

Stone Fox

by John Reynolds Gardiner



A Teaching Guide

by Margaret Whisnant

Stone Fox by John Reynolds Gardiner
A Novel Teaching Pack by Margaret Whisnant

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Little Willy and his dog, Searchlight,
live on a potato farm in Wyoming with Grandfather.

One morning, Grandfather does not get out of bed.
Doc Smith says he is not sick. He just doesn't want to live anymore.
Something is wrong.

Little Willy is determined to find the problem and fix it so
Grandfather will get well.

The odds are against him.

Ten-year-old little Willy must find \$500.
He and Searchlight must win the National Dogsled Race or lose the farm.



The odds are enormous.

He must beat all the other contestants.
He must win against the Indian called

Stone Fox.

He and his 5 Samoyeds never lose.

The odds are impossible,

but little Willy plans to win.

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Summaries

1 Grandfather

- One day Grandfather does not get out of bed. Little Willy, who lives with Grandfather on a potato farm in Wyoming, thinks he is playing one of his tricks.
- Grandfather always gets up early to make a fire and call little Willy to breakfast. He calls Grandfather to get up, but the old man doesn't answer.
- Little Willy runs out on the front porch where Searchlight is sleeping. The big black dog, with a white spot on her head, had been born over ten years ago, the same day as little Willy.
- The dog and the boy run a mile to Doc Smith's small log cabin.
- Little Willy asks her to come quick. Grandfather won't answer him.
- At first Doc Smith thinks it's another of Grandfather's tricks, but she stops reading when she hears that little Willy and Grandfather had not been up late singing and that Grandfather had gone to bed without playing his harmonica.
- Little Willy hitches Doc Smith's horse to the wagon for the ride back to the farm. Searchlight runs ahead.
- Grandfather hasn't moved. Searchlight licks his beard, which is full of tears.
- When Doc Smith finishes examining Grandfather, she asks about this year's potato crop. Then she asks if little Willy and Grandfather owe anybody money.
- Little Willy says the potato crop is good, and they don't owe any money. He wants to know what is wrong with Grandfather.
- Doc Smith says there is nothing medically wrong with Grandfather. For some reason, he has given up. He doesn't want to live anymore.
- Little Willy asks about fishing, the Rodeo, and turkey dinners. Doesn't Grandfather want to do these things anymore?
- Hearing little Willy's words, Grandfather shuts his eyes and tears roll down his cheeks into his beard.
- Doc Smith says she is sure he does, but there is something else.
- Little Willy vows to find out what is wrong and make it better.
- Searchlight barks loudly.

2 Little Willy

- A ten-year-old-boy cannot run a farm, but that is exactly what little Willy intends to do. He is sure that Grandfather will get well if the potato crop is a good one.
- Grandfather has been overly concerned about this year's crop. He has said over and over it would be the best crop ever.
- Three weeks pass and Grandfather gets worse. Doc Smith says little Willy should face the fact that Grandfather is going to die. Mrs. Peacock can take care of him and little Willy can come live with her. A local farmer can take Searchlight.
- Little Willy is sure Grandfather will get better after the harvest. He refuses Doc Smith's offer. They are a family and they will stick together.
- Little Willy promises Searchlight that he will never give her away.
- That evening little Willy's harmonica playing is so bad, Searchlight grabs it and runs out of the room. Though Grandfather hasn't spoken for over three weeks, little Willy asks if he wants to hear him play the harmonica some more.
- Grandfather puts his hand down on the bed with the palm facing upward. Little Willy looks at Grandfather hand for a long time and then asks if he is saying "yes."

Vocabulary Lists with Definitions

Arranged in Book Order

Set One: Chapter 1 Grandfather-- Chapter 3 Searchlight

Twenty-four Words

Note: The first page number(s) after each definition correlate to the 25th Anniversary Edition of **Stone Fox** published in 2005. The second number(s) in *italics* match the pagination in the original **Stone Fox** published in 1980.

