

# The Summer of Riley



By

Eve Bunting

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 curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two chapters of *The Summer of Riley* and is comprised of five 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 family and friendship, bullying, loyalty, personal growth, keeping dogs/pets, accepting responsibilities, and learning to accept life's difficulties..

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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/antagonist
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

William's new dog, Riley, is in trouble. He chased a neighbor's horse, and local law punishes any animal that chases livestock. William will do anything to save his dog's life. Riley has become the friend he's needed after his grandfather's sudden death and his parent's separation.

Will William and his friend Grace be able to save Riley – even if several citizens and the bully Ellis Porter think Riley deserves the most severe punishment possible? [Summary Courtesy of the Publisher]

*A thought-provoking story.* - School Library Journal.

*Bittersweet* – ALA Booklist.

## Author Biography

Eve Bunting

Eve Bunting is the recipient of the 1999 Kerlan Award and the 1997 Regina Medal, and is one of today's most acclaimed and versatile children's book authors. She has written over two hundred fifty picture books and novels. Ms. Bunting lives with her husband in Pasadena, California. [The Publisher]

Learn more by visiting: <http://evebuntingstudy.weebly.com>





# The Summer of Riley



*By Eve Bunting*

Name:

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## Chapters 1-2



### Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *The Summer of Riley* is William, an eleven-year-old boy whose parents have separated and his grandfather just died suddenly. To help him adjust to these new circumstances his mom brings home a beautiful Lab from the local pound. Unfortunately, with the arrival of Riley his problems only get worse. 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.

humongous	butyl	absolute	sedately
acquainted	dignity	patter	fend

1. Little Jeremy made an \_\_\_\_\_ nuisance of himself at the birthday party.
2. “Are you \_\_\_\_\_ with the rules of Monopoly?” she asked politely.
3. The pool's \_\_\_\_\_ liner was laying on the lawn.
4. No one expected such a tiny dog to \_\_\_\_\_ off the attack of a lynx.
5. Despite the circumstances, the principal managed to escape with his \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The coach moved \_\_\_\_\_ among her nervous players, calming each one.
7. He has a \_\_\_\_\_ pimple on the back of his neck.
8. We watched the dog \_\_\_\_\_ softly across the kitchen floor.

# Questions



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


2. Why was Grace surprised that William chose a Lab from the pound?


3. Why did William's mom agree to getting him a dog at this particular time?


4. What prevented William from having a dog before this?


5. William wanted to take Riley on an whole-day hike, but his mom wouldn't let him. True or False

6. Describe how Riley may have saved William's life.

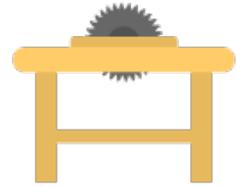

7. According to Grace, why do people sometimes get dogs? What did she mean by this?


## 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 Summer of Riley*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
great		To shred.
live		Really badly behaved.
mile		A fruit.
owners		Aggravate.
where		A person who cuts wood.
solid		Images representing gods.
tears		Look fixedly; gaze.

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

Word	Anagram	Clue

### Good to Know ~ The Labrador Retriever

The Labrador Retriever is one of the most popular breeds of dogs in the United Kingdom and in the United States. It is also a favorite disability assistance breed in many countries and are frequently trained to aid the blind. They are also often used by law enforcement agencies to perform screening and detection work. The Lab's temperament is usually kind and pleasant.



## B. Quatrain Poems go to the Dogs.

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 was written by the famous poet, Atrocious Halitosis. It is called, *If Dog's Could Talk*.

*It's just too bad that dogs can't talk,  
They'd have a lot to say.  
And if they could, I'm sure we would  
Be in for quite a shock!*



Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A - B - C - A**. 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.

### 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. Personification** is giving human qualities to something that is not human. The following example is taken from Chapter 2: ... *pulling each foot out of the sucking mud.*

Describe how the mud is personified in this example.


Create your own example of personification.


As you continue to read through the novel be on the lookout for other examples of this literary device. If you should find one, come back to this question and enter it below.


**D.** Chapter Two contains an example of an important literary device called **foreshadowing**. Foreshadowing is defined as *a warning or indication of a future event*. Chapter One ends with a very good example of foreshadowing as the final statements reads, *"I think Riley is the perfect dog," I said. And that's what I thought, then*. Readers immediately wonder what on earth is Riley is going to do to upset the applecart. Why do you think the author, Eve Bunting, would put such a statement in this chapter? See if you can find another example of foreshadowing in Chapter Two.



<b>1. Why did the author include this statement?</b>
<b>2. Example from Chapter Two:</b>

## 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 her 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 Chapters 1-2.

<b>What I Liked Best:</b>

<b>I Didn't Like The Part:</b>

<b>I Didn't Like It Because:</b>

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



1	2
3	4
5	6