

Where the Red Fern Grows

by Wilson Rawls

A Teaching Guide

by Margaret Whisnant



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Woodrow Wilson Rawls

September 24, 1913 – December 16, 1984

Wilson Rawls burned the first manuscript of *Where the Red Fern Grows*. Thankfully, he wrote the story a second time because he wasn't willing to give up on a life-long dream.

Born in Oklahoma's Ozark Mountains in 1913, Rawls started wanting to be a writer around the age of 10 when his mother brought home a copy of Jack London's *Call of the Wild*. Problem was, his homeschooling and 4 short years of formal education left him with a strong desire to write and limited skills. His grammar, spelling, and punctuation were atrocious, and he knew it. His father's reassuring words, "Son, a man can do anything he sets out to do, if he doesn't give up," didn't change the fact that the odds were stacked against him.

When the Great Depression hit in 1929, Rawls and his family moved from the Ozarks. For the next 20 years he traveled and worked as a carpenter, but he held on to his dream of being a published author. He wrote numerous short stories and five manuscripts, including *The Hounds of Youth*, the story a boy from the Ozarks and his hunting dogs. He kept his work hidden away in a trunk.

In 1957 Rawls met his future wife Sophie in Idaho. Rather than telling her about his secret ambition, he burned everything he had ever written just before their wedding. Why complicate their future together with his impossible dream? No publisher would ever accept his stories. They were nothing but junk.

A few months into their marriage, Rawls confessed everything to Sophie. To his surprise, she encouraged him. With his wife's blessing, he quit his job to focus on the rewrite of *The Hounds of Youth*. He knew the story by heart. He wrote without stopping, in longhand, for three weeks. On the Saturday morning he handed the manuscript to Sophie, he left home and went to town. He didn't want to be there when she read it because he was sure she would hate it.

Instead, Sophie loved it! She called him to come home and work on it some more. She would smooth out the errors if he would expand the story. Later, she typed up her husband's 35,000 word, hand-written dream. It was ready for a publisher.

The Saturday Evening Post, a popular magazine of the day, got first shot but the editors rejected it. Then Sophie sent it to the Ladies' Home Journal. They suggested that The Saturday Evening Post might be interested. Sophie gave The Post a second chance, and this time they said yes. *The Hounds of Youth*

Woodrow Wilson Rawls
(September 24, 1913 – December 16, 1984)

Study Questions

Directions: Answer the questions in the spaces provided.

- _____ 1. Based on the information in the Author Biography, the reader can infer that
- (A) Wilson Rawls liked dogs more than cats.
 - (B) *Where the Red Fern Grows* is, in some part, autobiographical.
 - (C) Billy's family left the Ozarks before his 10th birthday.
 - (D) Dog stories were not very popular in the 1950s.
- _____ 2. The *most likely* reason Rawls chose *The Hounds of Youth* and the manuscript for a rewrite is
- (A) it was about hunting dogs.
 - (B) Sophie liked hearing stories from her husband's childhood.
 - (C) he knew it by heart, and it was his favorite.
 - (D) he wanted people to know about life in the Ozarks as it used to be.
- _____ 3. Which of the following was **not** a major factor in making *Where the Red Fern Grows* a successful children's book?
- (A) Wilson Rawls's talent as a speaker
 - (B) 5000 teachers and librarians
 - (C) The Great Depression
 - (D) Doubleday agent Mr. Breinholt
4. Why did Wilson Rawls take his original, handwritten manuscript of *Where the Red Fern Grows* with him when he spoke to school children?
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
5. Put a ✓ in the blanks before the details that support the *main idea* of this article. Put an X in the blank before the items that are minor details.
- _____ Wilson Rawls became a successful author in spite of his poor writing skills because he didn't give up.
- _____ Rawls's family left the Ozarks with the coming of the Great Depression in 1929.
- _____ In addition to being a successful author, Wilson Rawls also gained fame as a guest speaker in American schools.
- _____ Rawls's lifelong dream was to become a published author.
- _____ Rawls met his wife Sophie in Idaho Falls, Idaho
- _____ Rawls's wife Sophie was an important part of his success as an author.
- _____ At one time, Rawls worked as a carpenter.

Word List with Definitions
Set 1—Chapters I—VIII
(26 Words)

