



TEACHER'S PET PUBLICATIONS

LITPLAN TEACHER PACK™

for

The Secret Life of Bees

based on the novel by  
Sue Monk Kidd

Written by  
Catherine Caldwell & Mary B. Collins

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ISBN 978-1-60249-060-4

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### **Sue Monk Kidd**

Sue Monk Kidd was born on August 12, 1948 in Sylvester, Georgia. In 1970 she graduated from Texas Christian University with a B. S. in nursing.

In the mid-to-late 1970's she enrolled in writing classes and started getting published as a freelance writer, writing mostly personal experience articles. She became contributing editor of *Guideposts Magazine*.

Sue's first books were spiritual memoirs published by Harper SanFrancisco: *God's Joyful Surprise* (1988), *When the Heart Waits* (1990), and *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter* (1996).

In 1997 she began her first work of fiction, *The Secret Life of Bees*, which was published by Viking in 2002. Her second novel, *The Mermaid Chair*, was published in 2005.

Sue Monk Kidd lives by a salt marsh near Charleston, South Carolina with her husband Sandy and a black lab named Lily.

#### **Awards**

2006 Distinguished Alumna of the Year, presented by Texas Christian University

2006 South Carolina "The Order of the Palmetto" Award - The state's highest civilian honor, bestowed by the Governor

2005 Winner of the Quill Award in General Fiction - *The Mermaid Chair*

2005 Southeastern Library Association Fiction Award winner - *The Secret Life of Bees*

2004 Book Sense Book of the Year in paperback - *The Secret Life of Bees*

Recipient of the inaugural Literature To Life award presented by The American Place Theatre, New York, NY- 2004

Nominated for the 2004 International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award (Dublin, Ireland) for *The Secret Life of Bees*

Winner of the 2003 SEBA Book of the Year for *The Secret Life of Bees*

Finalist for the 2003 Book Sense Book of the Year Award for fiction - *The Secret Life of Bees*

Finalist for the 2003 Boeke Prize in South Africa for *The Secret Life of Bees*

Nominated for the 2002 Orange Prize in England for *The Secret Life of Bees*

Winner of the 1996 Poets & Writers Exchange Program in Fiction for South Carolina

1993-1994 South Carolina Fellowship in Literature (Fiction) by the South Carolina Arts Commission

Citation in "100 Distinguished Stories" by Best American Short Stories 1994 for *The*

*Secret Life of Bees*

Citation in "100 Distinguished Stories" by Best American Short Stories 1996 for *In the Graveyard of Afterbirth*

1993 Katherine Anne Porter Second Prize in Fiction by the Nimrod/Hardman Awards

1994 and 1996 South Carolina Academy of Authors Fellowships in Fiction by the S.C. Academy of Authors

1993, 1995 and 1997 South Carolina Fiction Project Winner by the South Carolina Arts Commission/ Charleston Post and Courier

1995 Bread Loaf Scholar in fiction, Bread Loaf Writers Conference, Middlebury, VT

Named to the 1994, 1995, and 1996 South Carolina Readers Circuit

1994 Isak Dineson Creative Non-Fiction Award

1999 Literal Latte Creative Non-Fiction third prize

## INTRODUCTION *The Secret Life of Bees*

This LitPlan has been designed to develop students' reading, writing, thinking, and language skills through exercises and activities related to *The Secret Life of Bees*. It includes twenty-two lessons, supported by extra resource materials.

In the **introductory lesson** students search for information about topics alluded to in the text, and they are given the materials they will be using during the unit.

The **reading assignments** are approximately thirty 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 selected 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.

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 selected 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.

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.

A lesson is 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.

There is a **group theme project** in this unit. This project requires students to study the text for references to the group's assigned theme, discuss the theme among themselves using a discussion guide, and present information about the theme to the class.

