# *Synchro Boy* Teacher Guide



This guide contains:

Book Overview: Character, Setting, and Plot overview

Note to the Teacher

Whole book discussion/essay questions

End of Book Activities

Chapter discussion questions

Chapter quizzes

Quiz answer keys

BC Curriculum Alignment

Ontario Curriculum Alignment

*Synchro Boy* is an evaluated resource in British Columbia. See the ERAC review of the novel

<https://k12.bcerac.ca/resource/?q=Synchro-Boy&ResourceTitleID=8929>

Synchro Boy has been nominated for a White Pine Award. Visit <http://www.accessola.org/web/OLA/Forest_of_Reading/OLA/Forest_of_Reading/Forest_of_Reading.aspx> for information on how to participate in this exciting reader’s choice award program.

Shannon McFerran may be available for in-person author visits/writing workshops and virtual visits. Contact her at thepaperhat@gmail.com.

## Praise for Synchro Boy

“Bart's eventual acceptance that he is bisexual gives him the confidence to lean into synchro while easing off on the need to validate his own masculinity through sporting achievements. A nuanced, compassionate exploration of male   
sexuality and identity.”—*[Kirkus](https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/shannon-mcferran/synchro-boy/" \t "_blank)*  
  
Come on in, readers; the water’s fine.

— Michael Cart, *[Booklist](https://www.booklistonline.com/Synchro-Boy-Shannon-McFerran/pid=9703139" \t "_blank)*

4/5 stars - Highly Recommended

“There is a lot to appreciate in Synchro Boy, particularly the fact that, even though there is a “coming out” of sorts, the novel is not in and of itself a coming out story. The considerations of masculinity and femininity and the spaces in between is also refreshing. Anyone who has struggled to exist as feminine or masculine outside of traditionally prescribed assumptions in society will respect Bart’s journey and find much to sympathize with. Synchro Boy would certainly be worth including in classroom or school libraries.“ — Dr. Rob Bittner,*[Canadian Review of Materials](https://www.cmreviews.ca/node/120" \t "_blank)*

"This novel has a strong, fully developed male protagonist. Teens who are struggling with their sense of identity and family issues will relate to the burgeoning romances and the drawn-out emotional conflict between Bart and his father. The secondary characters are less fleshed out than Bart and Erika, but young people will still want to pick up the book.   
VERDICT: An excellent addition to YA shelves."

*[School Library Journal](https://www.slj.com/?reviewDetail=synchro-boy" \t "_blank)*

## Book Overview

### Characters

**Protagonist: Bart Lively: 16**

**Rosa Waves Swim Team:**

Coach Dennis Cragg

Riley Fletcher: Bart’s best friend

Andy

Geoff

**Rosa Pacific Synchro Club:**

Coach: Su-Yun (Sunny) Zhang

Erika Tenaka: Bart’s duet partner

Chelsea Gates: Erika’s former duet partner

Julia Sanford

Kyoka Shiozaki

Casey Bryant

Huiyan Jang

**Others:**

Melanie Lively: Bart’s Mom

Mike Lively: Bart’s Dad

Amanda Gates – Chelsea’s Mom

Ms. Shiozaki – Kyoka’s Mom

Dave Crawley aka “Dive Boy” – fellow student and a Dive Club member

Bill May: Bart’s hero, USA competitive synchronized swimmer, barred from the Olympics in 2004 due to his gender. May was a gold medalist at the inaugural Mixed Duet competition at the FINA World Championships, 2015.

### A Note About Setting

Synchro Boy takes place in a real place, on the traditional territory of the W̱SÁNEĆ, Lekwungen and Songhees Peoples. The characters live in the city of Victoria, on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. The pool and clubs that swim there in the story, however, are fictional—as is Rosa Pacific Secondary School.

The Rosa Waves Synchro club goes to Richmond, BC for a competition, and to Quebec City for the national event. But most of the action takes place at the Rosa Pacific Swimming Pool, Bart’s home, and his school.

### Plot Synopsis

BART LIVELY, a sixteen year old racing swimmer bound for the Olympics, desperately wants to feel like himself again. He loves the water, but he sure misses the freedom and expression he enjoyed when he was a dancer, and felt at home in his skin. He decides to try a free synchro session in the next pool, and it’s more than fun—it’s a challenge that captures him body and soul—*and* there’s a routine for guys: the mixed duet, just included in international competition last year.

ERIKA TENAKA, one of the club’s star swimmers, wants him to practice a mixed duet with her. But Bart’s already fighting off the guys on his team who harass Bart for being gay—something even *he’s* not sure of. If he joined *synchro*, it would only get worse. So Bart refuses, but when he finds out about the men who are fighting the sport’s gender stereotyping to compete in mixed duets around the world and get the event included in the 2020 Olympics, Bart feels compelled to join Erika.

To get the mixed duet ready for the ladder of competition ahead of them, Bart must master the technical aspects of synchro. He’s also falling for Erika, but he can’t seem to shake this ongoing flirtation with a guy in the dive club. And now, Erika’s jealous former duet partner CHELSEA wants Bart out of the club, until she realizes the attention the pair will get for entering the new event—attention she wants for herself. After passing a figures test and swimming at the Provincial competition, Bart gets together with Erika, spending romantic mornings hiding out at the top of the dive tower.

Then his coach splits Bart’s training time between Erika and Chelsea. Bart’s synchro improves with Chelsea’s technical influence, but they get a little too comfortable with each other, and end up kissing after a practice. Bart instantly regrets his slip—even before Erika sees, and refuses to swim her duet with him at the Qualifier. Devastated, Bart swims with Chelsea at the Qualifier. But none of the other mixed pairs show up, so they win by default, and the event is cancelled for the National competition. Tired of trying to master synchro the way Chelsea does—all perfectionism and no joy—Bart turns down her offer to come train with her as she gets ready for the Junior Worlds.