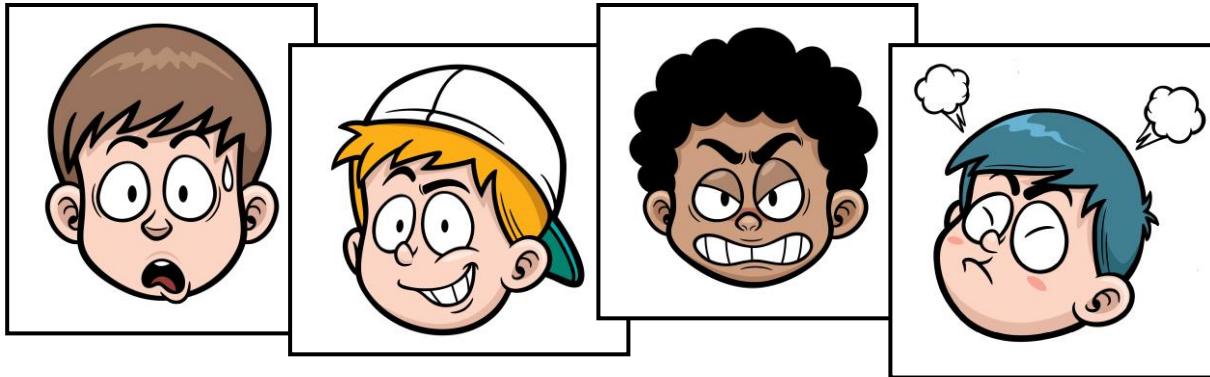
- cur** An unfriendly, vicious, or worthless dog; a despicable or cowardly person. (p. 12)
- coaxing** Attempting to influence by gentle persuasion, flattery, or pleading; working or tending to something carefully and patiently to make it function as one desires. enticing; urging (p. 12)
- dormant** Inactive, as if asleep; in a state of inactivity, as a volcano; quiescent. (p. 13)
- sheen** A gleaming or glistening brightness; shining; luster;. (p. 15)
- commotion** A noisy disturbance; disorder; turmoil.(p. 19)
- baying** Deep prolonged howling, as of a hound on the scent of something being pursued; holding in position, such as prey.(p. 22)
- festered** Formed pus, as in a cut, a wound, or around a foreign body in the flesh; to become or cause to become bitter or irritated, especially over a long period of time; cankered; smoldered. (p. 24)
- wares** Merchandise or manufactured goods produced for sale to consumers; services of artistic or intellectual creativity offered for sale; (p. 27)
- dumbfounded** To be made speechless by amazement; astonished; confused; puzzled; bewildered. (p. 28, p138)
- quavering** Trembling; shaking; to utter, say, or sing in a quivering voice. (p. 29. p. 51)
- adoration** An expression of deep love and esteem; worship. (p. 30)
- riffle** (1) a rapid, as in a stream; a ripple on water; a rocky shoal causing a rapid in a stream; (2) to turn hastily, as through the pages of a book; to shift around, as a group of objects. *Not to be confused with rifle*: a firearm. (p. 33, p. 95, p. 97, p. 161)
- wincing** Drew back slightly, as with sudden pain or surprise; cringed; made a face; grimaced; recoiled.(p. 34, p. 89)
- sorghum** A large, cereal grass, having broad, corn-like leaves and a tall, pithy stem bearing grain in a top cluster; the syrup made from sorghum grass. (p. 36)
- muster** To gather, summon, gather up, rouse (usually followed by *up*), such as courage; to assemble or gather as for display or inspection, as troops. (p. 39)
- gunny sack** A bag made of a coarse fabric woven from jute, hemp, or other fiber. (p. 40)
- scampering** Running about playfully. (p. 46)
- querying** Questioning; inquiring (p. 52)
- wily** crafty; tricky; cagey; cunning; sly. (p. 55--misprinted *wiley* on this page, 117)
- gouge** To dig or force into as by making a hole or a groove with a sharp object; swindle, extort, or overcharge. (p. 56)
- frazzle** (Informal: *to a frazzle*) A state of total exhaustion; worn to a mere remnant of oneself; to become frayed, shredded or worn out, as threadbare. (p. 62, p. 66)
- persistence** Continuing in spite of obstacles, opposition, or discouragement; not giving up; tenacity; perseverance. (p. 65)
- crude** Simple; lacking in sophistication or polish; elementary; clumsy; backward; rude; uncouth; (p. 70)
- domain** The territory governed by a single ruler or government; land owned by one person or family; realm; *Internet*: the name of an electronic address or website.(p. 73)
- cinch** *Informal*: something sure or easy; a certainty. (p. 77)
- raved** Talked wildly; talked or wrote with extreme enthusiasm; gave something an extravagantly enthusiastic approval or rating. (p. 77)

Dictionary Digs

Set 1 Chapters I—VIII

Use a dictionary to answer the following questions about some special words from Chapters I-VIII. Write the **letter** of your answer choice in the blank before each question.

- _____ 1. The *most likely* reason Andrew **winc**ed is (A) he found his lost phone, (B) someone stuck him with a pin, (C) his father promised to give him driving lessons, (D) he met his sister's new boyfriend.
- _____ 2. Which word or phrase is the *best* substitute for **ware**s in the following sentence?
*More than 50 merchants showcased their ware*s at the craft show.
(A) products, (B) costumes, (C) creative techniques, (D) talents
- _____ 3. Which of the following objects could be described as having a **sheen**?
(A) a brick sidewalk, (B) a teddy bear, (C) a flowering shrub, (D) a silver cup.
- _____ 4. Which definition of **crude** best applies to the sentence?
His behavior was so crude, he was asked to leave the meeting.
(A) simple, (B) rude, (C) lacking in sophistication, (D) backward.
- _____ 5. If the problem at hand will be a **cinch** to solve, then
(A) it's going to be next to impossible, (B) more than one person will have to be involved, (C) it's going to be an easy fix, (D) it will take longer than expected.
- _____ 6. The cartoon face that has a **dumbfounded** look is
(A) (B) (C) (D)



