

# Whirligig

By Paul Fleischman



## ***Whirligig* Reading and Writing Schedule**

| <b>Day Number</b> | <b>Reading</b> | <b>Writing</b> |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| One               | 1-13           | 1-4            |
| Two               | 14-18          | 5-8            |
| Three             | 19-32          | 9-12           |
| Four              | 33-42          | 13-18          |
| Five              | 42-54          | 19-22          |
| Six               | Catch Up       |                |
| Seven             | 55-62          | 23-26          |
| Eight             | 63-75          | 27-30          |
| Nine              | 76-85          | 31-34          |
| Ten               | 86-101         | 35-38          |
| Eleven            | Catch Up       |                |
| Twelve            | 102-114        | 39-42          |
| Thirteen          | 115-126        | 43-44          |
| Fourteen          | 127-133        | 45-46          |
| Fifteen           | Catch Up       | 47-48          |
| Sixteen           | Finish         | Rough Draft 1  |
| Seventeen         | Finish         |                |
| Eighteen          | Finish         | Rough Draft 2  |
| Nineteen          | Finish         |                |
| Twenty            | Finish         | Final Draft    |

## **Whirligig Summary**



Through a drunk driving accident, 16-year-old Brent Bishop causes the death of a teenaged girl and is sent on a journey of repentance that changes his life.

Brent Bishop is a self-centered teenager whose main goal is to be popular. A newcomer to Chicago, Brent goes to a party with the intention of making a good impression. When he shows up and embarrasses himself in front of his peers, his dreams of popularity quickly fade. Unable to handle the humiliation, Brent drinks too much alcohol and drives off, killing Lea Zamora, the 17-year-old driver of another car. The judge charges Brent with DUI—driving under the influence of alcohol—and manslaughter, sentencing him to perform an act of atonement.

At the request of the victim's mother, Brent is to build four whirligigs that resemble Lea and place one in each of the four corners of the United States—Washington, California, Florida, and Maine. Brent willingly makes this journey and, in the process, begins to forgive himself as he sees the joy that the whirligigs bring to others along the way.

*Whirligig* is a story about trying to fit in, trying to find your way, suppressing guilt, and eventually finding forgiveness.

## Paul Fleischman

Paul Fleischman is the author of many books for young readers. Many are novels for young people: novels in which readers of all ages can easily immerse. These combine an almost mythic kind of mystery, one part enchantment, one part characters and characteristics you could almost recognize in yourself, with a powerful and easily flowing use of language. In Paul's novels, there are often brushes with unspeakable evil, amazing goings-on, yet his deep love for and understanding of nature --- both the human kind and the environmental (and animal) kind --- makes gives his work immediacy and power. Yet as a child, he told *School Library Journal*, he "... certainly had no plans to be a writer. My youth in Santa Monica, California, was spent not in libraries or curled up with a book, but at the beach, on the playground, in alleys, riding my bike."



Paul still loves the beach --- he now lives in the oceanside community of Monterrey, California --- but he did become a writer, as well, after a few detours that weren't really detours at all. An ardent collector of precious junk and found objects as a kid, some of which became, as he grew older, sculptures. The finding, the recycling and recreation resonate for him strongly with the writing process. "A found sculptor is forever trying to solve problems," he told *School Library Journal*. "keeping an eye on both the sum and its parts, constantly judging and revising...I go through every one of these stages when I'm writing a book."

Like Crescent Dragonwagon, Charlotte's Zolotow, he is a second generation children's book author: his father is Sid Fleischman, who in 1987 won a Newbery Medal Award for his novel *The Whipping Boy* --- just two years before his son did the same. One early project the Fleischman family shared was a small, old-fashioned, long-before-there-were-computers home press. Paul and his sisters made stationary, business cards, and "began learning a language no one else on our block spoke," printer esoterica.

## **The Bucket List**

In the movie *The Bucket List*, two men who are near the end of their lives set out to experience life at its fullest by creating a list of things that they have always wanted to do, but never had the time, money, or inclination to do. What do you want to do in your life? Create a list of the top 10 things that you want to do in this life.

## **Your Trip to Tacoma!**

It is June 16<sup>th</sup>, and you've just been given your choice of an open bus pass, an open train ticket, or an open plane ticket, along with a pre-paid debit card in the amount of \$2000.00. Where are you going and what will you do? Describe not only your perfect summer vacation, but also describe whom you will be taking with you.