Tired too of trying to master his sexuality, Bart returns home and finally makes out with the boy from the dive club. But he isn’t in love with him—and while Bart knows he could love a guy in the future, he loves Erika in the *now*. So he tells her, and tries to convince Erika to swim with him again, hoping to feel the same joy he did before he started his quest for perfection. She says she’s retiring, but Bart’s secretly sent video of their performances to the federation that runs international competitions, who invites them to demo the mixed duet at the Western Open.

Bart begs Erika to take advantage of the opportunity. Up on the dive tower, he faces his fear of heights to prove that he’ll do anything to be her partner and work toward their Olympic dream together. Erika admits she’s scared about what lies ahead, but that she wants it too—and they leap off the tower together, side by side.

Swimming at the Western Open, they switch the boost so Erika lifts Bart for their big highlight—flipping the gender stereotype on its head, to loud applause from the stands. In the end, Bart knows he’s right where he should be: showing the world there’s more than one way to be a boy.

## Note to the Teacher:

Thank you for your interest in reading *Synchro Boy* with your students! If you have feedback on this resource or a request for a change or addition to the guide, please direct your message to shannon.mcferran@gmail.com.

**A note about First Peoples representation**

Synchro Boy reflects the diversity seen in real clubs and competition in British Columbia during the mid 2010s. There is racial diversity, yet none of the characters in the novel are Indigenous. This may spark a discussion with your students about what this says about access to sport for Indigenous youth, or preferences that Indigenous youth have for types of activities outside of school.

## *Synchro Boy* Whole Book Discussion/Essay Questions

What is the main source of conflict in Synchro Boy? How does it interact with secondary conflicts? How does Bart resolve his internal conflicts through the external action in the story?

Does every choice Bart make (for good or bad) create what happens next in his story? Are there places when it doesn’t?

What is Bart Lively’s biggest fear? What is Chelsea’s? What is Erika’s? How do their fears interact with each other to create interpersonal conflict?

What statement is the author making about gender in sport?

How do Bart’s two coaches – from racing and synchro – view Bart’s role as a male swimmer in these two sports?

Over the course of the book, Chelsea Gates changes for the better. What were the events that led to her transformation?

Some of the characters struggle with perfectionism. How does perfectionism act as an obstacle for the characters? How does it drive action in the story?

Bart is inspired by a real-life hero. How does Bill May give Bart the confidence to pursue his dream and make room for himself in the sport?

Erika says, “I know you’re happiest when you’re not fighting anyone’s idea of who you are …” When is Bart fighting other peoples’ ideas about him? Cite specific examples. How does this hold Bart back from accepting himself?

Is Synchro Boy a coming out novel, or is it pointedly **not** a coming out story? Cite textual evidence to support your view.

How does Bart’s relationship with his parents affect his drive to do what he feels passionate about? How does his mother’s support and his father’s withholding each play a part?

How do the characters’ friendships in Synchro Boy support and challenge them? Give specific examples from any of the friendships.

Describe Bart’s relationship with his coaches. How do the two coaches push and pull Bart toward/away from his goals?

## *Synchro Boy* End of Book Activities

**Another Point of View**

Synchro Boy is written from Bart’s perspective, using first person point-of-view. Try writing a scene from the novel in Erika’s or another character’s point of view. You can vary the point of view of the narration as well as the point of view character – Synchro Boy is written in first person. You can try writing your scene from second or third person limited or omniscient.

When you’ve drafted your scene, consider: whose point of view do you like best, and why? If you changed the POV of the narration, did you like yours better, or the 1st person narration of the novel? Consider the reasons for your preference.

**Performance Inquiry (Cross-curricular: Drama and English Language Arts)**

Look for artistic swimming clubs in your area, and find out when they are putting on a watershow. Propose an inquiry to pursue as you watch a performance of artistic swimming. You may choose to describe the connection of audience to performer and the performers to each other. Does watching the event in person make any of the descriptions of synchro or Bart’s feelings about the sport more alive? in writing, reflect on what you wondered before the event, and what you felt about it after.

**Land Drill Routine (Cross-curricular: Drama and English Language Arts)**

Choreograph your own land routine – researching the arm movements used to represent different synchro figures and transitions. Choose music with an 8-count beat, and perform your land drill to your chosen music for your peers. After, write an explanation of the significance of your choice in music and movements, and how the two interact.

**Personal Essay (Composition - writing processes,**

Write a personal essay on one of the topics that play an important role in *Synchro Boy*. Personal essays take a journey that follow your inquiry into a topic, weaving your own thoughts, experiences and memories together with facts and history, often resulting in some truth or insight, and further questions.

* Having our sexuality assumed by others based on our interests
* Macho sports culture
* Acceptance of gender expression
* Men in Synchro – (Biography of Bill May, and other sport pioneers)
* Connecting with mentors in a fight for change
* Another compelling topic of your choice (Propose to your teacher first.)

**Pool Inspiration Poem or Flash Fiction (Creative Writing)**

Begin with a timed writing activity. Set a timer for five minutes, and quickly write a list of as many words to do with pools and swimming as you can. When the timer goes, stop writing. Then go through your list and highlight or underline the words that stand out for you most. Write a lyric using these words—it doesn’t have to be about pools or swimming, but you’re just using those words to spark ideas. Your poem may be about another topic, but use swimming or swimming pools as a metaphor.

Alternatively, use the same list activity to gather words that you use in a flash fiction piece – a very short story with a beginning, middle, and an end. Aim for no more than 250 words.

**Text Dialogue (Creative Writing/Literary Studies/New Media/Visual Art)**

*Synchro Boy* includes several text message exchanges between characters, and some tweets. What choices did the graphic designer make for these conversations? How did the visual presentation effect you reading?