- _____ 7. Which word is **not** a synonym of **gouge**?
(A) swindle (B) cut (C) reclaim (D) gash
- _____ 8. Which word can replace **quavering** in the sentence and change it to an opposite meaning?
The young woman stood in front of the microphone and began addressing the angry crowd in a quavering voice.
(A) trembling, (B) shaking, (C) faltering, (D) forceful
- _____ 9. Which of the following is **not** a characteristic of **persistence**?
(A) laziness, (B) refusing to give up, (C) endurance, (D) overcoming obstacles.
- _____ 10. The word **cur** can be used to describe a stray dog and
(A) a canine mutation, (B) a despicable person, (C) any vicious wild animal, (D) a person who grooms horses.
- _____ 11. If a wound has **festered** then it (A) is infected, (B) has started to heal, (C) has formed a scar, (D) cannot heal.
- _____ 12. **Sorghum** is a type of (A) drink, (B) raccoon, (C) water, (D) grass.

Figures of Speech

Part 1: Chapters I-XI

The *italicized portions* of the following items are examples of the author's use of figurative language in *Where the Red Fern Grows*. Study the story quote and the accompanying question. Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank to the left.

- _____ 1. *It was too much for him and he took off down the street, squalling like a scalded cat.* (p. 12) This sentence contains a
(A) a simile
(B) a hyperbole
(C) an idiom
(D) personification
- _____ 2. *I went to bed with my heart all torn up in little pieces, and cried myself to sleep.* (p. 19) Which phrase is an example of an *idiom*?
(A) *went to bed*
(B) *went to bed with my heart*
(C) *with my heart all torn up in little pieces*
(D) *cried myself to sleep.*
- _____ 3. *All through the summer I worked like a beaver.* (p. 26)
What is the meaning of this sentence's simile?
(A) The work took place near water.
(B) The speaker was cutting and using wood.
(C) The person speaking worked hard without stopping.
(D) The work was seasonal.
- _____ 4. *As I trotted along, I whistled and sang. I felt as big as the tallest mountain in the Ozarks.* (p. 27) The simile in this passage describes the speaker's
(A) height.
(B) state of mind.
(C) age.
(D) location.
- _____ 5. *On hearing this remark, my heart jumped clear up in my throat. I thought surely it was going to hop right out on the depot platform.* (p. 40)
What is being *personified* in this passage?
(A) a remark
(B) a heart
(C) an animal that hops
(D) the depot platform
- _____ 6. *When the words finally came out they sounded like the squeaky old pully on our well when Mama drew up a bucket of water.* (p. 40)
This passage implies that the speaker's voice
(A) was high pitched and strained.
(B) barely audible and shaky.
(C) louder than usual.
(D) being disguised.

Chapter I

1. What time of the year was it when the man encountered the pack of dogs attacking the hound?
2. Just as he was thinking that the sanitation department would probably have to pick up a dead dog, what surprise did the man get?
3. How was the man able to make the attacking dogs scatter and leave?
4. What conditions told the man that the dog had come a long way?
5. Why did the man think it was probably a little boy who had put the dog's name on its collar?
6. How long did the hound stay with the man?
7. What drastic event(s) did the man think must have disrupted the hound's life and sent him on his solitary journey home?
8. What memories had the old hound stirred up in the man?
9. Why did the man leave the gate to his backyard open?
10. How far back was the story in the two cups on the man's mantel?



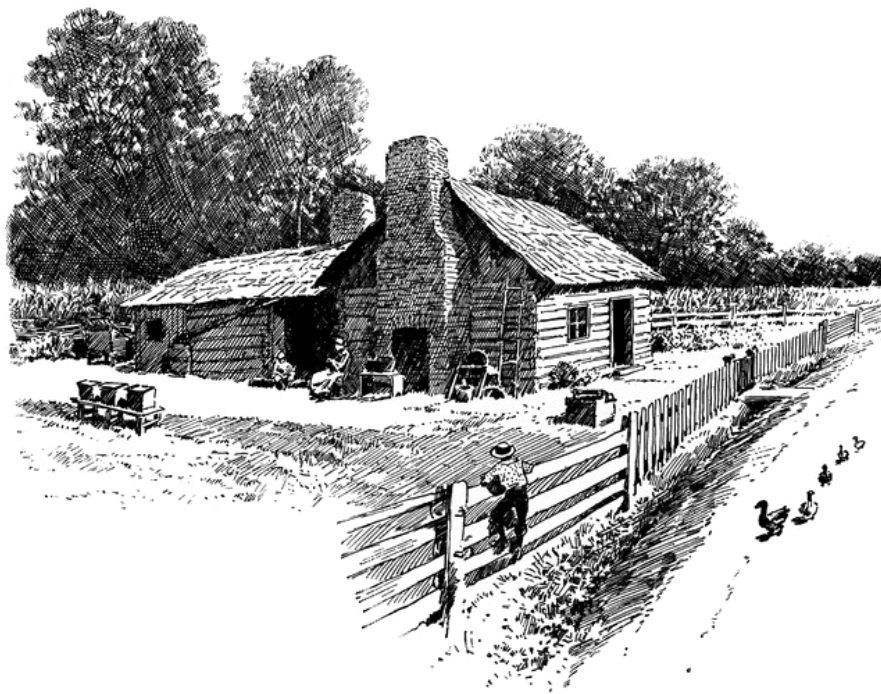
Chapter I



Write either **True** or **False** in the blank before each statement.

