

The Bell Family



By

Noel Streatfeild

A Novel Study
by Joel Michel Reed

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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 1 or 2 chapters and is comprised of five of the following different activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language Activities
- Extension Activities

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.**

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking. Students will also be expected to provide clear answers to questions and well-constructed explanations. It is critical as well that students be able to relate events and the feelings of characters to their own lives and experiences and describe their own interpretation of a particular passage.

A strength of the unit is that students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A **portfolio cover** is included (p.7) so that students may organize their work and keep it all in one place. A **Student Checklist** is also included (p.6) so that a record of completed work may be recorded.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

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

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 *cliffhangers*
4. Identify the climax of the novel.

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist/antagonist
3. Relating personal experiences

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Write a poem.
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Sheet
9. Write a short story

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
4. Design a cover for the novel
5. Create a comic strip

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Synopsis

Meet the big, happy Bell family who live in the vicarage at St. Mark's. Father is a reverend, Mother is as kind as kind can be. Then there are all the children – practical Paul, dancing Jane, mischievous Ginnie, and finally the baby of the family, Angus, whose ambition is to own a private zoo (he has already begun with his six boxes of caterpillars). And not forgetting Esau, a sure fire competitor for the most beautiful dog in Britain. (Courtesy of the publisher)

Other helpful information can be found on the following website:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noel_Streatfeild

Author Biography

Noel Streatfeild

Mary Noel Streatfeild (24 December 1895 – 11 September 1986), was an English author, best known for children's books including the "Shoes" series inaugurated by *Ballet Shoes* (1936).

She was born in Sussex, England, the second of five children of William Streatfeild, later the Bishop of Lewes. Her life is described in three semi-autobiographical novels: *A Vicarage Family*, *Away from the Vicarage* and *Beyond the Vicarage*. Noel was considered the "plain" sister in her family, but she shone in performances with her sisters for charity. Upon reaching adulthood she sought a career in theatre, and gained ten years of experience as an actress, working for the Charles Doran and Arthur Bouchier companies.

Her familiarity with the stage was the basis for many of her popular books for children, which are often about children struggling with careers in the arts.

Her first children's book was *Ballet Shoes*, published by J.M. Dent in 1936. She recalled, "The story poured off my pen, more or less telling itself ... I distrusted what came easily and so despised the book." It was a commended runner-up for the inaugural *Carnegie Medal* from the *Library of Congress*, recognizing the year's best British children's book, and it launched a successful career in writing for children. For her third book and third "Shoes" novel, *The Circus Is Coming (Circus Shoes)*, she won the 1938 Carnegie Medal.



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Name: _____

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Chapter 1



Before you read the chapter:

Briefly predict what you believe the plot-line of *The Bell Family* will be about.



Vocabulary:

Draw a straight line to connect the vocabulary word to its definition. Remember to use a straight edge (like a ruler).

1. Continuous
2. Cathedral
3. Mahogany
4. Habitable
5. Distemper
6. Vicarage
7. Rambling
8. Ambition
9. Atrocious
10. Specialist

- A. The primary residence of a church leader.
- B. A hard reddish-brown timber.
- C. A viral disease found in some animals.
- D. A strong desire to achieve something.
- E. Something unpleasant or of poor quality.
- F. Forming a series with no interruption.
- G. To speak at length during a conversation.
- H. Suitable or good enough to live in.
- I. The primary church of a diocese.
- J. A person, normally a doctor, who is trained in a particular branch of medicine.

Questions



1. Briefly describe the setting of Chapter One.

2. Define the terms *Vicarage* and *Parson*.

Vicarage	
Parson	

b. What do you think it would be like to live in a *vicarage*? Do you think you would enjoy the experience? Why or why not?

3. Which careers did the following characters from our novel pursue?

Alex	
Alfred	

b. How did Alex's father react to hearing about his career choice?

4. Why did the Bell family name their puppy *Esau*?

Language Activities



A. Many authors seem to enjoy using **alliteration** - a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here's an example of an alliteration: "... **g**rouching, **g**rouching, **g**rumbling about something or other."



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

Ballet dancing.	
Children playing.	
One from your own imagination.	

B. What do you think?

The Bell Family are forced to live in poverty as a result of their father's career. What sort of adjustments do you think the family will have to make in order to accommodate this lifestyle? How might their lives differ from that of a more wealthy family?



C. Homonyms

Homonyms are words which sound the same but have different meanings. An example is **bait** and **bate**. These chapters feature words which are examples of homonyms. In the chart below, create sentences which show the meaning of each set of homonyms.

Example 1

Homonyms	Sentence
1. Here	
2. Hear	

Example 2

Homonyms	Sentence
1. Shoe	
2. Shoo	

D. KWS Chart

There is a countless variety of careers found across the world. Here's a list of several common career choices; doctor, nurse engineer, police officer, fire-fighter, accountant, teacher, writer, receptionist, carpenter, dancer, electrician, sales clerk, dentist, pilot, and even acting is considered to be a potential career choice! Your task is to choose a career and list any helpful details which would assist someone who is researching your chosen career.



Career

What I Know	What I Want To Learn	Possible Sources

Extension Activity

Storyboard

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



Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first chapter of *The Bell Family*. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6