How is text conversation different from dialogue? Consider the different ways in which text dialogue could be presented in different literary forms. How would you present a text exchange within a poem? A play – how could you present the text differently from the dialogue in a script to indicate what needs to happen on stage? How might you present text dialogue inside a mixed media visual art piece? A digital art piece?

**Essay – Gender in Sport** **(Critical analysis and reflection)**

Bart is a talented athlete who could go far in a sport that unfortunately limits his participation—he can only swim competitively with females and not other males, and only just recently has his gender been able to compete in an event at the national and international level. What problems arise when a sports organization has rules and processes that are gender biased? What messages are sent to young athletes beyond the basic message that a specific gender can’t play, or can’t compete with their own gender, or at a certain level? Why do you think someone might someone argue that there is a time and place when it’s okay to limit participation? What do you think?

## Synchro Boy – Shannon McFerran

## Chapter Discussion Questions

**Chapter One**

What is Bart’s view of himself as his stands on the bulkhead at the opening of the novel? How does his self-regard present a conflict to be explored in the story?

How is the setting introduced in the novel? How does it provide a stage for the story conflict?

Do you think Bart’s suspension is justified? Why or why not? If you think it wasn’t, how do you think his coach should have handled the conflict?

Geoff calls synchro swimming “water ballet.” Why?

**Chapter Two**

Have you had an experience of trying an activity that takes you back to a younger time, like Bart did while he swam under water? If so, how did you react? How did it make you feel? If not, what do you think would give you the experience of feeling like you did when you were little? Do you think that would affect how creative you feel now?

Where do you still see sports designated as being specific to one gender? What do you think is happening to competitive sports as more gender diverse athletes join?

**Chapter Three**

What can you tell about Bart’s experience of high school?

How does Bart react to Riley’s attempt to stand up for him while Bart was trying synchro? Do you think Bart is fair in his response?

**Chapter Four**

How is Bart’s middle school experience similar or different from your own?

What problems did joining swimming solve for Bart at the time? Is it still working? Why or why not?

Bart recalls a transition point in his past that pushed him to give up something he loved so that he could move on. Do you think you would have made a similar choice? What do you think the decision cost Bart socially/emotionally, and developmentally?

What sort of character was Bart as an eleven year old? What sort of character is he now in the novel? Point to specific examples to support your view.

**Chapter Five**

What is Bart’s relationship with his best friend like? Cite specific evidence from the text so far to support your description.

Why do you think Bart likens Erika’s swimming to an ice dancer? What do you think might be significant about that comparison from Bart’s point of view as a boy?

What conflicts are established in the novel’s present time so far? Think about internal and external conflicts.

**Chapter Six**

What does Erika feel certain of when she comes over to talk to Bart?

Knowing what you know about Bart so far, is Erika right about him lying to her about why he was a dancer? What makes you think so?

**Chapter Seven**

What similarities can you draw between Bart’s treatment by his coach and his treatment by his teammates? What does this say about the culture of his club?

Why do you think Bart rejects Dive Boy’s calling him a “synchro boy?” What is the significance of the name “Synchro Boy” over the course of the story?

Describe Bart’s internal thoughts and feelings when he finds himself wanting to check out the guy from the diving team in the hot tub. What is at the heart of his discontent in this scene? How does Bart feel then when Dive Boy witnesses the harassment in the showers?

Bart remarks that it’s “like middle school again” with Riley. What do you think is leading to this change in the dynamic with Bart, Riley, and the other Rosa Waves members? How does it seem to be affecting Bart and Riley’s friendship?

**Chapter Eight**

Do you think Bart is okay with the answer he gives Sunny when she asks him to compete? Why? What are all of the opposing forces at this point in his decision?

**Chapter Nine**

What is Riley picking up on at the beginning of this chapter? How does that relate to what Bart feels when he finds out Riley hasn’t told him about asking Casey out?

What do you think of Bart’s reasons for why he can’t swim synchro with Erika? Do they make sense given the pressures he feels he’s under? Or do they speak to unfounded fears, as Erika might suggest when she texts Bart, ‘Don’t be scared?’

What revelation does Bart have about himself when he’s watching Bill May swim?

**Chapter Ten**

How does Bart’s mom’s note influence his behaviour in this chapter? How do you think it influences him through the rest of the story? Do you think a parent’s support has this kind of power in real life?

After Bart tells Coach Cragg he’s leaving, he listens to one voice telling him he’s going to be okay, and one that tells him he’s not. Do these voices articulate the same tension he’s been feeling all along, or are they saying something different now in the moment when he’s made the break? How do you think they will help or hinder Bart now?

**Chapter Eleven**

Bart thinks of a future when he’s holding a “medal and a girlfriend.” What do you think this image comes from? On what levels is it motivating Bart? How will it challenge him?

How do you think Bart’s choice is going to throw off “the stupid gender police?” Who are the gender police in his world?

**Chapter Twelve**

How would you describe the relationships among the girls on the synchro team? How does Chelsea feel about Bart? Why might she feel this way?

Why do you think Riley is upset as he is about Bart leaving racing?

**Chapter Thirteen**

Describe Bart’s relationship with his Dad. What does Bart want from him? Does he get what he wants at the end of this chapter? Explain.

**Chapter Fourteen**

What does Chelsea try to impress on Bart? Do you think the others aren’t being realistic about his chances in competition? Why or why not?

What does Chelsea mean when she says, “You’re such a racer, Bart?” What do you think it says about his personality?

**Chapter Fifteen**

Why do you think Erika says Amanda Gates would be relieved to find out that Bart is gay?

The girls examine recordings of Mixed Duet swims to see if the guys wear makeup. Discuss the significance of makeup and gender expression to the sport and the inclusion of men in competition.

