

Redwall



By

Brian Jacques

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

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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 93 page curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on four or five chapters of *Redwall* and is comprised of these 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 and **topics** which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include courage, loyalty to one's principles and friends, good versus evil, the importance of friends and family, perseverance and personal growth, 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 *anagrams*
7. Identify *personification*
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*
14. Identification of a *cliffhanger*

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 brochure
4. Design a cover for the novel
5. Design an Information Card

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Synopsis

As Redwall Abbey's creatures bask in the glorious Summer of the Late Rose, all is quiet and peaceful. But not for long. Cluny the Scourge is coming! And the evil one-eyed rat warlord is prepared to do bloody battle to get exactly what he wants. [The Publisher]

For a more complete synopsis of this novel please go to the website
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Redwall_\(novel\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Redwall_(novel))

Author Biography

Brian Jacques

Brian Jacques (pronounced 'jakes') was born in Liverpool, England on June 15th, 1939. At the age of ten, on his very first day at St. John's School he was given an assignment to write a story about animals. He wrote a short story about a bird who cleaned a crocodile's teeth. Brian's teacher would not believe that a ten year old could write so well. When young Brian refused to falsely say that he had copied the story, he was caned as "a liar". He had always loved to write, but it was only then that he realized he had a talent for it.

As an adult Brian also ran a weekly radio show on BBC Radio Merseyside, until October 2006, where he shared his comedy and wit, and played his favourites from the world of opera - he was a veritable expert on The Three Tenors. When he was wasn't writing, Brian enjoyed walking his dog 'Teddy', a white West Highland Terrier, and completing crossword puzzles. When he found time he read the works of Mario Puzo, Damon Runyon, Richard Condon, Larry McMurtry, and P.G. Wodehouse. He was also known to cook an impressive version of his favourite dish, spaghetti and meatballs.



Sadly, Brian passed away on February 5th 2011.

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Name: _____

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BOOK 1 - Chapters 1 - 5



Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of *Redwall* is a fearless mouse by the name of Matthias, who experiences many incredible adventures as the story unfolds. 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.

solemn	ambitions	festivities	vocation	legerdemain
temperament	confidentially	infrequent	enchanted	insubordination

1. The village people avoided the forest because they felt that it was _____.
2. The funeral procession was a most _____ sight.
3. Jake picked blacksmithing as his chosen _____ when he was only eleven.
4. I was told the thief’s name _____ by an anonymous person.
5. No magician can produce his tricks with such effortless _____ as Merlin.
6. The old miser had a most disagreeable _____.
7. The _____ celebrating the prince’s birth were marked by widespread joy.
8. The corporal was charged with _____ and was sentenced to KP duty.
9. The mayor’s _____ were squelched when he was charged with theft.
10. You will find his lapses in judgment are quite _____.

Questions



1. What is the **setting** of Chapter One?

2. Match each name with the proper description:

1	Matthias
2	Cornflower
3	Father Abbot Mortimer
4	Brother Methuselah
5	Cluny
6	Constance
7	Colin

A	A badger.
B	Head of the Abbey.
C	Lost his eye to a pike.
D	A silly and outspoken vole.
E	The protagonist of the story.
F	A Churchmouse.
G	The oldest resident of Redwall Abbey.

3. **Foreshadowing** is a literary device in which the author provides a hint as to possible future events. There is an example of foreshadowing near the end of Chapter One when the Abbot says to Matthias, *The day of the warrior is gone, my son. We live in peaceful times...* If this is indeed an example of foreshadowing, what might the author be trying to warn the reader about?

4. In Chapter One, after Martin had slain the wildcat and recovered from his wounds, what solemn vow did the Order take?

5. Describe how Cluny and the other rats arrived in the area near Redwall Abbey.

6. Investigate: What is a *bilge* rat?

7. Cluny's army of rats totaled about _____ in number. His second-in-command was _____ . Atop Cluny's personal standard was the skull of a _____ .

8. What was Friar Hugo's particular responsibility in the Abbey?

--

9. Describe the circumstances which resulted in Skullface's death.

10. Describe how Constance saved Matthias and the Churchmouse family from being killed.

Good to Know

Historically, an **abbey** is a collection of buildings centered around a church and inhabited by monastics (or monks). An abbey was often fortified, for they typically contained items of value. The community was usually governed by an abbot and they were often self-sufficient. It was common for an abbey to contain gardens, mills, stables, and workshops. One of the most famous abbeys is **Westminster Abbey** in London, England. You can check out its website at <http://www.westminster-abbey.org>



Language Activities



A. Check Out a Real Abbey

Redwall Abbey seems like a wonderfully fascinating (and mysterious) place. Around the world there are many incredible abbeys which are open for the public to visit. Some of these abbeys date back hundreds of years and include secret passageways, hidden rooms, execution chambers and countless other unbelievable mysteries.



Using resources in your school library or on the Internet do a further investigation of one of these English abbeys (or one approved by your teacher): **Westminster Abbey, Battle Abbey, Fountains Abbey, Whitby Abbey, Wall of Glastonbury Abbey, or Buckfast Abbey**. Your investigation should uncover at least three fascinating facts about the abbey and its people, as well as an appropriate picture.

B. We meet a number of fascinating characters from the animal world in these chapters. Match each of the animal pictures on the left with its proper name:

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

A	Otter
B	Rat
C	Grayling
D	Fieldmouse
E	Badger

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

D. Alliteration

The author seems to enjoy using **alliteration** - a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. An example from these chapters is "... fine fish for the table."



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

The squeak of a fieldmouse	
The hiss of a snake	
From your imagination	

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 two chapters of *Redwall*. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6