

Teacher Guide

Grades 7–8

Where the Red Fern Grows

Wilson Rawls

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WHERE THE RED FERN GROWS

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Teacher Guide

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Note

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ISBN 978-1-60878-706-7

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Publisher Information
For a complete catalog, contact—
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Bulverde, TX 78163-0097

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Table of Contents

Summary	3
Initiating Activities.....	3
Recommended Procedure	3
Graphic Organizers.....	7
Chapter-by-Chapter.....	12
Chapters contain: Vocabulary Words, Discussion Questions and Activities, Supplementary Activities, Predictions	
Post-reading Questions and Activities	30
Assessment for <i>Where the Red Fern Grows</i>	32

Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Brainstorming, classifying
and categorizing, analyzing

Literary Elements

Character, setting, plot
development, conflict,
theme, point of view,
flashback, suspense, imagery

Vocabulary

Synonyms/antonyms,
key words, dialect

Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing,
cause/effect

Writing

Narrative, expository

Listening/Speaking

Participation in discussion
and cooperative groups,
entertain others with
dramatic activities

Attribute Web

The attribute web below will help you gather clues the author provides about a character in the novel. Fill in the blanks with words and phrases which tell how the character acts and looks, as well as what the character says and what others say about him or her.

Acts

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Feels

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Looks

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Says

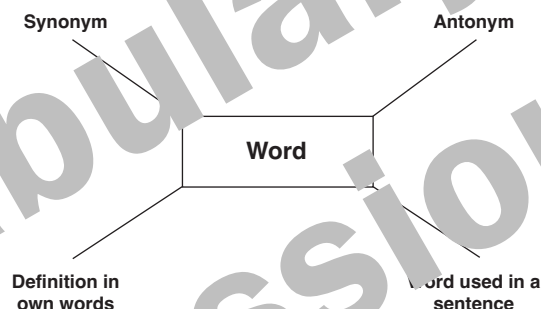
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Vocabulary

allotted 8 aromatic 8 canebrakes 9 peach tree switchings 13

Vocabulary Activity

The students will develop word maps. They will use words to distinguish antonyms, synonyms, etc. This activity may be done in cooperative groups.



Discussion Questions and Activities

1. Locate the setting for the story on a large classroom map. (page 8, *the Ozark foothills on the banks of the Illinois river in northeastern Oklahoma*)
2. Many stories have the same parts—a setting, a problem, a goal, and a series of events that lead up to the ending or conclusion. These story elements can be placed on a story map. Just as a road map leads a driver from one place to another, so a story map leads a reader from one point to another. What information do we have to begin a story map? (page 8 of this guide.)
 - What is the setting?
 - Who is the main character?
 - What is the problem?
3. What unusual fact do we learn about Bill's mother? Why was she allotted land? (Page 10, *"The land we lived on was Cherokee land allotted to my mother because of the Cherokee blood that flowed in her veins."*) What does this mean? (The mother has Native American ancestors.)
4. There are many sound words in this book that add a special touch to the story. Make a list for each chapter. Beside each sound word write how this word makes you feel.
5. Did you laugh when you read Chapter II? What incidents made you laugh? Why? An author uses certain elements to create humor or to make you laugh. These elements are:
 - word play and nonsense—colored words, absurd names, puns;
 - surprise and the unexpected;
 - exaggeration;
 - ridicule.

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Incidents that the students may list:

- puppy love (word play);
 - description of Samie caught in trap (surprise);
 - reaction of farm animals (exaggeration);
 - cat limping on all four feet (exaggeration);
 - peach tree switching (word play/coined word)
6. Have you ever prepared to run away from home? What did Billy take for supplies? How did the supplies compare with yours? What stopped Billy? (page 14, *the sound of a timber wolf*)

Research Activity

Why were the Cherokee taken from their land? Who gave them the land? When did this happen? Books for researching will be placed on the library table.

Chapter III

Pages 17-24

Vocabulary

interested 17 fantastic 18 maddened 18 fabulous 19 heft 20
urgency 21 destination 21

Vocabulary Activity

After reading the chapter, have students categorize the words on the list as a whole-group exercise. Suggested categories are:

- Descriptive nouns
- Human actions
- Words having to do with feeling or speaking

Discussion Questions and Activities

1. What do you think the saying, “God helps those who help themselves” means (page 18)? Write a one-sentence explanation of this saying and share it with a classmate.
2. Billy confided in Grandpa. Both of them are important in this novel. Begin attribute webs for both characters. How are they alike? How are they different? As we read you will add to the attribute webs. (*Both are generous. Both are wise in the woods. Both try to thrive.*) (See pages 9-10 of this guide.)

Teacher Information

The author may present his characters directly or indirectly. In direct presentation he tells us straight out what a character is like or has someone else in the story tell us what he/she is like.

In indirect presentation, the author shows us the characters in action; we infer what he is like from what he thinks or says or does.

Research Activities

1. What do you know about coons? The teacher will use the K-W-L technique (adapted from Palincsar et al. 1986). Books about raccoons will be on the library table.

K-W-L		
What I Know	What I Want to Find Out	What I Learned

2. What do you know about hound dogs? What kind of hunting are they used for? What two dogs always used? Why? Books will be on display. A chart for K-W-L will be displayed.

K-W-L		
What I Know	What I Want to Find Out	What I Learned