- _____ 1. The man had left his office and was walking home when he encountered the pack of dogs attacking the hound.
- _____ 2. The man stepped in to help when the pack slit the hound's ear wide open and put a gash in his shoulder.
- _____ 3. The dog being attacked was a redbone hound.
- _____ 4. The hound bolted from under the hedge and snapped at the man when he attempted to drive away the other dogs. .
- _____ 5. The man had memories of a hound that died so that he might live.
- _____ 6. The man thought that the old hound probably belonged to someone who lived in town or close by.
- _____ 7. The dog was dirty, mud-caked, and starved.
- _____ 8. The redbone had on an expensive collar with name "Hunter" scribbled on the tag.
- _____ 9. The old dog's warm gray eyes brought back wonderful memories for the man.
- _____ 10. The dog stayed with the man for a month before continuing its journey.
- _____ 11. The man knew the dog was a hunting hound and that penning him would break his will to live.
- _____ 12. Watching the dog walk away, the man saw the unmistakable marks of a hunting hound in his sideways walk and the way his ears flopped up and down in rhythm.

Chapter II



prize hens	Cherokee	Oklahoma	raccoon	dog-wanting
nervous wreck	home	steel traps	house cat	coon hounds
Mama	Papa	sleep	bribe	railroad ties
log house	pet him	money	hunter	fields

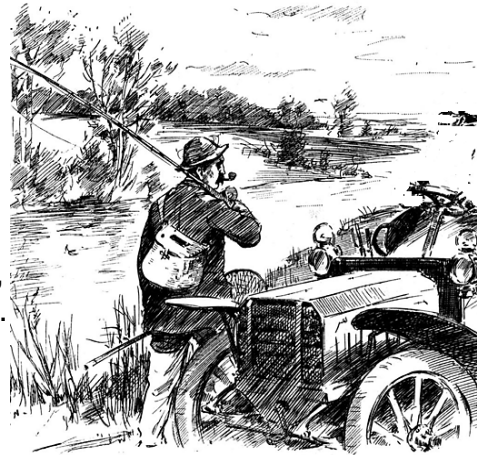
From the list above, choose the word, name, or phrase that correctly completes each of the following statements. Write the answer in the blank to the left. Each answer will be **used once**.

- _____ 1. Billy was ten years old when he started wanting a pair of _____.
- _____ 2. _____ offered to get Billy a collie, but he did not want that kind of dog.
- _____ 3. Billy's family lived in a valley in the Ozarks of northeastern _____.
- _____ 4. Billy's family had been allotted the land they lived on because of the _____ blood that flowed in his mama's veins.
- _____ 5. The family lived in a _____ surrounded by a grove of huge red oaks.
- _____ 6. Billy was a _____ from the time he could walk.
- _____ 7. Billy's parents didn't have the _____ to buy the dogs he wanted.
- _____ 8. The _____ caused Billy to lose weight, and he pestered his mother so much she couldn't get her work done.

Chapter III

Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank before each question.

- _____ 1. During the time he was working with his father, Billy's dog-wanting disease (A) disappeared, (B) burned itself down but festered up every time he saw a coon track, (C) grew worse and finally got so bad he couldn't sleep again, (D) was still there, but it didn't hurt nearly as much.
- _____ 2. Billy found the sportsman's magazine (A) in some underbrush near a creek, (B) in the trash at Grandpa's store, (C) wrapped around some fish his father bought, (D) where fishermen had camped.
- _____ 3. The magazine ad for the redbone coon hounds was from a kennel in (A) Oklahoma, (B) Kentucky, (C) Tennessee, (D) Arkansas.
- _____ 4. The pups were (A) ten dollars each, (B) fifteen dollars each, (C) twenty-five dollars each, (D) fifty dollars each.
- _____ 5. The passage from the Bible that Billy remembered was (A) *God helps those who help themselves*, (B) *The meek shall inherit the Earth*, (C) *The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want*, (D) *To everything there is a season*.
- _____ 6. For a bank, Billy used (A) his mother's old cookie jar, (B) an empty cigar box he found at the fishermen's camp, (C) a glass jar he found behind Grandpa's store, (D) a K.C. Baking Powder can he found in the trash pile behind the barn.
- _____ 7. How much money did Billy put in his bank when he began saving? (A) twenty-three cents, (B) fifty cents, (C) seventy-five cents, (D) a dollar and three cents.
- _____ 8. Billy hid his money (A) near the river, (B) under the porch, (C) in the hay loft, (D) under his bed.
- _____ 9. Which of the following was **not** something Billy sold to make money? (A) animal carvings that he created, (B) minnows and crawfish, (C) animal hides, (D) fresh vegetables.
- _____ 10. Billy sold the berries he picked to (A) the fishermen, (B) his grandfather, (C) his neighbors, (D) hikers.
- _____ 11. How much did Billy charge for the items he sold to the fishermen? (A) five cents, (B) ten cents, (C) a nickel per person, (D) whatever they offered.
- _____ 12. Billy's grandpa promised not to say anything to his father and to (A) order the dogs when Billy had the money, (B) buy all the berries Billy could pick, (C) loan Billy some of the money he needed, (D) buy all the animal hides he could bring in.



