



TEACHER'S PET PUBLICATIONS

LITPLAN TEACHER PACK™

for

The Witch of Blackbird Pond

based on the book by
Elizabeth George Speare

Written by
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TABLE OF CONTENTS - *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*

Introduction	5
Unit Objectives	7
Reading Assignment Sheet	8
Unit Outline	9
Study Questions (Short Answer)	13
Quiz/Study Questions (Multiple Choice)	23
Pre-reading Vocabulary Worksheets	41
Lesson One (Introductory Lesson)	59
Nonfiction Assignment Sheet	61
Oral Reading Evaluation Form	
Writing Assignment 1	69
Writing Assignment 2	75
Writing Assignment 3	76
Writing Evaluation Form	77
Vocabulary Review Activities	73
Extra Writing Assignments/Discussion ?s	71
Unit Review Activities	79
Unit Tests	83
Unit Resource Materials	119
Vocabulary Resource Materials	135

A FEW NOTES ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Elizabeth George Speare

Speare, Elizabeth George (1908-1994) U. S. author of historical fiction for children, born on Nov. 21, 1908 in Melrose, Mass. Each of Speare's books was meticulously researched so that historical details were appropriate for the period. Her characters were also well rounded, and she appealed to her readers by drawing them into history with ease.

Speare studied at Smith College and graduated from Boston University with a B.A. degree in 1930 and an M.A. in 1932. She later taught English in high schools in Massachusetts. She was awarded the Newbery Medal in 1959 for 'The Witch of Blackbird Pond' (1958) and in 1962 for 'The Bronze Bow' (1961). She also wrote 'Calico Captive' (1957) and 'Life in Colonial America' (1963), as well as a novel for adults, 'The Prospering' (1967). Her last children's novel, 'Sign of the Beaver' (1983), won a Newbery Medal and the Scott O'Dell award for historical fiction. Speare died on November 15, 1994.

INTRODUCTION - *Witch of Blackbird Pond*

This unit has been designed to develop students' reading, writing, thinking, and language skills through exercises and activities related to *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Speare. It includes seventeen lessons, supported by extra resource materials.

The **introductory lesson** introduces students to the theme of moving to a place far away. Following the introductory activity, students are given a transition to explain 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. At the end of the lesson, students begin the pre-reading work for the first reading assignment.

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 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 reading the work, there is a lesson 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.

Following the 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.

The **group activity** has students working in small groups to research and discuss several nonfiction topics related to the ideas in the story. The group activity is followed by a **reports and discussion** session in which the groups share their research about the topics with the entire class; thus, the entire class is exposed to information about many different ideas related to the story.

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 explain the information they found in their research. The second assignment is to express personal opinions/feelings: students write a composition in which they complete the sentence, "Ah, if I could sail away. . . ." The third assignment is to practice persuasive writing: students create a travel brochure for the place to which they sailed away in the second writing assignment.

The **nonfiction reading assignment** is combined with the group activity in this unit. Students are required to read a piece of nonfiction related in some way to *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*, specifically relating to the topics they have been assigned. After reading their nonfiction pieces, students will fill out a worksheet on which they answer questions regarding facts, interpretation, criticism, and personal opinions.

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 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 **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 Witch of Blackbird Pond*

1. Through reading *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*, students will gain a better understanding of the Puritans.
2. Students will see that moving from one area to another and becoming adjusted in one's new home has never been easy.
3. Students will learn that conflicts between individual citizens and institutions (like church and government) are a part of any historical era, not just modern times.
4. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the text on four levels: factual, interpretive, critical and personal.
5. Students will learn about the historical background for *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*.
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 *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* 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
 - e. To provide an opportunity to practice good grammar and improve students' use of the English language.
10. Students will read aloud, report, and participate in large and small group discussions to improve their public speaking and personal interaction skills.

READING ASSIGNMENT SHEET - *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*

Date Assigned	Chapters Assigned	Completion Date
	1-3	
	4-7	
	8-10	
	11-13	
	14-16	
	17-18	
	19-21	

UNIT OUTLINE - *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*

1	2	3	4	5
Introduction PV 1-3	Read 1-3	Study ?s 1-3 PVR 4-7	Study ?s 4-7 PVR 8-10 Group Activity	Library
6	7	8	9	10
Study?s 8-10 PVR 11-13 Group Work	Study ?s 11-13 PVR 14-16	Study ?s 14-16 Writing Assignment 1 PVR 17-18	Study ?s 17-18 Group Reports PVR 19-21	Study ?s 19-21 Group Reports
11	12	13	14	15
Extra Questions	Vocabulary	Writing Assignment 2	Group Writing Assignment	Group Writing Assignment
16	17			
Review	Test			

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

LESSON ONE

Objectives

1. To introduce *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* unit.
2. To distribute books and other related materials
3. To preview the study questions for chapters 1-3
4. To familiarize students with the vocabulary for chapters 1-3
5. To read chapters 1-3

Activity #1

Do a little travelogue about Barbados and the islands. Perhaps your local travel agent would have a video you could show. If not, try a large video store in your area; they sometimes carry travelogue videos.

Transition: Ask students what their impressions are of Puritan New England. Give them ample time to answer. Then, ask them how they think one would feel going from Barbados to Puritan New England. Allow ample time for answers. Explain that the heroine of the book they are about to read had to do just that.

Alternate Introductory Activity: If you cannot find a video about Barbados and the islands, focus on the aspect of moving to a new area. Ask how many students in your class have ever moved to a new neighborhood. Discuss how they felt about moving, what adjustments they had to make, etc. As a transition, explain that the heroine of the book they are about to read had to relocate, and she had a hard time adjusting to her new environment.

Activity #2

Distribute the materials students will use in this unit. Explain in detail how students are to use these materials.

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 reading a 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.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 - *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*

PROMPT

You have been assigned a topic to research for your group. You have done the research and will soon have to give a presentation to the class. As an evaluation of your participation in the group's work, your assignment is to write a composition in which you tell what topic you researched and specifically explain what information you found. This composition is to be based on your own research, not the research of the entire group.

PREWRITING

Gather together the notes you took as you were researching your topic. Organize them into a logical fashion, making a little outline of your main ideas.

DRAFTING

Write a paragraph in which you introduce the topic you researched.

Write one paragraph for each main idea you found in your research. Fill out each paragraph with details and examples where appropriate.

Write one paragraph (or more if necessary) in which you give a brief evaluation of your sources. Tell which ones were most helpful (and why), which ones were the least helpful (and why), and what you thought of your sources.

Write a concluding paragraph in which you give your personal reactions to the information you found.

PROMPT

When you finish the rough draft of your paper, ask a student who sits near you to read it. After reading your rough draft, he/she should tell you what he/she liked best about your work, which parts were difficult to understand, and ways in which your work could be improved. Reread your paper considering your critic's comments, and make the corrections you think are necessary.

PROOFREADING

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