



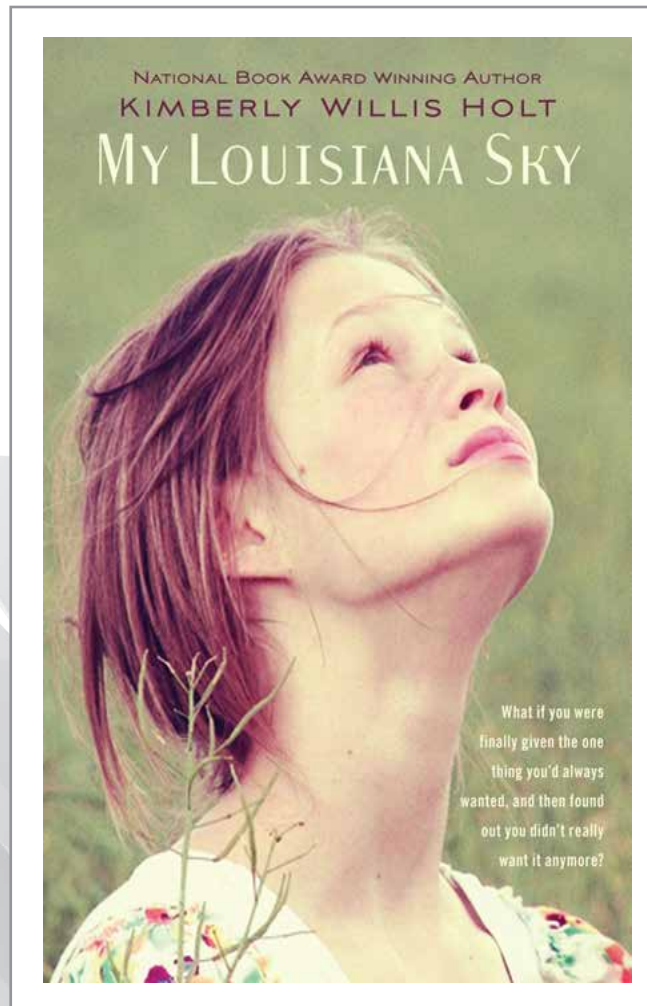
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 6-8**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# My Louisiana Sky

Kimberly Willis Holt



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

# My Louisiana Sky

Kimberly Willis Holt

## 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, compare/contrast, pros/cons, forming opinions, supporting with evidence, changing perspective, research

### Listening/Speaking

Discussion, interview, role-playing, sound effects, music, skit

### Across the Curriculum

Art: drawing, graphics, sketches; Music: hymns, rock 'n' roll; science: weather, plants; Social Studies: map, culture, dialect, media, civil rights, and segregation

### Literary Elements

Author's style, characterization, plot development, setting, point of view, simile, metaphor, theme, exaggeration, descriptions, foreshadowing, humor, dialect/colloquialism

### Comprehension

Predicting, summarizing, cause/effect, inferencing, main idea and details, sequencing, classifying, generalizing

### Writing

Description, report, reflection, response, narrative, persuasive, poem, editorial, article

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**Genre:** young adult fiction

**Setting:** Saitter, Louisiana near Alexandria in the summer of 1957 (based on the small town of Forest Hill, LA)

**Point of View:** first-person

**Themes:** coming of age, acceptance by peers, appreciating family, death and mourning, differences of class, race, and intelligence

**Conflict:** self vs. peers, self vs. parents, self vs. self

**Style:** narrative

**Date of First Publication:** 1998

## Summary

*My Louisiana Sky*, a coming-of-age story set in the summer of 1957 in the small town of Saitter, Louisiana, features Tiger Ann Parker, a smart and enthusiastic 11-year-old girl, who lives with her parents, both of whom are mentally challenged, and her strong-willed grandmother. Tiger's favorite aunt, Dorie Kay, a career woman, lives in Baton Rouge and encourages Tiger to move there to go to school after Tiger's grandmother suddenly dies. After a first kiss, her first TV, and having her hair cut short, Tiger faces some difficult challenges with her parents, girls at her school, her best friend, and her aunt. Tiger helps her father avert a disaster in a hurricane and discovers how much she loves her parents and her life in Saitter. She is growing up.

