

Jesse Oliver Aarons, Jr,
sandwiched between two older sisters and two younger sisters,
farm boy,
artist,
practical,
aspiring to be the fastest runner in fifth grade.

Leslie Burke,
new resident at the old Perkins place,
only child,
city girl,
unconventional,
imaginative,
needing a friend.

An unlikely pair
to rule
in a kingdom that lay
beyond
the

Bridge to Terabithia.



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Bridge to Terabithia
By Katherine Paterson
A Novel Teaching Pack
By Margaret Whisnant

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Goals

To . . .

- Offer a teaching guide with a full spectrum of learning experiences that flow from **basic knowledge** to **higher-level thinking skills**.
- Provide **classroom-ready** materials that **motivate** and **instruct**.
- Create **novel-specific activities** that require careful reading, help develop comprehension skills, and challenge the thinking process.
- Accommodate a wide variety of student **ability** and **interest**.
- **Support teachers** by providing a practical teaching resource that saves preparation time.
- Include **cross-curricula activities** as an integral part of the novel study.
- Correlate to various state **education standards and requirements** for language arts.

The Seven Components. . .

1. Summaries

Written in present tense, the chapter-by-chapter summaries are more detailed than those found in most teachers' guides or other sources. Important points of the plot, character motivation and development, and story clues are all included. For quick reference, the summaries are presented in bulleted format. These synopses are a valuable resource for

*quickly becoming familiar with a title when time is limited
managing a reading program that involves multiple titles/reading groups
facilitating independent study
refreshing memory when using a novel from year to year.*

2. Before You Read

In this component, the focus is on sparking student interest. Each teaching pack includes both an **independent activity** and a series of **whole-group/small-group discussion** or **research topics**, written as open-ended questions.

At least one **bulletin board idea** is included. In some cases, activities in the **Think, Write, Create** component also involve the creation of a bulletin board or classroom display.

3. Vocabulary

One of the many advantages of literature-based reading instruction is the opportunity to observe vocabulary in action! It is this circumstance that drives the vocabulary portion of the novel teaching packs.

Word Choices. . .

The words lifted from the novel for focused study are chosen based on one or more of the following criteria:

<i>their level of difficulty</i>	<i>their frequency of use in children's literature</i>
<i>their importance in comprehending the story</i>	<i>their value as useful composition vocabulary</i>
<i>the probability that they will be encountered across the curriculum</i>	<i>unique meanings, spellings, pronunciation, etc.</i>

Word Lists and Definitions. . .

For teacher convenience and reference, word lists with definitions are included. The selected words are arranged in story order, complete with page numbers so they can be spotted easily and studied in their "natural habitats." For clarity, the definitions are paraphrased to match the word's tense, number, part of speech, etc. rather than cross referenced as in a standard dictionary. The major resource of this information is www.dictionary.com.

Dictionary Activities. . .

Long word lists are divided into chapter sets of workable numbers and presented as **Dictionary Digs**—sometimes given a slightly different name to correspond with the theme of the novel. In this introductory

stage, students use a dictionary to answer a series of multiple choice questions about word meanings, usage, unique characteristics, etc.

Using the Words. . .

Other activities, which pull terms from the lists in random order, lead students through a variety of word studies which include

sentence usage

word forms

synonyms and antonyms

anagrams

categories

word-groups/connections

word types (acronyms, onomatopoeia , etc.)

scrambled sentences

analogies

whole-class/group games

etymologies

Note: Some of these varieties, but not all, are found in each Teaching Pack.

4. Assessment

The two sections in this portion of the teaching pack offer a wealth of materials designed to build a strong **foundation** for student progression to higher level thinking skills. The operative phrase is **basic comprehension**.

Short Answer Questions

Short answer questions for each chapter (or groups of chapters) are the first available assessment tools. The items encourage (and check) careful reading. Some require the reader to recognize a major event or idea while others involve finding a minor detail. The questions are in *sequence* with the pages they cover, but they are **not** designed to call attention to plot construction or other story elements.

The short answer questions can be used as

student reading guides

pop quizzes

discussion group guides

conferencing with individual students

Objective Tests

The objective tests have multiple functions. In addition to their obvious application, they also serve as tools that can *improve **comprehension skills** by providing practice in understanding plot structure and recognizing important story elements.*

Rationale:

Focus on the Plot. . .