**Whirligig Response Notes**  
**(Chapter One "Party Time")**

A. Plot: Write five Concrete Details about the plot of this chapter:

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|----|
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| 4. |
| 5. |

B. Select one quote from this chapter, and write it here. Include not only the page number, but also why it is important to you.

|              |
|--------------|
| Page # _____ |
| Quote:       |
| Why:         |

C. What questions did you have while you were reading? Write three of them here (be specific), and write down the answer when you find it.

|    |
|----|
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

D. What is going to happen next? Write at least one paragraph predicting where the story goes next.

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E. What connections did you make to the "real world"?

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|----|
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

## **I Like Long Walks on the Beach and Spinach Smoothies...**

Your best friend just signed you up for a computer dating service that promises to find you the perfect girlfriend/boyfriend. Before you can begin however, you must create a two-paragraph autobiography detailing the most important things about yourself that you would want somebody else to know.



**WANTED**

**REWARD**

What is it that you want out of life? What is it that you are willing to sacrifice to get it? Fill this poster out with your answers.

**Whirligig Response Notes**  
**(Chapter Two "Weeksboro, Maine")**

A. Plot: Write five Concrete Details about the plot of this chapter:

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| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| 4. |
| 5. |

C. Select one quote from this chapter, and write it here. Include not only the page number, but also why it is important to you.

|              |
|--------------|
| Page # _____ |
| Quote:       |
| Why:         |

C. What questions did you have while you were reading? Write three of them here (be specific), and write down the answer when you find it.

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| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

D. What is going to happen next? Write at least one paragraph predicting where the story goes next.

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E. What connections did you make to the "real world"?

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| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

## **Wish You Were Here.....NOT!**

Since you were only able to take one friend on your previously mentioned vacation, you left a bunch of other friends back home feeling angry because they are not your "best" friend. In an attempt to make them feel better, you are sending them a postcard detailing some of the bad things that happened on your trip. Create that postcard here (extra points are available if you actually draw the postcard).

## **My Own American Idol**

Describe someone in your life that means a lot to you. Create at least two paragraphs describing why they mean so much. For extra credit, have them read it and sign it at the bottom.

**Whirligig Response Notes**  
**(Chapter Three "The Afterlife")**

A. Plot: Write five Concrete Details about the plot of this chapter:

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| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| 4. |
| 5. |

D. Select one quote from this chapter, and write it here. Include not only the page number, but also why it is important to you.

|              |
|--------------|
| Page # _____ |
| Quote:       |
| Why:         |

C. What questions did you have while you were reading? Write three of them here (be specific), and write down the answer when you find it.

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| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

D. What is going to happen next? Write at least one paragraph predicting where the story goes next.

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E. What connections did you make to the "real world"?

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| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

## **Keep on Rollin!**

Imagine that you are Brent, and you awoke to see that the cyclist has left. He did, however, leave you a note asking you to write him while you are on your journey. Write a postcard to him describing what you are feeling (extra points are available if you actually draw the postcard).

## **Punishment or Free Trip?**

Do you agree or disagree with Mrs. Zamora's decision? Write at least two paragraphs where you share your point of view.

**Whirligig Response Notes**  
**(Chapter Four "Miami, Florida")**

A. Plot: Write five Concrete Details about the plot of this chapter:

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| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| 4. |
| 5. |

E. Select one quote from this chapter, and write it here. Include not only the page number, but also why it is important to you.

|              |
|--------------|
| Page # _____ |
| Quote:       |
| Why:         |

C. What questions did you have while you were reading? Write three of them here (be specific), and write down the answer when you find it.

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| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

D. What is going to happen next? Write at least one paragraph predicting where the story goes next.

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E. What connections did you make to the "real world"?

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|----|
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

**A Slurpee, Mariners vs. Dodgers, and Guitar**  
**Hero: Pearl Jam**

How do you define happiness? Start with your own definition, and then describe, exactly, what makes you happy.

## **This is Uncle Joe, the Professional Couch-Sitter...**

Draw a picture of your family. Be sure to label each member of your family, and include as many members of your extended family as you like.

**Whirligig Response Notes**  
**(Chapter Five "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star")**

A. Plot: Write five Concrete Details about the plot of this chapter:

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| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| 4. |
| 5. |

F. Select one quote from this chapter, and write it here. Include not only the page number, but also why it is important to you.

|              |
|--------------|
| Page # _____ |
| Quote:       |
| Why:         |

C. What questions did you have while you were reading? Write three of them here (be specific), and write down the answer when you find it.

