

Teacher Guide

Grades 7–8

The Witch of Blackbird Pond

Elizabeth George Speare

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THE WITCH OF BLACKBIRD POND

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Teacher Guide

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Note

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Please note: Please assess the appropriateness of this book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading and discussing it with your class.

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Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Brainstorming, classifying
and categorizing, evaluating,
analyzing details, comparing
and contrasting, synthesizing
ideas

Vocabulary

Words in context, prefixes/
suffixes, root words

Writing

Narrative, journal, report
writing

Listening/Speaking

Participation in discussion,
debate

Literary Elements

Character, setting, plot
development, point of view,
figurative language, fore-
shadowing, conflict

Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing,
cause/effect, inference,
comparing information from
more than one source

Chapter 2 - Pages 14-28

Vocabulary:

| | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| tantalize 15 | wraith 16 | stingy 16 |
| furtively 16 | shrew 16 | punctilious 17 |
| quizzical 17 | begrudge 17 | condemned 19 |
| intangible 20 | imperceptibly 21 | insistently 22 |
| constraint 22 | impulsively 24 | dominion 24 |
| incredulous 25 | cherished 25 | reproof 25 |
| cavernous 26 | befell 26 | |

Discussion Questions:

1. Begin an attribution for John Holbrook. (*studying to be a minister; too poor to go to Harvard, like to read*)
2. What did "walking up the river" mean? (*Page 1, Sailors walked along the shore and pulled a rope attached to the boat to move it forward when there was insufficient wind.*)
3. Why did the Eaton bring boards on their boats rather than slaves? (*Page 23, Did not believe in buying half-dead slaves from Africa. Considered slavery wrong.*)
4. How did Kit view slavery? (*Page 23, Probably had not thought much about what slavery meant. How else could you work a plantation?")*)
5. Why was John Holbrook shocked that Kit read plays? (*Page 24-25, "That girl never learned to read. Puritans believed plays were sinful."*)

Prediction:

What kind of reception will Kit get from her aunt and uncle?

Supplementary Activities:

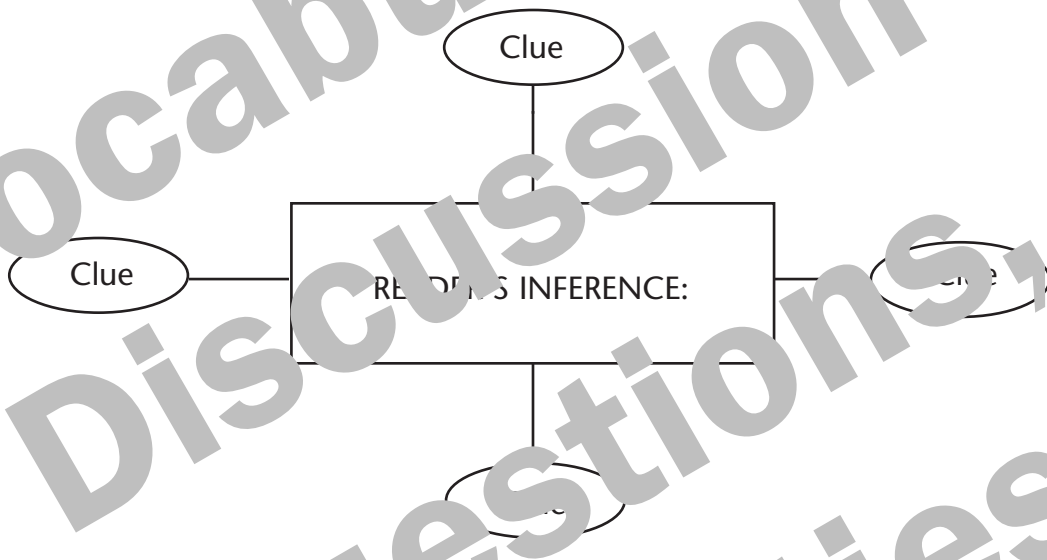
1. **Literary Analysis:** Sometimes an author uses a **simile** to help the reader form an image. A simile is a comparison between two things. A simile usually uses like or as.

A **metaphor** suggests a comparison by saying one thing is another without using like or as.

Personification is used when a writer gives human characteristics to an animal or object.

Keep a running list of similes, metaphors, and personification as you read the book. Illustrate or draw pictures of the two objects being compared.

2. **Comprehension Strategy—Inference:** Sometimes you are given clues about an event in the story, and you must put the clues together—like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle—to figure out what has happened or what will happen.



Chapter 3 - Pages 29-38

Vocabulary:

burnished 32

nondescript 33

pondering 36

anguish 32

fatal 33

impulse 36

grotesque 32

instinctive 36

condemned 33

Vocabulary Activities:

1. Draw pictures to remember the definition.
2. Play charades to dramatize words.

Decision-making Grid

The decision-making grid below is supposed to make it easier to find the best solution to a problem. Give examples of other questions you should ask yourself when you are trying to “weigh” different solutions. Then fill in the grid for the following problem: My best friend has been telling lies about me. See if classmates agree with the solution you decide is best.

| Problem | Criterion #1 | Criterion #2 | Criterion #3 |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| State the problem. | Will the solution hurt someone? | Will it make me feel better? | |
| Solution #1 | | | |
| Solution #2 | | | |
| Solution #3 | | | |
| Solution #4 | | | |

Story Map

A story map is just a simple drawing that helps you see how the important parts of a story fit together. It also helps you remember what happened in the story when talking or writing about it.

Fill in the story map.

1. Briefly describe the setting, or time and place, when the story begins.
2. Describe the main problem.
3. Summarize at least three key events in the story.
4. Tell what the climax was. In other words, where was the point of greatest tension, where you knew the problem couldn't get any worse?
5. Describe the resolution, or what happened after the climax until the end of the story.

