



STUDENT PACKET

GRADES 6-8

Where the Red Fern Grows

Wilson Rawls



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Where the Red Fern Grows

Wilson Rawls

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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

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

Summary of *Where the Red Fern Grows*

Ten-year-old Billy Colman sees an ad for two coon-hound pups and he resolves to earn fifty dollars to buy them. Billy spends weeks training the dogs, Old Dan and Little Ann, to hunt coons. Wilson Rawls tells the story that focuses on the relationship between the boy becoming a man and his hunting dogs.

Initiating Activities

1. Look at the cover of the book. Where do you think the story takes place? Do you think a dog will figure in the story? What makes a good dog story?
2. Anticipation Guide: Listed on page 4 are a number of statements. Please read each sentence and then mark your response with an "X"—agree, disagree, or uncertain. Be ready to defend your choice. After you complete the sheet, discuss your answers with a classmate.
3. Prediction: What do you think the title of the book means? The teacher lists class responses on a large piece of paper which may be kept in view until the answer is discovered in the book.

Recommended Procedure

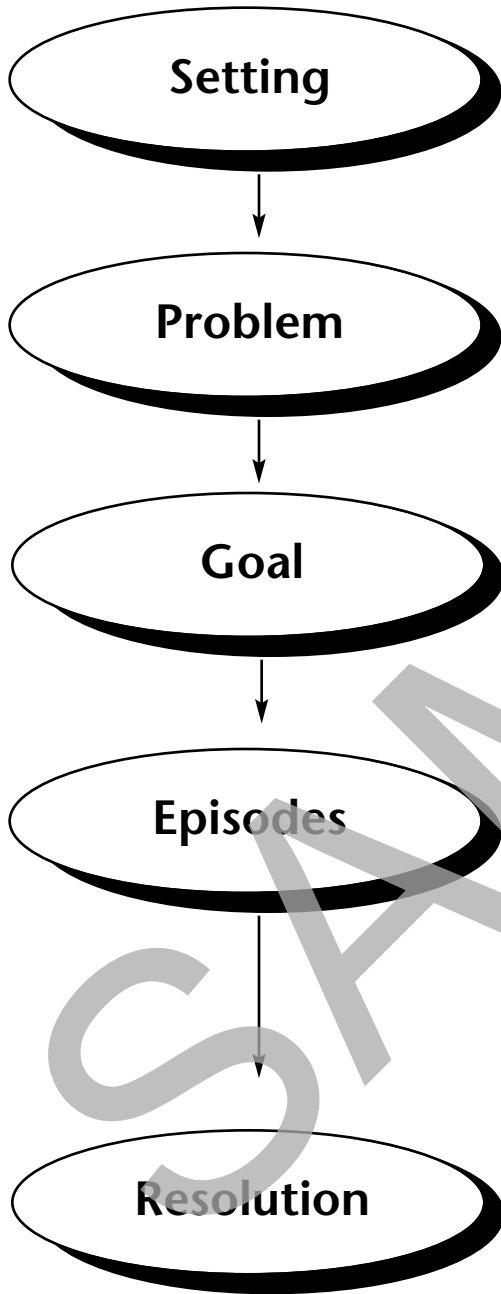
This book may be used in several ways: a) read to the entire class; b) read with the class; c) read in reading groups; d) read by an individual.

This book may be read one chapter at a time using the DRTA, Directed Reading Thinking Activity, Method. This technique involves reading a section, and then predicting what will happen next by making good guesses based on what has already occurred in the story. The predictions are recorded, and verified after the subsequent reading has taken place. (See pages 5-6 of this guide.)

The Discussion Questions and Activities at the end of each chapter, as well as any Supplementary Activities, are provided so that you may, using discretion, make selections from them that will be suitable for use by the children in your group.

You may wish to have students show knowledge of words in the vocabulary before reading the chapter by writing simple definitions in their own words. After reading, the students may need to redefine the words by referring to the text and/or a dictionary.

Story Map



Characters _____

Time and Place _____

Problem _____

Goal _____

Beginning → Development → Outcome

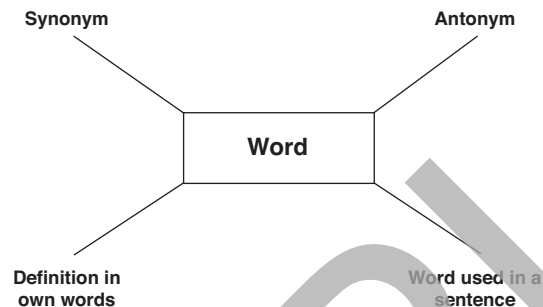
Resolution _____

Vocabulary

allotted 8 aromatic 8 canebrakes 9 peach tree switchings 13

Vocabulary Activity

The students will develop word maps. They will use color 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? (See 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 Billy's mother? Why was she allotted land? (*Page 8, "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 us laugh. These elements are:
 - word play and nonsense—coined words, absurd names, puns;
 - surprise and the unexpected;
 - exaggeration;
 - ridicule.

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 words).
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 Indians given 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

festered 17 fantastic 18 mulled 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 we will add to the attribute webs. (*Both are generous. Both are wise in the woods. Both cry at times.*) (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.