

Teacher Guide

Grades 5–6

The Castle in the Attic

Elizabeth Winthrop

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THE CASTLE IN THE ATTIC

by
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Teacher Guide

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Note

The Bantam Skylark paperback edition of the book was used to prepare this guide. The page references may differ in the hardcover or other paperback editions.

Please note: Please assess the appropriateness of this book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading and discussing it with your class.

ISBN 978-1-60878-435-6

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Publisher Information

For a complete catalog, contact—

Novel Units, Inc.

P.O. Box 97

Bulverde, TX 78163-0097

Web site: novelunits.com

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Table of Contents

Summary	3
Introductory Activities	10
Chapter-by-Chapter	13
Chapters contain: Vocabulary Words, Discussion Questions, Supplementary Activities, Predictions	
Post-reading Activities	34
Bulletin Board Ideas	34
Journal Prompts	35
Vocabulary Activities	35
Teacher Background	38
Bibliography	39
Assessment	40

Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Evaluating, visualization,
synthesis

Literary Elements

Fantasy as a genre, story
elements, characterization

Vocabulary

Synonyms/antonyms,
thesaurus, analogies,
categorize, word mapping

Comprehension

Predicting, comparison/
contrast

Writing

Newspaper article,
exposition, narrative,
journaling

Listening/Speaking

Interviewing, role play,
mood, news bite

Chapter 2

Pages 8-16

Vocabulary

chivalry 9	entrusted 9	drawbridge 10	portcullis 10
armory 11	buttery 11	scullery 11	troubadours 11
jesters 11	minstrels 12	wardrobe 12	allure 12

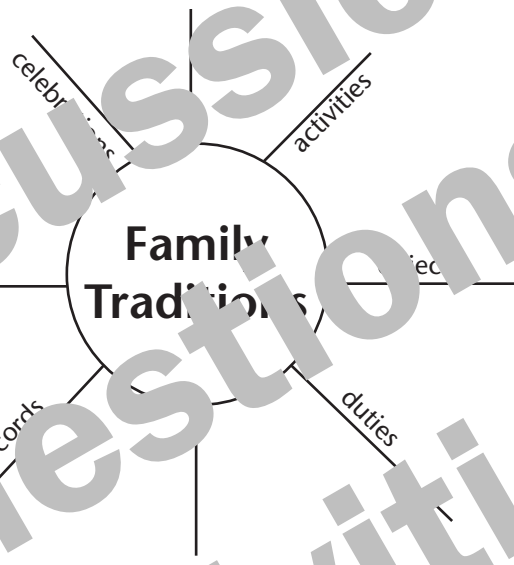
Discussion Questions

1. Why does William look “like a horse at the starting gate” at the beginning of Chapter 2? (He was anxious to see the carriage Mrs. Phillips had for him.) What kind of a descriptive device did the author use here? (a simile) Why are similes useful? (They give the reader visual images.)
2. What is the spring? (an enormous stone and wood structure which had been Mrs. Phillips’ water source when she was a child)
3. What are rules of chivalry? (Teachers: Look to page 28 in the book where the rules of chivalry are detailed in the fourth paragraph.) Why do you think they are important to Mrs. Phillips? (Answers vary.)
4. Using the diagram of the castle, conduct a tour for a partner. Be sure to use the correct terms.
5. What does Mrs. Phillips remember of the legend of the Silver Knight? (The knight was long ago thrown out of his kingdom by a sorcerer, and one day he’ll come back to life and reclaim his land.)
6. How are William’s feelings as he and Mrs. Phillips eat dinner in Chapter 2? (He is unsettled) Have you ever had something “hang” between you and someone else? Share your feelings.
7. Why is Mrs. Phillips leaving? (Answers vary, but include a notion that William will be closer to his parents when she’s gone.)
8. Look at these castle terms. Look for modern day equivalents or near equivalents.

Castles	Modern Day
Drawbridge	Bridge
Portcullis	Gate
Armory	Bulletproof vest
Buttery	Party room
Scullery	Kitchen
Troubadours	Stage entertainers
Jesters	Clowns/entertainers
Wardrobe	Closet
Allure	Hall

Supplementary Activities

1. Locate a copy of *King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table* so you can read a couple of chapters.
2. What is Marmite? Check at specialty food stores or with someone from England to answer. Try tasting it, if you can.
3. Speculate about what happened to the other soldiers in the castle. Write a short paragraph to explain your answer.
4. Interview a parent or older sibling about family traditions. Fill in a class web to record answers.



Journal Prompts

1. My hands have held...
2. My eyes have seen...
3. My money has gone to...
4. My signature appeared on...
5. My laugh has been heard at...
6. My feet have been...
7. My chivalry has been heard...
8. Explain and use an idiom in words.

break the ice

walk on eggshells

split hairs

sleep like a log

flipped his lid

in hot water

9. My imagination...
10. My toy soldier...

Vocabulary Activities

1. List storm synonyms for a common, -y verb, as in *went* or *ran* or *said*. Place the words on an expander, *went* to categorize shades of meaning among the synonyms. (See diagram on next page.)
2. Encourage students to start their personal word bank of words they've learned recently or want to learn. The parallel is to a money bank in which change is saved for use later. Likewise students collect vocabulary words on cards or lists for their personal bank.
3. Students make cards for use in a many-fold board game. On one side of a card, the vocabulary word is used in a sentence. A definition is placed on the reverse side. This pack of the cards provides the "questions" for the game. A name-reversal can also be used, such as *Jeopardy* or any board game in which players proceed from start to finish through a series of "blocks." Just use the vocabulary words as the means to proceed.