**Chapter Sixteen**

Why do you think Chelsea is disappointed to see Bart in makeup, with hair gelled?

What do you think Bart’s mom is afraid of? What do her comments at the end of the chapter suggest?

**Chapter Seventeen**

How is Bart taking control of his situation after regionals? Explain the factors you think are leading to his determination, rather than driving him away.

**Chapter Eighteen**

Bart comments that the world isn’t ready for a male-male synchro duet, yet. Do you think he’s right? Discuss the significance of the sole event for men in synchro being a mixed male-female duet, especially in light of the entire range of gender identity.

**Chapter Nineteen**

What does Bart’s pushing his hypoxic training in this chapter say about him? How does this explain some of his choices that he’s made in the story so far?

**Chapter Twenty**

What does Bart mean when he says “apparently we can both talk around this,” when Erika suggests Kim is “into him?”

**Chapter Twenty-one**

Discuss the different reactions the three have to shaving their heads. What does it say about each character?

**Chapter Twenty-two**

What does Bart’s mom taking him makeup shopping say about her, and her relationship to her son? Can you think of a time when a parent or guardian did something for you that they might not have before?

What’s the significance of Erika lifting Bart in the routine?

Why does Bart feel that it’s important the Mixed Duet event gets included in the Olympic Games?

**Chapter Twenty-four**

The Rosa Waves members don’t seem to have changed in their treatment of Bart. Why do you think that is? What would have to change for things to go differently?

Why do Bart and Erika say Chelsea makes it too easy to hate her? Do you think you’d hate Chelsea? Why or why not?

What little things make Bart and Erika more connected in the park scene? Discuss specific moments or exchanges.

**Chapter Twenty-five**

Why do you think Bart pretends he doesn’t see Erika at the GSA meeting? Discuss specific events or thoughts prior to this that you think may have influenced his decision.

**Chapter Twenty-seven**

Bart hears someone call him a “fag” in the hallway. Terms like fag, dike, and queer have been reclaimed by LGBTQ2S people, but we sometimes still hear them used as derogatory terms today. Do you still hear them used that way in your school or community? Discuss what would need to happen in Bart’s school for that to change.

What do you think leads Bart to being so irritable when he’s talking to Julia after walking out of the meeting? Cite specific examples.

What do you think of Julia’s intervening with Bart, Dave and Erika? Do you think you’d go about it the same way, if you were in the same situation? Why or why not?

Do you think that Bart is right when he says that synchro is viewed by others as “a sport for girls or gays or boys who want to be girls?”

**Chapter Twenty-eight**

Bart says “synchro’s hard enough. I don’t need the rest of my life to be hard, too.” What does he mean by this?

How has Bart been changing Chelsea over the course of the story? Discuss specific examples.

**Chapter Thirty-one**

How would you describe Bart and Erika’s relationship? Would you want to be in a relationship like theirs? Why or why not?

At this point in the story, you’re starting to see a new picture of Chelsea. Do you think she truly cares about Bart? Why or why not?

**Chapter Thirty-two**

Why do you think Erika decides to follow Bart out on his walk? What makes her talk to him? What is her take on why he’s mad?

**Chapter Thirty-four**

Why is Bart losing faith in the possibility for him in this sport at this point in the story? What was he hoping for that seems impossible now, and what events have pushed his dream further away?

**Chapter Thirty-five**

What’s the “twelve year old cliff” that Bart mentions? Were you committed to an activity you gave up around that age? Or did you stick with something you started when you were younger? What were the factors that led to your decision?

**Chapter Thirty-six**

When Bart remarks that Erika’s feminine movements look right on him, and that no one’s ever going to give him a 6-point-anything on how Boy he is, what is Bart feeling ready to let go of? How do you think this letting go leads him to get together with Dave? How do you see this spilling over into the rest of his life—to his relationship with Erika, Riley, his swimming, and his relationship to his former teammates?

**Chapter Thirty-seven**

What do you think Bart is grieving at the end of the chapter when he breaks down while he’s stretching in front of the mirror?

**Chapter Thirty-eight**

Erika talks about everything that they give up to commit to a sport like they have at their age. What do you think they get in return? Does the trade off seem worth it to you?

**Chapter Thirty-nine**

Describe the significance of Bart’s going to the top of the dive tower now. How is this showing Erika and himself what he’s ready for?

**Chapter Forty**

Bart says, “It’s time the pool and the wider world admitted that there are many ways to be a boy.” The world may be getting it, but some spaces are slower to understand or evolve. Where do you see this tension?

When synchronized swimming or artistic swimming first debuted, men and women swam and competed in the sport, but then clubs stopped including male swimmers. Why do you think men aren’t included now at the highest level of competition? What do you think it would take to change this?

**Chapter Forty-one**

Sunny tells Bart that the little guys are there in the club because he is. How important do you think teens are as role models for younger kids? How much influence do you feel you have? Did you look up to people your age when you were younger? How could this be important for creating change in a whole sport?

## Synchro Boy – Shannon McFerran

## Chapter Comprehension Check Quiz Questions

**Chapter One**

1) What does Bart need to do in the relay to make his goal of swimming in a national competition?

2) Why does Bart think Geoff is mad at him?

3) Why doesn’t Bart get his time?

4) How does Bart find himself crossing the tiles between the pools to the synchro pool?

**Chapter Two**

1) What does the synchro coach think Bart is there for?

2) Does she turn him away?

3) Why does Erika assume Bart is nervous and looks out the window of the storage room?

4) How does swimming synchro make Bart feel?

5) What do the synchro girls find surprising about swimming with Bart?

6) What does Chelsea’s mother tell Bart?

7) Does Bart want to keep doing synchro after this session? What does he say to himself?

