



My Brother Sam Is Dead

by James Lincoln Collier and Christopher Collier
1975 Newbery Honor Book

Objective Tests Teaching Guide

by Margaret Whisnant

***Objective Tests
and
Answer Keys***

for
My Brother Sam Is Dead
***By James Lincoln Collier
and Christopher Collier***
A 1975 Newbery Honor Book



A Teaching Guide
by Margaret Whisnant

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Pages 1-22

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

- _____ 1. When Sam arrived at the tavern in April, his family hadn't seen him since Christmas.
- _____ 2. Sam was happily excited about the fighting that had broken out near Lexington and Concord between the Minutemen and the British.
- _____ 3. The Meeker's tavern was located in Redding, Connecticut.



- _____ 4. Both Sam and his father hated British soldiers and the English King.
- _____ 5. Benedict Arnold was captain of Sam's company.
- _____ 6. Sam called the British soldiers "Lobsterbacks" because of the color of their uniforms.
- _____ 7. Father thought it didn't matter who fired the first shot at Lexington.
- _____ 8. Everyone at the tavern believed the people of Redding were ready to rebel against British rule.
- _____ 9. Sam and Father argued over the wisdom of fighting a war in order to gain freedom.
- _____ 10. Mr. Beach believed that God wanted people to question and disobey those leaders who would not allow freedom.
- _____ 11. Sam's father sometimes hit him for arguing and blurting out what was on his mind.
- _____ 12. Sam's mother thought her husband was wrong for hitting Sam, and she always did her best to stop him.

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Pages 23-37

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

- _____ 1. Had Tim ever met his Platt cousins who lived in New York?
- _____ 2. Was Redding a very large town compared with other places?
- _____ 3. Had some people built their homes in one of the two parts of Redding according to whether they were Presbyterians or Anglicans?
- _____ 4. Did Tim understand what the argument with the King and the Lobsterbacks was about?
- _____ 5. Did most of the people in Redding Ridge wish to remain loyal to the King?
- _____ 6. Did Tim realize that, since Minutemen and British troops had been killed at Lexington and Concord, the situation was no longer just an argument?



- _____ 7. Did Father tell Tim he was proud of Sam's determination to go to war and fight for freedom?
- _____ 8. In the Anglican Church, did the children and adults of all races sit together on the main floor?
- _____ 9. Did Mr. Beach preach a sermon that was sympathetic to Sam and those who shared his views?
- _____ 10. Did Tim worry that God might punish Sam for shouting at Father by getting him bayoneted by a Lobsterbacks?
- _____ 11. After church, did Tom Warrups let Tim know that Sam was at his place?
- _____ 12. Did Tim tell his father the truth about where he was going after church?

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V

Pages 61-73

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

- _____ 1. Until the time the soldiers came to search for weapons, the war (A) had occupied most of Tim's thoughts, (B) hadn't been very real to Tim, (C) kept Tim in constant fear for his brother's life.



- _____ 2. After losing so many of their guns, the people of Redding (A) stopped hunting, (B) went hungry, (C) were good and angry.
- _____ 3. Sometimes soldiers on both sides (A) took cows without asking or paying for them, (B) paid less for livestock than the farmers asked, (C) stole food from houses and barns.
- _____ 4. By January of 1776, the things Sam's family needed to run the tavern (A) were scarce or not available, (B) kept going up and up in price, (C) were of poor quality.
- _____ 5. For Tim, the worst part of the war was (A) missing Sam, (B) having extra work to do, (C) the constant fear of being hurt or killed.
- _____ 6. Father felt that the Rebels (A) had a good chance of winning, (B) were lying about the battles they had won, (C) could not defeat the powerful British army.
- _____ 7. If he became a soldier, Tim (A) thought he would be a Patriot, (B) wanted to be a Tory, (C) didn't know which side he would join.
- _____ 8. Which of the following was **not** true of Mr. Heron? He (A) had been to Trinity College in Dublin and was a surveyor, (B) became rich from slave trading, (C) had been pushed out of his elected seat in the General Assembly for being a Tory.
- _____ 9. Tim was smart, but Father didn't send him to school because he (A) didn't want Tim to leave like Sam, (B) wanted Tim to take over the tavern business, (C) needed Tim at home to help run the tavern.

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WHOLE BOOK TEST

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

- _____ 1. Tim and his family lived in Redding, (A) Massachusetts, (B) Connecticut, (C) Pennsylvania.
- _____ 2. Sam's company was led by (A) General George Washington, (B) General John Read, (C) General Benedict Arnold.
- _____ 3. What word did Sam use when he referred to the British? (A) Redcoats, (B) Lobsterbacks, (C) Red Traitors.
- _____ 4. Before he joined the Rebel army, Sam was going to school at (A) Yale, (B) Harvard, (C) Columbia.
- _____ 5. Sam thought freedom was worth (A) dying for, (B) fighting for, (C) interrupting or even sacrificing his education.
- _____ 6. Sometimes Father (A) wouldn't talk to Sam for days, (B) agree with Sam about rebelling against British rule, (C) hit Sam for speaking his mind.
- _____ 7. Tim liked to hear Sam talk about (A) his experiences as a soldier, (B) scoring telling points in a debate, (C) his arguments with Father.
- _____ 8. Father was (A) sometimes sympathetic with Sam's cause, (B) against war, (C) willing to fight the British to save his family.
- _____ 9. Father described war as a situation in which (A) all men become animals and beasts, (B) the sacrifice of one is important for all, (C) the dead pay the debts of the living.