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|----|
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

D. What is going to happen next? Write at least one paragraph predicting where the story goes next.

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E. What connections did you make to the "real world"?

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|----|
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

## **This One Time, I Had This Thing Hanging From My Nose....**

Brent has found himself in many uncomfortable situations. Describe a time when you were in an uncomfortable situation, and describe how you handled it.

## **I Just Know That I Could ROCK the Violin!**

Brent is finding new hobbies throughout the book; what is something that you have always wanted to do? Explain what it is, why you want to do it, and what is holding you back from doing it.

**Whirligig Response Notes**  
**(Chapter Six "Bellevue, Washington")**

A. Plot: Write five Concrete Details about the plot of this chapter:

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| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| 4. |
| 5. |

G. Select one quote from this chapter, and write it here. Include not only the page number, but also why it is important to you.

|              |
|--------------|
| Page # _____ |
| Quote:       |
| Why:         |

C. What questions did you have while you were reading? Write three of them here (be specific), and write down the answer when you find it.

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|----|
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

D. What is going to happen next? Write at least one paragraph predicting where the story goes next.

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E. What connections did you make to the "real world"?

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| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

## **In Ninth Grade, I had this HORRIBLE English Class...**

Brent is often frustrated on his journey. What is something that you had to do that you hated? How did you deal with it?

## **Whazzup Dawg?**

Write a letter from Brent to Anthony. What might Brent tell Anthony from his own experiences? Be sure to format your letter properly

**Whirligig Response Notes**  
**(Chapter Seven "Apprentices")**

A. Plot: Write five Concrete Details about the plot of this chapter:

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|----|
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| 4. |
| 5. |

H. Select one quote from this chapter, and write it here. Include not only the page number, but also why it is important to you.

|              |
|--------------|
| Page # _____ |
| Quote:       |
| Why:         |

C. What questions did you have while you were reading? Write three of them here (be specific), and write down the answer when you find it.

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| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

D. What is going to happen next? Write at least one paragraph predicting where the story goes next.

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E. What connections did you make to the "real world"?

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| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

## **If Dodger Stadium Had a Beach and a 7-Eleven...**

What is your favorite place in the world? Draw a picture of it, and then write at least one paragraph describing it.

## **...and Then I Put the Lit Firecracker in the Gas Tank...**

We all make mistakes in life. Sometimes it is trusting the wrong person, saying the wrong thing, or taking the wrong action. Describe a time that you made a big mistake, and what about it would you do differently if you had the chance.

## ***Whirligig* Response Notes** **(Chapter Eight "San Diego, California")**

A. Plot: Write five Concrete Details about the plot of this chapter:

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| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| 4. |
| 5. |

I. Select one quote from this chapter, and write it here. Include not only the page number, but also why it is important to you.

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| <p>Page # _____</p> <p>Quote:</p><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><p>Why:</p> |
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C. What questions did you have while you were reading? Write three of them here (be specific), and write down the answer when you find it.

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| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

D. What is going to happen next? Write at least one paragraph predicting where the story goes next.

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E. What connections did you make to the "real world"?

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| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

## **So, There is this Awesome English Teacher...**

Describe somebody in your life that you don't really have a lot in common with, but plays an important role in your life. What memories come to mind when you think of this person?

## **Dear Mr. Hurst...**

Write a letter to the person that you wrote about on the previous page. Tell them why they are important to you. Be sure to format your letter properly.

## ***Whirligig* Response Notes (Chapter Nine "Everybody Swing")**

A. Plot: Write five Concrete Details about the plot of this chapter:

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| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| 4. |
| 5. |

J. Select one quote from this chapter, and write it here. Include not only the page number, but also why it is important to you.

|  |
|--|
| <p>Page # _____</p> <p>Quote:</p><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><p>Why:</p> |
|--|

C. What questions did you have while you were reading? Write three of them here (be specific), and write down the answer when you find it.

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| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

D. What is going to happen next? Write at least one paragraph predicting where the story goes next.

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E. What connections did you make to the "real world"?

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|----|
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

## **...and Always Make Sure Your Zipper is Zipped...**

Based on your own experiences and what you may have learned from Brent's experiences, create a list of twenty rules for life. Be sure to include what you perceive to be the most important things to focus on in life.

