



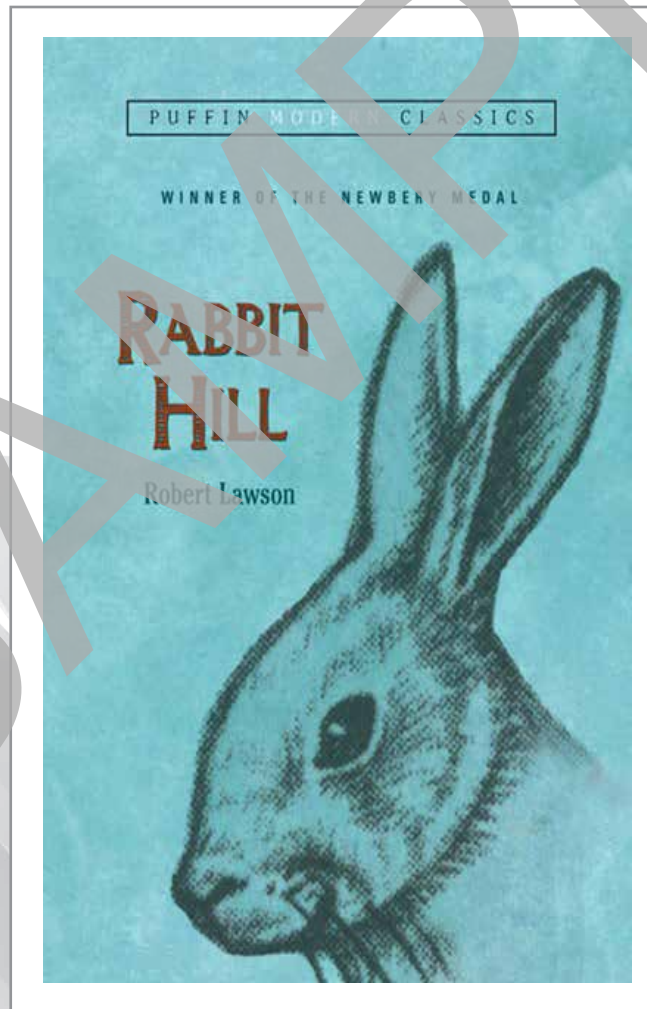
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 6-8**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# Rabbit Hill

Robert Lawson



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

# Rabbit Hill

Robert Lawson

## 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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## Table of Contents

Summary .....	3
About the Author/Illustrator .....	3
Newbery Medal .....	3
Introductory Information and Activities .....	3
<b>Twelve Chapters</b> .....	11
Chapters contain: Vocabulary Words and Activities, Discussion Questions, Predictions, Supplementary Activities	
Post-reading Activities .....	27
Recipes .....	31
Teacher Information .....	39
Resource Information .....	42
Puzzle Answers .....	43

## Skills and Strategies

### Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing,  
comparison/contrast,  
cause and effect

### Writing

Letters

### Vocabulary

Synonyms, analogies

### Thinking

Brainstorming, research,  
analysis

### Listening/Speaking

Role-play, discussion

### Literary Elements

Characterization, setting,  
story elements

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## Summary

The animals wait expectantly for the arrival of the new owners of the Big House. The story centers around the exploits of Georgie, an exuberant rabbit who retains his curiosity and love for a good chase, even after his father warns him that there can be swift, and often fatal, consequences.

## About the Author/Illustrator

Robert Lawson was born in New York in 1892. He grew up in Montclair, New Jersey, and studied at the New York School of Fine and Applied Art. He served with the Army during World War I. Prior to his death on May 26, 1957, he lived near Westport, Connecticut. His place was called "Rabbit Hill," which was the setting for his 1945 Newbery Medal winning book *Rabbit Hill*. He was also awarded the Caldecott Medal in 1941 for his illustrations in *They Were Strong and Good*.

## Newbery Medal

The medal is named for eighteenth-century British bookseller John Newbery, the first bookseller and publisher to make a specialty of children's books. It is awarded annually by the Association For Library Service To Children, a division of the American Library Association, to the author of The Most Distinguished Contribution To American Literature For Children. (See Teacher Information, John Newbery, page 39 of this guide.)

## Introductory Information and Activities

*Note:* Please be selective, and use discretion when choosing the activities that you will do with this unit. It is not intended that everything be done, but that discretionary choices made are most appropriate for your use and group of children. A wide range has been provided, so that individuals as well as groups may benefit from these selections.