- surrounded** Encircled by; enclosed on all sides, such as a fence. (p. 5) (*p. 5*)
- harmonica** Also called **mouth organ**, a musical wind instrument consisting of a small rectangular case containing a set of metal reeds connected to a row of rectangular holes, over which the player places the mouth and exhales and inhales to produce the tones. (p. 6) (*p. 7*)
- palomino** A horse with a golden coat and a white mane and tail, developed chiefly in the Southwestern US. (p. 6) (*p. 7*)
- proceeded** Moved forward or onward, especially after an interruption; moved in an orderly manner; continued; advanced; went ahead. (p. 8) (*p. 7*)
- examination** An inspection, as that done by a doctor on a patient; an inquiry; the act or process of testing pupils, candidates, etc. as by questions. (p. 8-9) (*p. 9*)
- concerned** Troubled or anxious; interested in; affected by. (p. 11) (*p. 12*)
- insisted** Demanded or asserted; refused to yield; stood firm. (p. 11) (*p. 12*)
- irrigation** The act of supplying dry land or crops with water by means of ditches, pipes, or streams; to water artificially. (p. 11) (*p. 12*)
- sickly** Not strong; not in good health; feeble; ailing; puny. (p. 12) (*p. 13*)
- inspected** Looked at critically and carefully, especially for the purpose of finding flaws; examined; checked. (p. 17) (*p. 16*)
- mended** Made repairs to; restored; corrected; reformed as one's behavior or a strained relationship. (p. 17) (*p. 16*)
- determined** Firmly fixed in an idea or thought; serious; steadfast; set; resolute; intent. (p. 19) (*p. 18*)
- stocked** Gathered a large supply of goods, such as food and water, for future use; accumulated; hoarded. (p. 23) (*p. 23*)
- purchased** Bought; acquired by the payment of money or an item of value. (p. 23) (*p. 23*)
- sturdy** Strongly built; solid; durable; stalwart. (p. 24) (*p. 24*)
- errands** Short and quick trips to accomplish a particular task, such as to buy something, deliver something, gather information, etc.; chores; assignments. (p. 25) (*p. 24*)
- respected** Admired; held in esteem or honor; obeyed; appreciated; refrained from intruding upon or interfering with, (p. 25) (*p., 26*)
- blur** Something not clearly seen; an indistinct form; a smudge or smear that clouds or covers the appearance of; to mask or cloud over. (p. 26) (*p. 27*)
- lunged** Moved forward suddenly with force; pounced; jumped; charged. (p. 26) (*p. 27*)
- enabled** Made possible or easy; provided the power, means, or ability to do something; allowed; authorized. (p. 28) (*p. 27*)
- tremendous** Extraordinary in size, amount, or intensity; amazing; astounding; huge; overwhelming; great. (p. 28) (*p. 27*)
- forged** Moved ahead with steady progress; formed by heating and hammering; imitated the handwriting or signature of another for fraudulent purposes. (p. 28) (*p. 28*)
- exhausted** Very tired; worn out; drained of strength; used up completely. (p. 28) (*p. 29*)
- impatiently** In a manner than indicates an unwillingness or inability to wait; irritably; restlessly; hurriedly. (p. 29) (*p. 29*)

Dictionary Digs

Set One

Chapter 1 *Grandfather*—Chapter 3 *Searchlight*

Use your favorite dictionary to find correct answers to the following questions about some important words from Chapters 1, 2, and 3. Write the letters of your answer choices in the blanks to the left.

_____ 1. Which of the following words is **not** a *synonym* for **purchased**?

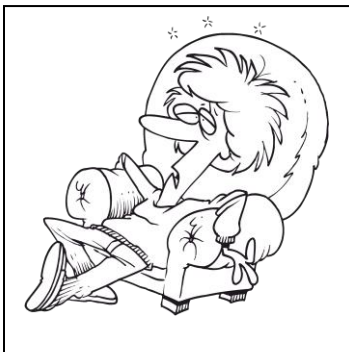
(A) bought, (B) acquired, (C) marketed

_____ 2. Choose the word that can be substituted for **lunged** in the sentence without changing its meaning.

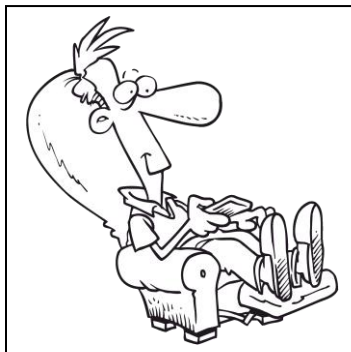
*Two players **lunged** forward only to crash into each other, completely missing the football.* (A) crept, (B) pounced, (C) retreated

_____ 3. Which of the following cartoon characters appears to be **exhausted**?

(A)



(B)



(C)



_____ 4. Which of the following is the *least* likely person to undergo an **examination**?

(A) a patient in a doctor's office, (B) a fourth-grade student, (C) an author working on a new novel.

