

# The Red Badge of Courage



By

Stephen Crane

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](http://novelstudies.org).

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## Suggestions and Expectations

This 74 page curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two chapters of *The Red Badge of Courage* and is comprised of four sections:

1. Before You Read
2. Vocabulary Building
3. Comprehension Questions
4. Language and Extension Activities

A **portfolio cover** (page 7) as well as a **Checklist** (page 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 the following different activities:

- 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 American Civil War, courage and sacrifice, leadership, manhood, self-preservation, perseverance, overcoming adversity, personal growth, facing one's fears.

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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. Working with anagrams.
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*

### 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. Complete a KWS Chart
4. Complete an Observation Chart
5. Conduct an interview
6. Write about personal feelings
7. Write a book review

### Art Activities

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

# The Red Badge of Courage

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## Synopsis

Written by Stephen Crane at the age of twenty-one, *The Red Badge of Courage* is one of the greatest war novels of all time – so groundbreaking that critics consider it to be the first work of modern American fiction. Although Crane never witnessed warfare, *The Red Badge of Courage* is a realistic and terrifying account of the Civil War and the fear that a young soldier must face on the battlefield as well as within himself. [The Publisher]

Check out the clips for **The Red Badge of Courage**  
- movie and book trailers - on YouTube

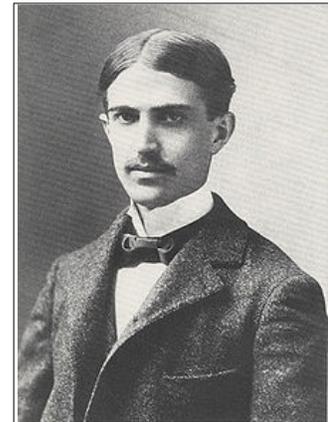
## Author Biography

*Stephen Crane*

**Stephen Crane** (November 1, 1871 – June 5, 1900) was an American author. Prolific throughout his short life, he wrote notable works in the Realist tradition as well as early examples of American Naturalism and Impressionism. He is recognized by modern critics as one of the most innovative writers of his generation.

The eighth surviving child of Methodist Protestant parents, Crane began writing at the age of four and had published several articles by the age of 16. Having little interest in university studies, he left school in 1891 to work as a reporter and writer. Crane's first novel was the 1893 Bowery tale

*Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, generally considered by critics to be the first work of American literary Naturalism. He won international acclaim in 1895 for his Civil War novel *The Red Badge of Courage*, which he wrote without any battle experience.



Courtesy of Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen\\_Crane](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_Crane)



# The Red Badge of Courage



*By Stephen Crane*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# The Red Badge of Courage

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## Chapter 1 - 2



### Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of *The Red Badge of Courage* is Henry Fleming, an eighteen year old soldier fighting in the American Civil War. 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 protagonist?




### Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

resolutely	monotonous	disdain	persistent	intricate
impregnable	extravagant	intimate	vindication	skedaddle

1. The convict received complete \_\_\_\_\_ when declared innocent.
2. Working a long eight hour shift at the factory was very \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Her quilt pattern was so \_\_\_\_\_ that it took weeks to complete.
4. When caught in the old man's garden we all decided to \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Edinburgh Castle was thought to be \_\_\_\_\_ by the Scots.
6. Buying her a necklace was considered to be a very \_\_\_\_\_ act.
7. Most \_\_\_\_\_ did he deny the serious accusations made against him.
8. Within a trusting relationship, two people can become \_\_\_\_\_ friends.
9. Inventors agree that one must be very \_\_\_\_\_ to achieve success.
10. Mr. Burns treated all of his employees with \_\_\_\_\_ and disrespect.

# Questions



1. It isn't until well into the novel that we learn the name of the protagonist. Until then, the author simply refers to him as "the youth". Why do you think he does this?


## Good to Know

In another popular novel, *Sunder*, by William H. Armstrong, the author does not reveal the name of the protagonist for the entire novel, simply referring to him as "the boy".

2. Describe the setting at the beginning of Chapter One.


3. Describe the source of the turmoil in Henry's mind during the first two chapters. What would you say is his chief concern as he thinks about going into battle?


4. There are a number of military terms in the first few chapters of the novel. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, define the following terms:

a	pickets	
b	cavalry	
c	infantry	
d	regiment	
e	brigade	
f	pontoon bridge	

5. His mother's reaction to his enlistment in the army had been a disappointment to him. Why was this the case?


6. Henry found camp life in the army to be very monotonous. T or F

7. Why do you think the tall man's *serene unconcern* dealt Henry a measure of confidence?


8. Describe the general reaction of the soldiers to the soldier trying to steal a horse from the farm girl. What do you think prompted them to react in this manner?


## Language Activities



### A. What a Difference.

Many English words have very different meanings, depending on how the word is used in a sentence. For the following words, create sentences showing two very different meanings these words have.

desert	1	
	2	
lie	1	
	2	
firm	1	
	2	

## B. Rank and File.

A number of army ranks are mentioned in *The Red Badge of Courage*. Soldiers like Henry soon understand the significance of different army ranks, but for the general public they can be quite confusing. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, arrange the following army ranks in order, from the least to the greatest:



major	
private	
general	
corporal	
colonel	
sergeant	
lieutenant	
captain	

**C. Personification** is giving human qualities to something that is not human. The first paragraph of the novel provides the reader with at least two examples of personification: "...the army awakened, and began to tremble with eagerness ..." The army reminds the reader of a person – *awakening* and *trembling*. Later in the paragraph the author writes, "... and at night when the stream had become of a sorrowful blackness..." Here the stream is described as being *sorrowful*.



a) Why do you think personification is a literary device used by many authors?


b) Create your own example of personification.


c) Bonus: Keep your eyes open for another example of personification. When you find one, come back to this page and record it below. (*There are dozens in the novel.*)


## D. 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 the 1st chapter of our novel.

Word	Anagram	Clue
enlist		Hear.
words		A weapon.
rope		Tiny opening on the surface of one's skin.
pride		Levered.
shoes		One often sees these on a lawn or garden.
sharp		Musical instruments.

## E. Research – Famous General of the American Civil War

In Chapter Two the author mentions the great French general, **Napoleon Bonaparte**. The American Civil War also produced its share of great and famous generals – in both the Union (North) and Confederate (South) armies. From the list below select one general. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, investigate the general of your choice and describe four interesting facts about the general and/or his accomplishments during the war to share with your colleagues. With your teacher's permission you may choose a general not included on this list.



Union Army	Confederate Army
Ulysses S. Grant	Robert E. Lee
George McClellan	Stonewall Jackson
Ambrose Burnside	J.E.B. Stuart
George Armstrong Custer	James Longstreet
John Reynolds	A.P. Hill

## 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?**

## G. An Acrostic Poem

There are many forms of poetry available to the aspiring poet other than the rhyming poem. An ACROSTIC poem is one example. In an acrostic poem the first letters of each line are aligned vertically to form a word. The word often is the subject of the poem. Here is an example written by the acclaimed poet, Atrocious Halitosis:

### The Firefly

Freaky-looking  
Itches me when I touch  
Restless at night  
Early or late  
Fearless  
Little  
Yellowfly



### The Acrostic Poem

Now create your own Acrostic Poem on a subject featured in this novel. Your poem must have at least four lines (and doesn't need to rhyme).

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_
