____ because ____.

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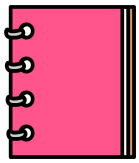
My name _____ Date _____



Part Summaries

Write what happens in each part of Fatty Legs.

Use: Somebody ____ wanted ____ but ____ so ____ then ____

Part 1: A Wish to Read

Part 2: Going to School

Part 3: The Red Stockings

Part 4: Standing Up for Herself

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My name _____ Date _____



My Name and Me

Write about you. You can pass on any line.

Names matter. This page is about you. Share only what you want to share.

My whole name _____

The story of my name: who chose it, and what it means or why they chose it

Something I am proud of about my family or where I come from

A word or a saying I love, in any language

Something I want to learn

How I like to be treated, and how I will treat others

☐ **My name is said right at school** ☐ **I help others say names right**

PREVIEW

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My name _____ Date _____

Problem and Solution

Pick a problem from Fatty Legs. Then write about it.

The problem I am writing about. Part _____

What is the problem?

Who has the problem

What that person wants

What did a character try to do about it?

Did it work? What happened because of it?

Say it this way:
The problem was ____. The character tried ____. It worked or did not work because ____.

What is another way the problem could have been met?

Who can help me when I have a problem I cannot solve alone?

PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Path Shed

My name _____ Date _____

Cause and Effect

Write what happened. Then write what happened because of it.

A cause is why something happens. An effect is what happens because of it. Write two cause-and-effect pairs for each part of the book.

Part	What happened (the cause)	What happened because of it (the effect)
Part 1		
Part 2		
Part 3		
Part 4		

Starters: Because ____, ____ happened. ____ happened, so ____.

Which effect surprised me most? What caused it?

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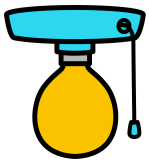
My name _____ Date _____



Traits and Proof

Pick four words. Prove each one with the book.

determined curious brave patient stubborn hopeful proud kind

Word I picked	Proof from the book (a short phrase)	Part

The word that matters most in her story, and why

Starters: The book says ____. This shows ____. I think ____ because ____.

PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Path Shed

My name _____ Date _____

Words: Fairness and Feelings

Read each word. Write a sentence. Add a word that means the same.

homesick (adjective)
missing your home and family.
My sentence

Same meaning _____

humiliation (noun)
the painful feeling of being made to look small in front of others.
My sentence

Same meaning _____

ashamed (adjective)
feeling bad because you think others look down on you.
My sentence

Same meaning _____

unfair (adjective)
not treated the way others are treated; not right.
My sentence

Same meaning _____

respect (noun)
treating someone as important and worthy of care.
My sentence

Same meaning _____

dignity (noun)
the feeling of being worthy of respect.
My sentence

Same meaning _____

PREVIEW

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My name _____ Date _____

Match the Meaning

Write the letter of each meaning.

1	**residential school**	☐	A	set on doing something even when it is hard
2	**Arctic**	☐	B	a true story a person writes about their own life
3	**Inuvialuit**	☐	C	long, snug socks that cover the legs
4	**memoir**	☐	D	a church-run boarding school that Indigenous children were sent to, far from their homes
5	**humiliation**	☐	E	not treated the way others are treated; not right
6	**unfair**	☐	F	a person who lived through something very hard
7	**respect**	☐	G	the Inuit people of the western Canadian Arctic
8	**determined**	☐	H	making things right between people after harm has been done
9	**persist**	☐	I	the painful feeling of being made to look small in front of others
10	**survivor**	☐	J	to keep trying even when it is hard
11	**stockings**	☐	K	the cold region at the far north of the world
12	**reconciliation**	☐	L	treating someone as important and worthy of care

PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Path Shed

My name _____ Date _____

Final Review



Answer each question about the whole of Fatty Legs.

Questions about the whole book. It is okay to pass on a question.

1. Recall: Retell the story in three sentences: a beginning, a middle and an end.

2. Recall: This is a memoir. Why does it matter that Margaret helped tell her own story?

3. Think: Why is learning to read so important to Olemaun? What could it let her do?

4. Think: Which choice in the story mattered most? What could have gone differently?

5. Prove it: Choose one way Margaret shows strength. Prove it with two pieces of evidence.

6. Your view: What does it mean to be strong? Use the book to support your answer.

Starters: The book says ____. This shows ____. I think ____ because ____.

PREVIEW

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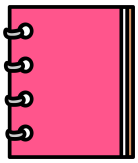
My name _____ Date _____



My Essay: Plan

Plan each part of your essay.

Opening and claim
Start with a hook. State your claim.

Reason 1
Evidence and part

Reason 2
Evidence and part

Reason 3
Evidence and part

Closing
Say why it matters.

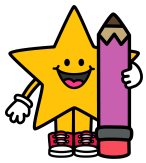
PREVIEW

My check before I write

- ☐ My claim is clear
- ☐ Each reason has evidence
- ☐ I named the parts
- ☐ I used a vocabulary word

Preview - Bright Path Sped

My name _____ Date _____



Final Project

Check one project. Plan it, then make it.

☐ **Project A**

Make a word poster

Write the name Olemaun in big letters. Add five words that describe her and one proof from the book for each.

☐ **Project B**

Write a note to a friend

Write a short note telling a friend why this book matters. Use at least two vocabulary words.

☐ **Project C**

Make a book review

Give the book a rating from 1 to 5. Give three reasons and tell who you think should read it.

My project: write here

My plan: what I need and what I will do first

My checklist

☐ I used the book to check my facts ☐ I used a vocabulary word ☐ I checked my spelling

PREVIEW

Talking About a Hard Story

A guide for a class talk about fairness, names and strength in the book. These are discussion questions, not a lesson on how to handle a real problem.

Before you start

- Read the teacher note on page 5 first, and the part your class will talk about.
- Any student may pass. No one has to tell a story about their own family.
- Students can write first, on the problem-and-solution page (page 16), then talk.

Six discussion questions

Question to ask the class	What to look for
Why might someone want to learn to read so much? What can reading let a person do?	Stories, knowledge, choices, a way to be heard. Any answer with a reason.
How can a name be used to hurt someone, and how can a name be a gift?	Names are tied to family and who a person is. Look for respect and kindness.
What does fair mean? Is treating everyone exactly the same always fair?	Fair means everyone gets respect and what they need. Accept thoughtful disagreement.
Why is reading a true story different from reading a made-up one?	A real voice, real people, a reason to listen carefully and respectfully.
What does it take to keep going when things are hard? Who can help?	Hope, determination, family, a friend or a trusted adult. Name at least one.
Why might the authors write down a true memory many years later?	So it is remembered, so others learn, so the person's voice is heard.

Say it a better way: three invented everyday situations

- A classmate (invented) is called a mean nickname at recess.
- A new student (invented) says their name and it is said wrong.
- A friend (invented) is left out of a game.

Pairs try this frame, then switch: **I feel ____ when ____ because ____. Can we ____?** The fair-or-unfair sort on page 17 gives more ideas. These are not scenes from the book.

Our class talk rules (your wording)

PREVIEW

Answer Key

The last part, the final review and the pages that vary.

Part 4: Standing Up for Herself (page 10)

1. **Recall: A kinder nun.** Varies for the details in the student's copy. Accept any accurate way the kinder nun supports Margaret.
2. **Recall: Two years.** Two years. Varies for the ending: accept an accurate retelling from the student's copy.
3. **Think: Standing up.** Varies. Look for an action, a feeling and a reason.
4. **Think: Why share it.** Varies. Look for an idea about being heard, about others learning and remembering, or about respect for people who lived it.
5. **Prove it: Same and changed.** Varies. Two details, one early and one late, and a comparison.
6. **Your view: What I will remember.** Varies. Opinion with a reason.

Final Review (page 28)

1. **Recall: The whole story.** Varies. Look for three accurate sentences in order: Olemaun wishes to learn to read and goes to a residential school at age eight; the red stockings and the nickname bring teasing; Margaret stands up for herself and a kinder nun supports her.
2. **Recall: A true voice.** Varies. Look for an idea about a first-hand voice: she knows how it felt, and readers hear it in her own way of telling.
3. **Think: Why reading.** Varies. Look for a reason tied to the text, such as stories, knowledge, choices or independence.
4. **Think: A choice that mattered.** Varies. A choice plus a different outcome.
5. **Prove it: Showing strength.** Varies. Two details named by part.
6. **Your view: Strength.** Varies. Opinion with evidence from the story.

Pages with no single answer

- **Before You Read, summaries, character map, my name and me, memoir detective, how she feels, problem and solution (pages 6 and 11 to 16):** each is the student's own thinking. Check that every idea points to a part of the book, and never ask a student to share their name story.
- **Cause and Effect, Staying Strong, Traits and Proof, Write a Letter, Big Ideas, Text Evidence, Final Project, Questions I Still Have, Orange Shirt Day (pages 18, 19, 20, 21, 26, 27, 32, 33, 34):** open pages. Check that each cause really leads to its effect and that each idea points to a part of the book. On the Orange Shirt Day page the facts are printed for students; any respectful answer with a reason counts, and no student has to share.

How to read this key and mark open answers

- A plain answer is the fact asked for. Varies means the answer is an opinion or comes from the student's copy.
- Give credit for an opinion, a reason and a detail from the book, even if the wording differs from the sample. If a detail is wrong, ask the student to find it in the book.

PREVIEW

Essay Rubric

For the essay on pages 29 to 31. Five criteria, three descriptions each; add your own notes.

Student _____ Prompt (A, B or C) _____ Date _____

Criterion	Strong	Getting there	Not yet	My notes
Opinion	A clear opinion that answers the prompt	An opinion, but it is vague or partly off the prompt	No clear opinion	
Evidence	Three or more details from the book, named by part	One or two details, or details with no part named	No details from the book	
Explaining	Each detail is explained and tied back to the opinion	Some explaining; some details stand alone	Details are listed but not explained	
Organization	Opening, three reasons, closing; clear order	Most parts are there; order is hard to follow	Parts are missing or mixed up	
Language	Vocabulary words used correctly; few spelling errors	A vocabulary word or two; some errors	No vocabulary words; errors get in the way	

How to use it

Circle or highlight one box in each row. There is no total: your notes and the student's next step matter more. The student's checklist is on page 30.

PREVIEW

Fatty Legs at Home

Dear family, our class is reading a memoir, a true story about a child who is sent to a residential school in Canada. It tells about a hard time in history. Questions are for talking, not for a grade, and any student may pass. Please reach out with any questions or concerns.

Student _____ Part we are reading _____

Three things to talk about

- Ask your student: what is the story about so far, in three sentences?
- Ask: what does she want, and what gets in her way?
- Ask: does a name in our family have a story? Share it together, only if you want to.

My words from home

One thing I learned _____

One feeling I noticed _____

A question I have _____

Words that may come up

Memoir: a true story a person writes about their own life. **Respect:** treating someone as important. **Resilient:** able to keep going after hard times. **Community:** a group of people who share a place or a way of life.

Note from the teacher

Note from home

PREVIEW