Chapter V

Write either **Yes** or **No** in the blank before each question.



- _____ 1. Was the stationmaster a rude, unfriendly man?
- _____ 2. Did the stationmaster know Billy's dad?
- _____ 3. When he picked up the pups, did Billy cry?
- _____ 4. Did the stationmaster ask Billy to pay the pups' feed bill?
- _____ 5. Did the stationmaster cut two slits in Billy's gunny sack and poke each pup's head through a hole?
- _____ 6. As Billy passed through town, did people compliment him on his pair of fine pups?
- _____ 7. Did Billy hit Freckle-face when he stomped his foot and caused his toe to bleed?
- _____ 8. Did the marshal save Billy from being beaten by the mob of boys?
- _____ 9. When Billy told the marshal that it had taken him two years to save the money for his pups, did the man accuse him of lying?
- _____ 10. Had Billy ever had a bottle of pop before the marshal bought one for him?
- _____ 11. By the time he left town for his journey home, had Billy decided that the stories he had heard about marshals weren't true?
- _____ 12. Did Billy spend the night in a cave in the Sparrow Hawk Mountains?
- _____ 13. Did Billy and the pups settle down for the night without having food or a place for sleeping?
- _____ 14. After the boy pup ventured outside and then had to make his way past the camp fire, did Billy decide that he was the bold and aggressive dog?
- _____ 15. Did Billy determine that the girl dog was smarter than the boy dog?
- _____ 16. When the mountain lion screamed in the night, did the boy dog raise his head and bawl a challenge back at the cat?
- _____ 17. Did the girl dog cower behind Billy during the encounter with the lion?
- _____ 18. Realizing that the lion had probably scented his pups, was Billy ready to die for his dogs?
- _____ 19. After remembering that his father had told him mountain lions were afraid of fire, did Billy throw more wood on the fire to build it back up and then sleep through the rest of the night?
- _____ 20. Was it the wee hours of the morning before the lion gave up and left the area?



Chapter I

Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank to the left.

- _____ 1. The man knew the dog belonged to someone because it
(A) came out from under the hedge with only a little coaxing,
(B) was unmistakably a hunting hound,
(C) seemed to know exactly which way to go in order to complete his journey.
(D) was wearing a handmade collar with the name "Buddie" etched into it,
- _____ 2. Which passage explains the man's decision to help the dog?
(A) *I could see that all the dogs were fighting one. . . I knew if something wasn't done quickly the sanitation department would have to pick up a dead dog.*
(B) *He was far out of place with the boxers, poodles, bird dogs, and other breeds of town dogs.*
(C) *It was hard for a man to stand and watch an old hound fight against such odds. . . I had seen the time when an old hound like that had given his life so that I might live.*
(D) *I knew he had come a long way, and no doubt had a long way to go.*
- _____ 3 With the mention of the Snake River Valley in Idaho and the Tetons, the reader knows where the man lives. Which of the following excerpts gives the reader a clue about where the rest of the story will take place?
(A) *I tried to make myself believe that his home was in the Ozark Mountains somewhere in Missouri or Oklahoma.*
(B) *With one final whimper he turned and headed east.*
(C) *He belonged in the country. He was a hunting hound.*
(D) *Through the rains, the snows, or the desert heat, he would jog along, never looking back.*
- _____ 4. The passage that best states the chapter's main idea is
(A) *It was one of those days when a man feels good, feels like speaking to his neighbor, is glad to live in a country like ours, and proud of his government.*
(B) *What I saw in the warm gray eyes of the friendly old hound brought back wonderful memories.*
(C) *I could have kept him in my back yard, but to pen up a dog like that is a sin.*
(D) *As I turned to enter my yard I started to lock the gate, and then I thought, "No I'll leave it open. He might come back."*
- _____ 5. The man said the cups on his mantle had a story that *went back more than a half century*. Based on this information, how long has the man had the cups?
(A) more than fifty years
(B) about seventy-five years
(C) a little over twenty-five years
(D) sixty years

Writing Challenge

The man would have let the hound stay longer, or he could have penned him up and forced him to stay permanently. Instead, he chose to let the dog go.

- What were the two major reasons the man didn't force the dog to stay?
- Do you believe he made the right decision? Why or why not?

Think, Write, Create

Chapter-by-Chapter

All of the following items are aligned to at least one CCSS, especially RL. 6.1, 7.1, 8.1 and one or more writing standards.

Specifically aligned CCSS are listed after selected prompts. Others may apply according to interpretation.

Chapter I

The hound that the man rescued from its attackers was starving and obviously not where it belonged. He gave it a bath, plenty of food, and a day of rest. He would have been willing to let the dog stay with him, but he opened his gate and let it continue its journey.

