



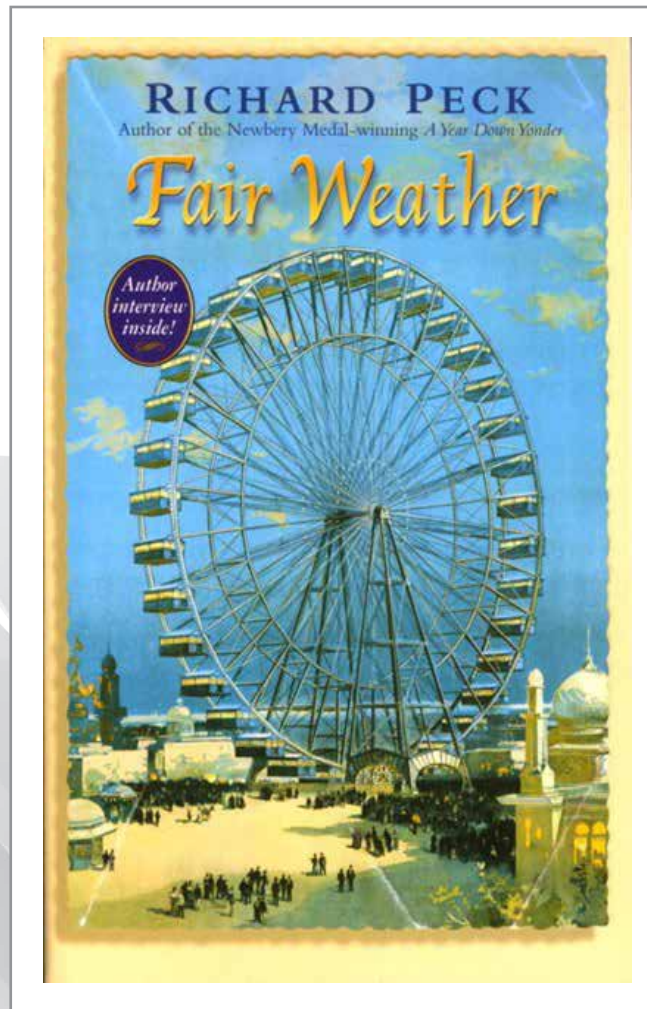
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 6-8**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# Fair Weather

Richard Peck



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

# Fair Weather

Richard Peck

## 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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**ISBN 978-1-50203-774-9**

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## Skills and Strategies

### Comprehension

Creative thinking, following directions, identifying attributes, inferring, predicting, compare/contrast, supporting judgments, concept map

### Literary Elements

Story mapping, figurative language, characterization, setting, conflict, theme, cause and effect

### Vocabulary

Target words, using adjectives, synonyms and antonyms, word maps, using a thesaurus and dictionary

### Listening/Speaking

Discussion, debate, poetry, interviewing, dramatizing

### Writing

Creative writing, character journal, personal narrative, letters and e-mails, dialogue, advertisement, journalism

### Critical Thinking

Compare/contrast, brainstorming, research, analysis, evaluation

### Across the Curriculum

Social Studies—maps, time line;  
Science—recipes, primary colors of light, simple machines;  
Math—computation; Art—design, drawing, illustration

**Genre:** fiction

**Setting:** 1893, central Illinois farm, World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago

**Point of View:** first person

**Themes:** family relationships, social status, innovation

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

**Style:** narrative (narrator is reminiscing)

**Tone:** lighthearted and humorous, rural vernacular

**Date of First Publication:** 2001

## Summary

*Fair Weather* is the story of a 13-year-old Illinois farm girl at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. Rosie Beckett has one more year of school left. She's feeling almost grown up—until she leaves home for the first time. Accompanied by an opinionated granddad, a spunky younger brother, and an older sister with a secret, Rosie arrives in Chicago unprepared for life in the city. She attempts to help her lonely aunt and learns a hard lesson about the dos and don'ts of high society. The sights and innovations at the fair, especially the Women's Building, show Rosie that she has "a world more to learn."

