

Teacher Guide

Grades 3–4

Sarah, Plain and Tall

Patricia MacLachlan

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SARAH, PLAIN AND TALL

by
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Teacher Guide

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Note

The Harper Trophy paperback edition of the book was used to prepare this guide. The page references may differ in other 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.

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ISBN 978-1-60878-459-2

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Publisher Information
For a complete catalog, contact—
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P.O. Box 97
Bulverde, TX 78163-0097

Web site: novelunits.com

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Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Brainstorming, comparing
and contrasting, evaluating,
analyzing details

Literary Elements

Character, setting, plot
development, figurative
language

Vocabulary

Compound words,
synonyms, prefixes/suffixes

Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing,
cause/effect, inference

Writing

Narrative, descriptive

Listening/Speaking

Participation in discussion
and cooperative groups,
entertain others with
dramatic activities

Chapter 7, pp. 38-43

Vocabulary

whickering
dahlias

zinnias
columbine

marigolds
nasturtiums

feverfew
tansy

Discussion Questions

1. **Prediction:** Notice how the chapters start. Where do you think this chapter will take place?
2. Who are Matthew and Maggie? (Neighbors) Have you met them earlier in the book? (*No, but there is a reference to Matthew and his mail-order bride, Maggie, on page 8.*) Why? (*They must live some distance away and not be able to visit often.*)
3. Why did Sarah's eyes fill with tears? (*She misses her brother and aunts in Maine. She is reminded of the feeling when Maggie visited and recognizes Sarah's loneliness.*)
4. Was Anna right about the chickens? How did she know she was right? (*Sarah wanted to name the chickens, making them pets. It would be hard to eat a pet.*)
5. What is special about Sarah's garden? (*She is putting down roots and will try to grow some fair flowers.*)
6. How does Papa show he likes Sarah? (*He brought her the first roses of the summer.*)

Chapter 8, pp. 44-50

Vocabulary

sly

small

pungent

mixed

Discussion Questions

1. **Prediction:** Why has Caleb been worried throughout the book? What signs has he seen? What are some other signs he might see? (You can look back at chapters 1-7 to remind yourself.)
2. Why do you think Sarah wants to learn how to ride Jack? (*Answers vary, but may include the idea that Maggie inspired her to gain some independence by going into town by herself.*)
3. What is Caleb's reaction to Sarah's request to learn to ride? (*alarm; He is afraid*)

4. What does the family do to prepare for the storm? Fill in your answers on the left side of a T-chart. Then fill in the right side of the T-chart to detail how you would prepare for a summer storm.

How Sarah, Jacob, Caleb and Anna prepare for storm	How I would prepare for storm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fix the roof • collect the animals in the barn • assemble the family in the barn during the storm 	

5. What did they see after the storm? (*hail on the ground; "Like sun on glass. Like the sea."*)

How would you describe hail? (*Answers vary.*) The author used a simile to describe the hail on page 50. What is a simile? (*A comparison using "like" or "as."*)

Chapter 5 pp. 51-53

Vocabulary scolding

Discussion Questions

1. **Prediction** How will the story end? Support your answer with clues from the book.
2. What are some of Caleb's suggestions to keep Sarah with them? (*get sick, tie her up*)
3. Why did Sarah kiss them all when she went on her first solo wagon ride? (*Answers vary, but may include ideas that she cares for them. Kissing is also an appropriate good-bye gesture.*)

4. Anna makes a comparison between Sarah going to town in the wagon and the wagon that took her mother away. Find that recollection and read it aloud (p. 54). Fill in the Venn diagram about the two wagon trips.



How do Venn diagrams vary with the positioning of the two circles? (The greater the amount of similarity, the greater part of the circles will overlap.)

Completed Attribute Webs