Whether they are aware of their ability or not, all good readers sense the **rhythm** of the **connected** events that compose the plot of a novel, and consequently **comprehend** the story. They are in tune with cause and effect, behavior and consequence, sequence—the heartbeat of the narrative.

This “plot rhythm” forms the framework for the objective tests. The chain of events that tell the story have been pulled from the novel and reformatted into a series of sequential questions, none of which require **interpretation**. They are intended to **draw student attention to the fact that something happened**, not to what the incident means. That comes later.

In addition to their testing function, teachers may use the pages to strengthen their students’ ability to **Summarize**: With only the questions as a guide, have students write a summary of the chapter. For a set of ten questions, limit the number of sentences they may write to seven or fewer. When they work with twenty or more questions, allow no more than twelve sentences.

Report the News: Ask your students to write a newspaper article based on the events identified in a set of questions and the *who, what, when, where, why* elements. Some information needed to complete this assignment may be located in previous chapters.

Twist the Plot: Choose one or two questions from each chapter and change its answer—true to false, no to yes, etc.—to demonstrate how changing a single (or several) events would (or would not) change the story. This process can be used to help students become proficient in distinguishing major plot movers from minor story details.

The Characters. . .

Too often, when they are asked to describe a story character’s personality, the only answer many students can muster is “nice.” This portion of the Novel Teaching Pack, coupled with related activities from **Think, Write, Create**, is a well of opportunities for those teachers who wish to eradicate “nice” from their students’ vocabularies!

Questions that identify a character’s personality and/or motivation are purposely and carefully included with the plot movers. Again, the questions do not require **interpretation**. They simply establish that someone did or said something—knowledge that is invaluable when character analysis is required.

Implied Meaning and Story Clues. . .

The objective tests include items that establish the existence of story components carrying ***implied meaning***. ***Story clues*** that tantalize the reader with hints of future events also appear as question. At this point in the novel study, as before, **interpretation** is not the goal. **Awareness** of the **facts** is the target.

Developing/Improving Listening Skills. . .

Listening skills are rightfully included on every list of state competency requirements. Rather than always requiring students to answer test questions on a printed page, why not surprise them occasionally by doing the test orally and meeting competency goals at the same time?

Discussion Guide Capability. . .

The objective tests are helpful discussion guides. Use individual items on these pages to draw student attention to sequence, cause and effect, story clues (foreshadowing), character traits, recognizing and interpreting implied meanings, etc. These “thinking out loud” sessions are an **important building block** for the next learning phase.

5. Think, Write, Create

In this section, students pack up what they already know about the novel and go exploring into its every nook and cranny. Some activities require the simplest interpretation or application, while others will challenge the most proficient thinkers. There is a high probability that young scholars, even reluctant ones, will label some of the selections as **fun**.

Rationale:

Guidelines. . .

Most of the items in this section are based on the skills presented in the ***Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Bloom’s Taxonomy)***. There are two reasons for this choice. First, it mirrors the Novel Teaching Pack’s primary purpose of building a variety of sophisticated thinking skills on a foundation of basic knowledge. Second, in following the taxonomy guidelines, activities that correlate with many state educational standards emerge automatically.

Organization. . .

Chapter-specific activities are grouped and presented according to their corresponding sets of **Short Answer Questions** and **Objective Test** page(s). Having led students through the basics for each chapter (or selected section), teachers may shop in this section for in-depth activities to optimize student understanding and interest. Armed with a firm grasp of each successive chapter, students are more likely to anticipate, embrace, and enjoy the next section. By repeating the process, students are also mastering concepts and intricacies connected to the **whole** novel

The **Whole Book Activities**, as their name indicates, require a grasp of the theme(s), characters, implications, etc. as they apply to the full novel. These pages are a teacher’s smorgasbord of culminating possibilities. In some cases, the choices are outgrowths of concepts that students have dealt with in a previous activity. In others, students are encouraged to look at the novel from a new angle.

Levels of Difficulty. . .

A broad spectrum of **difficulty levels** to accommodate the needs of individual students, including the gifted, is an integral part of **Think, Write, Create**. However, **all** items from this section are intended to **challenge** and **sharpen** thinking abilities.

Activities. . .

Every novel teaching pack includes activities that require students to choose and use precise, appropriate, and meaningful **vocabulary**. These exercises involve choosing a group of words to describe a character’s personality or behavior. The following example is from **Charlotte’s Web**.

