



TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Thunder Rolling in the Mountains

Scott O'Dell

READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Thunder Rolling in the Mountains

Scott O'Dell

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 978-1-50204-260-6

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Table of Contents

Summary	3
About the Authors	3
Overview	3
Vocabulary Activities	4
Bulletin Board Ideas	4
Background Information	5
Initiating Activities	5
Twenty-three Chapters	16
Each section contains: Summary, Vocabulary, Discussion Questions, and Supplementary Activities	
Concluding Activities	33
Assessment	36

Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Brainstorming, visualizing,
evaluating, decision-making,
synthesizing, researching

Writing

Journaling, expository,
titling, narrative, opinion
pieces

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, sounds,
interviewing

Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing,
comparison/contrast

Vocabulary

Etymology, context clues,
prefix/suffix, word mapping

Literary Elements

Story elements, conflict,
similes, characterization,
foreshadowing

Summary

Sound of Running Feet, the fourteen-year-old daughter of Chief Joseph, narrates the story of the Nez Perce tribe and the 1877 Nez Perce War. Sound of Running Feet tells of the 1,000 mile retreat of the Indians through Montana toward the Canadian border. Sound of Running Feet's own story provides a vehicle for the story, including her respect for her father, her love for Swan Necklace, and her ultimate survival.

About the Authors

Scott O'Dell worked as a technical director, cameraman, citrus rancher, teacher, and book columnist, but he spent most of his energies as a full time writer. He won many honors for his books for young people which include: *Island of the Blue Dolphins**, *The Black Pearl**, *Journey to Jericho*, *Sing Down the Moon**, *The Hawk That Dare Not Hunt by Day*, *Zia*, *Sarah Bishop**, *Streams to the River*, *River to the Sea: A Novel of Sacajawea**, *The Serpent Never Sleeps: A Novel of Jamestown and Pocahontas*, *Black Star*, *Bright Dawn*, and *My Name Is Not Angelica*.

His great-grandmother was a first cousin of the Scottish novelist Sir Walter Scott. O'Dell grew up in Julian, California, a rural gold-mining town southeast of Los Angeles, on the Mexican border in the Orifemme Mountains. He attended Occidental College, University of Wisconsin, and Stanford.

Elizabeth Hall married O'Dell in 1967 and finished *Thunder Rolling in the Mountains* after O'Dell's death. The pair had traveled the path of Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce Indians.

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Overview

Thunder Rolling in the Mountains was Scott O'Dell's last book, completed after his death by his widow, Elizabeth Hall. It is a story of the Nez Perce under Chief Joseph's leadership as they sought to reach Canada while evading the U.S. military. (See Background Information, page 5 of this guide.) The reading level is listed as 5.6.

Plot summaries, vocabulary words, and discussion questions are provided chapter-by-chapter. Supplementary activities and graphics are included also. The book can be read chapter-by-chapter, predicting and thinking about what will come next. The book's interesting characters, especially Sound of Running Feet, provide opportunity to explore the writer's craft in depiction, as well as the comparisons to other fourteen-year-olds you know or have met in books. It is suggested that some instructional time be spent daily on vocabulary building. Vocabulary activities are included on page 4 of this guide. Bookmark graphics on page 7 of this guide can be used to keep track of the story and characters as it is read.