## About the Author

Kimberly Willis Holt lives in Amarillo, Texas, with her husband Jerry and her daughter Shannon, but considers Central Louisiana her home. Seven generations of her family lived in this area. Ms. Holt's father was a career military officer, so she lived all over the world growing up. Her childhood was filled with adventure but also loneliness as her family moved often. At the age of 12 she wanted to become a writer, but a teacher discouraged her. Holt attended the University of New Orleans and Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, majoring in broadcast journalism. She worked in a radio station before moving into sales and marketing. In the mid-1990s, she decided to fulfill her dream of being a writer and set up a regular schedule to write from 7:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. each day. Her first book was *My Louisiana Sky*. The American Library Association (ALA) named it a notable book of the year, *Parenting* magazine gave it the Reading Magic Award, and the International Reading Association recognized it as a Young Adult's Choice Selection, Grades 7-12. The book also won an ALA Best Book for Young Adults—Top 10, a *Boston Globe-Horn Book* Honor Book, a *Booklist* Top 10 First Novels for Youth, and the Josette Frank Award. Showtime Movie Channel made a movie of the book starring Shirley Knight and Juliette Lewis, and Random House produced an audio cassette version read by the Broadway actress Judith Ivey. Ms. Holt's other books include *Mister and Me* (1998) and *When Zachary Beaver Came to Town* (1999), which won the National Book Award and many other awards. Her fourth book, *Dancing in Cadillac Light* was published in 2001.

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## Attribute Web

An Attribute Web diagram consisting of a central circle with a horizontal line, connected by lines to five surrounding circles. Each surrounding circle contains a label and four horizontal lines for writing.

- His/her statements**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- His/her behavior**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Others' behavior toward him/her**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Others' statements toward him/her**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Others' statements about him/her**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- His/her thoughts**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Central circle: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Chapter One, pp. 3-13

The first chapter introduces the main characters and the setting in Saitter, Louisiana on June 1, 1957. Tiger, the protagonist lives with her mother and father who are both mentally slow and her Granny who is the backbone of the family. Her buddy, Jesse Wade, is visiting. Dorie Kay, Tiger's aunt, comes to visit and has a television delivered to the family as a gift.

### Vocabulary

retarded (3)	sophisticated (5)	tailored (5)	honky-tonk (5)
tweed (6)	calico (6)	woodstove (6)	pranced (6)
harelip (6)	stocky (6)	kin (6)	nursery (7)
plumb (8)	invoice (9)	revealed (9)	colored (13)

### Discussion Questions

1. Why did Aunt Dorie Kay come to Saitter? *(to visit and be there when her gift of a TV arrives, pp. 4, 9)*
2. What day is it? *(June 1, 1957, p. 11)* What do you know about this time period? *(Answers will vary but clear up any misconceptions about the 1950s.)*
3. What does Granny think of Dorie Kay? *(She seems angry; Granny is critical of her daughter for living in Baton Rouge, having a maid clean her apartment, and buying the TV. pp. 10-11)*
4. How does Dorie Kay respond to Granny's criticism? *(She is sad. p. 10)*
5. **Prediction:** Will Granny learn to like the TV? Why or why not? *(Answers will vary.)*

### Supplementary Activities

1. Literary Analysis/Characterization: Have students begin character analysis charts (see page 10 of this guide) for Tiger, Momma, Daddy, Dorie Kay, and Granny.
2. Literary Analysis/Plot Development: Have students begin a story map (see page 11 of this guide) to use as they read the story. They should continue to add new information about characters, setting, problems, and events in the book.
3. Social Studies: Have students begin a list of the 1950's shows, stars, and singers mentioned in the novel.

## Chapter Two, pp. 14-27

The family attends the Baptist church service and afterwards, a covered dish lunch. Tiger, a strong baseball player, wants to be in the game yet notices the other girls her age are sitting on the sidelines. She decides to quit the game so the others girls will want to be friends with her. Tiger's father's ability to understand nature and use it to predict the weather is highlighted.