



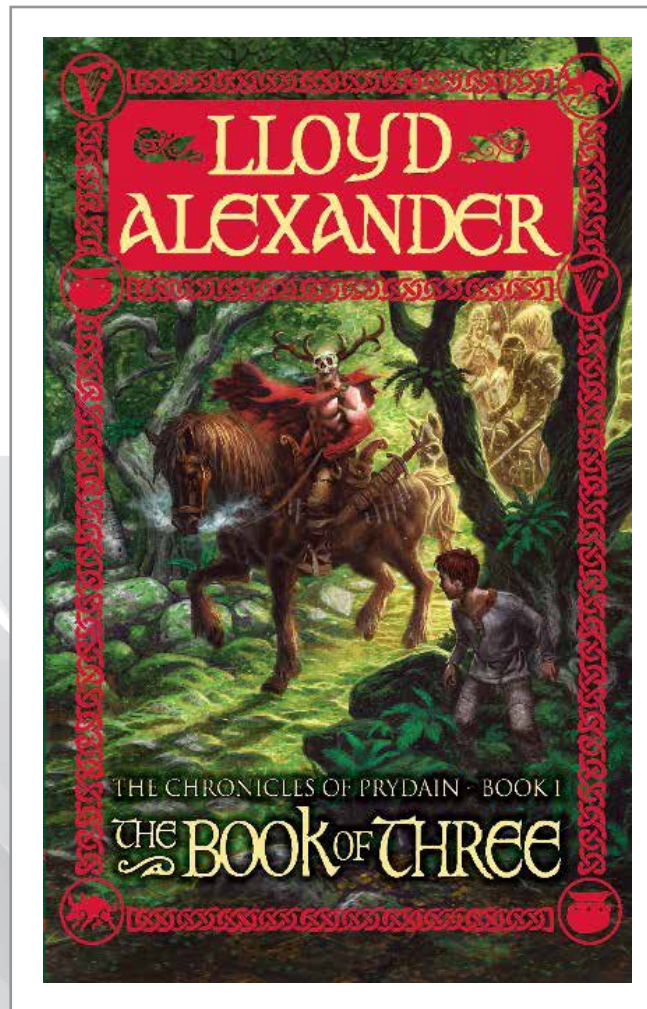
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

The Book of Three

Lloyd Alexander



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

The Book of Three

Lloyd Alexander

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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Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Interpreting evidence,
compare/contrast, pros/cons,
research, forming opinions

Comprehension

Cause/effect, classifying,
details, generalizing,
inferencing, predicting,
summarizing, main idea

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, oral report, music

Vocabulary

Context clues, word map,
synonyms/antonyms

Writing

Essay, list, editorial, article

Literary Elements

Characterization, plot
development, setting,
foreshadowing, symbolism,
simile, theme, description

Across the Curriculum

Art—posters/collage; Music—
harp study, recording;
Science—industry, animal
science; Health— swimming
safety, diet, folk medicine;
Social Studies—culture,
geography, history, map,
government, research

Genre: fantasy

Setting: imaginary Land of Prydain

Point-of-View: third-person

Themes: perseverance, heroism, gratitude, tolerance, good vs. evil, courage, commitment, identity

Conflict: person vs. self, person vs. society, person vs. person

Style: narrative

Date of First Publication: 1964

Summary

The Book of Three is a coming-of-age story set long ago in the imaginary Land of Prydain. Taran, Assistant Pig-Keeper, is dissatisfied with his farming life. He finds adventure when the oracular pig, Hen Wen, escapes into the forest. There Taran meets the heroic Prince Gwydion. They join forces to find Hen Wen and defeat the evil Arawn, ruler of Annvin, and Arawn's war leader, the Horned King. When Gwydion is captured, Taran resumes his quest. He succeeds with help from a strong-willed girl, a likable bard, a fanciful creature, and a disagreeable elf. Taran learns the meaning of heroism, responsibility, and respect for all living things.