_____ 5. The purpose of **irrigation** is to (A) make someone really mad, (B) bring water to dry land or crops, (C) bring emergency supplies to people in need.

_____ 6. An *antonym* of **determined** is (A) wavering, (B) steadfast, (C) intent.

_____ 7. Which of the following is **not** a characteristic of a **palomino** horse? (A) a golden coat, (B) a jet-black mane and tail, (C) white markings on the face and legs.

_____ 8. If Jason is *running **errands** for his mother*, then he is (A) moving as fast as he can to meet a deadline, (B) helping her keep a secret, (C) making short trips at her request to accomplish a set of tasks, such as delivering something.

_____ 9. Which word, when substituted for the word in bold print, will give the sentence an *opposite* meaning?

*Experts have **determined** that the signature on the will was **forged**.*

(A) fraudulent, (B) authentic, (C) counterfeit

_____ 10. To say that *the cabin was **surrounded** by a forest of tall pines* means that (A) the structure was situated in a large open area, (B) the tall pines kept sunlight from reaching the cabin, (C) the forest grew in a circle around the cabin.

_____ 11. A word that means the same as **sickly** is (A) puny, (B) healthy, (C) burly.

_____ 12. The *best* example of something that can be **mended** is (A) a rip in a pair of jeans, (B) a fallen tree, (C) burned toast.

Silly Sentences

All of the **bold print** words below are hanging out in the wrong sentence, which makes most of them sound just plain silly! Bring some sense back to the situation by writing each word in the blank before the sentence where it belongs.

insisted bobbed mended purchased plopped

- _____ 1. Yesterday, after saving his allowance for months, Bob **plopped** the new phone he has always wanted.
- _____ 2. Dad **purchased** the tear that yesterday's hail storm punched into the patio awning.
- _____ 3. My hat blew off in the wind, landed in the lake, and **mended** up and down until it was out of my reach.
- _____ 4. Mom **bobbed** that I call Grandmother and wish her a happy birthday before I left for school.
- _____ 5. Exhausted from an overnight with friends, Sandra **insisted** down on the couch without saying hello.

irrigation moccasin tension unison examination

- _____ 6. The **moccasin** in the room suddenly exploded into a loud argument.
- _____ 7. Uncle Frank had an **examination** system installed in his lawn and gardens so he doesn't have to waste time dragging around a water hose.
- _____ 8. Everyone shouted "Yes!" in **irrigation** when Mrs. Ross asked if we would like to listen to some music.
- _____ 9. After careful **tension**, I decided the stack of collectable cards weren't worth the price the dealer was asking.
- _____ 10. Our new puppy chewed at the heel of my **unison** and quickly sank his sharp little teeth into my foot.



Figurative Language

Each of the following sentences from the story contains an example of a **simile**, a **metaphor**, an **idiom**, a **hyperbole**, or **personification**. Study the sentence and its accompanying question. Write the letter of the correct answer in the blank to the left.

- _____ 1. *"Medically, he's as healthy as an ox. . . ."* (p. 10)
The figure of speech in this passage is
(A) a simile,
(B) a metaphor,
(C) an idiom,
(D) a hyperbole.
- _____ 2. *Hadn't Grandfather been overly concerned about the crop this year? Hadn't he insisted that every square inch of land be planted?* (p. 12)
Which phrase is the *hyperbole*?
(A) overly concerned
(B) about the crop
(C) every square inch
(D) be planted
- _____ 3. *It's not a dirty snow. It's a clean, soft snow that rests like a blanket over the entire state.* (p. 22)
The *simile* in this passage compares
(A) snow to a blanket,
(B) dirt to snow,
(C) snow to the state,
(D) softness to a blanket.
- _____ 4. *Little Willy loved to look at all the people, especially the "city slickers," as Grandfather called them. Why, they didn't know a potato from a peanut, Grandfather said, and their hands were as pink and soft as a baby's. . .* (p. 26)
This passage has an example of
(A) a simile,
(B) a metaphor,
(C) personification
(D) a hyperbole
- _____ 5. *Today again he (little Willy) waited, eyes glued on the big church clock that loomed high overhead.* (p. 27)
The *idiom* in this sentence is
(A) again he waited,
(B) eyes glued on the big church clock,
(C) clock that loomed,
(D) loomed high overhead.



