



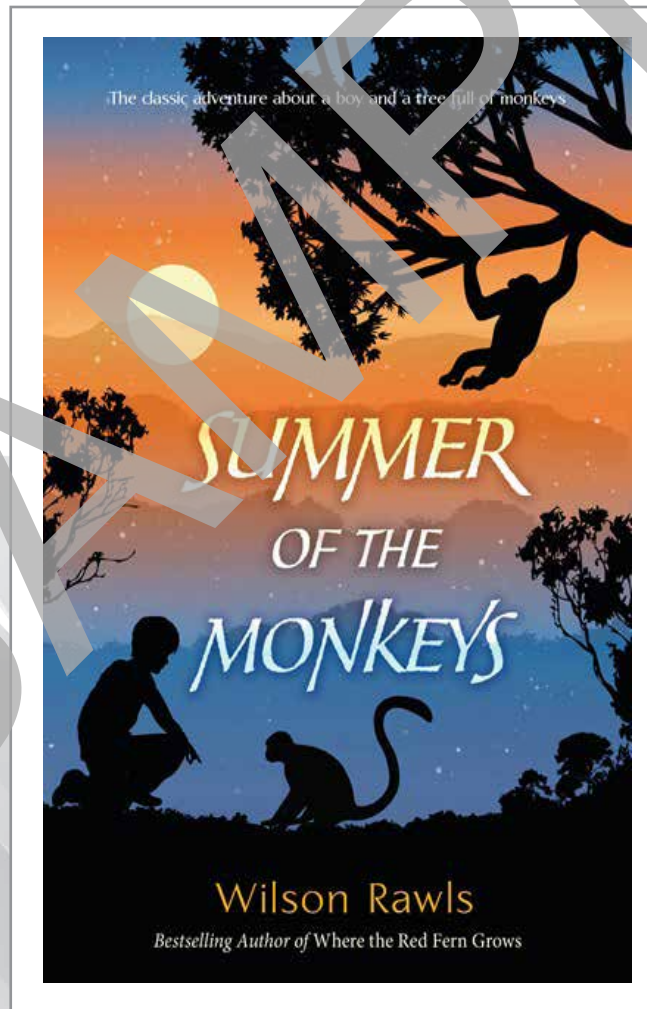
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Summer of the Monkeys

Wilson Rawls



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Summer of the Monkeys

Wilson Rawls

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!

ISBN 978-1-50204-224-8

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Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Brainstorming, predictions, compare/contrast, research, inferences, evaluating decisions

Comprehension

Cause/effect, drawing conclusions, summarizing, analysis, sequencing

Writing

Fable, poetry, epilogue, descriptions

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, dramatization

Vocabulary

Application, definitions, colloquialisms, context clues

Literary Elements

Author's purpose, character analysis, conflict/resolution, literary devices, point of view, theme, setting

Across the Curriculum

Social Studies—life during the late 1800s, sharecropping, the Cherokee Indians and Cherokee Nation, Roosevelt's Rough Riders, Red Cross, circuses; Science—monkey species and their natural habitats, plants/animals native to the Ozarks, hydrophobia, animals that work together; Geography—Ozark Mountain region, Borneo; Literature—*Where the Red Fern Grows*, Norse mythology; Art—portrait, sketch, collage, "The Big Moment" by Paul Detlefsen; Health—public accommodations for the disabled