About the Author

Lloyd Alexander was born on January 30, 1924, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was influenced by childhood reading of Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, myths, and the Arthurian legends. Before he gained recognition as a writer, Alexander was a bank messenger boy, soldier in the United States Army from 1943 to 1946, cartoonist, advertising copywriter, layout artist, and magazine editor. He published his first novel in 1955. His first novel for young readers, *Time Cat*, was published in 1963. *The Book of Three* followed in 1964 and launched the five-book Prydain series. Since then Alexander has published numerous fantasy novels for children and young adults. Many have won awards. *The Book of Three* was an ALA Notable Book.

Background Information:

The Prydain novels show Alexander's fascination with Wales, its landscape, and the Mabinogion, a collection of Welsh myths and legends. Sent to Wales during his military service, Alexander viewed the country as an enchanted land of bards and heroes. Bard Ffleuddur Fflam in *The Book of Three* carries a harp inspired by Alexander's acquisition of a worn Welsh harp with strings that broke suddenly.

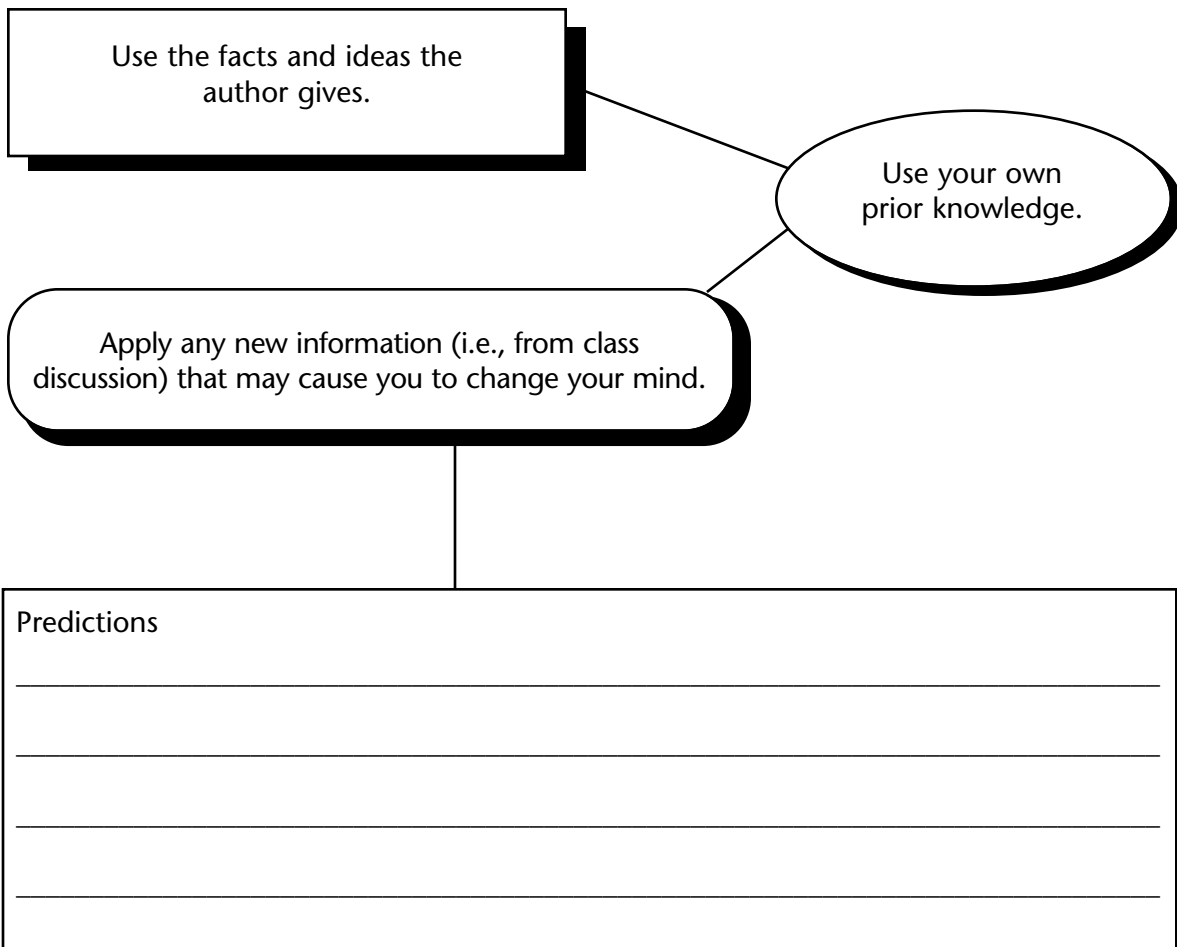
The Author's Note to *The Book of Three* provides a useful introduction. Valuable resources, including bibliographies, biographies, and a key to pronunciation of Prydain names, can be found by researching Lloyd Alexander on the Internet. Printed sources for quick reference include Gale's *Something About the Author* (vol. 49) and *Children's Literature Review*.