Short Answer Questions

1 Grandfather

1. Where did little Willy and Grandfather live?
2. What trick of Grandfather's did it take little Willy an hour to catch on to?
3. On the morning that Grandfather did not get out of bed, why did little Willy think he might be playing another trick?
4. Describe Searchlight.
5. How old was Searchlight?
6. What information caused Doc Smith to get up from her chair and go to see Grandfather?
7. What was in Grandfather's beard when Searchlight licked it?
8. After she examined Grandfather, what two questions did Doc Smith ask little Willy?
9. What did Doc Smith say was wrong with Grandfather?
10. How did little Willy intend to help Grandfather?

2 Little Willy

1. What facts made little Willy believe that Grandfather would be all right after the potatoes were harvested?
2. How did little Willy react to Doc Smith's suggestion that he should let Mrs. Peacock take care of Grandfather, give Searchlight away, and go live with her?
3. What color were Searchlight's eyes?
4. How long had it been since Grandfather had talked?
5. How did Grandfather answer "yes" or "no" to little Willy's questions?
6. Why was little Willy not able to rent a horse to plow the potato crop from the ground?
7. Why did little Willy turn down a friend of Grandfather's when he offered to help harvest the crop?
8. Though little Willy pleaded with him, what plan did Grandfather reject with "no, no, no!"?
9. Explain how Searchlight came to the rescue.
10. How did little Willy know that Grandfather had not been worrying about the potato crop?

1 Grandfather

Pages 3-11

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

- _____ 1. Little Willy and his grandfather lived on a potato farm in Wyoming.
- _____ 2. Grandfather was a very serious man who thought having fun was foolish.
- _____ 3. Little Willy knew something was wrong because Grandfather did not get out of bed.



- _____ 4. Searchlight was a young female dog about three years old.
- _____ 5. Doc Smith was a young woman who lived in town.
- _____ 6. Doc Smith stopped reading and went to see Grandfather when she learned he had gone to bed without playing his harmonica.
- _____ 7. Grandfather's beard was full of tears.
- _____ 8. Doc Smith asked questions to find out if there was something worrying Grandfather.
- _____ 9. Doc Smith said Grandfather had suffered a stroke and did not want to live anymore.
- _____ 10. Little Willy vowed to find out what was wrong and make Grandfather want to live again.



2 *Little Willy*

Pages 12-21

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

- _____ 1. How old was little Willy? (A) fifteen, (B) ten, (C) six.
- _____ 2. What crop did Grandfather grow on the farm? (A) potatoes, (B) wheat, (C) apples.
- _____ 3. Doc Smith said that Grandfather was (A) getting better, (B) about the same, (C) getting worse.
- _____ 4. Little Willy and Grandfather could communicate through (A) eye signals, (B) the harmonica, (C) hand signals.
- _____ 5. When he checked the strongbox for money to rent a horse, little Willy discovered (A) Grandfather's will, (B) that there was no money, (C) some strange letters that he couldn't read.
- _____ 6. Little Willy thought Grandfather was sick because (A) there was no money to rent a horse to bring in the crop, (B) this year's crop was not good, (C) he couldn't get help harvesting the crop.
- _____ 7. How did little Willy get the crop out of the ground? (A) A neighbor loaned him a horse to pull the plow. (B) Searchlight pulled the plow. (C) He rented a horse with his college money.
- _____ 8. How long did it take little Willy and Searchlight to get the crop in? (A) one week, (B) ten days, (C) a month.
- _____ 9. The crop was (A) small, (B) harvested too late, (C) a good one.
- _____ 10. When little Willy showed Grandfather the money from the crop and told him he could get better, Grandfather said (A) "No," (B) "Yes," (C) "Impossible."