Genre: young-adult fiction

Setting: the Ozark Mountains in Oklahoma; late 1800s

Point of View: first person

Themes: courage, family, determination, selflessness, persistence, miracles

Conflict: person vs. person, person vs. nature, person vs. self

Tone: descriptive, matter-of-fact, colloquial, humorous

Date of First Publication: 1976

Summary

Fourteen-year-old Jay Berry Lee stumbles upon a troop of monkeys in the river bottoms near his family's farm in the Ozarks. Upon learning that the monkeys escaped from a traveling circus (which is offering a substantial reward for their safe return), Jay Berry vows to catch the monkeys, collect the reward, and buy the pony and hunting rifle he always wanted. However, Jay Berry soon realizes how highly intelligent the animals are. After many failed monkey-catching attempts, he begins to give up hope. One night, a fierce storm hits the area. The next day, his twin sister Daisy finds a fairy ring—a circle of white toadstools said to grant the wishes of its finders. Each member of the family makes a secret wish. Concerned about the monkeys' well-being, Jay Berry ventures into the rain-drenched river bottoms and finds the monkeys frightened and willing to follow him to his family's farm. Soon, the monkeys are returned to the Johnson Brothers Circus. After receiving the hefty reward, Jay Berry selects a pony but returns it, realizing that what he wants most is for Daisy to have the operation that will help her walk normally. Jay Berry and his father anxiously await Daisy and Mrs. Lee's return from Tahlequah, where Daisy's surgery is being performed. When the women arrive home, Daisy's leg is healed and functioning and she tearfully thanks Jay Berry for his sacrifice. Upon returning to the farm, Jay Berry finds that his grandfather has gotten him the pony he previously selected. When his sister presents him with a .22-caliber rifle, Jay Berry realizes he has everything he always wanted. Daisy asks her brother to run with her, and the two gallop into the horizon, hands joined and hearts full.

About the Author

On September 24, 1913, Woodrow Wilson Rawls was born in the Ozark Mountains of Scrapper, Oklahoma. He was educated at home by his mother, who sent off for books to read to her children. Rawls recalls thinking the books his mother read aloud were for girls (stories with characters such as Little Red Riding Hood and Chicken Little) until she read *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London. That volume became the first book Rawls ever owned and made him ponder whether he could write his own novels. As a young adult, Rawls traveled the United States and Canada doing various construction jobs. He wrote several novels during this time but kept them a secret because he was ashamed of his poor spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Before he married Sophie Styczinski in 1958, he burned all of his manuscripts. When he later told his wife what he had done, she encouraged him to rewrite one of the stories. He chose *Where the Red Fern Grows*. Sophie helped him edit the work and, in 1961, it was published in three parts in *The Saturday Evening Post* and published by Doubleday as a complete work later that year. The novel was highly recognized, receiving a Michigan Young Readers Award, the Great Stone Face Award, and a Newbery Honor. In 1973, the story was made into a movie and Rawls was invited to visit

Chapters 1–3

Jay Berry Lee relates how his family came to live in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains in Oklahoma. As he is roaming the river bottoms one day searching for the family’s cow, Jay Berry makes an amazing find—a troop of monkeys. As a young boy with big dreams but very little money, Jay Berry is excited to discover that the monkeys have escaped from a circus and are worth reward money. With his grandfather’s help, his father’s support, and his mother’s reluctant permission, Jay Berry begins planning his monkey-catching strategies. His only worry involves being cursed with bad luck by “the Old Man of the Mountains”—a man Jay Berry’s sister claims dislikes anyone who hurts innocent little creatures.

Vocabulary
sharecropper
contraption
grove
altar
slough
jarred
scalded
liable
lobe
peddler
radiant