- How did the man explain his decision? How did it help him resolve the conflict?
- What experience(s) do you suppose gave the man the information he needed to imagine the dog's homecoming in such detail, including the location?
- Do you think the man did the right thing by not keeping the dog? Explain your point of view. (CCSS RL. 6.1, 7.1, 8.1, RL. 6.6, 7.6, 8.6)

What story facts prove that the man was

kindhearted
understanding
unselfish

(CCSS RL 6.1, 7.1, 8.1 RL. 6.3, 7.3, 8.3)

After the man let the dog go, the chill in the air from the Tetons prompted him to stop at the woodshed and pick up several sticks of wood. He didn't turn on any lights when he entered the house. *The dark, quiet atmosphere was a perfect setting for the mood* he was in. He built a fire in the fireplace and sat near it in his favorite rocker.

- Which of the following words do you think *best* identifies the man's mood? Use the word's definition and story facts to support your choice. How would dark and quiet support the word you chose?
nostalgic pensive meditative contemplative reflective sentimental
- What clues tell the reader that the man will be thinking about his boyhood days as he sits by the fire? (CCSS ELA RL. 6.1, 7.1, 8.1, RL. 6.3, 7.3, 8.3 RL. 6.4, 7.4, 8.4)

Chapter II

Choose two words from the list below that describe how you imagine Billy's parents felt when they saw how badly he wanted the hounds and they had to say no. Cite story facts and the words' definitions to support each of your choices.

distressed sorrowful concerned helpless inadequate
irritated sympathetic compassionate

(CCSS ELA RL 6.1, 7.1, 8.1 L 6.4, 7.4, 8.4)

When Billy caught Samie the first time in one of his traps, Mama used the forked stick under the clothesline to hold the cat down so Billy could release the cat's foot from the trap.

- What was the purpose of the clothesline?
- Do a drawing that illustrates how you think the clothesline was anchored and how the forked stick fit into the construction.

Whole Book

Except for the Maxwell car and the price of coonskins, the author makes no mention of significant events taking place in the outside world.

- What might have been the author's purpose in omitting these details? How did this give the reader both a focus on Billy's story and a sense of isolation in Billy's environment?
- How did this technique prepare the reader for the end of the story?

(CCSS ELA RL 6.2, 7.2, 8.2 RL 6.3, 7., 8.3 RL 6.6, 7.6, 8.6)

When the story ends, the reader knows that Billy and his family are moving away to a better life. What do you imagine happened to

Grandpa and his store
Rainie Pritchard
Samie
the new baby

Which of the following bits of advice *best* states the theme of ***Where the Red Fern Grows***? Cite at least three story facts to support your choice.

Look before you leap.

Follow your dreams.

Never give up.

Look for the silver lining.

(CCSS ELA RL 6.2, 6.2, 7.2, 8.2)

The dictionary definition of the word ***pathetic*** is "causing or deserving pity; pitiful."

- Based on their behavior and the things that happened to them, how were the Pritchards a pathetic family? How were Rubin and Rainie Pritchard pathetic as individuals? Use events and conversations from the story to prove that your answers are correct.
- The definition of ***ignorant*** is "having little or no knowledge or education; showing a lack of knowledge." The meaning of the word ***antisocial*** is "not liking to be with other people; harmful to society in general." Which of these two words do you think ***best*** describes the Pritchards? What story events or conversations support your choice?

(CCSS ELA RL 6.1, 7.1, 8.1 RL 6.3, 7.3, 8.3 RL 6.6, 7.6, 8.6)

Look up the definitions of the words ***ignorant*** and ***stupid***.

- Explain how the words ***ignorant*** and ***stupid*** have entirely different meanings. Why do you suppose people often confuse these two words?
- What changes did Billy's parents make in their lives to keep their children from growing up as ignorant people?
- How did Little Ann and Old Dan help Billy's parents carry out their plans?
- What proof can you find in the story that they were successful, especially with Billy?

(CCSS ELA RL 6.1, 7.1, 8.1 RL 6.4, 7.4, 8.4)

Night Journeys—A Comparison

When Billy disappeared into the darkness on his way to Tahlequah to pick up his pups, it was the second night journey he had made without his parents' knowledge. His previous excursion, however, had been for a different reason and with a different outcome.

Go to the bottom of page 21 and the top of page 22 in Chapter II for the chronical of Billy's first leaving-home experience. Fill in the spaces below with facts about Billy's two expeditions. Then use your notes to write about **Night Journeys—A Comparison**.

The First Journey

The Reason:



Preparation:



The Results:



The Second Journey

The Reason:



Preparation:



The Results:



Failure and Success:

How did each of the following contribute to the failure of one mission and the success of another? Which do you think had the *most* influence on the outcome?

Motivation:

Maturity and Experience:



About Your Teaching Guide. . .

Goals

To. . .

- Offer a teaching guide with a full spectrum of learning experiences that flow from **basic knowledge** to **higher-level thinking skills** and align with **US Common Core State Standards** for English language arts as well as with Canadian, Australian, and other international standards.
 - Provide **classroom-ready** materials that **motivate** and **instruct**.
 - Create **novel-specific activities** that require careful reading, help develop comprehension skills, and challenge the thinking process.
 - Accommodate a wide variety of student **ability** and **interest**.
 - **Support teachers** by providing a practical teaching resource that saves preparation time and meets instructional requirements.
-

The Nine Components. . .

