

The Door In The Wall



By

Marguerite de Angeli

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

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Table of Contents

Suggestions and Expectations	3
List of Skills	4
Synopsis / Author Biography	5
Student Checklist	6
Reproducible Student Booklet	7
Answer Key	73

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 chapter of *The Door in the Wall* and is comprised of the following 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 medieval times, castles, courage and determination, perseverance, loyalty, friendship and personal growth.

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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. Identify *anagrams*
8. Listing compound words
9. Identifying parts of speech
10. Identify/create *similes*
11. Identification of root words

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. Complete Five W's Chart
4. Identify *cliffhangers*
5. Identify the climax of the novel.
6. Complete a Story Pyramid

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Compare characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Create a poem
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Chart
9. Complete a KWS Chart
10. Create a friendly letter.

Art Activities

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

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Synopsis

Ever since he can remember, Robin, son of Sir John de Bureford, has been told what is expected of him as the son of a nobleman. He must learn the ways of knighthood. But Robin's destiny is changed in one stroke. He falls ill and loses the use of his legs. Fearing a plague, his servants abandon him and Robin is left alone.

A monk named Brother Luke rescues Robin and takes him to the hospice of St. Mark's, where he is taught woodcarving and – much harder – patience and strength. Says Brother Luke, “Thou has only to follow the wall far enough and there will be a door in it.”

Robin soon enough learns what Brother Luke means. And when the great castle of Lindsay is in danger, it is Robin, who cannot mount a horse and ride into battle, who saves the townspeople and discovers there is more than one way to serve a king. [Summary courtesy of the publisher]

Consider visiting the following website to learn more about the author's work and literature:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marguerite_de_Angeli

Author Biography

Marguerite de Angeli

Marguerite de Angeli was one of the most popular, well-loved authors for young people ever. Born in 1889, she wrote more than twenty-five highly acclaimed children's books. ***A Door in the Wall*** was the winner of the Lewis Carroll Shelf Award and the Newbery Award. She and her husband, John, had four sons and one daughter. She died at the age of 98 in Philadelphia.



The Door In The Wall



By Marguerite de Angeli

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 main character of *The Door in the Wall* is ten year old Robin de Bureford who lived during the Middle Ages in London, England. Who would you say is your favorite **protagonist** from a novel you have read or a movie you have seen? Why did you choose this particular character?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence. You may need a dictionary!

vexation	putrid	coif	embrasure
victuals	hospice	sedately	jennet

1. Ellen fitted the snug _____ onto her head to help her to stay warm.
2. After the doctor's diagnosis, Jasper was quickly admitted into the _____.
3. The variety of _____ provided for the knights was most delicious.
4. Robin took his place beside the _____ in the castle wall.
5. The _____ odor from the decaying fish finally drove them outdoors.
6. Tears of _____ formed in her eyes.
7. Kevin reluctantly climbed up onto the back of the _____.
8. The princess awaited the arrival of the prince, lounging _____ upon a sofa in the throne room.

Questions



1. Describe the **setting** of the story.

2. Why had Robin's father and mother left their home?

Father	
Mother	

3. Why do you think Robin treated Dame Ellen so rudely? What was the result of his rudeness?

4. Investigate: It mentions that the story took place during the reign of King Edward III of England. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet research the years of this monarch's reign. _____

5. Brother Luke told Robin that Dame Ellen had been taken of the plague. **True or False**

6. Why hadn't John-the-Fletcher come for Robin as planned?

7. Explain what the friar meant when he told Robin, *Thou hast only to follow the wall far enough and there will be a door in it?*

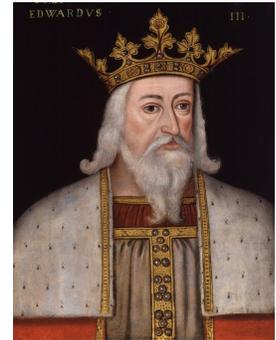
Language Activities



A. King Edward III

King Edward III was an important 14th Century figure, ruling England for 50 years. He was quite successful and achieved many accomplishments during his long and bloody reign.