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think the author mentions the monkeys in the first paragraph of the novel? *(Answers will vary. Students should note that the novel’s title implies that monkeys will play a large part in the story. The author may also be trying to grab readers’ attention by establishing that the main character has a rather normal boy’s life and then interrupting it with imagery of “a bunch of monkeys” [p. 1]—an element foreign to the expected setting.)*
2. How was Daisy born differently than Jay Berry? Why is she a “mystery” to her brother? *(Unlike Jay Berry, who was born perfectly healthy, Daisy was born with a leg deformity that only worsened. As she grew, she became further handicapped to the point where she began using a homemade crutch her father fashioned for her. She is a “mystery” to her brother because although she is physically impaired, she is happy and uncomplaining. She also has an affinity for animals, which flock to her. Jay Berry cannot understand why animals are drawn to her but flee from him.)*
3. How did Jay Berry’s parents come to own their small farm? *(Jay Berry’s parents began as sharecroppers [farmers who “rented” land and gave the landowner a percentage of the crop profits], which was considered a lowly profession at the time. After Jay Berry’s mother gave birth to him and his twin sister, Daisy, Jay Berry’s parents were notified by his grandfather that some land was available in the Ozarks. Jay Berry’s parents packed up their belongings and moved the family onto the land. Soon after arriving, Jay Berry’s parents built a log house and established their small farm on the land.)*
4. How does Jay Berry stumble upon a monkey in the river bottoms? How does he respond to the sighting, and why? *(Sally Gooden, the family’s milk cow, escaped from the farm and normally hides in the river bottoms. After Jay Berry locates her, he decides to do a little exploring with his dog, Rowdy, before returning home. Rowdy smells something unusual and eventually tracks down an animal. When Jay Berry realizes he is seeing a monkey in the tree, he is disbelieving and quite startled—mainly because the monkey is alien to the region and makes Jay Berry think of dark, dangerous jungles.)*
5. A colloquialism is an informal word or phrase that is common in conversation and often comes naturally to its native speaker(s). Considering the context in which it is used, what does the term “treed” mean? Why do you think Jay Berry uses this colloquialism? Discuss other colloquialisms you have noticed in the novel thus far. *(Students should deduce that to “tree” something means to force it up a tree. Since it has already been established that Jay Berry is an adventurous, active young boy in the Ozarks who wishes only to own a pony and a gun, students*

can conclude that Jay Berry and his dog often hunt small animals. Answers will vary, but colloquialisms might include “young possum” [p. 2], “hailed off” [p. 2], “as lively as a young squirrel in a corn crib” [p. 2], “puffed up like a settin’ hen in a hailstorm” [p. 4], “wouldn’t have budged an inch from a buzzing rattler” [p. 4], etc.)

6. Compare and contrast Jay Berry’s father’s and mother’s reactions to his news of the monkey sighting. What do their reactions reveal about them? *(Jay Berry’s father is thoughtful and tries to reason about why a monkey would be in the river bottoms. He is amused rather than alarmed and simply continues with his daily tasks. Jay Berry’s mother is extremely concerned. She already worries about the dangers that lurk in the river bottoms, and the monkey sighting only makes her more anxious. However, neither parent is interested or troubled enough to investigate the truth of Jay Berry’s story. Jay Berry’s father’s reaction shows that he is laid-back and confident. His mother’s reaction shows that she is vigilant and cautious.)*
7. What information does Jay Berry’s grandfather relay to him about the monkeys? What conflict develops, and how do Jay Berry and his grandfather plan to resolve it? *(Jay Berry’s grandfather tells him that the monkeys escaped during a circus train wreck and that the circus is offering a hefty reward for their safe return—\$2 for every monkey but one. The last monkey is worth a \$100 reward. The developing conflict is the actual capturing of the monkeys. Jay Berry and his grandfather plan to resolve the conflict by wrapping steel traps with cloth and setting them with apples so they will catch—but not harm—any monkeys that step into them.)*
8. How does Jay Berry convince his mother to let him go monkey-catching? *(Jay Berry guiltis his mother into letting him try to catch the monkeys by claiming that he never has opportunities to make money, but if he catches the monkeys he can afford everything he’s ever dreamed of having. He asks his mother, “You wouldn’t keep me from doing that would you” [p. 33]? Then, when Jay Berry’s mother sees the traps his grandfather has assembled, she seems a little more convinced. By the time Jay Berry’s mother suggests he talk to his father, Jay Berry knows she is giving in. Students should note that before telling his mother his plans, Jay Berry claims that he “knew just what to do, and just what to say to wear her down” [p. 32]. His mother’s final decree is “You are not going to those bottoms, monkey hunting, unless your father is close by in the fields” [p. 34].)*
9. Who is “the Old Man of the Mountains” (p. 37)? Do you think Daisy is making him up, or do you think she believes he is real? Why? *(According to Daisy, the Old Man of the Mountains roams through the hills caring for the small animals and plants. He is a protector of nature and frowns upon those who harm the living creatures he protects. He can hear everything that is spoken in the hills, and he can cast bad luck upon a person. Answers will vary. Daisy obviously dislikes that her brother hunts small animals, so perhaps her spooky story is meant to frighten him out of hunting. Students should note that whether or not Daisy truly believes the old man is real, Jay Berry is convinced of his existence by the time Daisy has finished talking.)*
10. **Prediction:** How well will Jay Berry’s cloth-wrapped monkey traps work?