**Chapter Three**

1) What happens when Bart’s Mom asks him about the suspension?

2) What does Bart find out when he looks up synchro for guys?

3) Why does Bart say everyone thinks he’s queer?

4) Why is Bart shutting Riley out at the end of this chapter?

**Chapter Four**

1) How long as Bart been teased for being feminine?

2) Who got Bart into swimming when he was younger?

3) What did he get out of swimming that he didn’t out of dance?

4) What’s not enough for Bart now?

**Chapter Five**

1) What does Riley suspect at the start of this chapter?

2) What is Bart’s big idea?

3) Why does Bart’s mom want him to call his dad?

**Chapter Six**

1) Who does Erika say wants Bart to join synchro?

2) Does Bart shut Erika down right away?

3) Why does Bart say Erika’s his soul mate after seeing her T-shirt?

4) What does Sunny think about Bart joining?

**Chapter Seven**

1) What does Bart try to do after practice?

2) Why is Bart worried about Riley?

3) What does Bart call his guilty pleasures?

4) What does Bart try to do at the end of the chapter?

**Chapter Eight**

1) Why are there two mixed duets in a competition?

2) What song has Erika always wanted to swim a routine to?

3) Why do the swimmers call Bart “Bullet?”

4) What does Bart decide not to ask Erika at the end of his session with her?

**Chapter Nine**

1) Why does Erika want Bart to look at a hashtag on Twitter?

2) What does Erika know about Riley that Bart doesn’t?

3) There’s no one else swimming that routine in their age group (Juniors)

4) Does Bart accept Erika’s invitation?

5) What does Bart’s Mom walk in on when she goes to his room?

**Chapter Ten**

1) What did Bart’s Mom put out in his room when he wasn’t looking?

2) What does Bart go to do before the Rosa Waves guys get on deck?

**Chapter Eleven**

1) How do the Chelsea, Jules, and Erika receive Bart and the news that he’s joining?

2) What does Bart get Chelsea to do during their first practice?

**Chapter Twelve**

1) What does Bart find out about Chelsea and Erika at the SI Barbeque?

2) Who is Bart missing at the party?

3) What is Erika’s secret to success?

4) What does Riley find out?

5) What does Bart decide not to do at the end?

**Chapter Thirteen**

1) What does Bart’s Dad threaten to do now that Bart’s decided to leave racing for synchro?

2) What deal does Bart make with him?

**Chapter Fourteen**

1) Where does Bart and the team travel?

2) What is Bart horrified to find out before the competition?

**Chapter Fifteen**

1) Why is Bart worried about Chelsea’s mom?

2) How is Bart surprised in this chapter?

**Chapter Sixteen**

1) What does Bart notice about Erika when he’s swimming with her in competition?

2) Shiny suits with kites, waves and bubbles.

3) Because he didn’t pass his figures at Regionals, prohibiting him from entering the next level of competition.

4) To loosen the gelatin out of their hair.

**Chapter Seventeen**

1) What does Sunny do in a formal arrangement with Bart that she previously did informally with Chelsea?

2) What does Amanda Gates threaten?

3) Why does Bart try to stop Erika from tearing a strip off of Chelsea after she gets the news that they’re suspended from Provincials?

**Chapter Eighteen**

1) How long does Bart get to improve his figures before he has to compete them at Provincials?

2) Who helps Bart with extra coaching after practice?

3) Why can’t Bart make it through the end of the Breathing Underwater routine?

4) What does Erika get Bart for Christmas?

**Chapter Nineteen**

1) What does Bart arrange for at the upcoming Provincials?

2) How does Bart build his oxygen efficiency?

3) How does Chelsea react to Bart’s fainting under water?

**Chapter Twenty**

1) What surprises Bart and Erika when they get to Provincials?

2) How is Bart feeling about swimming the demo of their routine?

3) Are the guys at the pool in makeup?

**Chapter Twenty-one**

1) Why does Bart shave his head?

2) What is the pre-comp routine for the synchro team?

3) What does Bart worry about once his head is shaved?

4) Who does Bart avoid talking to, but still checks for messages from at the end of the night?

**Chapter Twenty-two**

1) From Bart’s point of view, how does Bart and Erika’s demo go at the Provincials?

2) Who comes down to congratulate them after their swim?

3) What does Chelsea do differently with Erika than Bart?

4) Why does Bart feel convinced their routine will score them more points than the other routines in the future?

5) What does Chelsea do when watching the other mixed duet routines?

**Chapter Twenty-three**

1) How does Bart feel about Sunny giving him a routine to swim with Chelsea?

2) What does Sunny tell Bart he’d need to be prepared for if guys swim at the national trials?

3) What does Chelsea think is possible for Bart one day?

**Chapter Twenty-four**

1) How does Bart react to Geoff’s harrassment?

2) How does Geoff react to this?

3) Where does Bart go after this?

4) What does Erika think will happen now Chelsea’s advanced in the qualifiers for the national squad, and she hasn’t?

5) Where do Bart and Erika have their discussion?

**Chapter Twenty-five**

1) What does Chelsea offer Bart in the hallway?

2) What does Bart do to prove himself?

3) What does Bart do when he sees Erika in the GSA club?

**Chapter Twenty-six**

1) When does Bart go to the pool hoping to see Erika?

2) What does Bart witness when he arrives?

3) Why can’t Bart follow Erika up to the top of the dive tower?

**Chapter Twenty-seven**

1) What does Bart ask Riley to get him to talk to him again?

2) What does Dive Boy say to Bart when he joins the meeting?

3) Why does Bart object to what Dive Boy says?

4) What does Bart find out at the meeting about Dive Boy?

5) What does Bart say about being called queer and swimming synchro?

**Chapter Twenty-eight**

1) What does Chelsea criticize Bart for?