Eight-year-old Fern cried and begged her father not to destroy the runt pig. She sealed the little animal’s fate by asking her father if he would have killed her if she had been born very small.

- Which **two** of the following words do you think **best** describe the way Fern’s father behaved during this episode? Explain your choice. Include the definitions of the words you selected in your answer.

<i>practical</i>	<i>sensitive</i>	<i>loving</i>	<i>cruel</i>	<i>considerate</i>
<i>realistic</i>	<i>flexible</i>	<i>callous</i>	<i>compassionate</i>	<i>logical</i>

- Choose **two** words from the list below that you believe **best** describe Fern’s behavior. Explain why they are the appropriate words. Use the definitions of your choices as part of your explanation.

<i>impulsive</i>	<i>compassionate</i>	<i>assertive</i>	<i>tender-hearted</i>	<i>hysterical</i>
<i>undisciplined</i>	<i>naive</i>	<i>juvenile</i>	<i>humane</i>	<i>empathetic</i>

In each case students work with a given collection of terms, all of which can be correctly applied to the character(s) in question. However, the individual words have strengths of meaning. It is the student's task to analyze both the character's behavior and the words, make choices, and then cite events from the story to support his/her selection.

Teachers may opt to narrow the choices to fewer words, choose words for individual students, divide the class into groups and offer a specific set of words to each group, or use the assignment as it is written. Whatever the technique, it is here that the word **nice** can be knocked off the shelf, shattered on the floor, and swept out the door. No longer necessary. Useless. Gone!

Other items in this section challenge students to . . .
write for self-expression, for communication, and for entertainment
form opinions and theories
cite "evidence" from the story to support their explanations and opinions
connect personal experience to story situations
become familiar with and identify literary elements
analyze story characters and events
make predictions based on given facts

think about social issues
create drawings, diagrams, photos, maps, models, recordings, films, etc.
imagine
categorize
engage in research and data gathering
recognize and perceive story theme(s)
understand point of view

Cross Curricula. . .

Think, Write, Create takes full advantage of opportunities to connect both major themes and the smallest story detail to other realms of the curriculum. In **Charlotte's Web**, for example, students may apply their calculation skills to a page of "Spider Math." In the **Holes** teaching pack is a challenge to create a game that utilizes a "saved" group of Camp Green Lake's holes.

Options, options, and more options. . .

Think, Write, Create is purposely bulging at the seams to give teachers **pick-and-choose options** for
individualizing assignments
group work
whole class activities
capitalizing on student interest
homework
short-term and long-term projects
differentiating assignments

6. Graphic Organizers

Ideas for the graphic organizers are pulled from the chapter or whole book activities and expanded into a writing assignment. Priority is given to those topics that allow a student to relate personal experiences, make choices, empathize with a story character, and/or imagine.

Structure. . .

The organizers do not repeat a set pattern of circles, squares, lines, etc., prescribed for a particular type of writing. Each one is tailored to a **specific idea** pulled from the novel. **Structured directions** for organizing the topic support the student at this stage of the process so that **writing** is the major focus.

Non-writing Organizers. . .

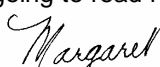
Sometimes, students are enticed to stretch their imaginations by filling out "forms" or writing "diary entries." One graphic organizer from **Hatchet**, for example, allows students to assume the persona of the pilot who rescued Brian by writing three entries into his log—the day before the rescue, the day of the rescue, and the day after the rescue. In the **Holes** Novel Teaching Pack, students become detectives and conduct a "background check" on Mr. Sir, recording their findings on the provided "official form." In these cases, composition skills take a back seat to **imagination, empathy, and pure enjoyment**. Teachers may wish to capitalize on student enthusiasm by asking for a written "report" based on the information entered on the forms.

7. Answer Keys

Keys for **all items that require a specific answer** are included in this section.

A final note from the author. . .

It is my personal wish that when the last page has been read, the last activity completed, and the last idea discussed, at least one of your students will ask, "What are we going to read next?"


Margaret Whisnant

Chapter Summaries

One: Jesse Oliver Aarons, Jr.