## About the Author

Richard Peck grew up in Decatur, Illinois. After studying in London and writing poetry and articles in New York, he became an English teacher. He says he couldn't have become a writer without teaching first. In his classrooms, he learned about his students' problems and he heard them in his students' voices. Not only did teaching introduce him to his readers, it showed him that he wanted to write about the problems young people face while growing up. At the age of 37, Peck wrote his first novel. He now has over 30 novels, including a Newbery Honor Book, *A Long Way from Chicago*, and its Newbery Medal-winning sequel, *A Year Down Yonder*. Among his numerous honors and awards, Peck received the Margaret A. Edwards Award for lifetime achievement in children's literature and a National Humanities Medal. Peck says that "writing fiction involves sticking your nose into other people's business—snooping and calling it research." He is well known for realistically capturing the words, emotions, and concerns of his young readers.

## Background Information

Asked about his choice of time and setting for *Fair Weather*, Richard Peck says, "...the twentieth century began at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893," and he wishes he could have attended the fair. Over 27 million people, including 25 percent of the United States' population, did attend. The fair showcased a city rebuilt in the 22 years after the Great Chicago Fire and the accomplishments of America since the arrival of Christopher Columbus. With advances in technology, America was changing from a nation of agricultural producers to one centered around cities, urban culture, and factories—a nation on its way to becoming a "consumerist

society.” For Americans, it was a time of pride and confusion. The fair introduced products and inventions that would soon become a part of their lives. The Exposition, or Chicago World’s Fair, promoted and influenced the social and cultural directions in which America was headed. For more detailed background information, see educational Web sites and Chicago historical societies on the Internet.

## Characters

**Rosie Beckett:** 13-year-old farm girl; believes she is almost grown up

**LeRoy “Buster” Beckett:** Rosie’s 7-year-old brother; plays pranks on his sisters and dislikes farm work

**Lottie Beckett:** Rosie’s 17-year-old sister; has finished school and is looking to start her own life

**Mama (Adelaide Beckett):** shy but strong-willed farm wife

**Dad (Gideon Beckett):** hardworking farmer

**Granddad (Silas Fuller):** Mama and Euterpe’s father; an opinionated and stubborn country man

**Tip:** Granddad’s dog

**Lillian Russell:** Granddad’s old mare who is named after an actress

**Everett Evans:** Lottie’s sweetheart; a college student from Chicago who is working a summer job on a neighboring farm

**Mr. Oldweiler:** owner of the store where the Becketts trade eggs and butter

**Aunt Euterpe Fuller Fleischacker:** Mama’s older sister who lives in Chicago; a lonely widow who isn’t accepted by high society

**Mrs. O’Shay:** Aunt Euterpe’s cook

**Mrs. Potter Palmer:** nonfictional character; the queen of Chicago’s high society (As President of the Board of Lady Managers, she ensures that women have representation at the fair.)