2) What does she offer Bart?

3) What has Bart forgotten he was doing after Friday practice? What does he end up doing with Chelsea that he wish he didn’t?

4) What makes Bart feel even more guilty when he gets home?

**Chapter Twenty-nine**

1) What is Riley surprised that Bart can do even though he’s deeply upset?

2) Why is Riley still mad at Bart?

3) What do Riley and Bart think he has to do in order to make it up to Erika?

**Chapter Thirty**

1) What does Bart find out from Sunny?

2) How does Chelsea react to what happened on Friday?

3) Why does Chelsea want to keep swimming the duet with Bart?

4) Why does Bart agree to keep swimming with Chelsea?

**Chapter Thirty-one**

1) Who writes to Bart to wish him and Erika well at the Qualifiers?

2) What does Erika do differently from when she usually talks to Bart during practice?

3) Who made Bart swim better, according to Erika?

4) Why does Erika quit the duet?

**Chapter Thirty-two**

1) Where is the National Qualifier event held?

2) Why does Bart think Chelsea may be mad at him at the start of the National Qualifier?

3) Does Bart get to swim *Breathing Underwater* at the Qualifiers?

4) What happens with the other mixed duet pairs at the qualifier?

5) Why is Bart mad when he watches the news coverage of the event?

6) What does Bart notice is missing when he watches the video of his swims with Chelsea?

**Chapter Thirty-three**

1) What does Bart want the call with his dad to keep focused on?

2) What is Bart surprised to hear about his old Rosa Waves Coach?

3) Why does Bart feel like he didn’t “win” the conversation?

**Chapter Thirty-four**

1) What is Chelsea’s big success?

2) What does Chelsea want that Bart can’t go along with?

**Chapter Thirty-five**

1) What does Bart practice after everyone’s gone home?

2) What does Bart decide when Dave first touches him?

**Chapter Thirty-six**

1) Where do Riley and Bart go camping?

2) Does Dave say he’s upset that Bart still wants to be together with Erika?

3) What does Bart want Riley to understand?

**Chapter Thirty-seven**

1) What do the club members watch on the livestream?

2) What does Sunny offer Bart in consolation?

3) What news does Erika break to Bart in a text?

**Chapter Thirty-eight**

1) Where do Bart and Erika go to talk?

2) What were Erika’s last synchro goals?

3) What is Bart willing to do for Erika so she can keep swimming toward her last goal?

4) What does Bart explain to Erica about Dave and how he feels?

5) What is Sunny calling everyone on deck to hear?

**Chapter Thirty-nine**

1) What does Erika discover when she comes to her early morning pool practice?

2) What does she do when she sees this?

3) What does Bart ask Erika to commit to?

4) How does Bart show his commitment to Erika, and the challenges he’s willing to face to keep going in synchro?

**Chapter Forty**

1) When Bart says “She’s my weight,” what does he mean?

2) What does Bart think about when he submerges after the highlight when Erika lifts him out of the water? Are his fears confirmed?

3) What changes Bart’s dad’s opinion?

4) What does Bart’s hero tell him?

**Chapter Forty-one**

1) Who comes to watch the Winter watershow?

2) Who is Chelsea swimming mixed duet with now?

3) How do the swimmers kick off the watershow?

## Synchro Boy – Shannon McFerran

## Chapter Quiz Answer Keys

**Chapter One**

1) Bart needs his triple-A time

2) Bart got faster than Geoff last year.

3) The timer spilled her coffee at the moment Bart reached the end of the lane, when Geoff bumped the table on purpose.

4) Geoff pressured him. Bart wanted to prove he can do whatever he wants, even if that’s trying synchro.

**Chapter Two**

1) To try synchro—or at least “protest-swim.”

2) No—Sunny welcomes Bart.

3) She thinks Bart’s worried that his swim team mates are going to make fun of him.

4) Free; like a little kid playing in the pool;

5) His power in the lifts; being able to launch the flyer (Kyoka) and the others; his splits

6) Synchro is a girl’s sport.

7) Yes—he says he’d rather be in the synchro pool, but it’s too scary—like facing his fear of heights on the diving tower.

**Chapter Three**

1) He avoids telling her what caused the fight

2) There aren’t any guys synchro clubs, or mixed clubs in his age group or his country—it’s all girls represented

3) When he was in middle school, Bart asked a question in health class if it were normal to like people of the same sex and other sexes “that way.”

4) Riley’s leaving it open for Bart to talk to him about sexuality, but Bart doesn’t want to talk about it.

**Chapter Four**

1) Since the first week of middle school

2) Riley

3) Respect from his peers

4) That respect that he left dance for.

**Chapter Five**

1) That Bart likes Erika.

2) For Riley and he to invite girls to go with them to the Sports Institute Barbeque.

3) To hear about the suspension from Bart himself, not someone else.

**Chapter Six**

1) Erika herself, Sunny, and some of the other girls.

2) No, he’s thinking about it, and trying to come up with a plan at the end of the chapter.

3) Because Erika’s shirt says *Breath is for the Weak*, which reflects Bart’s belief that if he takes more strokes between breaths and breathes less, he swims faster.

4) Sunny thinks Bart has potential for the Mixed Duet event and could swim competitively.

**Chapter Seven**

1) Tries to talk to Coach to convince him to let Bart reduce his practice time with Rosa Waves to fit in synchro practices, as “cross-training.”

2) Because Riley admits to getting a hard time from the other guys while Bart was away on his suspension, but he won’t talk.

3) His poster of dancer Sergei Polunin\*, and his playlist of pop songs

\*The author notes that Bart is no longer a fan of Sergei Polunin the way he was in 2015.

4) Call his dad to tell him about the suspension, as his mom asked.