- After he hears his dad's pickup crank, ten-year-old Jesse gets up to go running as he has done every morning all summer. He wakes his little sister May Belle, who shares his room along with his baby sister Joyce Anne.
 - Jesse is the only boy smashed between two older sisters—Ellie and Brenda—and two younger ones—May Belle and four-year-old Joyce Ann. May Belle worships Jesse.
 - A shirtless Jesse trots across the yard on the chilly August morning past Miss Bessie, the cow. He crouches at the northwest corner of the field and takes off running as the cow watches.
 - At Lark Creek Elementary school, where Jesse will be a fifth grader, there is very little athletic equipment, and the older students usually have control of it at recess. The lower-grades boys have started holding running contests.
 - The year before, Jesse acquires a taste for winning when he once takes the whole running event. Instead of being the “crazy little kid that draws all the time,” Jesse is the fastest kid in third, fourth, and fifth grades. Later in the week, a fifth grader takes the title away, but this year, with the previous winner now a sixth grader, Jesse believes he will have a good chance to be the fastest runner.
 - Jesse thinks how happy May Belle will be when he wins. He thinks his dad will be proud and forget about how tired he is from driving to and from Washington and digging and hauling all day. He imagines that his dad will get on the floor and wrestle the way they used to.
 - May Belle calls Jesse in for breakfast. His older sisters Ellie and Brenda make fun of his running and complain that he stinks. His mother orders him to wash and put on a shirt.
 - Ellie and Brenda plead with their mother for money to spend on a shopping trip they are planning to make. Finally, she gives them five one-dollar bills. Jesse knows this means his sisters will not be helping with the chores.
 - Jesse's mother calls him lazy and tells him to get off the bench and go milk Miss Bessie and pick beans. Jesse obeys.
-
- May Belle comes to the bean patch to tell Jesse that new people are moving into the old Perkins place down on the next farm. The house is one of those places that people move into because they have no place to go, and they move out as quickly as they can.
 - Later, Jesse thinks how peculiar it is that the incident is probably the biggest thing in his life, and he shrugs it off as nothing.

Two: Leslie Burke

- With Ellie and Brenda gone, Jess picks all the beans and helps his mother with the canning. In a foul mood, Mrs. Aarons screams at him all afternoon. She is too tired to fix supper.
- Jess takes his little sisters outside to eat the peanut-butter sandwiches he makes for them. He sees the U-Haul still outside the Perkins place, but he doesn't see anybody.
- Back in his room, Jess pulls his pad and pencils from under his mattress, lies down on the bed, and begins to draw.
- Jess loves to draw, especially crazy animals with problems. He would like to show his drawings to his dad, but he doesn't. When he was in first grade, Jess had told his father he wanted to be an artist when he grew up, only to have him react with disgust.
- None of Jess's regular teachers like his drawings, but Miss Edmunds says he is “unusually talented,” and shouldn't let anything discourage him.
- Jess is in love with Miss Edmunds, but he keeps his feelings and the fact that she likes him a secret.
- Miss Edmunds has long hair, wears jeans, eye makeup, but no lipstick, plays a guitar, and sings. Jess's mother believes she is some sort of a hippie. Jess thinks she is probably right, but he endures school for Miss Edmunds' half-hour class held in the teachers' room each Friday.

Word List with Definitions

Arranged in Story Order

(Some words may appear on more than one page.)

