

Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

The Sign of the Beaver

by Elizabeth George Speare

Copyright © 2001 by Prestwick House, Inc., P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938.
1-800-932-4593. www.prestwickhouse.com Permission to copy this unit for
classroom use is extended to purchaser for his or her personal use. *This material,
in whole or part, may not be copied for resale.*

ISBN: 978-1-58049-962-0

Item No. 201445

The Sign of the Beaver

CHAPTER ONE

1. Matt helps his father build their log cabin. Can you remember helping a relative or someone else build something? Did you enjoy it? Why or why not?
2. Matt's father gives him his grandfather's watch to keep him company. It is a family heirloom. Are there any heirlooms in your family? What do you think of them?
3. It is inconceivable in today's world for a boy of thirteen to be left alone for six or seven weeks. Can you think of any reason today that a father might do so? What do you think would be the most difficult part of being left alone at your home for seven weeks?
4. After Matt is alone, he can't resist shooting his father's gun. He knows he shouldn't waste the bullet, but the temptation is too great. Have you ever been told by your parents not to do something, but then you were tempted to do it?

CHAPTER TWO

5. Matt remembers his father's advice about dealing with Indians. He knows it is important always to be polite. If someone from another country visited your school, what advice would you give him or her on how to get along with your classmates?
6. Matt wishes to have someone to talk to about his thoughts. Do you ever feel the need to talk to someone? Who would you want to talk to?

CHAPTER THREE

7. Ben seems friendly enough, but we do not really know his thoughts. Speculate on what he may be thinking when he first encounters Matt.
8. Matt enjoys Ben's tall tales but doesn't quite believe them. Have you ever known anyone you suspected of telling tall tales? How did you feel about this person?
9. A little, bothersome voice inside Matt warns him that Ben is not to be trusted. He doesn't follow his instinct, and Ben steals his gun. Have you ever felt that uneasy feeling that something is not quite right? Did you follow your instincts and act on them?

CHAPTER FOUR

10. Matt's problems continue to escalate. Now a bear has eaten his supplies and wrecked the cabin. There is an old expression that troubles come in threes; maybe people suspect that once trouble occurs, we become preoccupied with it, and that is why we are hit again. What do you think?
11. The bear gets in because Matt neglects to secure the door. Can you remember a time in your life or something you observed or heard, when an act of simple negligence resulted in big problems?

CHAPTER FIVE

12. Matt succumbs to temptation when he decides to get honey from the beehive. Although his father warned him to leave the bees alone, it is very difficult for Matt to give up sweet-tasting food. Do you remember a time when you needed to use willpower to resist food or some other temptation? How long were you able to resist?
13. Matt, too ill to resist, accepts help from the Indians even though he fears them. Today, accepting help from a stranger can bring danger with it. How do you feel about accepting help from a stranger?

CHAPTER SIX

14. Matt realizes the Indians have been watching him all along. Have you ever experienced a violation of your privacy? How did it make you feel?
15. Matt tries to repay Saknis by giving him a book. When he discovers Saknis can't read, Matt is worried he has offended the old man. Have you ever said or done something, with good intentions, that turned out to be offensive?
16. Saknis cleverly devises a plan that will benefit both Matt and Attean. Matt really has no choice and agrees to the terms. Did you ever make a bargain with a friend or family member? How did you negotiate the terms of the agreement? Did both sides honor the agreement?

CHAPTER SEVEN

17. In trying to teach Attean to read, Matt experiences some frustrations. Have you ever tried to teach someone something? How did it go?
18. Attean, unhappy that the lessons will take a year or more, knocks the book on the floor and leaves. Have you ever been discouraged when trying to learn a new skill?
19. Most people, when in a situation in which they try to be nice to someone who doesn't like them, usually say, "The heck with it!" and walk off. Matt, however, can't do that. What do you think he should do?

CHAPTER EIGHT

20. Matt sees his book, *Robinson Crusoe*, in a different light after Attean points out that he could have survived without the items from the ship. Can you think of something you always wanted to do, but after finally getting to do it, the experience didn't measure up to your expectations?
21. Attean teaches Matt that the secret to learning is keeping the student's interest. Write a letter of advice to your teacher on how to make your school day more interesting.

CHAPTER NINE

22. The student is now the teacher. Attean is teaching Matt how to catch food. What special knowledge or skills do you have that you could teach your teacher?
23. Matt clearly wants Attean's approval. Why do you think that is so important to him? Humans seek approval because it validates their self-worth. Whose approval is most important to you? Why?
24. Attean is angry that the wild man in Matt's book promises to be a slave after Crusoe saves his life. Attean thinks it is better to die than be a slave. What's your opinion on that?