

### GRADES 6-8

# The Sign of the Beaver

Elizabeth George Speare

READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

## The Sign of the Beaver

Elizabeth George Speare

### STUDENT PACKET

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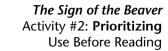
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**Directions:** Suppose you found yourself alone in the Maine wilderness in 1768. You face all of the following problems—and more. Rank them in order of importance to you, with "1" being the problem you would need to solve first.

	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.

	The Sign of the Beave
Name	Study Questions
	Use During and After Reading

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 his 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?

The Sign of the Beaver Activity #7: Vocabulary Chapters 10-12

pondering 50 mar wary 52 indi gingerly 58 env	impressive 4 ngy 52 misshapen 5 ifference 54 disdainful 54 ious 59 chagrined 6 ttling 61 flimsy 61	retorted 52 disgruntled 58	
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**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 .

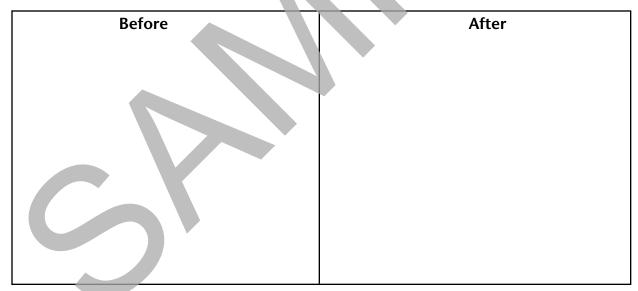
The Sign of the Beaver
Activity #13: Art
Use After Reading

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**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.



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.