



STUDENT PACKET

GRADES 6-8

The Sign of the Beaver

Elizabeth George Speare

READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

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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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Name _____

Directions: Suppose you found yourself alone in the Maine wilderness in 1768. You face all of the following problems—and more. Rank them in order of importance to you, with “1” being the problem you would need to solve first.

- ___ hunger
- ___ thirst
- ___ loneliness
- ___ need to keep the fire going
- ___ danger from wild animals
- ___ boredom
- ___ no way to communicate with your family
- ___ need to protect food from animals
- ___ desire to keep time
- ___ possible threat from Indians
- ___ need to protect cabin from robbers
- ___ need for warm clothes

Predict how a 13-year-old boy might solve these problems. As you read *The Sign of the Beaver*, watch for the order in which Matt tackles these problems and the methods he uses.

Name _____

Write a brief answer to each study question as you read the novel at home or in class. Use the questions for review before group discussions and before your final exam.

Chapters 1-3

1. When and where does the story take place?
2. Why has Matt's father left him alone? When does he plan to be back?
3. What are your impressions of Matt so far?
4. How does Matt keep track of time? What else could he do?
5. Why does Matt's father take Matt's gun?
6. How does Matt feel about being alone?
7. What daily chores does he have?
8. How does Matt start the fire when it goes out?
9. What does Matt eat?
10. What advice does Matt's father give him about Indians? What does the father's attitude toward them seem to be?
11. Who is Ben? How does Matt feel about him?
12. What does Matt do for Ben? Why? What do you think would have happened if Matt had refused to let Ben in?
13. How does Ben show himself to be untrustworthy?

Chapters 4-6

1. Who has messed up Matt's cabin? Is Matt right to blame himself?
2. Why does Matt bother the bees? What is the result? Explain how Ben's stealing the gun leads to Matt's getting stung.
3. Who helps Matt after he is stung? How? Why, do you think? What do you think would have happened if he had not had help?
4. Why doesn't Matt lie to Saknis as he had to Ben?
5. Who is Attean? What is his attitude? How is he like Matt? How are they different?
6. What does Saknis bring for Matt's leg? for his feet?
7. How does Matt learn that Saknis and Attean can't read?
8. What "treaty" does Saknis make with Matt? Why? How does Attean feel about it?

Name _____

suspicion 45	intently 46	impressive 47	resentment 50
pondering 50	mangy 52	misshapen 52	retorted 52
wary 52	indifference 54	disdainful 54	disgruntled 58
gingerly 58	envious 59	chagrined 60	frayed 61
handiwork 61	whittling 61	flimsy 61	

Directions: Use words from the vocabulary box to complete the analogies, below. Using the analogies as models, create analogies for five more of the vocabulary words and give them to a partner to complete.

Sample: NO is to YES as OFF is to ON. (Both pairs are opposites.)

1. LOUDLY is to SOFTLY as CARELESSLY is to _____.
2. PEELING is to CARROT as _____ is to STICK.
3. FRAGILE is to EGG as _____ is to STRAW HOUSE.
4. SQUALID is to HUT as _____ is to DOG.
5. SAINT is to TRUSTING as VILLAIN is to _____.
6. _____ is to _____ as _____ is to _____.
7. _____ is to _____ as _____ is to _____.
8. _____ is to _____ as _____ is to _____.
9. _____ is to _____ as _____ is to _____.
10. _____ is to _____ as _____ is to _____.

Name _____

Directions: As a group, discuss how Matt solves the problem of getting the dog out of the trap. Brainstorm words that describe the feelings Matt has before the problem is solved and afterward.

Before	After
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Individually, create a “before” and “after” picture of Matt to capture his feelings before and after he solves the problem.

Before	After

Create a class book. Each student completes the statement, “Helping someone or something in trouble means...” Include the before and after sketches done above, colored with markers if desired. Individual pages can be bound or stapled into one book.