Set One: One: *Jesse Oliver Aarons, Jr.*—Six: *The Coming of Prince Terrien*

- crouched** Stooped, especially with the knees bent; pressed the entire body to the ground with the limbs bent; cowered. (p. 3)
- shebang** *Informal:* The structure of something, as of an organization, contrivance, or event. (p. 4)
- puny** Of less than normal size and strength; weak; unimportant; insignificant; petty or minor. (p. 5)
- grits** Coarsely ground corn, with the bran and the germ removed, that is boiled or sometimes then fried, eaten as a breakfast dish or as a side dish with meat. (p. 5)
- primly** In a way that is formally precise or proper, as behavior or dress; stiffly neat. (p. 6)
- seep** To pass, flow, or ooze gradually through a porous substance; to enter or be introduced at a slow pace, as ideas or methods; trickle; leak. (p. 10)
- pandemonium** Wild uproar or unrestrained disorder or noise; chaos; craziness; hullabaloo. (p. 13)
- hypocritical** Pretending to have virtues, moral or religious beliefs, principals, etc., but not actually possessing them; deceitful; insincere. (p. 14)
- proverbial** Of, pertaining to, or characteristic of a short popular saying, usually of ancient or unknown origin, that expresses some commonplace truth or thought; traditional; accepted; familiar; well-known. (p. 14)
- conspicuous** Easily seen or noticed; obvious. (p. 24)
- sarcasm** A sneering or cutting remark intended to wound; bitterness; scorn; wisecrack. (p. 26)
- consolation** The state of being comforted in times of disappointment; relief; solace. (p. 29)
- melodic** Having the structure of musical sounds in agreeable succession or arrangement; having the characteristics of a melody; harmonious; musical. (p. 30)
- consolidated** Combined; brought together into a single or unified whole; united. (p. 32)
- rumpus** A commotion; an uproar; a noisy or violent disturbance; a spat; a squabble. (p. 33)
- contempt** The feeling or attitude of regarding someone or something as inferior, base, or worthless; the state of being despised or dishonored. (p. 35)
- ominously** Threateningly; indicating the presence of evil or harm; menacingly; perilously. (p. 35)
- abruptly** Suddenly or unexpectedly; in a way that is curt or brusque, as in speech or manner; quickly; without warning. (p. 35)
- scowling** Wrinkling or contracting the brow into an expression of anger or disapproval; sullen or unfriendly in appearance. (p. 36)
- regally** In the manner of a king or queen; queenly; kingly; splendidly. (p. 40)
- exhilaration** A feeling of liveliness and cheerful joy; happiness; excitement; elation. (p. 46)
- solemnly** Done in a grave, sober, mirthless manner, as a person's behavior, facial expression, speech, tone, or mood; seriously; sincerely; earnestly; passionately. (p. 50)
- regicide** The killing of a king. (p. 52)
- speculation** The contemplation or consideration of some subject or situation; a study of something; thought based on inconclusive evidence; guessing; theorizing. (p. 57)
- surplus** An amount or quantity greater than that which is needed; leftovers; something that remains above what is used or needed; extra. (p. 57)
- moping** Behaving in a gloomy or dejected manner. (p. 59)
- sprawling** Sitting or lying with the body or limbs spread out awkwardly; descriptive of haphazard growth or extension outward, especially from the result of real estate development on the outskirts of a city. (p. 60)
- lolling** Hanging or drooping in a relaxed manner; dangling; moving, standing, or reclining in a relaxed, lazy manner; goofing off; (p. 62)
- wretched** Pitiful; miserable; very unfortunate in condition or circumstances; worthless. (p. 62)
- slithering** Gliding or sliding like a reptile; walking with a sliding or shuffling gait; slipping or sliding, as on a loose or uneven surface. (p. 63)

Dictionary Digs

Set One

One: Jesse Oliver Aarons, Jr.—Six: The Coming of Prince Terrien

Use a dictionary to answer the following questions about some challenging words from the first six chapters of **Bridge to Terabithia**. Write the letters of the correct answers in the blanks to the left.

- _____ 1. A word that is an *antonym* of **contempt** is (A) disdain, (B) condescension, (C) respect.
- _____ 2. Which of the following is *least likely* to cause a **rumpus**? (A) napping kittens, (B) two brothers playing football in a kitchen, (C) three children playing with one toy.
- _____ 3. A person who uses **sarcasm** probably intends to (A) show the humorous side of the situation, (B) hurt someone's feelings, (C) make certain his or her opinion is clear.
- _____ 4. An example of **speculation** is (A) attempting to identify the perpetrator of a crime with little or no evidence, (B) carefully measuring a room before purchasing carpet, (C) the inability to make a decision though the necessary information is available.
- _____ 5. Which word can be substituted for **lolling** in the following sentence without changing its meaning? *My sister has been **lolling** in the bathroom for more than half an hour.*
(A) dawdling, (B) singing, (C) hiding
- _____ 6. A *synonym* for **pandemonium** is (A) chaos, (B) charisma, (C) chagrin.
- _____ 7. Which of the following cartoons best illustrates a character who is **moping**?