There are three **writing assignments** in this unit, each with the purpose of informing, persuading, or expressing personal opinions. In the first writing assignment students write a short work of historical fiction using a newspaper or magazine article as a basis for their stories. In the second writing assignment students write a letter to send back in time to Lily telling her in detail about an event or topic that was alluded to in the novel. In the third writing assignment students rewrite the scene when T. Ray comes to get Lily from the calendar sisters, from his point of view and persuading Lily to return home with him.

There is a non-fiction **reading assignment**. Students must read non-fiction articles, books, etc. to gather information about topics related to *The Secret Life of Bees*.

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: multiple choice or short answer. As a convenience, two different tests for each format have been included. There is also an advanced short answer unit test for advanced students.

There are additional **support materials** included with this unit. The **Unit Resource Materials** section includes suggestions for an in-class library, crossword and word search puzzles related to the novel, and extra 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 **Vocabulary Resource Materials** section includes similar worksheets and games to reinforce the vocabulary words.

The **level** of this unit can be varied depending upon the criteria on which the individual assignments are graded, the teacher's expectations of his/her students in class discussions, and the formats chosen for the study guides, quizzes and test. If teachers have other ideas/activities they wish to use, they can usually easily be inserted prior to the review lesson.

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## UNIT OBJECTIVES *The Secret Life of Bees*

1. Through reading Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees*, students will explore themes of the novel and make connections between themselves and the larger world.
2. Students will gain a better knowledge of historical events presented in the novel.
3. Students will study the effects of the civil rights movement in the early 1960s.
4. Students will study how the characters cope with the situations life throws at them.
5. Students will study the elements of connotation and denotation, figurative language (onomatopoeia, simile, metaphor, personification, imagery), allusions, epigraphs, and point of view as related to *The Secret Life of Bees*.
6. Students will analyze how literary elements are used to develop the theme of a novel.
7. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the text on four levels: factual, interpretive, critical, and personal.
8. Students will answer questions to demonstrate their understanding of the main events, characters, and ideas in the novel.
9. Students will improve their oral reading skills and individual reading comprehension.
10. Students will enrich their vocabularies and improve their understanding of the novel by using the vocabulary lessons prepared for use in conjunction with the novel.
11. Students will read aloud, report, and participate in large and small group discussions to improve their public speaking and personal interaction skills.
12. The writing assignments are geared to several purposes:
  - a. To have students demonstrate their abilities to inform, persuade, express their own personal ideas, or be creative
  - b. To check students' reading comprehension
  - c. To make students think about ideas presented in the novel
  - d. To encourage logical thinking
  - e. To provide an opportunity for students to practice good grammar and improve their use of standard, written English

READING ASSIGNMENTS *The Secret Life of Bees*

Date Assigned	Assignment	Completion Date
	<i>Assignment 1</i> Chapter 1	
	<i>Assignment 2</i> Chapters 2-3	
	<i>Assignment 3</i> Chapters 4-5	
	<i>Assignment 4</i> Chapters 6-7	
	<i>Assignment 5</i> Chapter 8	
	<i>Assignment 6</i> Chapter 9	
	<i>Assignment 7</i> Chapter 10	
	<i>Assignment 8</i> Chapter 11	
	<i>Assignment 9</i> Chapter 12	
	<i>Assignment 10</i> Chapter 13	
	<i>Assignment 11</i> Chapter 14	



UNIT OUTLINE *The Secret Life of Bees*

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Introduction Allusion Bingo	PVR 1 Oral Reading	Study ?s 1 PVR 2-3 Conotation & Denotation	Study ?s 2-3 PVR 4-5 Characterization	Study ?s 4-5 PVR 6-7 Figurative Language
<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
Study ?s 6-7 PVR 8 Allusion	Study ?s 8 PVR 9 Epigraphs	Study ?s 9 PVR 10 Historical Context Purpose & Intent	Writing Assignment #1	Study ?s 10 PVR 11
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
Nonfiction PVR 12	Study ?s 11-12 PVR 13 Writing Assignment #2	PVR 14 Presentations	Study ?s 13-14 Point of View	Writing Assignment #3
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
Group Theme Research & Discussion	Group Theme Presentations	Extra Discussion ?s Preparation	Extra Discussion?s Discussion	Vocabulary Review
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>			
Unit Review	Unit Test			

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

## LESSON ONE

### Objectives

1. To introduce students to subject matter discussed in the novel
2. To introduce students to a variety of media center resources or online research
3. To distribute books and other materials necessary for the unit

### Activity 1

Meet in the library or media center.

