

Summer of the Monkeys



By

Wilson Rawls

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 curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on one or two chapters of *Summer of the Monkeys* and is comprised of five of the following 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 and **topics** which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include the importance of friends and family, sacrifice, perseverance and personal growth, courage.

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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/antagonists
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

A tree full of monkeys is the last thing fourteen-year-old Jay Berry Lee expects to find on one of his treks through Oklahoma's Cherokee Ozarks. Jay learns from his grandfather that the monkeys have escaped from a circus and there's a big reward for the person who finds them. Jay knows how much his family needs the money, and he's determined to catch the monkeys. It's a summer of thrills and danger no one will ever forget. [The Publisher]

Author Biography Wilson Rawls

Woodrow Wilson Rawls was born on September 24, 1913 in the rural Ozark Mountains near Scrapper, Oklahoma. There were no schools near his home, so Woody was taught by his mother. At first Woody wasn't interested in books until his mother brought home Jack London's *Call of the Wild*.

As a teenager and young adult, he traveled through the USA, South America, and Canada, working on construction jobs. On his travels, he began writing stories. Embarrassed by his poor grammar and spelling skills, he kept his efforts locked away in a trunk. He married Sophie Styczinski in 1958 in Idaho Falls, Idaho. Sophie heard about his writing and encouraged Woody to submit one of the stories to the *Saturday Evening Post*. The magazine serialized the story in 1961, publishing it in three parts, calling it "The Hounds of Youth." Later, Doubleday published it as the book we now know as *Where the Red Fern Grows*. *Summer of the Monkeys*, was published in 1976, eight years before Rawls died in Marshfield, Wisconsin, in 1984.



Summer of The Monkeys



By Wilson Rawls

Name: _____

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Chapter 1



Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of *Summer of the Monkeys* is fourteen-year old, Jay Berry Lee, who grew up in Oklahoma’s Cherokee Ozarks during the late 1800s. 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 interesting and memorable **protagonist**?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

opportunity	sycamore	foliage	intend
slough	conversation	overalls	copperhead

1. My mom is going to trim some of the _____ from that old cedar tree.
2. If you go for a walk by the river, be careful not to step on a _____.
3. Bossy, the cow, managed to fall into the _____ out behind the barn.
4. We were sorry to see that the giant _____ had been struck by lightning.
5. We found a pair of _____ that Calvin plans to wear to the picnic.
6. What do you _____ to do with that rare postage stamp?
7. I had a lovely _____ with Aunt Rachel last evening.
8. “Please take this _____ to go to the washroom,” Mrs. Telson advised.

Questions



1. What is the **setting** of the novel at the beginning of Chapter One?

2. Match each name with the proper description:

1	Sally Gooden
2	Rowdy
3	Jay Berry Lee
4	Daniel Boone
5	Mama
6	Grandpa
7	Daisy

A	Traded for 60 acres of land.
B	The novel's protagonist.
C	A twin.
D	Seemed hypnotized with the beauty of the land of the Cherokee.
E	Escape artist.
F	Possessed a long, skinny tail.
G	Jay Berry's favorite hero.

3. What physical problem was Daisy born with? What influence did this have on her personality?

4. Research: Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, investigate the meaning of **sharecropper**.

5. Describe the circumstances which resulted in Jay Berry's family moving to the Cherokee Nation.

6. How did Jay Berry's mother upset Grandma when they first arrived at their store?

7. What was your first impression of Mama? What caused you to form this impression?

8. Why didn't Papa want the cow to eat any wild onions?

9. Why did Jay Berry go down to the river bottoms?

10. What was Papa's explanation for how the monkey got loose in the river bottoms?

11. What chore was Jay Berry sent on at the conclusion of this chapter?

Language Activities



A. Exaggeration

Exaggeration is a literary device defined as *a statement that represents something as better or worse than it really is*. We find several possible examples of exaggeration in this chapter. One such example is: *My old heart started turning somersaults; and something that felt like a thousand-legged centipede jiggled its way up my spine*.

Think of an exaggerated way of describing the following

The smell of a rotten egg.	
A wolf's howl.	
Your choice.	

B. A simile is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. We find an example of this in Chapter One: *I was as pink as a sunburnt huckleberry...*

In this example what two things are being compared?

--	--

Invent your own **similes** comparing the following items with something from your imagination:

a) The sound of an excited monkey.

b) your own example

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 this section of our novel.

Word	Anagram	Clue
told		An unintelligent person.
acres		Worries.
worth		Toss.
sister		Withstand.
friends		People who locate things.
flower		A hunter of birds.

D. What Do You Know About Monkeys?

As you might have guessed from the title of this novel, monkeys play an important part in the book's plot. But what do you know about this colorful little primate? Did you know, for instance, that there are about 260 known species of monkeys? Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, research three fascinating facts about the monkey and record this information below.



1	
2	
3	

E. 5 Ws and an H.

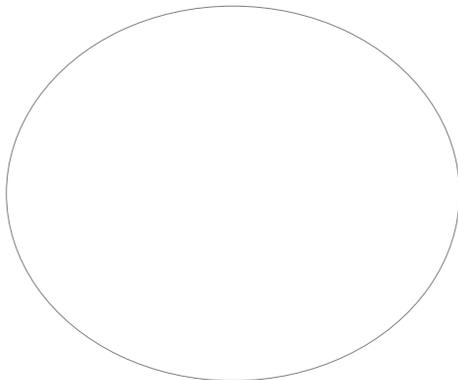
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



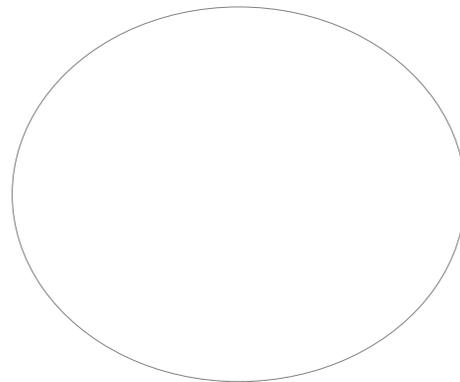
WHO?



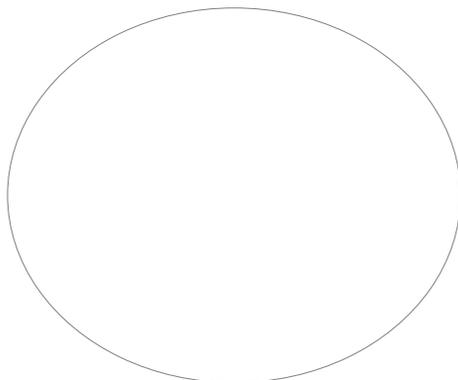
WHAT?



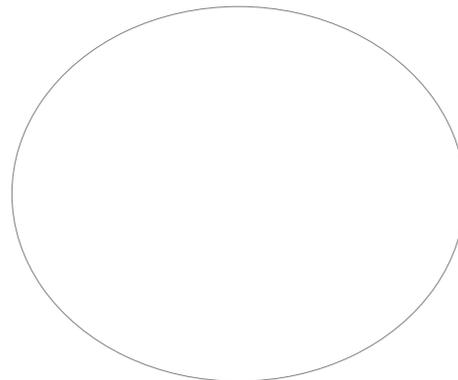
WHEN?



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 chapter of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6