Using resources in your school library or on the Internet investigate this important historical figure – the king that Robin's dad served so faithfully. Record at least five important facts about King Edward III's life and reign in the chart below.



1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

B. A Quatrain Poem Celebrates Courage.

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 of the famous poem, ***The Knight Whose Armour Didn't Squeak***, written by A.A. Milne (creator of *Winnie the Pooh*).

*Of all the Knights in Appledore
The wisest was Sir Thomas Tom.
He multiplied as far as four,
And knew what nine was taken from.*

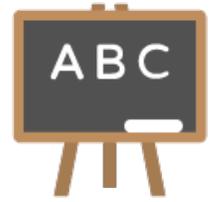


Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A - B - A - C**. Other rhyming schemes include: AABB, AAAA, AABA, ABBA, ABBA, and AAAB.

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 chapter of our novel (like ***knights*** or ***castles***).

<p>The Quatrain Poem</p> <p>Now create your own Quatrain Poem. Your poem must follow the format of a quatrain poem described above (and must rhyme).</p> <p>Title: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
--

C. Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here's one such example: from Chapter One: *the great whiskered wart on her chin.*



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

A huge castle.	
The flight of an arrow.	
Your choice.	

D. A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter One is: *But his legs would not obey him. They were like two long pieces of uncooked dough...*

What is being compared in this example?

