

Where The Red Fern Grows



By

Wilson Rawls

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 70 page curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two chapters of *Where the Red Fern Grows* and is comprised of four activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- 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 importance of family, determination, sacrifice, overcoming difficulty, courage, hounds and the Ozarks.

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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 *anagrams*
7. Identify *personification*
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*
14. Identification of a *cliffhanger*

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. Write a letter to a friend
4. Complete an Observation Chart
5. Conduct an interview
6. Write about personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete a KWS Chart

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a brochure
4. Design a cover for the novel
5. Design an Information Card

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Synopsis

A loving threesome, they range the dark hills and river bottoms of Cherokee country. Old Dan has the brawn, Little Ann has the brains, and Billy has the will to make them into the finest hunting team in the valley. Glory and victory are coming to them, but sadness awaits too. [Courtesy of the publisher]

Billy, Old Dan and Little Ann – a boy and his two dogs.

Where the Red Fern Grows is an exciting tale of love and adventure you'll never forget.

Author Biography

Wilson Rawls

Woodrow Wilson Rawls was born on September 24, 1913 in the rural Ozark Mountains near Scrapper, Oklahoma. There were no schools near his home, so Woody was taught by his mother. At first Woody wasn't interested in books until his mother brought home Jack London's *Call of the Wild*.



As a teenager and young adult, he traveled through the USA, South America, and Canada, working on construction jobs. On his travels, he began writing stories. Embarrassed by his poor grammar and spelling skills, he kept his efforts locked away in a trunk.

He married Sophie Styczinski in 1958 in Idaho Falls, Idaho. Sophie heard about his writing and encouraged Woody to submit one of the stories to the Saturday Evening Post. The magazine serialized the story in 1961, publishing it in three parts, calling it "The Hounds of Youth." Later, Doubleday published it as the book we now know as *Where the Red Fern Grows*. He wrote another book, *Summer of the Monkeys*, which was published before Rawls died in Marshfield, Wisconsin, in 1984.

Where The Red Fern Grows



By Wilson Rawls

Name: _____

Where the Red Fern Grows

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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 protagonist of **Where the Red Fern Grows** is Billy Colman, a very likeable ten year old boy, whose life goes through some dramatic changes as the story unfolds. 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 especially interesting **protagonist**?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

dormant	devotion	fertile	commotion	intended
grieve	deliberate	exposed	investigate	allotted

1. Do you think that Betsy _____ on bumping into her brother?
2. His _____ to his wife was very admirable.
3. The police will surely _____ the robbery at our local grocery store.
4. Framer Johnson was fortunate to have such _____ soil on his land.
5. Miss. Pilgrim _____ one pencil to every student in her class.
6. Seeds will often lie _____ for several months before taking root.
7. We all thought Jasmine’s cruel words were chosen with _____ care.
8. The two rambunctious puppies caused much _____ in the park.
9. Everyone is entitled to _____ the loss of a pet.
10. The con man was finally _____ by the local newspaper.

Good to Know

Billy's family lives on **Cherokee** land. The Cherokee people are a North American people who historically settled in the southeastern U.S. Many Cherokees were forcibly moved to this area of Oklahoma by the government in the 1830s.

Questions



1. What is the setting of Chapter Two?

2. Describe how the man broke up the fight between the hound and the other dogs. Why do you think he did this?

3. **Foreshadowing** is a literary device in which hints and clues are given that tip the reader off as to what is to come later in the novel. How might the following statement taken from Chapter One be regarded as an example of foreshadowing?: *Memories of a wonderful love, unselfish devotion, and death in its saddest form.*

4. Why couldn't Billy's family buy him a dog?

5. Why was Billy's family allowed to live on Cherokee land?

6. How had Billy's deep desire for a dog affected his health?

7. What complication arose from Billy setting traps around the farm?

8. After catching one of Mama's prize hens, Billy got one of those "young man peach tree" switchings. What does this particular expression mean?

9. Why wasn't Billy able to catch old Mister Ringtail (the raccoon) in his trap?

10. As Chapter Two comes to a close, what was it that had been making Billy a "nervous wreck"?

Language Activities



A. Growing in the Ozarks

It is obvious that Billy loves living in the Ozarks. Several of the plants and trees which grow in this region are mentioned in these chapters: **wild flowers, redbuds, papaws, dogwoods, sycamores, birches and box elders.**



Other trees native to this area are the **maple, white oak, and shortleaf pine.** Flowers include **gooseberry, wild honeysuckle and lowbush huckleberry,**

Using resources in your school library or on the Internet investigate one of these trees or plants, or another which is native to the Ozarks. Your investigation should uncover at least three facts about the life form of your choice as well as an appropriate picture.

B. Choose ten words from these chapters with two or more **syllables**. Indicate the syllables by drawing a line between each syllable. **Example:** good / bye.

C. The Quatrain Poem.

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 part of the famous poem written by Rudyard Kipling entitled, *The Power of the Dog* (slightly modified):

*Buy a pup and your money will buy
Love unflinching that cannot lie -
Perfect passion and worship fed
By a bone to chew or a pat on the head.*



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, 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 four chapters 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: _____

D. 5 Ws and an H.

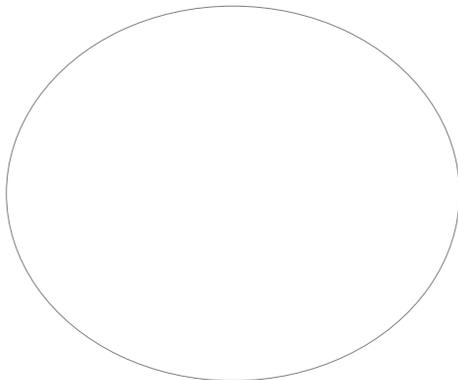
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



WHO?



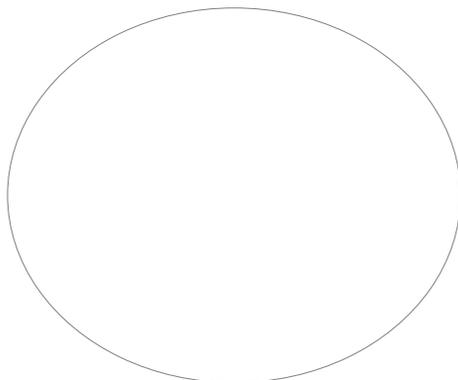
WHAT?



WHEN?



WHERE?



WHY?



HOW?

Extension Activity



Storyboard

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



Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first chapter of *Where The Red Fern Grows*. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6