



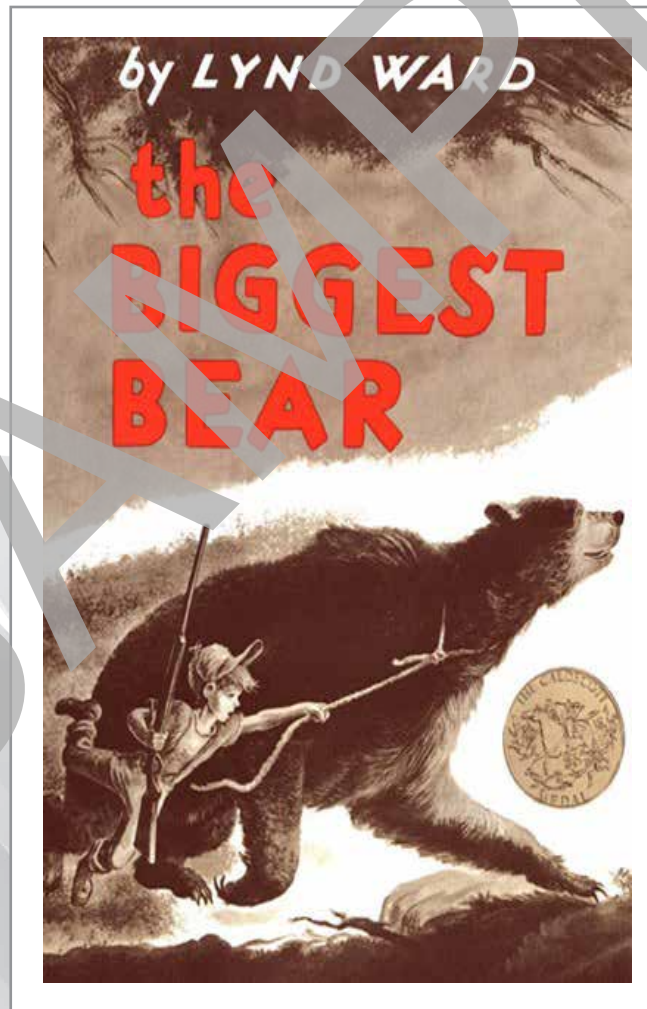
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES K-3**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# The Biggest Bear

Lynd Ward



**READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT**

# The Biggest Bear

Lynd Ward

## TEACHER GUIDE

**NOTE:**

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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## Summary

Johnny Orchard is humiliated by the fact that there is no bearskin on his family's barn while other barns in the valley have bearskins nailed up to dry. His grandfather's philosophy is, "Better a bear in the orchard than an Orchard in the bear." Things change drastically when Johnny brings home a small bear cub that grows up to be "The Biggest Bear."

## About the Author/Illustrator

Lynd Ward was born June 26, 1905, in Chicago, Illinois. He died of Alzheimer's disease, June 28, 1985, in Reston, Virginia. He was a graphic artist and illustrator of books for adults and children. In 1953, he won the Caldecott Medal for *The Biggest Bear*, which he both wrote and illustrated. Ward also illustrated numerous other books, including many for children written by his wife, May McNeer. Ward received numerous awards for his work, including a silver medallion from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1973 for "distinguished service to children's literature."

## The Caldecott Medal

The Caldecott Medal, named for Randolph Caldecott, is awarded annually by the American Library Association for the illustrator of the most distinguished American picture book for children. Randolph Caldecott, an English illustrator, was born in Chester, England, March 22, 1846. He died in St. Augustine, Florida, February 12, 1886. He had a great talent, and loved horses, dogs, and everything that belonged to the English countryside. His drawings were noted for their freshness, boldness, and gaiety. He thought long and seriously before putting pen to paper. He said, "The fewer the lines, the less error committed!"

Although Caldecott and his wife never had children of their own, he had many children as friends. It was for children that he did the work for which he will probably be longest remembered, and best loved.

*Note:* When using this study guide, please be selective and use the suggestions and activities that would be most appropriate for you and your group of children. It is not intended that you do everything that is included in this guide, but that discretionary choices be made. A wide range has been provided, so that individuals as well as groups may benefit from your selections.

