

The Light in the Forest



By

Conrad Richter

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 *The Light in the Forest* 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 which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include the struggle for one's personal identity, indigenous people of North America, friendship and loyalty, personal growth and responsibility.

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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. Complete a Story Pyramid
5. Identify the climax of the novel.

Character Activities

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

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Create a poem
4. Conduct an interview
5. Complete a KWS Chart
6. Write a book review
7. Complete an Observation Chart

Art Activities

1. Design an Information Card
2. Design a cover for the novel

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Synopsis

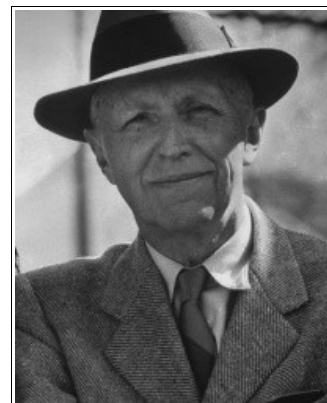
When John Cameron Butler was a child, he was captured in a raid on the Pennsylvanian frontier and adopted by the great warrior Cuyloga. Renamed True Son, he came to think of himself as fully Indian. But eleven years later his tribe, the Lenni Lenape, has signed a treaty with the white men and agreed to return their captives, including fifteen-year-old True Son. Now he must go back to the family he has forgotten, whose language is no longer his, and whose ways of dress and behavior are strange to him as the ways of the forest are to them. A beautifully written, sensitively told story of a white boy brought up by the Indians. *The Light in the Forest* is a beloved American classic. [The Publisher]

Good reading for anyone curious about the past of our country. - The Yale Review.

Author Biography

Conrad Richter

Conrad Richter was born in Pennsylvania in 1890. His family on his mother's side was identified with the early American scene, and from boyhood on he was saturated with tales and the color of Eastern pioneer days. In 1928 he and his small family moved to New Mexico, where his heart and mind were captured by the Southwest. From this time on he devoted himself to fiction. His book, *The Town*, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1951. His book, *A Country of Strangers* (1966) was a companion to *The Light in the Forest*. Conrad Richter died in 1968. (Adapted from The Publisher)



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Student Checklist

Student Name _____

Assignment	Grade / Level	Comments

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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 Light in the Forest* is True Son, a fifteen-year-old boy who has been living with the Delaware people for eleven years – ever since being captured by them and kidnapped from his parents at the age of four. Who would you say is your favorite **protagonist** from a novel you have read? Why did you choose this particular character?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

aversion	dismayed	endure	humiliated
redoubt	stern	overwhelmed	fringed

1. When Joanne was assigned homework in every class she felt completely _____.
2. The soldiers built a crude _____ with the hope of keeping their enemies at bay.
3. Francis found it difficult to _____ the jeers of the other children.
4. His belt was tied in the back and his cape was _____ with threads.
5. Kevin could tell by the principal's _____ expression that he was in trouble.
6. My mother has a definite _____ to attending parent-teacher meetings.
7. When Jack ripped his pants during recess, he felt completely _____.
8. Letitia was _____ to learn that her mother had been in an accident.

Questions



1. What is the **setting** of the story for most of Chapter One?

2. Describe the crisis that True Son suddenly faced.

3. Describe the feelings that were going through True Son's mind during this crisis.

4. If you were in True Son's place, what do you think you would find most difficult about leaving the Lenni Lenape people?

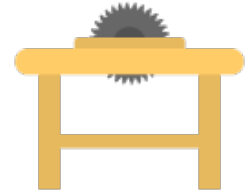
b. What do you think you would find most difficult about rejoining his white family?

Language Activities



A. 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 **WAS** can also form the word **SAW**. 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. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in the first chapter of *The Light in the Forest*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
pale		Beg.
wrong		An adult is _____ up.
seldom		Replicas or copies.
stake		Lays hold of something.
sisters		Withstands.
words		An ancient weapon.
flesh		Ledge.

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

Word	Anagram	Clue

Good to Know ~ The Tuscarawas River

True Son's village lies on the banks of the Tuscarawas River which is in northeastern Ohio. The Tuscarawas is 129 miles long (209 km) and is part of the watershed of the Mississippi River, draining an area of over 2500 square miles (6,700 square km). It is thought that the name, *Tuscarawas* means "Old Town".



B. A Poem About a Delaware.

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 entitled ***The Delaware***, was written by the poet, Campfire Sam.

*It came to me one night in June
When I lay gazing at the moon.
The world is mine to keep or share,
For I'm a man - a Delaware.*



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

The Quatrain Poem

Now create your own Quatrain Poem. Your poem must follow the format of a quatrain poem described above (and must rhyme).

Title: _____

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 Lenni Lenape.*



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

An evergreen tree.	
An insect's chirp.	
Your choice.	

D. A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter One is: *Then how could he be torn from his family like a sapling....*

What is being compared in this example?

--	--

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

a) a canoe on a river

b) a falling tree

c) your choice

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?

F. Caviar Words

The author of this novel is noted for his use of elegant, tasteful words. Someone once stated that some words have the sound of **caviar** (rich and elegant) and others are more common (**peanut butter** words). With a colleague come up with 6 examples of each type of word. You may use any chapter of the novel to find these words.



Caviar Words	Peanut Butter Words

G. My 02¢ About This Chapter.

What I Liked Best:

I Didn't Like The Part:

I Didn't Like It Because: