

The Silver Chair



By

C.S. Lewis

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 two chapters of *The Silver Chair* and is comprised of five 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 Christian symbolism, loyalty, friendship, courage, sacrifice (standing up for one's beliefs) and good vs evil.

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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 about 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

Eustace and Jill are on the run from school bullies when Aslan suddenly calls them to Narnia. Caspian's son, Prince Rilian, has mysteriously disappeared and Aslan wants the children to find him.

With the help of a strange creature called Puddlegum, Eustace and Jill journey across a giant country and into a strange underground world in their search for the lost prince. But in order to save Rilian, the friends must first battle a deadly evil that lurks below the surface of their beloved Narnia ... [Courtesy of the Publisher]

C.S. Lewis' "The Silver Chair" is another great episode in the Chronicles of Narnia. It tells the ongoing story of Eustace Scrubb (my favorite human character in the Narnia stories). This time Eustace and his friend Jill must find and rescue Prince Rilian of Narnia, King Caspian's son.

The Silver Chair operates on so many levels. It is an allegory of Man's interaction with and failure to obey God. It is an argument against the Naturalistic worldview. It is a story of journey and friendship. Most importantly, it is a ripping good tale. - Review (www.amazon.com)

Author Biography

C.S. Lewis

C.S. Lewis. Clives Staples (Jack) Lewis was born in Belfast, Ireland in 1898. He was a close friend of J.R. R. Tolkien (*Lord of the Rings*) when both men were faculty members at Oxford University in Oxford, England. Dr. Lewis was a devout Christian who wrote many books defending and explaining his faith. In 1956, he married the American writer Joy Gresham, who died four years later of cancer at the age of 45. Lewis's works have been translated into more than 30 languages and have sold millions of copies. *The Chronicles of Narnia* have sold the most and have been popularized on stage, TV, radio and the movies. Lewis died on Nov. 22, 1963 - the same day that President Kennedy was assassinated.



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Name: _____

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Chapters 1-2



Before you read these chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy.” There are actually two protagonists in *The Silver Chair*, Eustace and Jill, two young people are drawn into the land of Narnia on a dangerous and vital mission. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels that you have read or movies you’ve seen. What do you think makes for an especially interesting **protagonist**? (One that is very difficult to forget.)



Vocabulary:

* In Chapter One Eustace and Jill mention *hols*, which means *holidays*.

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

indignant	laurels	precipice	spiteful
quenched	wrenched	convenience	persistent

1. I have included a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your _____.
2. That old dog is so _____, I know that sooner or later he will get his own way.
3. She _____ her thirst with a large bottle of iced tea.
4. Ralph was just being _____ by not loaning you his catcher's mitt.
5. The teacher was most _____ when we called him by his first name.
6. They dove into the bushes and hid themselves among the _____.
7. Jill ventured as close to the _____ as she dared.
8. Eustace _____ the sword from the knight's hand.

Questions



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

2. Why was the school Eustace and Jill attended an unpleasant place to be?

3. How had Eustace's personality changed since last term, and what had caused this change?

4. Describe how Eustace and Jill ended up in That Place.

5. Once Eustace and Jill had entered That Place, Jill asks the questions, *Can we get back? Is it safe?* Why do you suppose the author chose to leave these questions unanswered?

6. Describe how Aslan saved Eustace at the end of Chapter One.

7. What are three adjectives which you would choose to describe the personality of Aslan?

--	--	--

8. Why do you think Aslan asked Jill what happened to the boy when he was right there and probably saw what happened?

9. Summarize briefly the four signs Aslan outlined in their quest.

1	
2	
3	
4	

10. Why do you think Jill felt no fear when she was blown off the cliff?

11. What clues do you have near the end of Chapter Two which might indicate that Jill has been transported to a place and time similar to earth's Medieval Times?

Language Activity



A. A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter One is, *It made the drops of water on the grass glitter like beads...* What two things are being compared in this example?

--	--

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

a) the roar of a lion

b) a cool drink of water

c) your own example

Good to Know – The Lions of Trafalgar Square.

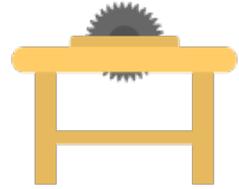
It mentions in Chapter Two that Aslan reminded Jill of the lions in Trafalgar Square.

Trafalgar Square is a public square in the city of Westminster, Central London, built around the area formerly known as Charing Cross. Its name commemorates the Battle of Trafalgar, a British naval victory in the Napoleonic Wars with France and Spain that took place on 21 October 1805 off the coast of Cape Trafalgar. The 'statue of Nelson is guarded by four sculpted lions.



B. 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 two chapters of *The Silver Chair*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
staring		Classifications.
darting		Enjoys the swap.
cedars		Shaking in my boots.
breath		Rub-a-dub-dub.
hangers		String 'em up once again.
swear		Articles offered for sale.
golden		Yearned for.

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

Word	Anagram	Clue

C. 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.



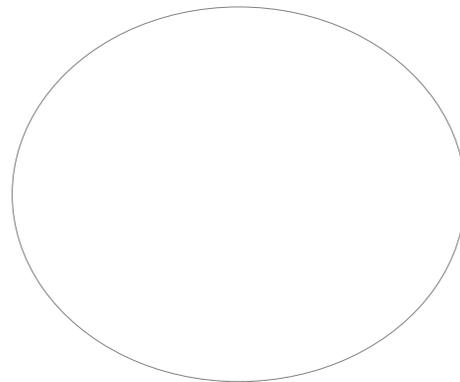
WHO?



WHAT?



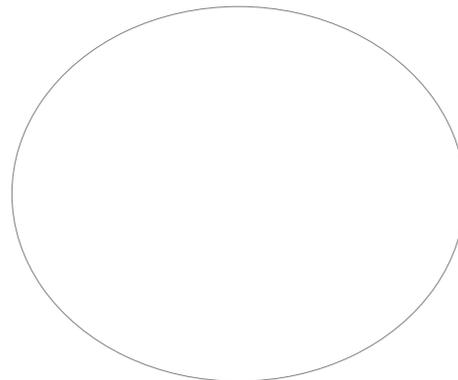
WHEN?



WHERE?



WHY?



HOW?

Extension Activities

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



1	2
3	4
5	6

B. A Quatrain by C.S. Lewis

The **quatrain** is a popular form of rhymed verse. It is a poem of four lines, is usually light and humorous. The following quatrain is actually the first four lines of a much longer poem by C.S. Lewis entitled, *The Witch*.

Trapped amid the woods with guile
They've led her bound in fetters vile
To death, a deadlier sorceress
Than any born for earth's distress



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: AABB, 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 topic should have something to do with the themes established in the first two chapters of our novel.

The Quatrain Poem

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

Title: _____

Here is another quatrain by C.S. Lewis from the poem, *To Sleep*.
More of his poems can be found on the website, poemhunter.com

*I will find out a place for thee, O Sleep -
A hidden wood among the hill-tops green,
Full of soft streams and little winds that creep
The murmuring boughs between*