**Chapter Eight**

1) There are two mixed duets because one is needed to demonstrate all the required elements (the technical), and one is needed to demonstrate creativity in choreography (the mixed duet)

2) Breathing Underwater (by Canadian band Metric )

3) Because of his speed

4) He decides not to ask Erika to the SI Barbeque, because she looks too sad.

**Chapter Nine**

1) Because the hashtag is about the Mixed Duet event, advocating for its inclusion in the Olympic program.

2) That Riley has asked Casey out

3) Why does Erika think they have a chance to compete a mixed duet nationally?

4) No, he says he can’t compete with her.

5) Bart watching mixed duet events on YouTube.

**Chapter Ten**

1) Mom leaves an old photo with a note tucked inside the frame, asking Bart not to forget what he is capable of.

2) He goes to tell Coach Cragg he’s leaving the Rosa Waves.

**Chapter Eleven**

1) Chelsea challenges Bart—she doesn’t believe he’s serious. Erika and Julia are excited and welcoming.

2) Bart gets Chelsea to take a photo of Erika and him in a boost.

**Chapter Twelve**

1) He finds out that Chelsea and Erika were duet partners every year before this one.

2) Bart’s missing Riley

3) Erika goes to the pool at 4am to practice before the public is let in.

4) That Bart quit the Rosa Waaves

5) Talk to Riley about his news after Riley leaves the dance floor, after he sees Riley with Chelsea.

**Chapter Thirteen**

1) refuses to pay for his Sports Institute fees

2) If he gets to Nationals in synchro, Dad will continue covering Bart’s school and coaching fees

**Chapter Fourteen**

1) To Richmond, for the Regionals event

2) That Bart’s figures score will be added to Erika’s and averaged, likely pulling down the score for their duet.

**Chapter Fifteen**

1) Bart thinks she’s upset that Bart is swimming with Erika instead of Chelsea and ruining Chelsea’s chances at competing a duet. He thinks Amanda might be taking it out on him.

2) By Erika’s touch during the makeup application, making him feel more than when he’s been much more physically close to her.

**Chapter Sixteen**

1) That she’s better than the other girls, but he can’t say how.

2) Describe the duet’s swimsuits for the free competition.

3) Why does Amanda Gates say that Sunny will have to pull Bart from the team after Regionals?

4) Why do Bart, Erika and Jules go to the warm kiddie pool after their competition is over?

**Chapter Seventeen**

1) provide extra coaching before practice

2) she threatens to have Chelsea go to a different synchro club

3) Bart says that getting angry at her won’t change anything.

**Chapter Eighteen**

1) 2 months

2) Erika and Julia

3) He can’t hold his breath through the complete vertical sequence.

4) a T-shirt like her own.

**Chapter Nineteen**

1) To demo their routine, if not compete it.

2) Swims lengths underwater without taking a breath

3) Angry, but also legitimately upset by it.

**Chapter Twenty**

1) There are other mixed duet pairs there to compete

2) Nervous to swim in front of guys who are swimming better than he is.

3) No, it’s a figures event. But Bart wonders if they will be during competition.

**Chapter Twenty-one**

1) To avoid needing to gel during routine; also, to be more like hero Bill May, look less like his Dad

2) Get together in one hotel room to do nails and eat junk food

3) That he’ll look wrong to Erika.

4) His Dad.

**Chapter Twenty-two**

1) He thinks it’s the best they’ve swum yet—that they were connected in a different way – their physical connection has shifted.

2) Kim and his partner from Aquastellers, and Josh from the Yukon’s club, and then Chelsea and teammates.

3) She doesn’t hug or talk to Erika.

4) He feels their free routine involves more difficulty.

5) Narrates the swims, giving her opinion/interprets the scoring

**Chapter Twenty-three**

1) He doesn’t want it – thinks it will take time from practicing with Erika

2) Learning new routines quickly

3) To swim on the national squad

**Chapter Twenty-four**

1) He swears, gets upset, and physically pushes Geoff.

2) Geoff just laughs it off.

3) Bart goes to meet Erika at her house

4) Chelsea will get to compete a mixed duet at the Jr. World’s, maybe with Bart.

5) On the merry go round.

**Chapter Twenty-five**

1) Candied ginger

2) Holds a handstand with splits.

3) Pretends he didn’t see her.

**Chapter Twenty-six**

1) 4am, before it opens

2) Erika running through her solo routine to River, on repeat.

3) He’s afraid of heights.

**Chapter Twenty-seven**

1) To see the bad monster flick he wanted to see, go to the go karts, (Do things that Riley’s more interested in doing)

2) That he knew Bart was queer.

3) Because he’s only been called queer by people he doesn’t like.

4) His real name – David; and that he has a crush on Bart.

5) He says the two are conflated in other people’s minds – but swimming synchro has nothing to do with his sexuality.

**Chapter Twenty-eight**

1) Being “all over the place,” “a floppy fish.” Not swimming well.

2) She offers to stay and help coach him more after practice.

3) Meeting Erika to work on their routine after his practice. He wishes he hadn’t kissed Chelsea.

4) Seeing the note from his mom – having forgotten about their dinner

**Chapter Twenty-nine**

1) Eat a lot of comfort food.

2) He feels Bart wasn’t telling him about his life, or giving him the heads up when he decided to make a major change by quitting Rosa Waves

3) Quit swimming a duet with Chelsea

**Chapter Thirty**

1) The duet with Chelsea was Chelsea’s idea, not Sunny’s.

2) She’s upset, but says she’s put it past her, and wants to practice.

3) She thinks they can get it to national competition, and attract attention for it.

4) He doesn’t want to hurt her any more than he has.

**Chapter Thirty-one**

1) Bill May

2) Keeps her goggles on, so he can’t see her eyes

3) Chelsea

4) She says she can’t be that close to Bart after what happened.