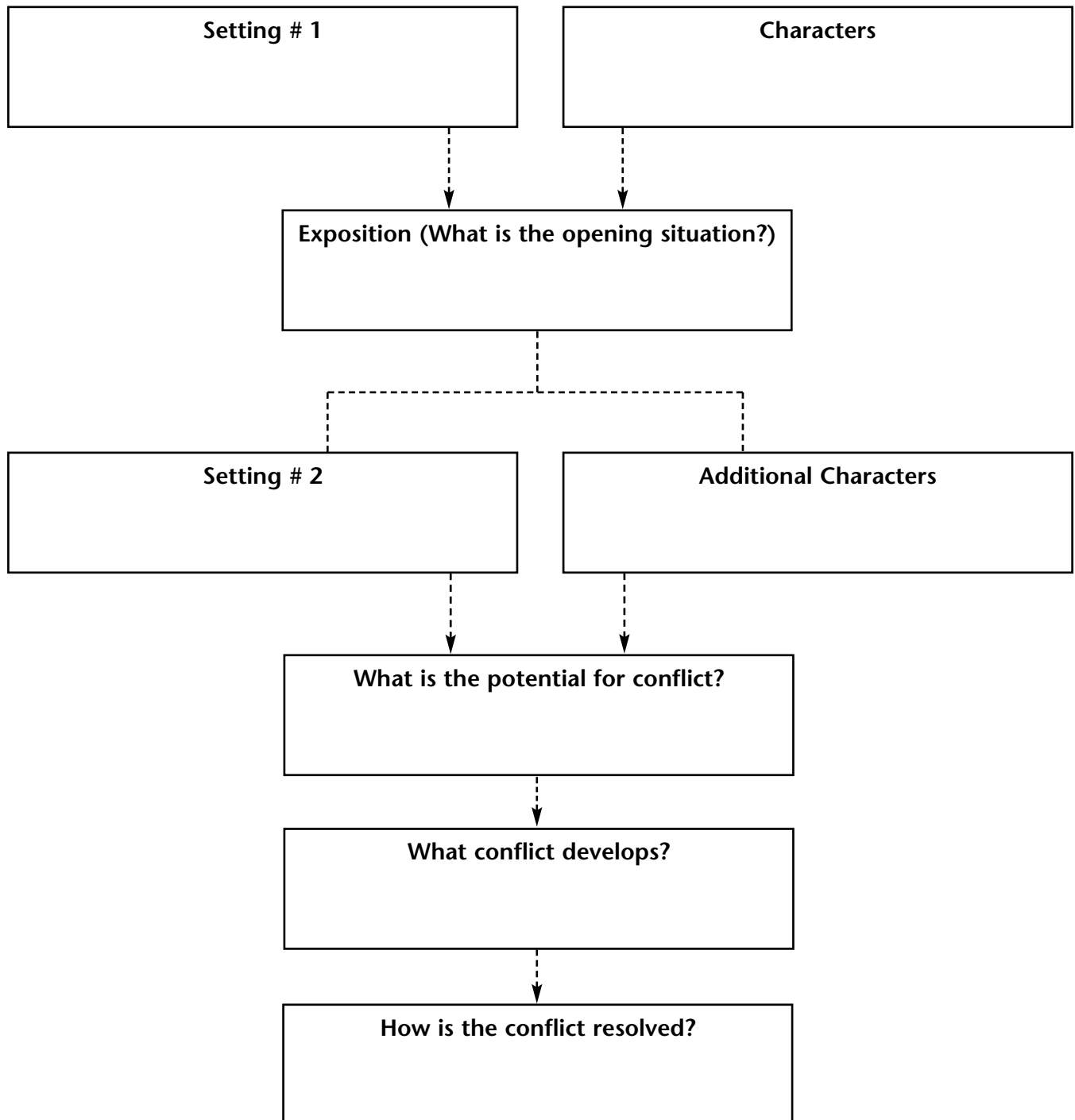
**Colonel William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody:** nonfictional character; runs a traveling Wild West Show, which tours Europe and America

**Lillian Russell:** nonfictional character; actress and singer

**Mrs. Danforth Evans:** Everett’s mother; high society woman, though not as prestigious as Mrs. Potter Palmer

**Mr. Danforth Evans:** Everett’s father; dean at the University of Chicago

## Story Map



## The Worst Day in Aunt Euterpe's Life, Part Two, pp. 85–97

At the fair, Granddad and Buster go to the Hall of Electricity while Aunt Euterpe takes Lottie and Rosie to the Women's Building. The girls have mixed reactions to the artwork and modern appliances on display as well as to speakers Susan B. Anthony and Frances Willard regarding suffrage and prohibition. At lunch, Rosie speaks to Mrs. Potter Palmer, horrifying Aunt Euterpe. Things get worse when Granddad interrupts the women announcing that he has lost Buster, who is eventually found looking at the moving picture machine. Rosie, feeling terrible about the trouble she has caused her aunt and confused about the way the world works, wants to return to the security of the farm.

