

The Black Stallion



By

Walter Farley

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

The Black Stallion

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About the author: Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit novelstudies.org.

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Suggestions and Expectations

This 71 page curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two chapters of *The Black Stallion* and is comprised of these different activities:

1. Before You Read
2. Vocabulary Building
3. Comprehension Questions
4. Language and Extension Activities

A **portfolio cover** (p.7) as well as a **Checklist** (p.6) are included so that students may track of their completed work.

Every activity need not be completed by all students.

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include horse racing, courage and sacrifice, the importance of friends, family, love, perseverance & overcoming difficulty.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying/creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *personification*.
7. Working with anagrams.
8. Use of singular/plural nouns
9. Listing compound words
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identification of root words
13. Identify *similes* and *metaphors*

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Identify the climax of the novel.
4. Five W's Chart

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Protagonists
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Comparing two Characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Write a letter to a friend
4. Complete an Observation Chart
5. Conduct an interview
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete a KWS Chart

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Design an Information Card

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Synopsis

Alec Ramsay is the sole survivor of a devastating shipwreck. Trapped on a desert island, Alec finds that his only companion is a horse, beautiful, unbroken, and savage ... a horse whose beauty matches his wild spirit.

This first classic story of the Black Stallion, full of action, excitement, and suspense, has set the pace for horse stories for sixty years ... and continues to leave its rivals in the dust.

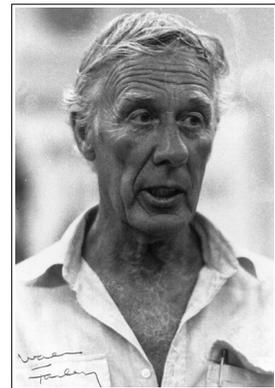
[Summary courtesy of the Publisher]

Check out the clips for **The Black Stallion** – movie and book trailers - on **YouTube**. Also the great site set up by the author's son ~ **Black Stallion Fan Site**
<http://theblackstallion.com/web/>

Author Biography

Walter Farley (1915 - 1989)

Walter Farley was born in Syracuse, New York on June 26, 1915. He began writing **The Black Stallion** when he was a high school student. Later Farley attended Columbia University where he graduated with a B.A. It was while he was a student at Columbia that **The Black Stallion** was published (1941). Farley's uncle was a professional horseman and taught his nephew various methods of horse training. Farley and his wife, Pamela had four children which they raised on a farm in Pennsylvania and in Florida. Walter Farley died on cancer in October 1989. He had just finished the twenty-first book in the Black Stallion series, **The Young Black Stallion**.



The Black Stallion



By Walter Farley

Name: _____

The Black Stallion

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Chapters 1 - 2



Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main (human) protagonist of *The Black Stallion* is an enterprising young boy, Alec Ramsay. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. What do you think makes for an especially interesting protagonist?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

descended	monotonous	clambered	inert	accustomed
customary	diminish	hysterical	instinct	subside

1. The sisters grew almost _____ when they lost their way in the forest.
2. Janie gradually became _____ to the kindness of the farmer's family.
3. Is it _____ in your country to greet a stranger with a formal bow?
4. As soon as the storm began to _____ the boys ventured outdoors.
5. They found the detective's _____ form lying on the kitchen floor.
6. Lloyd's first _____ was to run from the charging grizzly.
7. As he nibbled on the crackers, Joan felt her hunger gradually _____.
8. Princess Anne _____ the spiral staircase wearing a beautiful gown.
9. After playing for more than an hour, the game became very _____.
10. The ogre _____ up the hillside and roared his defiance to the world.

Questions



1. Why had Alec been in India, and where was he now traveling to?

2. Describe the **setting** of Chapter One.

3. Why did Alec consider Arabia to be such a special place?

4. Think of three appropriate adjectives to describe the stallion as he is portrayed in Chapter One:

--	--	--

5. Alec boarded a ship named _____, which was piloted by Captain _____.

6. Describe Alec's first step in attempting to befriend the stallion.

7. Why do you think the fact that the dark-skinned man drowned might be important later in the story?

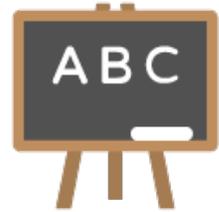
8. Describe how Alec managed to reach land after the ship sank.

Language Activities



A. Alliteration

Authors often enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the same sound is repeated at the beginning of several words. An example from Chapter Two is “The Black had his head out the window.”

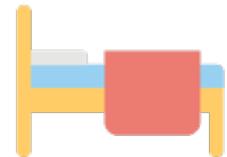


Using your imagination, create your own examples of **alliteration** from the following topics. Each example must contain a minimum of three words.

The cry of a baby	
A train’s whistle	
From your imagination	

B. Anagrams

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word **PAN** can also form the word **NAP**. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:



a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters.

The words in the left-hand column are found in the first two chapters of our novel.

Word	Anagram	Clue
same		A broad, flat-topped elevation.
horse		Coastline.
coast		A necktie or scarf.
broad		A wooden plank.
sharp		Musical instruments.
thrust		Not falsehoods.

C. Next to each pair of words indicate whether each is an example of a Synonym (S), Antonym (A), or Homophone (H).

1	screams - yells		6	hysterical - calm	
2	great - grate		7	depart - vacate	
3	stern - bow		8	conscious - comatose	
4	surveyed - inspected		9	scent - sent	
5	accustomed - unacquainted		10	hectic - tumultuous	

D. Choose ten words from these chapters with two or more **syllables**. Indicate the syllables by drawing a line between each syllable. **Example:** good / bye.

E. The Quatrain Poem.

The **quatrain** is a popular form of rhymed verse. It is a poem of four lines, is usually light and can be humorous. The following quatrain is the first four lines from a poem called **My Pet Horse**, written by the famous poet, Atrocious Halitosis.

*I got myself a horse today,
I bought him from some jerk,
Who promised me, that without fail,
He'd help me with my work.*



Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A - B - C - B**. Other rhyming schemes include: ABAB, AAAA, AABA, ABBA, ABBA, and AAAB.

Your task is to write your own quatrain poem. You may choose a rhyming scheme that fits with your own personal creation. The theme should have something to do with the themes established in the first seven chapters of our novel.

The Quatrain Poem

Now create your own Quatrain Poem. Your poem must follow the format of a quatrain poem described above (and must rhyme).

Title: _____

F. 5 Ws and an H.

Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



WHO?



WHAT?



WHEN?



WHERE?



WHY?



HOW?

Extension Activity



Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A storyboard can tell the story of only one scene - or the entire novel.



Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first two chapters of *The Black Stallion*. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6