3 Searchlight

Pages 22-29

snow
the schoolhouse
the race home

the sled
run errands
little Willy

Grandfather
the church clock
the owner of the horse



From the list above, choose the name, word, or phrase that fits each of the clues below and write it in the blank. **Each answer** will be used **at least once**. **One answer** will be used **twice**.

- _____ 1. It was easy to tell when it was winter in Wyoming because this was on everything.
- _____ 2. Grandfather had bought the one that little Willy and Searchlight used from the Indians.
- _____ 3. He had chopped enough wood and bought enough supplies for the winter.
- _____ 4. Because she knew the whereabouts of every fallen tree and every gully, Searchlight could run this at tremendous speed.
- _____ 5. He had put fifty dollars in a savings account for little Willy because he wanted him to go to college and be educated.
- _____ 6. Searchlight pulled little Willy on the sled five miles from Grandfather's farmhouse to the outskirts of town where this was located.
- _____ 7. After school, little Willy and Searchlight went into the town of Jackson to do this.
- _____ 8. Searchlight and little Willy waited each evening for it to strike at six to begin their race home.
- _____ 9. He stood impatiently on the front porch of Grandfather's farmhouse watching Searchlight and little Willie.
- _____ 10. With Searchlight pulling it, its runners barely touched the snow, and near Grandfather's farmhouse, it seemed to lift up off the ground and fly.

4 The Reason

Pages 30-36

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

- _____ 1. Did Searchlight like Clifford Snyder right away?
- _____ 2. Did Clifford Snyder have a gun?
- _____ 3. Was Clifford Snyder afraid because he thought little Willy was planning to shoot him?
- _____ 4. Did little Willy leave Searchlight outside because she refused to come into the house?
- _____ 5. Had Clifford Snyder come to help Grandfather and little Willy work things out with the state of Wyoming?
- _____ 6. Had Grandfather been paying the taxes on the farm?
- _____ 7. Did Grandfather seem to get a little better when Clifford Snyder was in the room?
- _____ 8. Had Grandfather been getting a tax bill from the government every year?
- _____ 9. Had Grandfather been storing the tax bills in the strongbox for more than ten years?
- _____ 10. Would Grandfather and little Willy lose the farm if they didn't pay the five hundred dollars in taxes they owed?



WHOLE BOOK TEST



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

- _____ 1. Little Willy and Searchlight's story took place in (A) Colorado, (B) Wyoming, (C) Idaho.
- _____ 2. How old was little Willy? (A) ten, (B) fifteen, (C) twelve.
- _____ 3. Doc Smith said that Grandfather wouldn't get out of bed or talk because he (A) didn't want to live, (B) had a bad heart, (C) had pneumonia.
- _____ 4. Searchlight was (A) the same age as little Willy, (B) a year old, (C) a pure-white husky.
- _____ 5. What crop did little Willy and Grandfather grow on the farm? (A) corn, (B) wheat, (C) potatoes.
- _____ 6. How did little Willy make the five-mile trip to school each day? (A) He walked. (B) He rode the horse. (C) Searchlight pulled him on a sled.
- _____ 7. Why did little Willy look in Grandfather's strongbox? (A) to get money to rent a horse, (B) to find the deed to the farm, (C) to get money to pay Doc Smith.
- _____ 8. How did little Willy and Searchlight harvest the crop? (A) They rented a horse to pull the plow. (B) Searchlight pulled the plow. (C) People from town helped.
- _____ 9. Little Willy's teacher had once told Grandfather that he (A) didn't study enough, (B) could do a lot better in school, (C) asked too many questions.
- _____ 10. How did Grandfather communicate with little Willy? by (A) blinking his eyes, (B) hand signals, (C) making sounds with his throat.
- _____ 11. Why did little Willy have fifty dollars in a savings account? Grandfather has put it there (A) for little Willy's college, (B) for emergencies, (C) to buy seeds for next year's crop.

Think, Write, Create *Chapter-by-Chapter*



1 Grandfather

When little Willy told her that Grandfather wouldn't answer him, Doc Smith thought it was just another trick.

- What facts can you find in the story to prove that Grandfather enjoyed playing practical jokes on little Willy?
- What is the difference between a practical joke and one that somebody tells?
- What is the best practical joke anyone in your family or one of your friends has ever played?
- Give an example of how someone might think they are playing a joke, when they are really hurting someone's feelings.

Grandfather had taught Willy that it was good to ask questions.