**Chapter Thirty-two**

1) Quebec City

2) that he chose to wear makeup—or that he borrowed her eye shadow

3) No, Sunny made up a new mixed duet for him to swim with Chelsea.

4) They don’t show up. Bart and Chelsea win by default.

5) He looks angry on camera, but people don’t know why, because the harassment was edited out

**Chapter Thirty-three**

1) Getting his dad to keep his end of the bargain and pay for training

2) Coach Cragg has noticed how hard he’s working.

3) Because his dad might still expect him to go back to racing at some point.

**Chapter Thirty-four**

1) She makes it onto the Junior National squad

2) Going to Montreal to train with her

**Chapter Thirty-five**

1) Erika’s solo routine

2) That he’s always waiting for someone to pull him onto the roller coaster (experience something thrilling but scary that he wants to do), but he has to choose to have this experience with Dave.

**Chapter Thirty-six**

1) Sombrio Beach on the Juan de Fuca trail

2) No, he seems accepting of it.

3) That he wasn’t just trying to be straight, and that synchro wasn’t just to go after a girl, but something really important to him

**Chapter Thirty-seven**

1) Chelsea and Erika’s solo routines at the Nationals.

2) Swimming in Chelsea’s position in the team routine for the club watershow

3) That she’s retiring from synchro swimming.

**Chapter Thirty-eight**

1) The outdoor seating in the pool cafeteria

2) To swim her solo at Nationals, and swim a mixed duet

3) He’s willing to go swim with a different club to be out of her way, and encourages her to find a different mixed duet partner

4) That he and Dave were a one-time thing, but that he loves her.

5) That FINA (International Swimming Organization) has received Bart’s video and letter, and invited them to demo a mixed duet at the Western Summer Open

**Chapter Thirty-nine**

1) Bart is swimming her solo routine.

2) She coaches Bart.

3) To being his partner next season, and aim for the Junior Worlds, and the Olympics one day.

4) He faces his fear of heights and goes out onto the 10 metre platform with her.

**Chapter Forty**

1) Erika would keep him grounded, like a weight keeps a kite from flying away

2) He thinks it’s the moment he would be judged, like he has been in the past—but no, people love the lift and cheer, instead.

3) Finally seeing Bart swim synchro – he knows his talent is too good not to continue

4) Bill May tells Bart that it won’t get easier, but he’ll get stronger.

**Chapter Forty-one**

1) Chelsea with her mom, and Coach Cragg

2) She has a new duet partner from New Brunswick

3) They leap into the pool from the various diving boards and platforms, carrying coloured streamers

## BC Curriculum Alignment

The activities and discussions in this teacher’s guide align with the following features of the BC English Language Arts Curriculum Grades 10-12:

**Big Idea:**

The exploration of text and story deepens our understanding of diverse, complex ideas about identity, others, and the world.

### Curricular Competencies:

#### Comprehend and Connect

* Think critically, creatively, and reflectively to analyze ideas within, between, and beyond texts
* Access information for diverse purposes and from a variety of sources to inform writing
* Recognize and identify the role of personal, social, and cultural contexts, values, and perspectives in texts
* Construct meaningful personal connections between self, text, and world

#### Create and Communicate

* Respectfully exchange ideas and viewpoints from diverse perspectives to build shared understandings and extend thinking
* Respond to text in personal, creative, and critical ways
* Demonstrate speaking and listening skills in a variety of formal and informal contexts for a range of purposes
* Use writing and design processes to plan, develop, and create engaging and meaningful texts for a variety of purposes and audiences
* Experiment with genres, forms, or styles of creative and communicative texts
* Express and support an opinion with evidence

### Content:

* + function and genre
  + text forms and features – elements of visual/graphic texts
  + metacognitive strategies
  + writing processes

## Ontario Curriculum Alignment

The discussions and activities in this teacher guide for Synchro Boy support the following grade specific Ontario Ministry of Education English Curriculum

learning expectations:

#### Oral Communication

1.2 select and use appropriate active listening strategies when participating in a variety of classroom interactions

1.5 develop and explain interpretations of oral texts, including increasingly complex texts, using evidence from the text and the oral and visual cues used in it to support their interpretations

1.6 extend understanding of oral texts, including increasingly complex texts, by making connections between the ideas in them and personal knowledge, experience, and insights; other texts; and the world around them

1.8 identify and analyse the perspectives and/or biases evident in oral texts, including increasingly complex texts, and comment on any questions they may raise about beliefs, values, identity, and power

#### Reading and Literature Studies

1.3 identify the most important ideas and supporting details in texts, including increasingly complex texts

1.4 make and explain inferences about texts, including increasingly complex texts, supporting their explanations with well-chosen stated and implied ideas from the texts

1.5 extend understanding of texts, including increasingly complex texts, by making appropriate connections between the ideas in them and personal knowledge, experience, and insights; other texts; and the world around them

1.6 analyse texts in terms of the information, ideas, issues, and themes they explore, examining how various aspects of the texts contribute to the presentation or development of these elements

1.8 identify and analyse the perspectives and/or biases evident in texts, including increasingly complex texts, and comment on any questions they may raise about beliefs, values, identity, and power

2.2 identify a variety of text features and explain how they help communicate meaning

#### Writing:

1.2 generate, expand, explore, and focus ideas for potential writing tasks, using a variety of strategies and print, electronic, and other resources, as appropriate

1.3 locate and select information to appropriately support ideas for writing, using a variety of strategies and print, electronic, and other resources, as appropriate

1.5 determine whether the ideas and information gathered are relevant to the topic, accurate, complete, and appropriately meet the requirements of the writing task

2.5 explain how their own beliefs, values, and experiences are revealed in their writing

2.1 write for different purposes and audiences using a variety of informational, literary, and graphic forms