



TEACHER'S PET PUBLICATIONS

LITPLAN TEACHER PACK™

for

My Side of the Mountain

based on the book by
Jean Craighead George

Written by
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A FEW NOTES ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jean Craighead George

GEORGE, Jean Craighead (1919-). Jean Craighead George is the author of many outstanding books for children, including *Julie of the Wolves*, which won the Newbery Medal in 1973. *My Side of the Mountain*, first published in 1959, is a Newbery Honor Book, an ALA Notable Book, and a Hans Christian Anderson Award Honor Book.

Jean Craighead George's father was a naturalist and scientist. He taught her the plants and animals of the eastern forests and showed her where the wild edible fruits and tubers grew. On weekends along the Potomac River near Washington D.C., where she was born and grew up, she and her father boiled water in leaves and made rabbit traps. Her brothers are trained falconers and helped her train a falcon. As an elementary-age child, she attempted to run away and live peacefully in the wild, but returned after only forty minutes. Not so her hero, Sam Gibley, of *My Side of the Mountain*. Many children ask if there is a real Sam Gibley, and her response is "there is no real Sam, except inside me."

Jean carries little spiral notebooks with her on her forays into the natural world. She claims to take notes all the time. An accomplished artist who has illustrated many of her own books, Jean also sketches as she hikes. She calls her first drafts "first runs" in which she gets to know all the people and see how they're moving. She lets the movie run in her head, and then goes back and edits it in later drafts.

Jean feels that children are her audience and she wants to grab them on the first page, if possible, and keep them to the last page. Other outstanding books written by her include: *The Summer of the Falcon*, *The Wounded Wolf*, *The Talking Earth*, *One Day in the Prairie*, *Water Sky*, *Shark Beneath the Reef*, *The First Thanksgiving*, and *On The Far Side of the Mountain*; sequel to *My Side of the Mountain*.

INTRODUCTION - *My Side of the Mountain*

This unit has been designed to develop students' reading, writing, thinking, and language skills through exercises and activities related to *My Side of the Mountain* by Jean Craighead George. It includes twenty lessons, supported by extra resource materials.

The **introductory lesson** exposes students to the setting of the novel, the Catskill Mountain, New York area. 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. Following the transition, students are given the materials they will be using during the unit.

The **reading assignments** are approximately twenty-five 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 8 to 10 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. It 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 approximately 8 to 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**. 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** 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 writing to inform: students will draw from the information gained in their research on the Catskills, to write a descriptive composition on the setting. The second assignment gives students the opportunity to express their personal ideas: students will apply the technique of flashback by composing their own personal autobiographical flashback. The third assignment is to give students a chance to persuade: students will assume Sam's identity and try to convince his parents to take the rest of the family home and allow him to remain on Bitter Mountain, *alone* and living off the land.

In addition, there is a **nonfiction reading assignment**. Students are required to read a piece of nonfiction related in some way to *My Side of the Mountain*. 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**.

There is an optional **class project** (Project Survival) through which students can utilize and apply information learned through reading the novel to construct a wilderness survival guide.

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.

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 worksheets. There is a list of **bulletinboard ideas** which gives the teacher suggestions for bulletinboards 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 - *My Side of the Mountain*

1. Through reading *My Side of the Mountain*, students will gain understanding of the themes of survival, courage, and companionship.
2. Students will develop an awareness of Sam's individuality and examine their own.
3. Students will do background research on the Catskill Mountain, New York, area to provide meaning to the geographical references made by the author.
4. Students will gain appreciation for and demonstrate proficiency in identifying and using figurative language.
5. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the text on four levels: factual, interpretive, critical and personal.
6. Students will be given the opportunity to practice reading aloud and silently to improve their skills in each area.
7. Students will answer questions to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the main events and characters in *My Side of the Mountain* as they relate to the author's theme development.
8. Students will enrich their vocabularies and improve their understanding of the novel through the vocabulary lessons prepared for use in conjunction with the novel.
9. 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