- When, in your opinion, is it good to ask questions? Are there times when you should not ask questions? Explain your answers.
- Explain the difference between asking questions and being nosey.
- Give an example of a rude question. Add details to explain why you chose this one.

(See **Graphic Organizer #1: Questions**)

Little Willy's dog was named Searchlight. Why was this a good name for her?

After she examined Grandfather, Doc Smith said there was nothing wrong with him. Then she asked little Willy questions about what was happening in their lives.

- Explain how the things Doc Smith asked about might cause Grandfather to worry and want to give up?
 - When you are worried about something, how do you change your behavior? Who is usually the first person to notice that something is bothering you? Have you ever been able to hide your true feelings from this person? Explain.
 - What are some things people can do rather than worrying about something?
-

Whole Book

According to Doc Smith there was nothing medically wrong with Grandfather. She said his illness had started in his mind and spread to his body, and he had given up.

- What things did Grandfather have that were worth living for? Why do you think he gave up?
 - Can you explain why Grandfather made such a bad decision about paying his taxes?
 - Explain how Grandfather's way of dealing with his problem was really unfair to little Willy.
 - Do you think Grandfather did the right thing by not telling Willy about their financial problem? Why or why not?
-

The story of little Willy's heroic bid to save Grandfather's farm takes place over a six month period with the mention of an event that occurred two months earlier.

Use story clues and logical sequencing to place each of the following story events in the correct chronological order by month. All of your answers do not have to match precisely those of your classmates in order to be correct. Some months may not have an event.

Winter comes to Wyoming.

Little Willy finds they are in danger of losing the farm because Grandfather has not paid the taxes.

Little Willy sees the poster announcing the National Dogsled Races.

One morning Grandfather does not get out of bed.

Little Willy and Searchlight race against Stone Fox and his Samoyeds.

Grandfather plants the potatoes.

Little Willy and Searchlight bring in the potato crop.

Little Willy finds letters, but no money in Grandfather's strongbox.

School starts back.

Little Willie carries Searchlight across the finish line.

(See **Graphic Organizer #6: Sequencing Activity**)

Find evidence in the story to prove that the following statements about Searchlight are true:

Searchlight was devoted to Little Willy and to Grandfather.

Though she was ten years old, the same as Little Willy, Searchlight was a strong dog.

Searchlight was intelligent.

Little Willy and Grandfather's lives were richer because of Searchlight.

What are some stories the adults in your life tell about pets they had as children? Write about the one that is your favorite. Include photos or drawings.

Questions

Grandfather told little Willy that it was good to ask questions, but he didn't explain that there are different kinds of questions. Take a look at these three examples:

"What time are we leaving for the game?"
"How much money do you make, Mr. Landon?"
"Why are you wearing those ugly shoes?"

The first one asks for important information, so it's a good question. The second is rather nosey, and you should think about these types of questions before asking. The third is just plain rude. You might even call it a "bully question."

Use the spaces below to organize your ideas, and then use your notes to write about **Questions**.

Two good questions that I ask often are. . .

These questions are appropriate because. . .



I think everybody should think twice before asking these two questions. . . .

because. . .

These two questions, in my opinion, are really, really bad no matter what. . .

No one should ever ask such questions because. . .

My conclusion about asking questions is. . .

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**.
- 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.
- Include **cross-curricula activities** as an integral part of the novel study.
- provide materials aligned with **Common Core State Standards** for language arts. **See Box Insets.**

The Seven Components. . .

1. Summaries

Written in present tense, the detailed chapter-by-chapter summaries cover important points of the plot, character motivation and development, and story clues. For quick reference, the summaries are presented in bulleted format. These synopses are a valuable resource for

*quickly becoming familiar with a title when time is limited,
managing a reading program that involves multiple titles/reading groups,
and refreshing memory when using a novel from year to year.*

2. 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**.

In some cases, activities in the **Think, Write, Create** component also involve the creation of a bulletin board or classroom display.

Common Core Connections

RL.4.2

Before-you-read ideas/activities based on story theme, characters, and setting.