Using Predictions

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

As students work on their 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 to help us make predictions? Why are some predictions more likely to be accurate than others?

Create a chart for recording predictions. This could either be an individual or class activity. As each subsequent chapter is discussed, students can review and correct their previous predictions about plot and characters as necessary.



Chapters VI–VIII, pp. 63–92

Taran wakes alone in a cell. Eilonwy appears, then leaves to free Taran's companion and get Melyngar and weapons. Taran and Eilonwy follow passageways and take swords from a king's barrow. An explosion destroys Spiral Castle. Taran finds out that Eilonwy rescued a stranger, not his companion Gwydion.

Vocabulary

grating (63)
consciousness (63)
bauble (65)
prattling (67)
galleries (69)
passageways (69)
kinsmen (70)
defense (75)
rapid (78)
pace (78)
barrow (89)
raiment (89)
scabbard (90)

Discussion Questions

1. Describe Eilonwy's appearance. What is Eilonwy doing at Spiral Castle? Why does she play with a golden bauble? (*She is blue-eyed with long reddish-gold hair, delicate, a year or two younger than Taran, and fully as tall. Achren may be her aunt. Her kinsmen sent her to learn to be an enchantress due to a family tradition. She hates Achren. She plays with a bauble because she has nothing else to do.* pp. 65–66, 69–71)
2. What does Eilonwy think of Taran? Why? Do you think she is unreasonable? (*Answers will vary. Students may refer to conversations in which Eilonwy denies she's a little girl, asks Taran if he's slow-witted, says she feels sorry for him because it's terrible to be dull and stupid, and asks if the work of Assistant Pig-Keeper calls for much intelligence.* pp. 65–66, 68–69, 72–73, 76, 78, 81)
3. What does Taran think of Eilonwy? Do you agree with him? (*Answers will vary. Students may refer to Taran's opinion that she is the "most confusing person he had ever met," that she prattles, is a "rattlebrained fool," and "scatterbrained."* pp. 66–73, 78–79, 80–83, 85–86)
4. Taran warns Eilonwy that Achren will know she let him escape. Eilonwy says that's very thoughtful to say. "It shows a kind heart, and I think that's so much more important than being clever." Do you agree with her? (*Answers will vary.* pp. 76–77)
5. Why does Eilonwy jump down into Taran's deep chamber? Would you have done the same? (*Eilonwy thinks the tunnel has to go some place better than where they are. She understands tunnels and thinks it follows the same direction as the one above. It has half as many galleries coming off it, and it's a lot more comfortable.* Answers will vary. pp. 82–83)
6. What is meant by "a tree of lightning crackled in the sky"? What actually happens to Spiral Castle? (*Students may infer that an explosion caused by a violent storm or an earthquake destroys it.* Answers will vary. pp. 90–91)
7. Whose shadowy figure lies on the high stone slab surrounded by dead warriors? Whose sword does Eilonwy take? (*the king who built the castle; the king's sword,* pp. 88–89, 91)
8. **Prediction:** Will Taran see Gwydion again?

Supplementary Activities

1. Literary Analysis/Characterization: Have students begin a Character Web for Eilonwy.
2. Research: Have students use reference sources to discover what dungeons were like in medieval castles. Have them write a few descriptive sentences about dungeons.
3. Writing: Have students write a paragraph describing how they would help someone who was in a bad situation.