

# Charlotte's Web



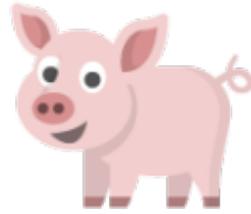
By

E.B. White

A Novel Study  
by Nat Reed

# Charlotte's Web

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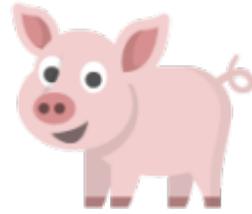
**About the author:** Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit [novelstudies.org](http://novelstudies.org).

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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 one or two chapters of *Charlotte's Web* and is comprised of four of the following different activities:

- b. Before You Read
- c. Vocabulary Building
- d. Comprehension Questions
- e. 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 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 the preciousness of life, the importance of friendship and loyalty, determination, farm life, farm animals (pigs, sheep, geese), rats and spiders.

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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/create *similes*

### 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

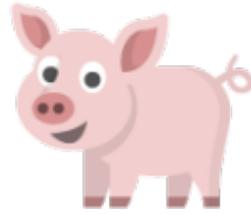
1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Write a letter to a friend
4. Complete an Observation Chart
5. Conduct an interview
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete a KWS Chart

### Art Activities

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

# Charlotte's Web

By E.B. White



## Synopsis

Sixty years ago, on October 15, 1952, E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web* was published. It's gone on to become one of the most beloved children's books of all time.

*Charlotte's Web* is the story of a little girl named Fern who loved a little pig named Wilbur—and of Wilbur's dear friend Charlotte A. Cavatica, a beautiful large grey spider who lived with Wilbur in the barn.

With the help of Templeton, the rat who never did anything for anybody unless there was something in it for him, and by a wonderfully clever plan of her own, Charlotte saved the life of Wilbur, who by this time had grown up to quite a pig. [The Publisher]

## Author Biography

E.B. White

E. B. White, the author of such beloved classics as *Charlotte's Web*, *Stuart Little*, and *The Trumpet of the Swan*, was born in Mount Vernon, New York. He graduated from Cornell University in 1921 and wrote for *The New Yorker* magazine, then in its infancy. He died on October 1, 1985, and was survived by his son and three grandchildren.

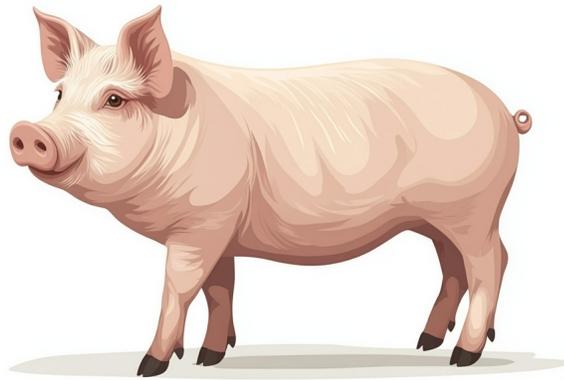
He won countless awards, including the 1971 National Medal for Literature and the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award, which commended him for making a "substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children."

During his lifetime, many young readers asked Mr. White if his stories were true. In a letter written to be sent to his fans, he answered, "No, they are imaginary tales . . . But real life is only one kind of life—there is also the life of the imagination." [The Publisher]





# Charlotte's Web



*By E.B. White*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Chapter 1



### Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. One of the main protagonists of *Charlotte's Web* is a very likeable eight-year-old girl, Fern, who lives on a farm. 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 – one that you might never forget?




### Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

injustice	untimely	distribute	miserable	prompt
specimen	blissful	commanded	appetite	litter

1. We found sitting by the canal to be a very \_\_\_\_\_ experience.
2. After toiling hard all day long, the girls worked up a hearty \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Sitting in the rain all day made the poor old dog very \_\_\_\_\_.
4. When our teacher penalized the entire class for something Jon did, almost everyone felt they suffered a great \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The clown's arrival at the funeral was most \_\_\_\_\_.
6. "Please \_\_\_\_\_ these pencils evenly," Mr. Jamieson ordered.
7. Which \_\_\_\_\_ of butterfly do you think is most beautiful?
8. The \_\_\_\_\_ of pigs was the largest the farmer had ever seen.
9. I find that the clerks in that store are always polite and \_\_\_\_\_.
10. I thought the company president would have \_\_\_\_\_ a larger salary.

# Questions



1. Why do farmers sometimes kill the runts in a litter of farm animals?


b. What are your own personal thoughts regarding this practice?


2. Describe the setting of Chapter One.


3. Why do you think that Fern's dad thought that saving the baby pig was foolishness?


4. What did Avery think of the idea of Fern getting a pig?


5. Avery was \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

6. What did Fern feed the pig, and how did she feed it?


7. Fern decided to call the pig \_\_\_\_\_.

# Language Activities



## A. How much do you know about pigs anyway?

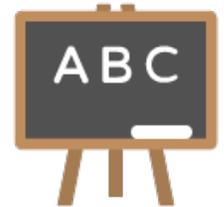
Domestic pigs are the most plentiful large domesticated animal on earth, with a population of over two billion. Pigs are found on every continent except Antarctica. Pigs are **omnivores** (they eat meat and plants), and are raised for their meat and for the leather their hides can produce. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, investigate additional facts about this valuable animal. Below record three fascinating facts from your research.