RL.4.7

Information/links for purchasing made-for-TV version of **Stone Fox**

W.4.1 W.4.2 W.4.4 SL.4.4

Various prompts for writing

W.4.7 SL.4.4

Researchable Trivia Activity/Various prompts requiring research

3. Vocabulary

One of the many advantages of literature-based reading instruction is the opportunity to observe vocabulary in action! It is this circumstance that drives the vocabulary portion of the novel teaching packs.

Word Choices. . .

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

their level of difficulty

their importance in comprehending the story

the probability that they will be encountered across

the curriculum

their frequency of use in children's literature

their value as useful composition vocabulary

unique meanings, spellings, pronunciation, etc.

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**—sometimes given a slightly different name to correspond with the theme of the novel. In this introductory stage, students use a dictionary to answer a series of multiple choice questions about word meanings, usage, unique characteristics, etc.

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

Note: Some of these varieties, but not all, are found in each Teaching Pack.

Common Core Connections

RL.4.4 L.4.4 L.4.6

The vocabulary component is structured around selected text vocabulary. Included are word lists with definitions, dictionary work, and usage activities designed to help students become familiar with difficult or new words they will encounter in the text.

L.4.5

This component contains a printable activity based on figures of speech from the novel.

4. Assessment

The **two sections** in this portion of the teaching pack offer a wealth of materials designed to build a strong **foundation** for student progression to higher level thinking skills. The operative phrase is **basic comprehension**.

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, but they are **not** specifically designed to call attention to plot construction or other story elements.

The short answer questions can be used as

student reading guides

pop quizzes

homework

discussion group guides

conferencing with individual students

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. That comes later.

In addition to their testing function, teachers may use the pages to strengthen their students' ability to **Summarize:** With only the questions as a guide, have students write a summary of the chapter.

Report the News: Ask your students to write a newspaper article based on the events identified in a set of questions and the *who, what, when, where, why* elements. Some information needed to complete this assignment may be located in previous chapters.

Twist the Plot: Choose one or two questions from each chapter and change its answer—true to false, no to yes, etc.—to demonstrate how changing a single (or several) events would (or would not) change the story. This process can be used to help students become proficient in distinguishing major plot movers from minor story details.

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.

Common Core Connections

RL.4.1 4.9

The Short Answer Questions and Objective Tests focus on factual story comprehension to prepare students for recalling needed text details/facts for drawing inferences, evidence etc.

RL.4.2

Short Answer Questions and Objective Tests can be used as guides for chapter summaries.

5. 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 are based on the skills presented in the ***Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Bloom's Taxonomy)***. There are two reasons for this choice. First, it mirrors the Novel Teaching Pack's primary purpose of building a variety of sophisticated thinking skills on a foundation of basic knowledge. Second, in following the taxonomy guidelines, activities that correlate with the **Common Core** and **State Standards** for language arts emerge automatically.

Organization. . .

Chapter-specific activities are grouped and presented according to their corresponding sets of **Short Answer Questions** and **Objective Test** page(s). 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 and address specific **educational standards**. Armed with a firm **factual grasp** of each

successive chapter, students are more likely to anticipate, embrace, and enjoy the next section. By repeating the process, students are also mastering concepts and intricacies connected to the **whole** novel.

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 novel 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 a group of 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 section challenge students to . . .

*write for self-expression, for communication, and
for entertainment
form opinions and theories
cite "evidence" from the story 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. .

Options and more options. . .

<i>Think, Write, Create</i> 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 Common Core Standards</i>

Common Core Connections

RL.4.1

Prompts in this component require students to explain and draw inferences from the text.

Specific Examples:

4 The Reason

Searchlight jumped at the closed farmhouse door where Clifford Snyder stood. Little Willy saw that he was holding a derringer and pointing it at Searchlight, and his hand was shaking.

- *Why do you suppose Clifford Snyder carried a gun? Was his job dangerous?*
- *Clifford Snyder said he wasn't afraid of Searchlight. How do you know he was not telling the truth?*

Whole Book

Use events from the story to prove that the following statements about Stone Fox is true:

Stone Fox was both intimidating and admirable.

Stone Fox was kind as well as cruel.

RL.4.2

Various prompts in this component address story theme and text summarization.

Specific Examples:

2 Little Willy: *Summarize the series of events that led little Willy to discover that he and Grandfather had no money.*

Whole Book

*Which of the following do you think best states the theme of **Stone Fox**? Give at least three story facts to support your choice.*

Some things are worth the sacrifices you have to make

When faced with a difficult situation, have courage and don't give up.