## **What's On Your Mind?**

Sketch the outline of Brent's head. Choose at least five symbols to draw inside his head that represent his personality, his journey, the people that he met, or the experiences that he has had.

## **Final Essay for *Whirligig***

Your final essay for *Whirligig* will not really be an essay at all; rather, it will be a collection of six body paragraphs using the same, basic format, which, if done correctly, will lend itself to a good essay. This format includes the topic sentence, a concrete detail, two commentary sentences, and a closing statement. Although this basic structure is the basis for good writing, it is merely a jumping point for great writing. With that in mind, your basic five-sentence paragraph, if done perfectly, will only be good enough for a satisfactory grade. A superior paragraph will contain much greater detail.

The subjects for these paragraphs are as follows:

1. Your first paragraph will introduce your essay, and highlight each of the following paragraphs.
2. Your second paragraph will highlight the most important parts of chapter two.
3. Your third paragraph will highlight the most important parts of chapter three.
4. Your fourth paragraph will highlight the most important parts of chapter four.
5. Your fifth paragraph will highlight the most important parts of any one of chapters five through nine.
6. Your sixth paragraph will close off your essay by summarizing the previous paragraphs, AND giving the reader something to take away.

## **Reflective Prewrite for *Whirligig***

1. The best thing about *Whirligig* was...because...
2. The most challenging thing about *Whirligig* was...because...
3. I learned...
4. Most significant quote was...Page #:
5. This quote was most significant because...
6. The theme of this book is \_\_\_\_\_ because\_\_\_\_\_.
7. Advice to myself for the next book I read in English....

**Writing Sample for Chapter One Paragraph in**  
**Whirligig**

In chapter one of *Whirligig*, Brent is obsessed with being popular and craves to belong to the right group. For example, when he is at Chaz's party, he drinks three scotch and sodas before talking to Brianna. Brent needs to drink in order to boost his confidence, and to feel relaxed enough to talk to Brianna. His low self-esteem causes him to drink, which gives him the courage to approach Brianna. He hopes that this will result in him going out with her and becoming part of the "in-crowd." He is rejected and humiliated to the point where he tries to commit suicide.

**Whirligig-Handout**  
**Chapter 2 Shaping ¶**

**TS:** In chapter two of *Whirligig*, Alexandra and Steph have very different views of life even though they claim to be best friends.

**CD:** For example, when they are walking out to the point, Alexandra tells Steph that boys are attracted to girls with long hair, but Steph says, "Long hair is a hassle."

**CM#1:** (*This shows that*)

**CM#2:** (*This is because*)

**CS:** (*As a result*)

## **Whirligig: Handout** **Chapter 3 Shaping ¶**

**TS:** In chapter three of Whirligig, Brent yearns to apologize to the Zamora family and show his remorse but he doesn't know how to do it effectively.

[strong topic sentences have 3+ CM; highlight the CM]

**CD:** For example, when he finds the Zamora's address from the obituary, he writes and mails a four-sentence apology that Mr. Zamora defaces and returns to him (37).

[strong CD shows action, has a transition, and a lead in--identify these]

**CM#1:** (This shows that)

[Strong CM#1 has 3+ commentary words]

**CM#2:** (This is because)

[Strong CM#2 has 3+ commentary words]

**CS:** (As a result)

[strong concluding sentences are all commentary]

## **Whirligig: Handout** **Chapter 4 Shaping ¶**

**TS:** In chapter four of *Whirligig*,

[strong topic sentences have 3+ CM; highlight the CM]

**CD:** For example,

[strong CD shows action, has a transition, and a lead in--identify these]

**CM#1:** (This shows that)  
[Strong CM#1 has 3+ commentary words]

**CM#2:** (This is because)  
[Strong CM#2 has 3+ commentary words]

**CS:** (As a result)  
[strong concluding sentences are all commentary]

## **Whirligig: Handout** **Chapters 5-9 Shaping ¶**

**TS:** In chapter five/six/seven/eight/nine of *Whirligig*,

[strong topic sentences have 3+ CM; highlight the CM]

**CD:** For example,

[strong CD shows action, has a transition, and a lead in--identify these]

**CM#1:** (This shows that)  
[Strong CM#1 has 3+ commentary words]

**CM#2:** (This is because)  
[Strong CM#2 has 3+ commentary words]

**CS:** (As a result)  
[strong concluding sentences are all commentary]