1.	
2.	
3.	

## B. Alliteration

Author often enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. An example from Chapter One is “... forgive me for this foolishness.” (Although it is usually more effective if the words are all in a row – i.e. pretty Polly Parker.)

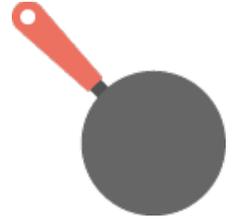


Using your imagination, create your own examples of **alliteration** from the following topics. Each example must contain a minimum of three words.

The wail of an angry baby	
The sound of a police siren	
From your imagination	

## C. 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.

Each of the words in the left-hand column are found in the first chapter of our novel.

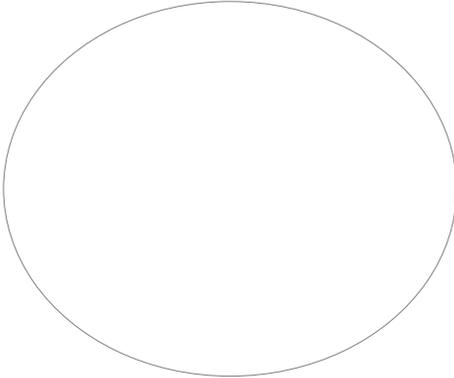
Word	Anagram	Clue
earth		Someone who despises.
room		Marsh.
death		Despised.
stove		Elects.
result		A muffled, crackling sound.
name		Not nice to someone.

Now find three additional words from the first chapter which have interesting anagrams to see if you can stump a classmate.

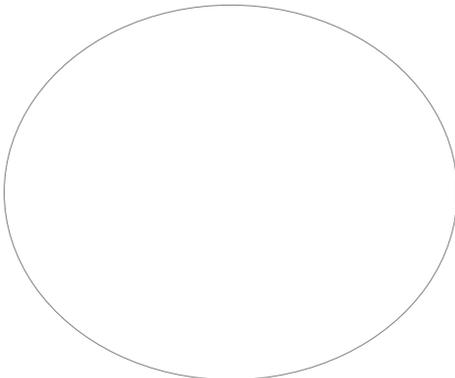
Word	Anagram	Clue

**D. 5 Ws and an H.**

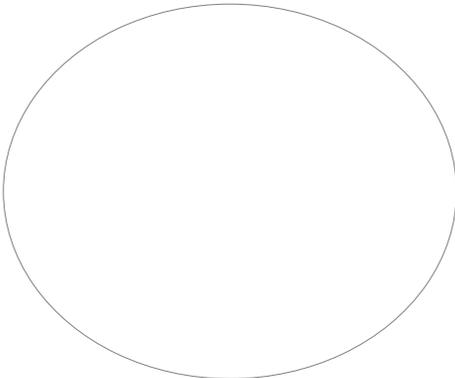
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



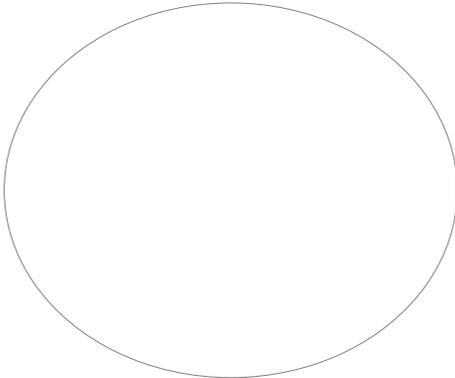
**WHO?**



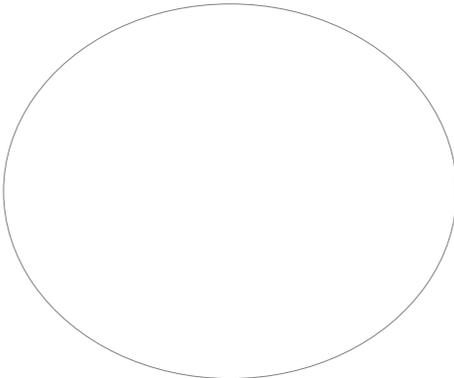
**WHAT?**



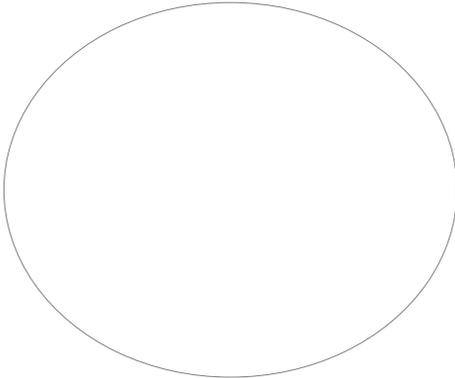
**WHEN?**



**WHERE?**



**WHY?**



**HOW?**

## Extension Activities



### 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 chapter of *Charlotte's Web*. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6