People aren't always what they seem to be.

RL.4.3

Prompts from Think, Write, Create deal with in-depth analysis of characters, events, and settings.

Specific Example:

7 The Meeting

After little Willy left, Stone Fox stood unmoving for another moment, and then he reached out and gently petted one of the Samoyeds.

- *What do you imagine Stone Fox might have been thinking during the moment he stood unmoving? Is it possible he regretted hitting little Willy? Explain.*
- *What does the fact that he reached out and gently petted one of his dogs tell you about Stone Fox? Does it cause you to change your opinion of him? Why or why not?*

W.4.1 W.4.2

Numerous prompts from this component ask students to form opinions about a story event or character and support their point of view with reasons, explanations, and/or text information in a composition.

Specific Example:

1 Grandfather

Grandfather had taught Willy that it was good to ask questions.

- *When, in your opinion, is it good to ask questions? Are there times when you should not ask questions? Explain your answers.*
- *Explain the difference between asking questions and being nosey.*
- *Give an example of a rude question. Add details to explain why you chose this one.*

*(See **Graphic Organizer #1: Questions**)*

W.4.3.

Prompts in this component provide opportunities for students to practice and improve their narrative writing skills.

Specific Example:

Whole Book: *What are some stories the adults in your life tell about pets they had as children? Write about the one that is your favorite. Include photos or drawings.*

W.4.7

Think, Write, Create contains research prompts.

Specific Example:

6 Stone Fox: *Stone Fox had a team of five Samoyeds. Do some research and write a short report about these dogs. (See **Samoyed Facts** for writing/summarizing/report resources)*

Common Core Connections—continued

W.4.9

This component provides an abundance of prompts that require students to find evidence/clues/facts from the story to support their positions or opinions.

Specific Example:

Whole Book: *Find evidence in the story to prove that the following statements about Searchlight are true:*

Searchlight was devoted to Little Willy and to Grandfather.

Though she was ten years old, the same as Little Willy, Searchlight was a strong dog.

Searchlight was intelligent.

Little Willy and Grandfather's lives were richer because of Searchlight.

W.4.4

Many of the prompts in this section can be applied as either a writing assignment, an oral presentation, or both.

L.4.1 L.4.2

A **Grading Rubric for Writing**, which addresses the skills of **L.4.1** and **L.4.2** is included in this teaching pack.

L.4.4 L.4.5 L.4.6

Some prompts in this component challenge students to choose from a set of given terms to describe/analyze a character or event.

Specific Example:

4 The Reason: Which **two** of the following words do you think **best** describe Clifford Snyder? Use events in the story and the meanings of the words to support your choices. (**Note:** All the words below are **synonyms**, and there are no wrong answers. Choose the words you think provide the **strongest** definition for Clifford Snyder's character and behavior.)

despicable cruel insensitive merciless cowardly brutal pitiless reprehensible
mean bully

6. Graphic Organizers

Ideas for the graphic organizers are pulled from the chapter or whole book activities and expanded into a writing assignment. Priority is given to those topics that allow a student to relate personal experiences, make choices, empathize with a story character, and/or imagine.

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.

Imaginative 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**.

Common Core Connections

RL.4.2 W.4.4 L.4.1 L.4.2 L.4.6 Specific Examples:

Graphic Organizer # 7: The Jackson Times

Graphic Organizer #10: Story Summary Organizer

RL.4.3 W.4.4 L.4.1 L.4.2 L.4.6 Specific Examples:

Graphic Organizer #4: The Name

Graphic Organizer #7: Little Willy

Common Core Connections—Continued

RL.4.6 W.4.4 L.4.1 L.4.2 L.4.6 Specific Examples:

Graphic Organizer #5: The Day—A Character's Point of View

Graphic Organizer #9: A Year Later

W.4.1 W.4.2 W.4.4 L.4.1 L.4.2 L.4.6 Specific Examples:

Graphic Organizer #1: Questions

Graphic Organizer #3: Doc Smith Talks Taxes

W.4.3 W.4.4 L.4.1 L.4.2 L.4.6 Specific Examples

Graphic Organizer #2: Work and Fun

Graphic Organizer #6: June-February

7. 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.

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