**Harrison Bergeron Reading Activities:**

**A Lesson Plan for Harrison Bergeron by Kurt Vonnegut**

**Pre-Reading Activities:**

- Students will explore the word "handicap". The goal of the discussion/lesson is to move beyond the idea of physical handicap. Can we impose handicaps on others? For example, if you were to be given a Language Arts test in Mandarin Chinese, would that be a handicap to you?

- A student volunteer will then be "handicapped" according to the rules of the *Harrison Bergeron* universe. A student will be given a heavy backpack to carry, a clown nose and baseball cap, and made to snap their fingers every ten seconds (so as to disrupt his or her thoughts). Is this fair? Is this student now equal to the rest of the class? Is this what equality means?

**During-Reading Activities:**

- Students will be asked to write down a list of all the "handicaps" that exist in the Harrison Bergeron universe, and what they are designed to hide or compensate for.

- Students will consider the character of Mrs. Bergeron. What does it mean that she has no "handicaps"?
Post-Reading Activities:

- As a class, we'll share our reactions to the story. What kind of world is this?
- As a class, we'll revisit our definition of "handicap". How has it changed after reading this story?
- In small groups, we'll compare the characters of Harrison Bergeron and Diana Moon-Glampers. Why do they do the things they do? How do they view themselves and society?

Reading Extension Activity:

- A common saying in America is “The squeaky wheel gets the grease”, while a version of the same saying in Japan goes “The nail that sticks up gets hammered down”. In a group, go online and the idea of conformity. What cultural customs surround conformity in America? In other societies?