1. Before You Read

In this component, the focus is on sparking student interest. Each teaching pack includes open-ended questions that can be used as **independent activities**, **whole-group/small-group discussions**, or **research topics** and at least one **bulletin board idea**.

2. Informational Texts

This section provides a short author's biography along with one or more additional articles that provide background information designed to help students comprehend and enjoy the story. Each informational text is accompanied by a set of ten CCSS aligned questions and a writing challenge. **Specific CCSS alignments are listed in the answer keys.**

3. Vocabulary

Word Choices. . .

The words lifted from the novel for focused study are chosen based on one or more of the following criteria:

<i>their level of difficulty</i>	<i>their frequency of use in children's literature</i>
<i>their importance in comprehending the story</i>	<i>their value as useful composition vocabulary</i>
<i>the probability that they will be encountered across the curriculum</i>	<i>unique meanings, spellings, pronunciation, etc.</i>

Word Lists and Definitions. . .

For teacher convenience and reference, both a compiled alphabetized word list and story-order word lists with definitions are included. Page numbers for the selected vocabulary are given so that each word can be spotted easily and studied in context. For clarity, the definitions are paraphrased to match the word's tense, number, part of speech, etc. rather than cross referenced as in a standard dictionary. The major resource of this information is www.dictionary.com.

Dictionary Activities. . .

Long word lists are divided into chapter sets of workable numbers and presented as **Dictionary Digs**. Students are instructed to use a dictionary to answer a series of multiple choice questions about word meanings, usage, unique characteristics, etc. These pages are **designed to be used before reading** so that students will have a working knowledge of the words when they encounter them during reading. **CCSS skills alignments are listed in the answer keys.**

Using the Words. . .

Other activities, which pull terms from the lists in random order, lead students through a variety of word studies which include

sentence usage

word forms

synonyms and antonyms

anagrams

categories

word-groups/connections

word types (acronyms, onomatopoeia, etc.)

scrambled sentences

analogies

whole-class/group games

etymologies

figurative language from the story

Note: Some of these varieties, but not all, are found in each Teaching Guide. These pages may be introduced prior to reading or as post-reading activities. ***Targeted CCSS skills alignments are included in the answer keys.***

4. Assessment—Short Answer Questions

Short answer questions for each chapter (or groups of chapters) are the first assessment tools. The items encourage and check for careful, *factual* reading. The questions are in *sequence* with the pages they cover,

The short answer questions can be used as

student reading guides

pop quizzes

homework

discussion group guides

conferencing with individual students

5. Assessment—Objective Tests

The objective tests have multiple functions. In addition to their obvious application, they also serve as tools that can *improve **comprehension skills** by providing practice in understanding plot structure and recognizing important story elements.*

Rationale:

Focus on the Plot. . .

Whether they are aware of their ability or not, all good readers sense the **rhythm** of the **connected** events that compose the plot of a novel, and consequently **comprehend** the story. They are in tune with cause and effect, behavior and consequence, sequence—the heartbeat of the narrative.

This plot rhythm forms the framework for the objective tests. The chain of events that tell the story have been pulled from the novel and reformatted into a series of sequenced questions, none of which require **interpretation**. They are intended to **draw student attention to the fact that something happened**, not to what the incident means. These skills are covered in other components.

The Characters. . .

Questions that identify a character's personality and/or motivation are purposely and carefully included with the plot movers. Again, the questions do not require **interpretation**. They simply establish that someone did or said something—knowledge that is invaluable when character analysis is required.

Implied Meaning and Story Clues. . .

The objective tests include items that establish the existence of story components carrying **implied meaning**. **Story clues** that foreshadow future events also appear as questions. At this point in the novel study, as before, **interpretation** is not the goal. **Awareness** of the **facts** is the target.

Developing/Improving Listening Skills. . .

Listening skills are rightfully included on every list of competency goals. Rather than always requiring students to answer test questions on a printed page, why not surprise them occasionally by doing the test orally and meeting competency goals at the same time?

Discussion Guide Capability. . .

The objective tests are helpful discussion guides. Use individual items on these pages to draw student attention to sequence, cause and effect, story clues (foreshadowing), character traits, recognizing and interpreting implied meanings, etc. These “thinking out loud” sessions are an **important building block** for the next learning phase.

6. Assessment—CCSS/Standards-Based Skills—Quizzes and Writing

These pages are a series of chapter-by-chapter quizzes that focus specifically on a variety of **ELA CCSS** including literature, language, and writing. Individual chapters are covered by 5 questions presented in test format with a separate writing challenge. The **whole book test** has 20 questions with a full-book writing challenge. ***Specific CCSS alignments for individual questions and writing challenges are included in the answer keys.***

7. Think, Write, Create

In this section, students pack up what they already know about the novel and go exploring into its every nook and cranny. Some activities require the simplest interpretation or application, while others will challenge the most proficient thinkers.

Rationale:

Guidelines. . .