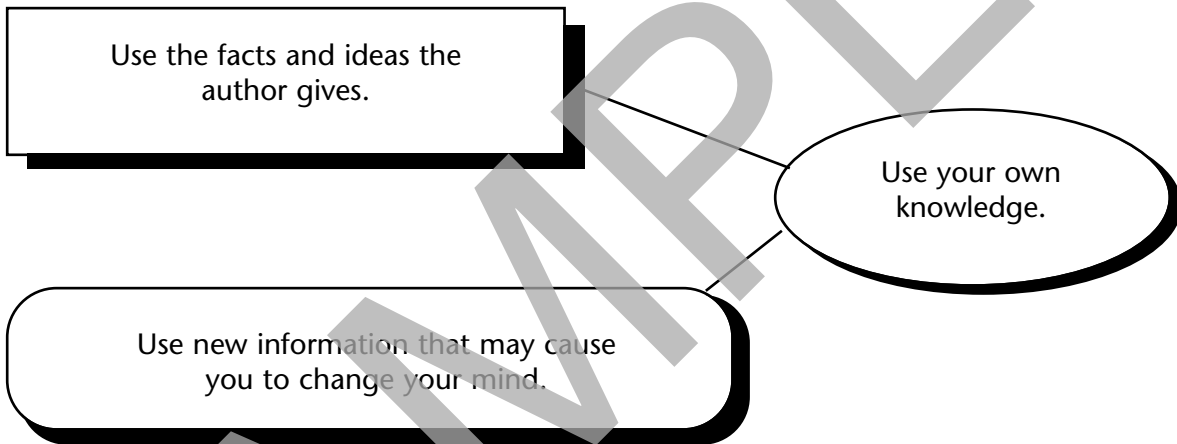
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## Using Predictions in the Novel Unit Approach

We all make predictions as we read—little guesses about what will happen next, how the conflict will be resolved, which details given by the author will be important to the plot, which details will help to fill in our sense of a character. Students should be encouraged to predict, to make sensible guesses.

As students work on predictions, these discussion questions can be used to guide them: What are some of the ways to predict? What is the process of a sophisticated reader's thinking and predicting? What clues does an author give us to help us in making our predictions? Why are some predictions more likely than others?

A prediction chart is for students to record their predictions. As each subsequent chapter is discussed, you can review and correct previous predictions. This procedure serves to focus on predictions and to review the stories.



Predictions:

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## Pages 12-33

### Vocabulary

stump (14)  
calves (24)

hungry (18)  
mash (26)

pocket (20)  
pancakes (30)

brought (22)  
especially (32)

### Vocabulary Activity

How many words can you make from the letters in the word “especially”? (*Examples: special, pea, sea, yes, yell, yea, lea, lap, sap, see, lip, sip, seep, peace, piece, lee, lisp, lay, lie, spy, pie, yipe, yip, yelp, yap.*)

### Discussion Questions

1. What does Johnny find in the woods? (*Page 16, He finds a bear cub.*)
2. What does Johnny feed the bear cub? (*Page 18, He feeds it a piece of maple sugar.*) In reality, would Johnny, or anyone, be wise to feed a bear cub maple sugar or anything else? Why or why not?
3. Johnny takes the bear cub home. What are some things that the bear cub likes to eat? (*Pages 24-32, The bear cub likes to drink the milk meant for the calves, and to eat the mash meant for the chickens, as well as apples, pancakes, and maple sugar.*)

### Supplementary Activities

1. Have you ever been to a National Park where there are bears? What are the rules and regulations about feeding bears in National Parks? Why have the rules been established? See Resource Information at the end of this guide for addresses of organizations that may have helpful literature for you about National Parks. Request a listing of current educational materials available.
2. Bring in some maple sugar for the children to taste.

## Pages 34-47

### Vocabulary

shelves (34)

smokehouse (38)

worse (42)

### Vocabulary Activity

Find out more about a smokehouse.

*Smokehouse:* A structure in which meat or fish is cured with smoke.

*Smoke:* To preserve meat or fish by exposure to the aromatic smoke of burning hardwood, usually after pickling in salt or brine.