About Your Teaching Guide

The primary goal in creating the teaching packs for children's novels is to provide a **classroom-ready**, non-threatening method for checking student comprehension and stretching thinking skills. **When used as a basic guide for teaching a novel, the materials offer many and varied opportunities for learning.**

Use your teaching pack as a guide and lead your students into discovering new ideas about

THE PLOT

Each test page is actually an outline of the plot. In your teaching pack, the chain of related events that tell the story has been pulled from the novel and reformatted into a series of questions. Whether they are aware of their ability or not, all good readers sense the **rhythm** of the **connected** events that compose the plot; and consequently **comprehend** the story. This "plot rhythm" is the basic structure of the tests.

To further your students' understanding of plot, try the following activities:

Summarizing the Story: Using only the chapter questions as a guide, have your students write a summary of the chapter. For a set of ten questions, limit the number of sentences they may write to seven. For twenty questions, allow no more than twelve sentences.

Reporting the News: Have students write a newspaper article, based on the events from a set of questions, and add the *who, what, when, where, why* format. Some needed information may be located in previous chapters.

Twisting the Plot: Choose one or two questions from each chapter and change its answer—true to false, no to yes, or a different answer—and explain how changing a single (or several) events would change the story. To further illustrate the rhythm of a good story, try changing the answers to one complete set of questions. Your students will see how difficult, if not impossible, it is to tell a sensible story from a tangled set of events.

THE CHARACTERS

Questions that illustrate character motivation and personality are purposely included. Too often, when they are asked to tell what kind of person a story character is, the only answer many of our students can muster is "nice."

In your efforts to remove "nice" from your students' literary vocabulary, try this idea:

Character Charts: Display individual charts for the main characters. As the chapters are read, record **facts**, **behaviors**, or **events** that relate to the each character. Then connect the items with several appropriate words such as **empathetic, brave, calloused, bold, untrustworthy**, etc. The teacher can take the lead by contributing the first few words and then assigning the task of identifying more terms to students. Record the word collections on the charts with the story facts.

This information is a valuable student resource when displayed in the room for all to see and use during a writing assignment. In creating and using character charts, students will soon begin writing more fluently and insightfully about story personalities.

Use the charts to encourage your students to try some "predicting" or "detective" writing about what the character(s) might do next or what might have happened after the story ended. Let the charts help your students recognize **CHARACTER CHANGE (dynamics)**.

Another fun activity with the charts is to match a book personality with a zodiac sign. Students must justify their reason for thinking a character is a particular sign by citing his/her behaviors, words, reactions to situations, etc. that prove the match.

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

(Implied Meaning)

Because the primary goal for the objective questions is **basic comprehension**, items requiring a student to **interpret** an event or a character's behavior are not included. Always included, however, are questions that *establish the existence of a story component carrying an implied meaning.*

MAKING PREDICTIONS

(Recognizing Story Clues)

Authors subtly place clues in the story line giving the reader hints as to what is about to happen. Like the implied meaning, these clues are brought to the reader's attention in the form of a question. Once a student learns to spot the gems, his/her ability to comprehend and enjoy a story tends to leap forward.

Use "thinking-out-loud" class discussions to list all the possible meanings of the clue questions. Have your student write their individual predictions (no sharing or telling), store the papers until the novel is finished, and then retrieve them for reading. Sometimes, a wrong prediction makes a story as good as the original.

OTHER FUCTIONS

The objective test pages are excellent discussion guides for both whole groups and small groups. They work well as homework reading guides and as conferencing tools. They are also useful management tools for teachers who wish to use multiple titles in one classroom.

IMPROVING/DEVELOPING LISTENING SKILLS

Rather than always requiring your students to answer test questions on a printed page, surprise them (and save paper!!) by occasionally doing the test orally.

Try this technique:

Student Rules for an Oral Test:

The teacher will read each question *two times*. No comments or questions that interrupt this initial phase of the test are allowed.

When all questions have been read, individual students may ask for repeats of any question he/she wishes to hear again.

No interruptions/comments during the re-reading part of the test.

Teacher Rules for an Oral Test:

The teacher will read each question *two times*. Except to remind students that a re-reading phase will following after the last question, he/she will not respond to comment/question during this period.

The teacher will repeat **any** and **all** questions (even if it results in reading the same question multiple times).

(The second teacher rule is a *vital* part of the exercise. Asking for multiple repeats of a question does not mean students aren't paying attention. It does indicate their desire to *understand* and *answer* the question correctly.)

As students become more comfortable and experienced with oral test-taking, the number of requests for repeated questions will diminish. An added bonus to this technique is that skills learned in these testing periods tend to translate into other situations where teacher-talking and student-listening are required components of learning.

Final Note

This Objective Tests Teaching Guide is designed for use as supplementary material that supports a total reading program. It is my goal to provide busy teachers with a classroom-ready, practical resource loaded with motivational and learning opportunities for their students. It is my hope that your purchase will prove to be a hard-working instructional component for years to come. Thanks for choosing one of my products for your classroom.



Margaret Whisnant, Author