



TEACHER'S PET PUBLICATIONS

LITPLAN TEACHER PACK™

for

The Midge's Apprentice

based on the book by

Karen Cushman

Written by

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A FEW NOTES ABOUT THE AUTHOR  
Karen Cushman

CUSHMAN, Karen (1941- ). Karen Lipski Cushman was born into an ethnic, working-class Chicago family. They moved to Los Angeles in 1952. She didn't know that writing was a job, something that real people did with their lives. The type of jobs she knew about were secretary, salesman, or school crossing guard, like her Grandpa. A scholarship to Stanford University sent her off to write depressing poems and irreverent parodies of school songs. She graduated in 1963 with a degree in English and Greek. She wanted to dig for treasures on the Acropolis by moonlight, instead she worked for the telephone company in Beverly Hills, a job she quit. She found other jobs. Quit them all.

While working at the Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles, she met Philip Cushman, married him and moved to Oregon. There he taught, while she wove, made blackberry jam and had a daughter, Leah. They came back to California, both earning further advanced degrees. She currently is the Assistant Director of the Museum Studies Department at John F. Kennedy University in San Francisco, California. She and her husband and daughter, along with two cats, a dog and a rabbit, live in Oakland, California.

Karen considers herself a late bloomer. She is making a new career late in life, writing children's books and having a wonderful time. Over the years she's had lots of book ideas. She'd tell her husband and that would be that. This time when she told him, he said, "Don't tell me. Write it down." So she did and the rest is history. Her three books are the Newbery Honor Book, *Catherine, Called Birdy* (1994), her Newbery Award Winning, *The Midwife's Apprentice* (1995), and her latest, *The Ballad of Lucy Whipple* (1996). The first two take place in medieval times and the most recent one is set during the Gold Rush. She feels that Catherine, Alyce, and Lucy are all her. Karen Cushman claims she knows herself better now than before she began to write.

## INTRODUCTION - *Midwife's Apprentice*

This unit has been designed to develop students' reading, writing, thinking, and language skills through exercises and activities related to *The Midwife's Apprentice* by Karen Cushman. It includes nineteen lessons with extra resource materials plus an optional class project.

The **introductory lesson** introduces students to the medieval time period background information mentioned throughout this novel. It also doubles as the first writing assignment for the unit. Following the introductory activity, students are given an explanation of how the activity relates to the book they are about to read. The next lesson following the transition, students are given the materials they will be using during the unit.

The **reading assignments** are approximately twenty pages each; some are a little shorter while others are a little longer. Students have approximately 15 minutes of pre-reading work to do prior to each reading assignment. This pre-reading work involves reviewing the study questions for the assignment and doing some vocabulary work for ten vocabulary words they will encounter in their reading.

The **study guide questions** are fact-based questions; students can find the answers to these questions right in the text. These questions come in two formats: short answer or multiple choice. The best use of these materials is probably to use the short answer version of the questions as study guides for students (since answers will be more complete), and to use the multiple choice version for occasional quizzes. I might be a good idea to make transparencies of your answer keys for the overhead projector.

The **vocabulary work** is intended to enrich students' vocabularies as well as to aid in the students' understanding of the book. Prior to each reading assignment, students will complete a two-part worksheet for 10 vocabulary words in the upcoming reading assignment. Part I focuses on students' use of general knowledge and contextual clues by giving the sentence in which the word appears in the text. Students are then to write down what they think the words mean based on the words' usage. Part II nails down the definitions of the words by giving students dictionary definitions of the words and having students match the words to the correct definitions based on the words' contextual usage. Students should then have an understanding of the words when they meet them in the text.

After each reading assignment, students will go back and formulate answers for the study guide questions. Discussion of these questions serves as a **review** of the most important events and ideas presented in the reading assignments.

After students complete extra discussion questions, there is a **vocabulary review** lesson which pulls together all of the fragmented vocabulary lists for the reading assignments and gives students a review of all of the words they have studied. Following the reading of the book, two lessons are devoted to the **extra discussion questions/writing assignments/activities**. These questions focus on interpretation, critical analysis and personal response, employing a variety of thinking skills and adding to the students' understanding of the novel. These questions are done as a **group activity**. Using the information they have acquired so far through individual work and class discussions, students get together to further examine the text and to brainstorm ideas relating to the themes of the novel.

The group activity is followed by a **reports and discussion/ activity** session in which the groups share their ideas about the book with the entire class; thus, the entire class gets exposed to many different ideas regarding the themes and events of the book.

There are three **writing assignments** in this unit, each with the purpose of informing, persuading, or having students express personal opinions. The first assignment is to inform: students write a composition about one of the background topics assigned in Lesson One in which students will research English medieval history. The second assignment gives students the opportunity to express their personal ideas: students will design and compose a "missing poster" in which an appeal is made for Alyce's return to the village. The third assignment is to give students a chance to persuade: students pretend to be Alyce trying to convince Jane Sharp to accept her back and allow her to continue her apprenticeship.

In addition, there is a **nonfiction reading assignment**. Students are required to read a piece of nonfiction related in some way to *The Midwife's Apprentice*. After reading their nonfiction pieces, students will fill out a worksheet on which they answer questions regarding facts, interpretation, criticism, and personal opinions. During one class period, students make **oral presentations** about the nonfiction pieces they have read. This not only exposes all students to a wealth of information, it also gives students the opportunity to practice **public speaking**.

Another feature of this unit is the **speaker day**. This provides an extension of the theme of midwife care. A professional in this field will be asked to share information and experiences on this topic.

The **review lesson** pulls together all of the aspects of the unit. The teacher is given four or five choices of activities or games to use which all serve the same basic function of reviewing all of the information presented in the unit.

An **optional class project** is included which has students actively involved in recreating an authentic mini-Renaissance Faire.

