



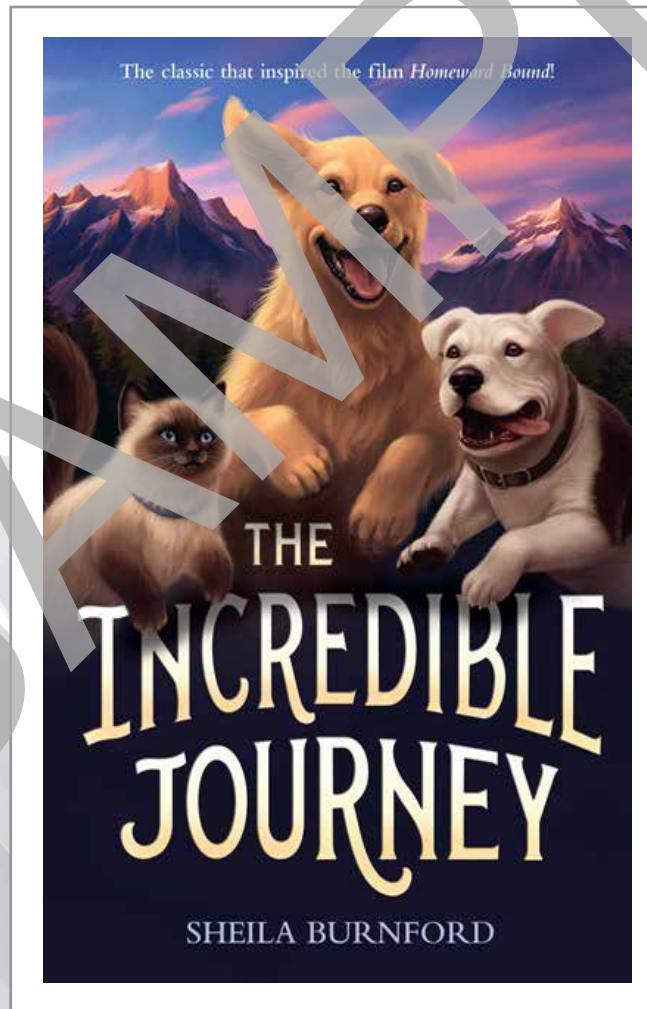
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

The Incredible Journey

Sheila Burnford



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

The Incredible Journey

Sheila Burnford

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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3901 Union Blvd., Suite 155

St. Louis, MO 63115

sales@novelunits.com

novelunits.com

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Novel Units: Rationale

How do you ensure that the needs of individual students are met in a heterogeneous classroom? How do you challenge students of all abilities without losing some to confusion and others to boredom?

With the push toward “untracking” our schools, these are questions that more and more educators need to examine. As any teacher of “gifted” or “remedial” students can attest, even “homogeneous” classrooms contain students with a range of abilities and interests.

Here are some of the strategies research suggests:

- cooperative learning
- differentiated assignments
- questioning strategies that tap several levels of thinking
- flexible grouping within the class
- cross-curriculum integration
- process writing
- portfolio evaluation

Novel Units are designed with these seven facets in mind. Discussion questions and projects are framed to span all of the levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy. Graphic organizers are provided to enhance critical thinking. Tests have been developed at two levels of difficulty. While most activities can be completed individually, many are ideal vehicles for collaborative effort. Throughout the guides, there is an emphasis on collaboration: students helping other students to generate ideas, students working together to actualize those ideas, and students sharing their products with other students. Extension activities link literature with other areas of the curriculum—including writing, art, music, science, history, geography, and current events—and provide a basis for portfolio evaluation.

Finally, teachers are encouraged to adapt the guides to meet the needs of individual classes and students. You know your students best! We are offering you some tools for working with them. Here are some of the “nuts and bolts” for using these “tools”: a glossary of some of the terms used above that will facilitate your use of the guides.

Bloom’s Taxonomy: a classification system for various levels of thinking. Questions keyed to these levels may be:

- comprehension questions, which ask one to state the meaning of what is written
- application questions, which ask one to extend one’s understanding to a new situation
- analysis questions, which ask one to think about relationships between ideas such as cause/effect

About the Author

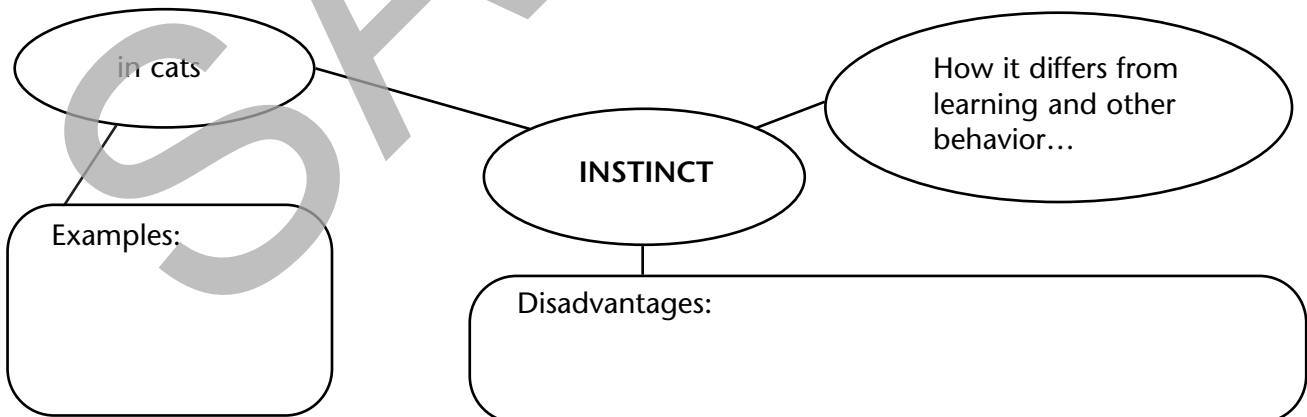
Sheila Burnford was born in Scotland on May 11, 1918. She went to St. George's School in Edinburgh and Harrogate College in Yorkshire before studying in Germany. After marrying David Burnford in 1941, she had three daughters. She served in the Royal Naval Hospital's Voluntary Aid Detachment in England between 1939 and 1941, and served as an ambulance driver the following year. She died in 1984, at age 65.