Most of the items in this section focus on an **ELA CCSS skill**. All meet the criteria of the ***Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Bloom's Taxonomy)***. ***Specific CCSS skills alignments are listed after each thinking/writing prompt.***

Organization. . .

Chapter-specific activities are grouped and presented according to their corresponding sets of **Short Answer Questions, Objective Test, and CCSS Skills**. Having led students through the basics for each chapter (or selected section), teachers may shop in this section for in-depth activities that optimize student understanding and interest while also addressing specific **educational standards**.

The **Whole Book Activities**, as their name indicates, require a grasp of the theme(s), characters, implications, etc. as they apply to the full novel. These pages are a teacher's smorgasbord of culminating possibilities. In some cases, the choices are outgrowths of concepts that students have dealt with in a previous activity. In others, students are encouraged to look at the story from a new angle.

Levels of Difficulty. . .

A broad spectrum of **difficulty levels** to accommodate the needs of individual students, including the gifted, is an integral part of **Think, Write, Create**. However, **all** items from this section are intended to **challenge** and **sharpen** thinking abilities.

Activities. . .

Every novel teaching pack includes activities that require students to choose and use precise, appropriate, and meaningful **vocabulary**. These exercises involve choosing words to describe a character's personality or behavior. The following example is from ***Charlotte's Web***.

Eight-year-old Fern cried and begged her father not to destroy the runt pig. She sealed the little animal's fate by asking her father if he would have killed her if she had been born very small.

- Which **two** of the following words do you think **best** describe the way Fern's father behaved during this episode? Explain your choice. Include the definitions of the words you selected in your answer.

<i>practical</i>	<i>sensitive</i>	<i>loving</i>	<i>cruel</i>	<i>considerate</i>
<i>realistic</i>	<i>flexible</i>	<i>callous</i>	<i>compassionate</i>	<i>logical</i>

- Choose **two** words from the list below that you believe **best** describe Fern's behavior. Explain why they are the appropriate words. Use the definitions of your choices as part of your explanation.

<i>impulsive</i>	<i>compassionate</i>	<i>assertive</i>	<i>tender-hearted</i>	<i>hysterical</i>
<i>undisciplined</i>	<i>naive</i>	<i>juvenile</i>	<i>humane</i>	<i>empathetic</i>

In each case students work with a given collection of terms, all of which can be correctly applied to the character(s) in question. However, the individual words have various strengths of meaning. It is the student's task to analyze both the character's behavior and the words, make choices, and then cite events from the story to support his/her selection.

Teachers may opt to narrow the choices to fewer words, choose words for individual students, divide the class into groups and offer a specific set of words to each group, or use the assignment as it is written.

Other items in this component challenge students to . . .

*write for self-expression, for communication, and
for entertainment
form opinions and theories
cite textual evidence to support their
explanations and opinions
connect personal experience to story situations
become familiar with and identify literary elements
analyze story characters and events
make predictions based on given facts*

*think about social issues
create drawings, diagrams, photos, maps,
models, recordings, films, etc.
imagine
categorize
engage in research and data gathering
recognize and perceive story theme(s)
understand point of view*

Cross Curricula. . .

Think, Write, Create takes full advantage of opportunities to connect both major themes and the smallest story detail to other realms of the curriculum. In **Charlotte's Web**, for example, students may apply their calculation skills to a page of "Spider Math." In the **Holes** teaching pack students are challenged to create a game that utilizes a saved group of Camp Green Lake's holes.

Options, options, and more options. . .

Think, Write, Create is purposely bulging at the seams to give teachers **pick-and-choose options** for

<i>individualizing assignments</i>	<i>homework</i>
<i>group work</i>	<i>short-term and long-term projects</i>
<i>whole class activities</i>	<i>differentiating assignments</i>
<i>capitalizing on student interest</i>	<i>implementing standards-based skills</i>

8. Graphic Organizers

Ideas for the graphic organizers are pulled from individual chapters, groups of chapters, or a whole-book concept. **These pages are aligned to numerous CCSS skills for ELA writing. Teachers may choose the particular skill(s) they wish to address with each assignment.**

Structure. . .

The organizers do not repeat a set pattern of circles, squares, lines, etc., prescribed for a particular type of writing. Each one is tailored to a **specific idea** pulled from the novel. **Structured directions** for organizing the topic support the student so that **writing** is the major focus.

Non-writing Organizers. . .

Sometimes, students are enticed to stretch their imaginations by filling out "forms" or writing "diary entries." One graphic organizer from **Hatchet**, for example, allows students to assume the persona of the pilot who rescued Brian by writing three entries into his log—the day before the rescue, the day of the rescue, and the day after the rescue. In the **Holes** Novel Teaching Pack, students become detectives and conduct a "background check" on Mr. Sir, recording their findings on the provided "official form." In these cases, composition skills take a back seat to **imagination, empathy, and pure enjoyment.**

9. Answer Keys

Keys for **all items that require a specific answer** are included in this section. When appropriate, **suggested answers** for open-ended activities are also added. **CCSS alignments for all components except Think, Write, Create are included in this section.**

A final note from the author. . .

It is my personal wish that when the last page has been read, the last activity completed, and the last idea discussed, at least one of your students will ask, "What are we going to read next?"



Margaret Whisnant