Supplementary Activities

1. Literary Devices: Begin a chart of the figurative language used in the novel. Examples:
Similes—“black eyes glowing like black haws” (p. 5); “as still as a fence post” (p. 9); “a heart as big as a number four washtub” (p. 17); “as big as bur oak acorns” (p. 19); “as pleased as a fox in a henhouse” (p. 21); “backing up like a crawdad” (p. 26); **Metaphors**—animal sounds: “welcome music” (p. 5); Jay Berry’s mother: a tree stump (p. 32); **Personification**—“A big grinning Ozark moon crawled up out of nowhere...” (p. 5); “My old heart started turning somersaults...” (p. 12).

2. Science: Research the natural habitats of two or three different monkey species. Create a multimedia presentation that includes visual aids and an explanation of why the species you researched are well-suited to their particular habitats.
3. Social Studies: Research sharecropping. Write a one-page response discussing why you think Jay Berry's parents were unhappy living this way.
4. Art: Draw or paint a portrait of the Old Man of the Mountains based on Daisy's description.
5. Science: Select a plant or animal mentioned in the novel's first three chapters (e.g., sycamore, red-tail hawk, possum, red oak). Research its scientific name, what it looks like, and what it needs to survive. Make a poster displaying your findings.

Chapters 4–6

Jay Berry sets his traps but is twice outsmarted by the monkeys. He realizes how intelligent the little creatures are—particularly the hundred dollar monkey, who warns the others about the camouflaged traps. When Jay Berry leaves his belongings unattended, the monkeys steal them. Furious, Jay Berry hurls rocks at the hundred dollar monkey using his beanshooter. However, he promptly flees when the monkeys begin descending from the trees—possibly, Jay Berry thinks, to seek revenge. Realizing he needs a new plan, Jay Berry revisits his grandfather. Together, the two develop a scheme involving a unique net designed for trapping animals.

Vocabulary	
kindling	
quavering	
spindly	
squalling	
briers	
timber	
superstitious	
loping	
hallowed	
darted	

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Jay Berry's father is concerned about his son's excitement over catching monkeys? *(Jay Berry's father seems most concerned with how Jay Berry will react if his attempts to catch the monkeys are unsuccessful. He seems to believe his son is overconfident with high expectations and oversimplified theories about the monkeys' intelligence and the ease with which he will trap them. He tells his son, "It's not good for a boy to want something with all his heart and then be disappointed. Things like that can hurt for a long time" [p. 43]. He is trying to prepare Jay Berry for potential failure.)*
2. How is Jay Berry twice outsmarted the first morning he attempts to trap the monkeys, and what does he learn about the monkeys in the process? *(The first time Jay Berry sets his traps, he hangs apples above the traps as bait. The hundred dollar monkey simply uses his long arms to snatch the apples out of midair. The second time Jay Berry sets his traps, he tethers the apples to the traps. In response, the hundred dollar monkey springs each of Jay Berry's traps with a stick, then removes the apples by untying the strings binding them to the triggers. Answers will vary. Jay Berry learns that [1] the monkeys are smarter than any animal he has ever attempted to trap, [2] the smaller monkeys follow the hundred dollar monkey's lead, and [3] catching the monkeys is going to be more difficult than he and his grandfather thought.)*
3. Why do you think the monkeys steal Jay Berry's possessions? *(Answers will vary. Since the monkeys watched Jay Berry set the traps, they may have interpreted that act as Jay Berry leaving gifts for them. Thus, when Jay Berry leaves his gunny sack of apples and traps unattended, the monkeys might have likewise assumed that was for them, too. Or perhaps, being circus-trained animals, the monkeys viewed the rest of the apples in Jay Berry's sack as their reward for successfully solving a*

Character Analysis

Directions: Working in small groups, discuss the attributes of the various characters. In each character's box, write several words or phrases that describe him or her.

Jay Berry	Daisy	Papa	Mama
Grandpa	Grandma	Rowdy	Jimbo