



TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 3-5

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

The Velveteen Rabbit

Margery Williams



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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Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Concept mapping, research

Vocabulary

Word mapping

Comprehension

Predicting, comparison/
contrast, cause and effect

Listening/Speaking

Drama, role play, dance

Writing

Explanation, narrative,
creative

Literary Elements

Characterization, setting,
story elements

Summary

One Christmas, the Boy received a stuffed Velveteen Rabbit in his stocking. Although the Boy paid a lot of attention to him for a while, he was soon put into the cupboard with many other toys and forgotten. Many of the more expensive toys made fun of him; the only one who was kind to him was the old, worn Skin Horse who had been in the nursery longer than any of the others. He explained to the Rabbit that being real comes of having someone really love you and takes a long time. He himself had been “made real” by the Boy’s uncle.

One night, a woman called Nana—who was in charge of the nursery—gave the Boy the Rabbit to sleep with, in place of his usual china dog, who had been misplaced for the time being. From then on the boy played constantly with his beloved Rabbit. While the Rabbit missed his chats with the Skin Horse, he was happy with the Boy, and didn’t even notice how worn his fur was becoming from all the Boy’s handling.

In the Spring, the Boy took the Rabbit outside often, and forgot him there once; Nana was forced to come and get him in the dark. Summer came and one evening, the Velveteen Rabbit was lying in a nest the Boy had made him in the bracken, when two real rabbits came by. They challenged him to get up and play, then taunted him when they saw he had no hind legs. Longingly, he watched them dance until they stopped to sniff him and—to his dismay—to pronounce him not real.

Weeks went by and the Boy grew ill. Finally the Boy grew well enough to be taken to the seaside. The doctor gave the order to disinfect the room and the Rabbit was taken along with the rest of the rubbish to be burned. Lonely and cold on the rubbish pile, he thought of the Skin Horse and a real tear came to his eye. Where the tear dropped, a flower grew. From the flower came a lovely fairy, the “nursery magic fairy” who takes care of discarded playthings and makes them Real. She flew with the Rabbit into the woods and set him down in a clearing with some real rabbits. He sat still for quite a while, not realizing that he could move until an itch made him use his new hind legs—and then he joyfully joined the rabbits in their dance.

Fall, winter, and spring passed and one day the Boy stopped in his play to look at two rabbits who were peeping at him. He noticed that one looked like his “old Bunny,” but never really knew that it was, indeed, his old friend.

Pages 21-27 (beginning "There was a wonderful summer...")

Vocabulary: bracken dreadful hind fluttered

Continue the synonym chains:

bracken-bushes-

dreadful-awful-fearful-

hind-back-

fluttered-flitted-

Discussion Questions:

1. How can you tell the little boy is kind-hearted? *He tries to keep the Rabbit comfortable by making him nests.*
2. Why is the Velveteen Rabbit puzzled about how "well-made" the other rabbits are? *He has never seen real rabbits and assumes they are well-made toys.*
3. How does the Velveteen Rabbit feel about the real rabbits? How do they feel about him? *He seems envious of their ability to dance. They treat him scornfully.*
4. Why doesn't the Velveteen Rabbit accept the invitation to dance? *He cannot; he has no hind legs.*

Writing Activity:

The Rabbit pretended that he did not want to dance rather than admit he could not. Write about a time you pretended that you didn't care about something to hide your real feelings.

Dance: Create your own body movements to show how the rabbits danced.

Pages 28-37 (beginning "Weeks passed...")

Vocabulary: flushed rubbish fowl-house
 bonfire bygone playfellow

Activity Sheet

Cause and Effect chart:

The story begins as it ends with the Boy and Rabbit together. Think about all the steps that came between that first time together—when the Boy took the Rabbit out of his stocking—and that last time—in the woods.

Often one event results in another. The first step is called the CAUSE and the result is called the EFFECT. Sometimes one CAUSE has more than one EFFECT. Sometimes several CAUSES contribute to the same EFFECT.

Summarize each of the main events in the story in each of the “pie pieces” below. Label causes “c” and effects “e.”

[A circle cut into about 12 pie slices, the first labeled “Boy receives rabbit for Xmas.”]