The Incredible Journey was one of two books Burnford wrote for children, and by far the more popular. She wrote two other novels, *The Fields of Noon* and *Without Reserve*, and was a contributor to *Punch*, *Canadian Poetry* and *The Glasgow Herald*.

Initiating Activities

Choose one or more of the following activities to establish an appropriate mind set for the story students are about to read:

1. **Anticipation Guide** (See Novel Units Student Packet, Activity Sheet #3): Students discuss their opinions of statements which tap themes they will meet in the story, e.g., friendship, animal behavior, survival, etc.
2. **Video:** View the video version of the novel.
3. Have students **brainstorm** associations with the word INSTINCT as a student scribe jots ideas around the word on a large piece of paper. Help students "cluster" the ideas into categories. A sample framework is shown below:



Chapter Two

Vocabulary Words

adjacent (18)

placid (20)

methodically (18)

wary (24)

wistfully (19)

materialize (20)

Discussion Questions

1. Why does John almost wish he didn't have to leave Luath just now? *(Luath has finally shown him some trust and affection by offering him a paw.)*
2. Why does John feel a little silly about his farewell to the animals? Do you agree with him that he is "becoming too attached to them"? *(He waves to them from his car.)*
3. How would John feel if he could see what happens to the animals twenty minutes after he leaves? *(He would be shocked to see them head off down the road; they never wander far from the house.)*
4. Who leads the group? How do they decide which way to go? Are they going in the proper direction? *(Luath, the young Labrador leads, heading instinctively west which is the direction from which the Hunters brought them.)*
5. Why does Mrs. Oakes think that something is odd when she arrives? Why does she stop worrying? *(She doesn't see the animals, but is reassured when she reads the part of the note which is left because it seems to indicate that John has decided to take the pets with him.)*
6. How do you imagine the scene when darkness falls the first night of the trip? Where do the three sleep? What sounds do you hear? What do you smell? What is the temperature like? *(The old dog is asleep; the young dog and cat come to sleep nearby; we hear the wolf, owls, rustling, porcupine; the temperature is probably crisp but not bitterly cold.)*

Prediction: Already Bodger is exhausted. Besides fatigue, what problems will the animals face?

Writing Activity: On pages 20-22, we see Mrs. Oakes' reaction when she finds that the animals are gone, presumably with John. Rewrite this section, telling how Mrs. Oakes would have acted if all pages of the note had been clipped together, and she had known that the animals were supposed to be at home.

Chapter Three

Vocabulary Words

gullet (29)	appease (30)	sedge (31)	abhorrent (31)
plaintive (32)	unresponsive (32)	benison (32)	whisky-jack (34)
transfixed (35)	ineffectual (36)	banshee (36)	adversary (36)
decamp (37)	bravado (37)	rank (37)	stanch (37)
perplexity (38)	galvanizing (38)	grotesque (38)	harlequin (38)
succulent (39)			

Discussion Questions

1. What can you figure out about the cat's actions before the others wake up? *(He goes out to hunt and finds a bird.)*
2. How can you tell that the young dog considers the old dog's needs when choosing particular routes? *(He chooses the softer, more shaded areas because "these were all considerations that the old dog needed.")*
3. Why does the cat do better than the dogs when it comes to getting food? Why do you think the Terrier isn't a better hunter? What about the Labrador? What advice would you give these dogs about how to get food? *(The cat's hunting instincts have not been trained out of him. The Terrier is old, has poor eyesight, and is pretty slow; the Labrador has been trained not to eat the animals it retrieves.)*
4. Why does Bodger collapse? *(He is old, weary, hungry.)*
5. What happens before and after what is shown in the picture on page 28? *(A cub bats at Bodger and the cat attacks the cub; the mother bear comes to investigate, and Luath and Tao manage to scare her and the cub away.)*
6. What do you think would have happened to Bodger if the mother bear hadn't come along? if the cat hadn't come along? if the Labrador hadn't come along? *(If the cat hadn't upset the mother by attacking her cub, perhaps the bears would have left Bodger alone; however, once the cat attacked the cub, Bodger would have been a goner without the intervention of the dog.)*
7. How do the cat and the Labrador help their friend, Bodger, recover after his encounter with the bears? Do you think these are actions a cat and dog would really take? *(The cat brings Bodger food and the young dog licks Bodger's wounds.)*

Prediction: A bear and her cub have been driven away. What other wild animals might attack the trio?

Writing Activity: You are Bodger. If you could write, what "thank you" poem might you give to Luath, the Labrador?