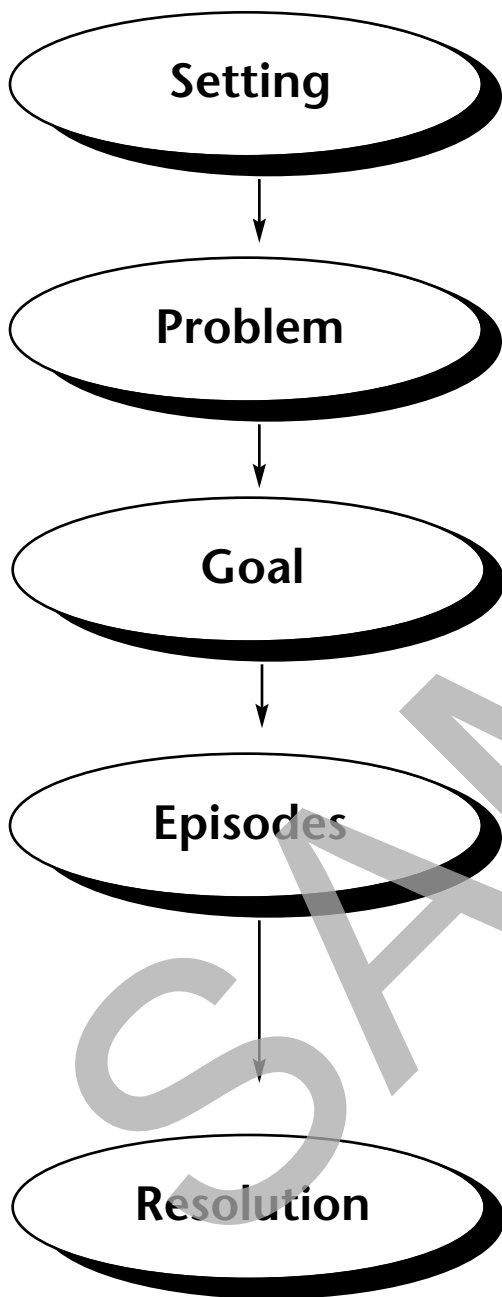
Vocabulary Activities

1. Look for nouns among the identified vocabulary words. Picture each mentally or in a simple illustration on a 3x5 card. Share your pack of pictures with a classmate. Guess the words from the illustrations. On a work paper, write down each word you guess.
2. Act out words for classmates to guess. (“Skulking,” “churning,” “puckered,” and “commotion” are some possibilities).
3. How and when would you use each vocabulary word yourself?
4. Check out the etymology of certain vocabulary words (i.e., travois, kouse, cous, breechcloths, carbine, butte, chokeberries, gulch, papoose, nickered).
5. “Add a word a day.” Distribute calendars for the time period of the novel study. Each student will meet at least one new word each day, recording it on the calendar. Evaluation is completed when the teacher chooses one of the words to be defined or used in a sentence.
6. Create a cooperative class sentence using as many vocabulary words as possible.
7. Hone the skills of using context clues. Make a class list of context clue hints. Practice “talking a word through” with a partner.
8. Keep a yearlong prefix and suffix listing—perhaps on shelf paper or adding machine tape. Review occasionally with quizzes or team competition.
9. Prepare some vocabulary games, adapting popular board games for vocabulary. At a grade level in a school, each class could author one game and prepare copies to share with other classes.

Bulletin Board Ideas

1. Use a large map to plot movements in the story.
2. Prepare a time line of the story’s events.
3. Native American study: Pose questions at the start of the work. Students or groups should prepare posters to record answers and information learned.
4. Decorate blankets and tepees as the book’s characters might have done.
5. Imagine you are Swan Necklace collecting colors to decorate the mats and skins your people use. Prepare your colors and sketches of what you’ll paint.

Story Map



Characters _____

Time and Place _____

Problem _____

Goal _____

Beginning → Development → Outcome

Resolution _____

3. How does Sound of Running Feet happen to observe the stampeding animals? (*She secretly follows behind the raiding party and is surrounded when the stampeding animals return to the Indian camp.*)
4. How is the Indian mood changed at the end of the chapter? (*They are exhilarated because of beating the soldiers in the raid.*)

Supplementary Activities

1. Collect some of the Indian names on a poster or large bulletin board paper. In short sentences or illustrations, explain the names. Try giving classmates or family members names of the same genre.
2. Is the pursuit of Chief Joseph's Indians fair and right? Is the killing of settlers justified? Discuss with classmates. Try to include various views and sides of the question in your answers.
3. Is Swan Necklace's war whistle like a lucky charm? Explore superstitions and lucky charms in the library.

Chapter Thirteen

Sound of Running Feet is admonished not to play warrior or follow the warriors. Some white settlers are brought to the camp.

Vocabulary

chokecherries
skulking

puckered

churning

commotion

Discussion Questions

1. What is Lean Elk's message and warning to Sound of Running Feet? (*She was definitely in the way on the raid and could have been killed. Lean Elk accused her of costing the Indians a herd of horses.*)
2. What is the Indians' dilemma with the white settlers? (*Chief Joseph doesn't want to harm them but also doesn't want them spying for the soldiers.*)
3. What does Sound of Running Feet learn about white women? (*They act no differently than the Indian women. They calm babies and offer comfort.*)

Chapter Fourteen

Sound of Running Feet observes the white girl. Chief Joseph calls the chieftains into council, and they decide to travel north to join Sitting Bull.

Vocabulary

tethered

Discussion Questions

1. Identify these details from Chapter Fourteen.

	<i>Page</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
Trapped deer	77	The white settler Dirty Face's manner and appearance
Yellow Hair	76	One of the white settlers
click-clack	79	Telegraph by which information about the Indians could be sent
Old Lady's Country	80	Canada
Sitting Bull	80	Indian leader

2. What is the reception of the Crows? (*friendly but unwilling to help lest the white soldiers turn on them also*)
3. How do the Indians evade the soldiers? (*narrow passages through the mountains*)

Supplementary Activities

1. Choose one of the following to describe on a Venn diagram.

Indian Women / White Women
Chief Joseph / Ferocious Bear
Soldiers / Indian Band
War in the book / War today

2. Try writing in journal style as though you are Sound of Running Feet. What might you have written in Chapters Thirteen and Fourteen?
3. What were the barriers to communication between the Indians and the white settlers, particularly in this book? What might have been done to overcome the barriers?