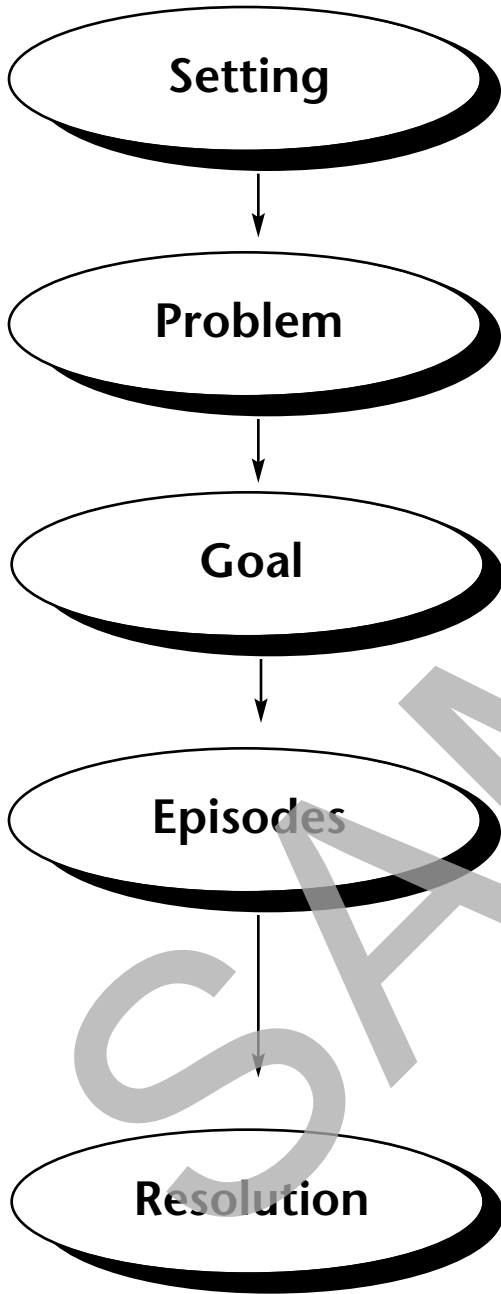
### Initiating Activities

1. **Rabbits' Rules of the Road:** Obtain some copies of "Rules of the Road" published for human use. Hang a few of them, mobile-like. Place other copies around the room, for easy access to the students. When ready to start the activity, refer to the books, and elicit discussion as to their use, purpose, etc. Why are there "Rules of the Road" for people?

Ask the students to think about rabbits. What if rabbits were to make up "Rules of the Road" for their use? What might some rules be? Record the rules suggested by the students, or have each record his/her own rule on a strip of paper. Place on bulletin board. (See Post-reading Activities, Rules of the Room.)

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## Story Map



Characters \_\_\_\_\_

Time and Place \_\_\_\_\_

Problem \_\_\_\_\_

Goal \_\_\_\_\_

Beginning → Development → Outcome

Resolution \_\_\_\_\_

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## Chapter 1: “New Folks Coming”—Pages 11-26

### Vocabulary

shiftless 12	optimistic 12	felicitous 12	bountiful 12
auspicious 13	numerous 14	successors 14	inconsiderate 14
sumac 14	desolate 15	riddance 16	precisely 16
verbena 18	indications 18	futile 20	cherished 21
anticipated 21	renaissance 21	grubs 23	leeward 24
indignantly 25	lingered 26	uncoiled 26	clammy 26
unkempt 26	speculating 26	recurring 26	

### Vocabulary Activity

Group the words into sets of three words each. Use each set of words in one sentence. Illustrate one sentence.

### Prereading Instruction

Fantasies explain the way things might be in the real world, or the way that things should be. An important element of fantasy is the theme or special message that is developed by the author through the use of imagery. Look for the theme in this story.

### Discussion Questions

1. Read only pages 11-13. What do we learn about the characters of the story on these pages?  
Where does the story take place?  
What is the problem of the story?  
Do you think that the chapter title is important? Why or why not?  
Who might the “folks” be? Humans? Animals?
2. Start a story map. Add to it as the story evolves. (See page 10 of this guide.)
3. Read pages 14 through 26.
4. Mother and Father Rabbit react to the news about the New Folks in very different ways (page 12). What are their reactions, and why do you suppose that they react as they do? (*Mother Rabbit is a worrier. She is concerned about having enough food for her family. Father Rabbit is calmer, and more optimistic.*)
5. As the story is read, make a list of the animal characters, and a list of the human characters.

#### Animals

Mother Rabbit  
Father Rabbit  
Georgie Rabbit  
Uncle Analdas Rabbit  
Porkey Woodchuck

#### Humans

Bill Hickey—carpenter  
Louie Kernstawk—mason  
Tim McGrath—plowing/planting man  
New Folks—Man with a pipe, Woman, Sulphronia

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Gray Fox  
Dogs  
Gray Squirrel  
Willie Fieldmouse  
Mole  
Phewie Skunk  
Red Buck Deer  
Grandfather Cutworm  
Chipmunks  
Birds/Owl, Crow, Bluejays  
Mr. Muldoon, the cat

6. Describe the condition of the house and the land as the story begins. Why do you think that everything has been neglected (pages 13-15)? (See Supplementary Activity #1.)
7. Describe the relationship between Mole and Willie Fieldmouse. (Pages 21-24, Willie functions as the "eyes" for Mole.)

### Supplementary Activities

1. Are there any abandoned buildings in your area? Do you know why this has happened? Why might abandoned buildings be dangerous to humans and animals? Is there something that you can do to help the situation?
2. Do some research. Since this story takes place in Connecticut (page 17) find out more about the Eastern Mole. Share your information in some way with the rest of the group. You may wish to give an oral report, a newscast presentation, write a report as it would appear in the local newspaper, etc. (See Teacher Information/Eastern Moles at the back of this guide.)
3. New Folks Coming! Prepare this announcement, and a subsequent report, for the evening news. Make graphics/illustrations to accompany the report.
4. Make a prediction. Will there be a hero in this story? Record the predictions made by group members, so that they may be checked as the story evolves.
5. What is a hero? Brainstorm the word "hero."