### Vocabulary

horticultural (85)  
depicted (86)  
enlightenment (86)  
bowers (87)  
suffrage (88)  
pulpit (88)  
temperance (88)  
prohibition (88)  
rigor mortis (92)  
blundered (92)  
oblivion (94)  
gaudy (94)  
zoögyroscope (95)  
tintypes (95)

### Discussion Questions

1. What is Aunt Euterpe's opinion of the Women's Building? Why is the Women's Building so important to her? (*It is "the beating heart of the fair." Answers will vary. p. 86*)
2. Discuss Lottie and Aunt Euterpe's differences of opinion on the mural showing cavewomen with fire. Why would they see the same painting so differently? (*Aunt Euterpe sees the mural depicting women bringing enlightenment to their menfolk. Lottie sees the women in the mural as learning to cook so they will never get out of the kitchen. Answers will vary. p. 86*)
3. Why does Rosie have trouble understanding the artwork showing modern women? Should art always be straightforward so every viewer gets the message? (*Rosie needs more education to be able to interpret the paintings. Answers will vary. p. 86*)
4. What does Aunt Euterpe believe will happen if women vote? Does her belief come true once women do get the right to vote? (*Women would purify politics. Answers will vary. p. 88*)
5. Is Lottie correct that prohibition of hard liquor would not happen? What were the results of prohibition? (*No. Answers will vary. p. 88*)
6. Do you think Aunt Euterpe is being proper or overly concerned about others' opinions when she instructs Lottie and Rosie to pay attention to the ladies at tea? Can someone learn from watching others? (*Answers will vary. p. 89*)
7. Review the description of Mrs. Potter Palmer's bed and personal items. What kind of person is Mrs. Palmer? Should Aunt Euterpe admire her? (*Mrs. Palmer has Louis the Sixteenth's bed, and her underwear and stockings are catalogued according to their use. Answers will vary. p. 90*)
8. Discuss Rosie's encounter with Mrs. Potter Palmer. How do you feel about her social blunder? (*Rosie stops Mrs. Palmer, curtsies, and compliments Chicago. She tries to introduce Mrs. Palmer to Aunt Euterpe. Answers will vary. pp. 91–92*)
9. How does Granddad lose Buster? Where is Buster supposed to be? (*Granddad goes to see Little Egypt dance. Buster rides a camel, then is supposed to wait out front for Granddad. p. 93*)
10. **Prediction:** Will Rosie's social blunder force Aunt Euterpe to leave Chicago? What could prevent that from happening?

## Supplementary Activities

1. Comprehension: On pages 91 and 92, Rosie approaches Mrs. Potter Palmer. Write a scene about what might have happened if Granddad hadn't shown up and interrupted.
2. Writing: The captive balloon breaks free from its moorings and vanishes (pp. 93–94). Pretend people were onboard at the time. Write a newspaper article reporting the event. Include interviews with the survivors.
3. Science: The theory behind animated movies started before Professor Muybridge's zoögyroscope (pp. 94–95). A toy from the 1820s called the thaumatrope (pronounced thomma-trope) uses movement to make two separate pictures look like one picture. The thaumatrope works on a principle called the persistence of vision, or how long your eyes remember something you've looked at. To make your own thaumatrope, you will need:

heavy stock paper or cardboard (white)

scissors

hole punch

two 12-inch pieces of string or yarn

crayons, markers, or pens

Cut the paper or cardboard into a circle. Punch two holes on opposite sides of the circle, about 1/4-inch from the edges. Draw a bird on one side of the circle. Flip the disc over and draw a birdcage on the other side. (The birdcage should be upside down compared to the bird.) Tie a piece of string to each of the holes. Hold the strings a few inches from the disc and twirl, then pull the strings tight. As the disc spins, the bird will look as if it is in the birdcage.

Variations: Experiment with shapes other than circles. Try colored paper and colored drawings. Replace the bird and birdcage with other drawings or spell your name dividing the letters between both sides of the disk. Just remember the image on one side of the thaumatrope has to be upside down from the one on the other side.