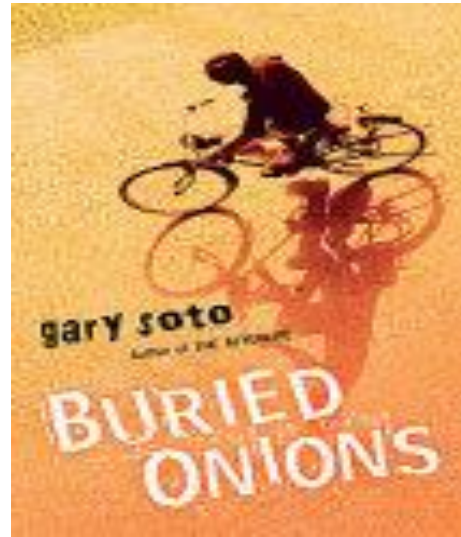
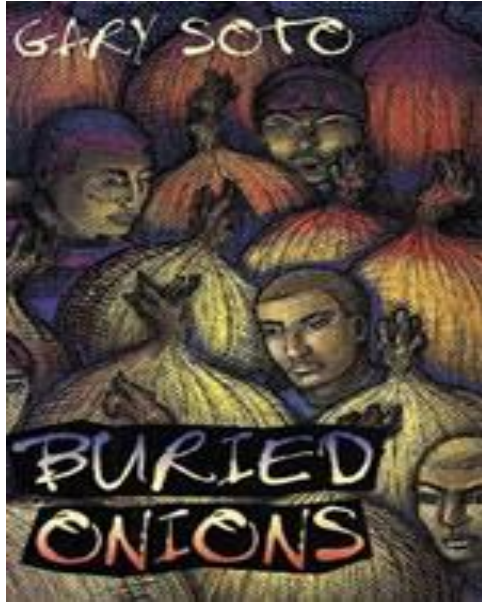


## *Buried Onions* by Gary Soto



Eddie, a young Mexican American, fights to make something of himself in Fresno, California. Reeling from the death of his father, his best friend, and his cousin, he must wage a constant battle against negative community influences (guns, drugs, lack of opportunity, cultural stereotypes). Facing his own ennui, he often feels there is no hope. In the beginning chapters, friends and relatives coax him to pick up guns and avenge his cousin's death. Yet, Eddie is determined to survive in this world where all seems against him.

All he wants is to forget his violent past, hold down an honest job, and walk a straight line. But Eddie, pressured by his aunt and friends of his cousin to avenge his cousin's death, finds himself slipping closer and closer to a dangerous and violent end.

Set in a poor barrio, where heat vapors swelter from the asphalt and thirteen-year-old boys carry knives, *Buried Onions* is the tale of a teenager trying to escape the influences of the gangs and violence around him. But making an honest living proves to be easier said than done. A richly felt first-person narrative guides us through Eddie's coming of age, from universal adolescent experiences like flirting with pretty girls and trying to find a job to inner-city trials like knife threats and police arrests. Gary Soto's poignant novel and moving narrative allow all teenagers to relate to the gritty reality of Eddie's life.

See Attached Lesson Plan

## Buried Onions Lesson Plan

### Benchmarks

At the completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

**9-12 Benchmark I-A:** Listen to, read, react to, and analyze information

**Performance Standards 10 - 2:** Respond reflectively (through small group discussion and journal writing) to written text.

### Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Interpret a passage and discuss the metaphor of the onion referred to in the passage.
- Understand the relationship between the buried onion Eddie imagines beneath the pavement and the heritage of farm workers in communities like Fresno.

### Materials:

*Buried Onions* by Gary Soto

PowerPoint presentation on farm workers in Fresno County that can be found at:

[http://www.cirsinc.org/docs/Farmworker\\_Food\\_Security\\_Results\\_Presentation.pdf](http://www.cirsinc.org/docs/Farmworker_Food_Security_Results_Presentation.pdf)

### Lesson

As a whole class, we will look at and discuss the PowerPoint presentation on the plight of farm workers in Fresno County, California.

The title of the presentation is, "Hunger in the fields: Food insecurity among farm workers in Fresno County." This PowerPoint presentation gives information about the plight of farm workers and the consequences of not having enough food.

Once we have viewed the presentation and had some discussion, we will then discuss some possibilities of what Eddie is referring to in the following passage.

"The sun was climbing over the trees of City College and soon the black asphalt would shimmer with vapors. I had a theory about those vapors, which were not released by the sun's heat but by a huge onion buried under the city. This onion made us cry. Tears leapt from our eyelashes and stained our faces. Babies in strollers pinched up their faces and wailed for no reason. Perhaps as practice for the coming years. I thought about the giant onion, that remarkable bulb of sadness" (pg. 4).

### Assignment

Students will pair up and write a Dialogue Journal. Students will respond individually to the following prompt: *In the passage above, discuss the metaphor of the onion. What does the onion represent?*

After each individual student is done with their response, they will exchange their journals with their partner and respond to each other's journals.