--	--

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

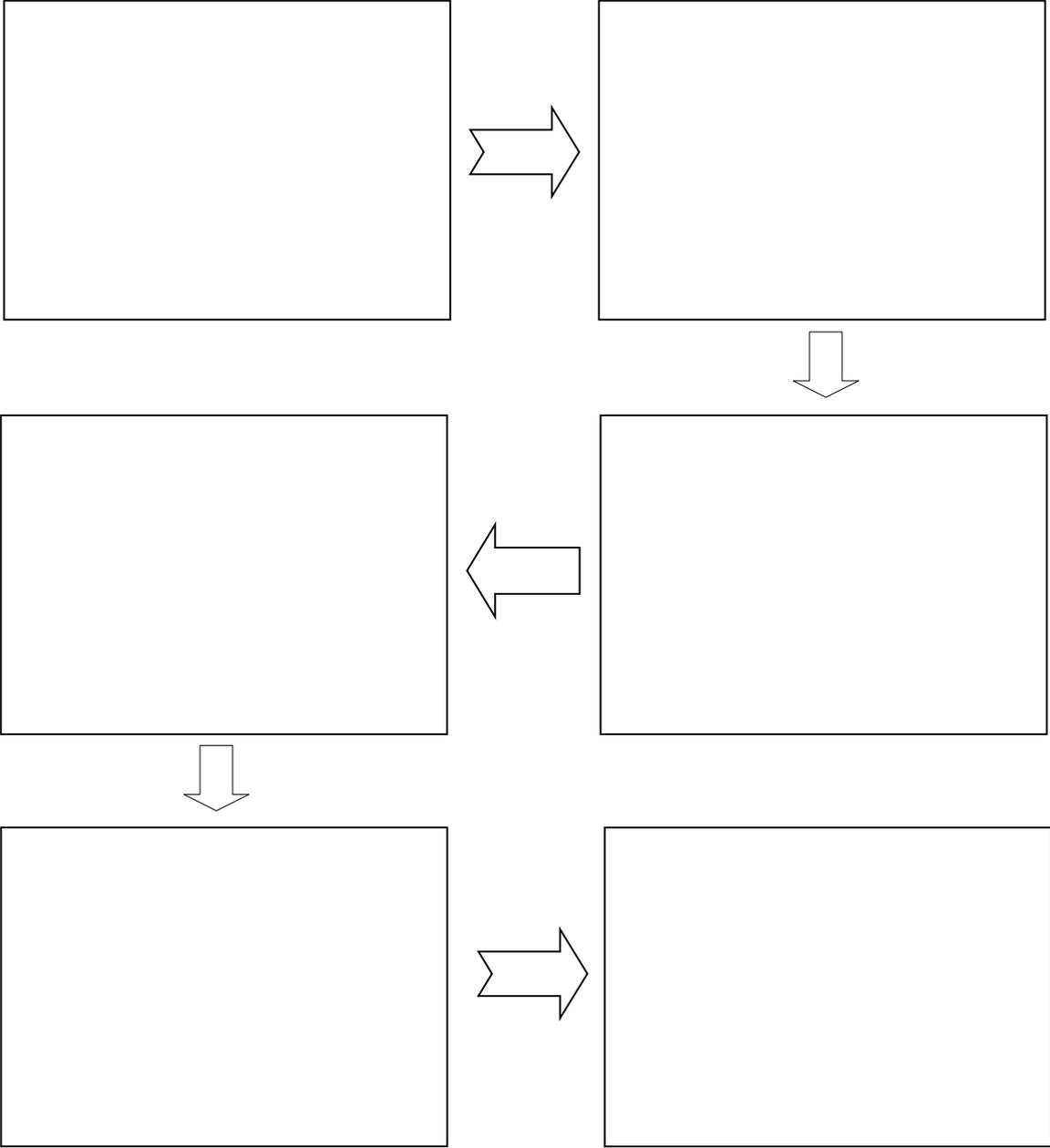
a) a jousting tournament

b) a sword fight

c) your choice

E. Sequence Chart

Choose what you consider to be the six most important events in this chapter. In each of the six boxes below list the six events that you have chosen, describing what happened and telling why you consider this to be an essential part of the story.



F. 5 Ws and an H.

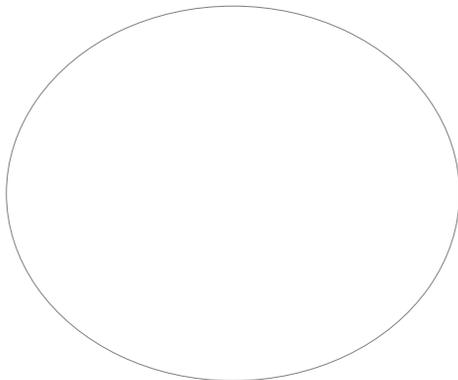
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



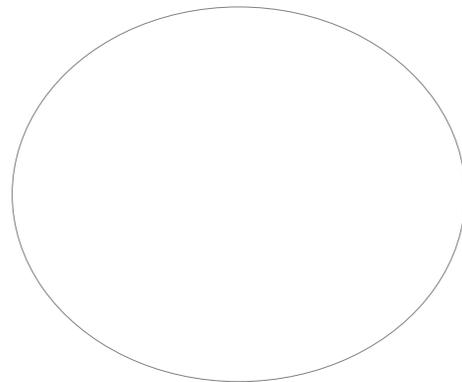
WHO?



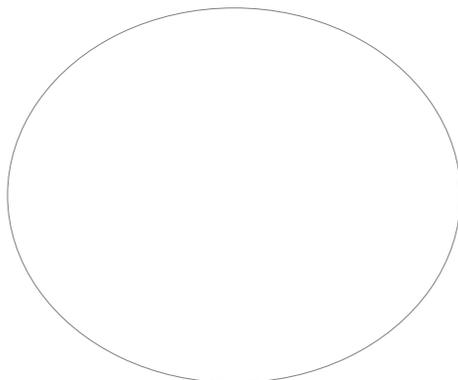
WHAT?



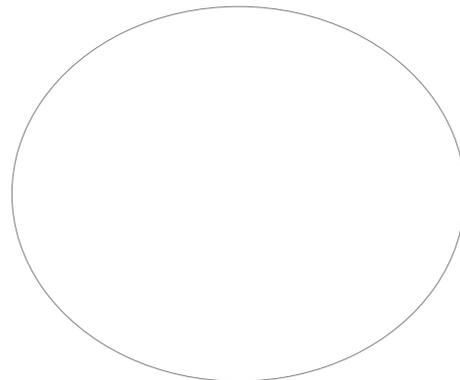
WHEN?



WHERE?



WHY?



HOW?

Extension Activity



Storyboard

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