READING ASSIGNMENT SHEET - *My Side of the Mountain*

Date Assigned	Reading Assignment (Chapters)	Completion Date
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Set 1</i></p> <p>I Hole Up in a Snowstorm I Get Started on This Venture I Find Gribbley's Farm</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Set 2</i></p> <p>I Find Many Useful Plants The Old, Old Tree I Meet One of My Kind and Have a Terrible Time Getting Away The King's Provider What I Did About the First Man Who Was After Me</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Set 3</i></p> <p>I Learn to Season My Food How a Door Came to Me Frightful Learns Her ABC's I Find a Real Live Man</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Set 4</i></p> <p>The Autumn Provides Food and Loneliness</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Set 5</i></p> <p>We All Learn About Halloween I Find Out What to Do About Hunters</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Set 6</i></p> <p>Trouble Begins</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Set 7</i></p> <p>I Pile Up Wood and Go on with Winter I Learn About Birds and People I Have a Good Look at Winter and Find Spring in the Snow</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Set 8</i></p> <p>The Spring in the Winter and the Beginning of My Story's End I Cooperate with the Ending The City Comes to Me</p>	

UNIT OUTLINE - *My Side of the Mountain*

1	2	3	4	5
Library Nonfiction Assignment	Work Session Writing Assignment 1	Introduction Materials PVR Set 1	Study ?s Set 1 PVR Set 2 Oral Rdg Eval Writing Assignment 2	Study ?s Set 2 Work Session on W.A. #2 Writing Conference
6	7	8	9	10
Survival Problem Solving PVR Set 3	Study ?s Set 3 PVR Set 4	Study ?'s Set 4 PVR Set 5	Study ?'s Set 5 Companionship PVR Set 6	Study ?'s Set 6 Newspaper articles
11	12	13	14	15
Group Activity Figurative Language PV Set 7	Read Set 7 Study ?'s Set 7 PVR Set 8	Study ?'s Set 8 Individuality	Writing Assignment 3	Extra Discussion Questions
16	17	18	19	20
Extra Discussion ?'s / Writing Assignment Sharing	Vocabulary Review	Review	Test	Project Survival

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

LESSON ONE

Objectives

1. To give students background information for *My Side of the Mountain*
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 give students the opportunity to write to inform by developing and organizing facts to convey information.

Activity

Assign one of each of the following topics to a small group of your students or individually. 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 need to submit these sheets with their compositions. Answer any questions they may have about filling out this form.

Topics:

1. Where are the Catskill Mountains located?
2. Research the specific bird life found in this locality.
3. Find out what animals would live in the Catskill Mountain area.
4. Identify the type of vegetation available in the Catskill Mountain area.
5. Discover the various land forms you may find in this type of geographical area.
6. Define the climate found in the Catskills.
7. State the distance between New York City and the Catskill Mountains.
8. What county in New York are the Catskills located?
9. Locate the nearest towns to the Catskills.
10. Discover the length and severity of the winters in this geographical area.
11. Determine what would be necessary for survival in this type of climate.
12. What well-known Washington Irving character is associated with these mountains?
13. What distances are Delhi and Poughkeepsie, New York from the Catskills?

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 - *My Side of the Mountain*

PROMPT

You are going to read an adventure of a young boy, Sam Gibley, who runs away to live in the wilderness. Before you read this fascinating tale of survival, it would help you to have some background information about the setting of this story.

You have been assigned a topic about which you must find information. You are to read as much as you can about that topic. During the next class session, you will be asked to share the information you discovered with the class. All class members will take notes on the various topics covered. Drawing from this information, you will relate what you have learned by writing a descriptive composition based on the Catskill Mountains' **plant life, wildlife, geography and climate**.

PREWRITING

You will go to the library. While you are 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 the facts.

After you have listened to other class members share and you have gathered your information, 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 or heard- 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. In this case, you need a separate paragraph for each of the subtopics mentioned above.

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.