The **unit test** comes in two formats: all multiple choice-matching-true/false or with a mixture of matching, short answer, and composition. As a convenience, two different tests for each format have been included.

There are additional **support materials** included with this unit. The **unit resource section** includes suggestions for an in-class library, crossword and word search puzzles related to the novel, and extra vocabulary games and worksheets. There is a list of **bulletin board ideas** which gives the teacher suggestions for bulletin boards to go along with this unit. In addition, there is a list of **extra class activities** the teacher could choose from to enhance the unit or as a substitution for an exercise the teacher might feel is inappropriate for his/her class. **Answer keys** are located directly after the **reproducible student materials** throughout the unit. The student materials may be reproduced for use in the teacher's classroom without infringement of copyrights. No other portion of this unit may be reproduced without the written consent of Teacher's Pet Publications, Inc.

## UNIT OBJECTIVES *The Midwife's Apprentice*

1. Through reading Karen Cushman's *The Midwife's Apprentice*, students will see the results of and the value of perseverance.
2. Students will determine characters' status as static or dynamic.
3. Students will become familiar with English medieval history.
4. Students will be exposed to the medieval practice of midwifery.
5. Students will become informed in the modern practice of midwifery.
6. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the text on four levels: factual, interpretive, critical and personal.
7. Students will be given the opportunity to practice reading aloud and silently to improve their skills in each area.
8. Students will answer questions to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the main events and characters in *The Midwife's Apprentice* as they relate to the author's theme development.
9. Students will enrich their vocabularies and improve their understanding of the novel through the vocabulary lessons prepared for use in conjunction with the novel.
10. The writing assignments in this unit are geared to several purposes:
  - a. To have students demonstrate their abilities to inform, to persuade, or to express their own personal ideas  
Note: Students will demonstrate ability to write effectively to inform by developing and organizing facts to convey information. Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively to persuade by selecting and organizing relevant information, establishing an argumentative purpose, and by designing an appropriate strategy for an identified audience. Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively to express personal ideas by selecting a form and its appropriate elements.
  - b. To check the students' reading comprehension
  - c. To make students think about the ideas presented by the novel
  - d. To encourage logical thinking
  - e. To provide an opportunity to practice good grammar and improve students' use of the English language.

READING ASSIGNMENT SHEET - *The Midwife's Apprentice*

<b>Date to be Assigned</b>	<b>Chapters</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
	Chapters 1-3	
	Chapters 4-6	
	Chapters 7-9	
	Chapters 10-12	
	Chapters 13-15	
	Chapters 16, 17, Author's Note	



UNIT OUTLINE - *The Midwife's Apprentice*

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Library  Writing Assignment #1  Nonfiction Rdg	Introduction  PVR Ch. 1-3  Optional Project Description	Study? Ch. 1-3  PVR Ch. 4-6	Study? Ch.4-6  PVR Ch. 7-9	Study? Ch.7-9  Prediction
<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
PVR Ch. 10-12  Oral Reading Evaluation	Study ?Ch. 10-12  PVR Ch. 13-15	Writing Assignment #2	Study ?Ch. 13-15  Work Session	Writing Conference  PVR Ch.16- Author's Note
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
Characterization	Study? Ch.16,17, Author's Note  Theme	Writing Assignment #3	Extra Discussion Questions/ Activities	Extra Discussion Questions/ Activities
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
Speaker Day	Vocabulary Review	Review	Test	Optional Project Renaissance Faire

Key: P = Preview Study Questions    V = Vocabulary Work    R = Read

## LESSON ONE

### Objectives

1. To provide students the opportunity to gather information about medieval times
2. To give students the opportunity to fulfill their nonfiction reading assignment that goes along with this unit
3. To give students practice using library resources
4. To prepare students for the introductory activity in Lesson Two.
5. To give students the opportunity to write to inform by developing and organizing facts to convey information.

### Activity

Assign one of the topics on the following page to each of your students. Some topics will require a pair of students, or a small group to research. Distribute Writing Assignment #1. Discuss the directions in detail. Take your students to the library so they may work on the assignment. Students should fill out a "Nonfiction Assignment Sheet" for at least one of the sources they used, and students should submit these sheets with their compositions.

## WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 - *The Midwife's Apprentice*

### PROMPT

You are going to read a story about a young girl your age who faces a tremendous personal challenge in a very different time. It is realistic or historical fiction (the events in the novel *could* have taken place, but the characters and events are *fictional*). Before you read it, however, you should have some background information about some of the places and things mentioned in the story.

You have been assigned one topic about which you must find information. You are to read as much as you can about that topic and write a composition in which you relate what you have learned from your reading. Note that this is a *composition*, not just a sentence or two.

### PREWRITING

You will go to the library. When you get there, use the library's resources to find information about your topic. Look for books, encyclopedias, articles in magazines- anything that will give you the information you require. Take a few notes as you read to help you remember important dates, names, places, or other details that will be important in your composition.

After you have gathered information and become well-read on the subject of your report, make a little outline, putting your facts in order.

### DRAFTING

You will need an introductory paragraph in which you introduce your topic.

In the body of your composition, put the "meat" of your research- the facts you found- in paragraph form. Each paragraph should have a topic sentence (a sentence letting the reader know what the paragraph will be about) followed by an explanation, examples or details.

Write a concluding paragraph in which you summarize the information you found and conclude your report.

### PROMPT

After you have finished a rough draft of your paper, revise it yourself until you are happy with your work. Then, ask a student who sits near you to tell you what he/she likes best about your work, and what things he/she thinks can be improved. Take another look at your composition, keeping in mind your critic's suggestions, and make the revisions you feel are necessary.

### PROOFREADING

Do a final proofreading of your paper double-checking your grammar, spelling, organization, and the clarity of your ideas.