Explain to students that the class will be reading Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees*, and distribute the materials students will use in this unit. Explain in detail how students are to use these materials.

### Books

Each school has its own rules and regulations regarding student use of school books. Advise students of the procedures that are normal for your school. Preview the book. Look at the covers, front matter, and index.

### Study Guides

Students should read the study guide questions for each reading assignment prior to beginning the reading assignment to get a feeling for what events and ideas are important in the section they are about to read. After reading the section, students will (as a class or individually) answer the questions to review the important events and ideas from that section of the book. Students should keep the study guides as study materials for the unit test.

### Vocabulary

Prior to each reading assignment, students will do vocabulary work related to the section of the book they are about to read. Following the completion of the reading of the book, there will be a vocabulary review of all the words used in the vocabulary assignments. Students should keep their vocabulary work as study materials for the unit test.

### Reading Assignment Sheet

You need to fill in the reading assignment sheet to let students know by when their reading has to be completed. You can either write the assignment sheet up on a side blackboard or bulletin board and leave it there for students to see each day, or you can make copies for each student to have. In either case, you should advise students to become very familiar with the reading assignments so they know what is expected of them.

### Extra Activities Center

The Unit Resource Materials portion of this LitPlan contains suggestions of topics for an extra library of related books and articles in your classroom as well as crossword and word search puzzles. Make an extra activities center in your room where you will keep these materials for students to use. (Bring the books and articles in from the library and keep several copies of the puzzles on hand.) Explain to students that these materials are available for students to use when they finish reading assignments or other class work early.

### Non-fiction Assignment Sheet

Explain to students that they each are to read at least one non-fiction piece from the in-class library at some time during the unit. Students will fill out a non-fiction assignment sheet after completing the reading to help you (the teacher) evaluate their reading experiences and to help the students think about and evaluate their own reading experiences.

## WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 *The Secret Life of Bees*

### PROMPT

Throughout *The Secret Life of Bees*, Sue Monk Kidd weaves historical events into her fictional storyline. Other writers, such as Dudley Randall, have also depicted social events in a literary framework ("Ballad of Birmingham"). Refer to the article that you selected from a newspaper or magazine. Your assignment is to use the facts of the article in a work of historical fiction, choosing your words carefully (using figurative language, connotation, allusions and other devices we have studied) to elicit the desired response from your readers.

### PRE-WRITING

How might you represent the events of that article through historical fiction? What do you want to convey to your readers? What response do you want from your readers regarding the issues in your article? Will you write in prose or poetry? What point of view will you use in your piece? How do you want your readers to feel about the principal characters or events? Think a few minutes about these key questions and jot down your thoughts.

Your work of historical fiction must include examples of at least two different types of figurative language and two allusions. Think about what images or allusions might connect well with your work and jot them down.

Do you need to make up some additional characters? Maybe you need to embellish some facts? Consider the techniques you might use to strengthen the emotional power of the fictionalized piece you create. Make notes of your thoughts on these issues.

### DRAFTING

Using your article, your notes, and your thoughts, write a rough draft of your work of historical fiction. There are many different ways of approaching this assignment, so no step-by-step directions are available, but put pen to paper and begin *somewhere*; you can (and should) always go back to revise, strengthen, and polish your work.

### PROOFREADING

After you have revised and edited your work to the best of your ability, have someone whose opinions you trust proofread and evaluate your work. That person should let you know the good points as well as things that could be improved. Consider your critic's opinions and revise as you feel necessary, making a good, final copy to submit.