(A)



(B)



(C)



- _____ 8. What is the *best* interpretation of the following sentence? *Although he looks the part, Mr. Atchison is certainly not the **proverbial** absentminded professor.*
Mr. Atchison (A) looks and acts like a professor one might see in a movie, (B) physically resembles, but acts nothing like the often-mentioned teacher who can't remember anything, (C) uses humor to conceal the fact that he can't remember anything.
- _____ 9. If a person is having **grits** for breakfast, what vegetable is he or she eating? (A) peas, (B) potatoes, (C) corn.
- _____ 10. If someone began by applying fresh paint to the walls of a room and then decided to redecorate the whole **shebang**, what happened? The person (A) changed color choices several times, (B) rearranged the furniture as well as painting, (C) intended only to paint the walls, but made changes to the entire room.
- _____ 11. Which animal is usually associated with the act of **slithering**? (A) a bear, (B) an eagle, (C) a snake.
- _____ 12. Choose the word that can be substituted for **abruptly** in the following sentence so that it is changed to an *opposite* meaning. *A thunderstorm erupted without warning and then subsided **abruptly**.* (A) quickly, (B) lackadaisically, (C) furiously.
- _____ 13. Which of the following is **not** a *likely* reason someone might be **puny**? (A) too much exercise, (B) poor diet, (C) chronic illness.

Short Answer Questions

One: Jesse Oliver Aarons, Jr.

1. Why did Jesse get up so early in the morning on a summer day in August?
2. How was May Belle different from Jesse's other three sisters?
3. Who was Miss Bessie?
4. How old was Jesse?
5. Why did the younger boys run at recess instead of organizing a ball game?
6. Explain how Jess got a taste for winning.
7. Why was Jesse's father tired when he came home from work?
8. What did Jesse's two older sisters do instead of helping him with the farm work?
9. What did Jesse's mother order him to do?
10. What news did May Belle bring to Jesse?

Two: Leslie Burke

1. Why did Jesse, and not his mother, fix peanut-butter sandwiches for his little sisters?
2. What was Jess's favorite topic for his drawings?
3. Why didn't Jess show his drawings to his father?
4. What opinion did Miss Edmunds, the music teacher, have of Jess's artistic ability?
5. How did Jess feel about Miss Edmunds?
6. Why did Jess's mother and people at Lark Creek Elementary think of Miss Edmunds as a hippie?
7. Why did the sight of May Belle and Joyce Ann greeting their dad cause Jess to ache?
8. Where was Leslie Burke when Jess first saw her?
9. What factors made it difficult for Jess to determine if Leslie was a girl or a boy?
10. Why didn't Jess stay and talk to Leslie Burke?

One: Jesse Oliver Aarons, Jr.
Pages 1-8



Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank before each question.

- _____ 1. Jess got up every day during the summer and went running because (A) it was a way to avoid farm chores, (B) he wanted to be the fastest runner in fifth grade, (C) he was tired of being weak and thin.
- _____ 2. Jess had (A) two sisters and two brothers, (B) two sisters, (C) four sisters.
- _____ 3. May Belle was going on seven, and she (A) worshipped Jess, (B) tattled on Jess all the time, (C) couldn't wait to go to school.
- _____ 4. How old was Jess? (A) fourteen, (B) eight, (C) ten.
- _____ 5. Jess got a taste for winning the year before when (A) he won a spelling contest, (B) he won a running contest, (C) his teacher awarded him a prize for art.
- _____ 6. Jess hoped that, if he became the fastest runner, (A) his dad would be proud of him, (B) May Belle would tell everybody, (C) the older kids would respect him.
- _____ 7. Jess's mother was from (A) Connecticut, (B) New York, (C) Georgia.
- _____ 8. Instead of helping Jess with the chores, Ellie and Brenda talked their mother into allowing them to (A) visit their new school, (B) go shopping, (C) have their hair done.
- _____ 9. Miss Bessie was (A) Jess' neighbor, (B) a cat, (C) a cow.
- _____ 10. Jess wasn't excited when someone moved into the Perkins place because (A) the house was ratty and people moved out as quickly as they could, (B) he could tell the family had no boys, (C) their furniture and other things looked like junk.

Think, Write, Create

Chapter Activities

One: Jesse Oliver Aarons, Jr.

Jesse got up early every day all summer to run. When school opened again, he intended to be the fastest runner in fifth grade.

- Would you classify Jess's behavior as that of a **perfectionist** or a person with **determination**? Use the meaning of the word and Jess's techniques for achieving his goal as the main points to justify your choice.
- In addition to serving as training for the school races, can you think of other ways Jess benefited from his early morning runs?

Think of a typical August morning in your life. Then consider Jesse's morning as described in the first chapter. Compare the two experiences based on *the bedrooms*, *wake-up times*, *the sounds and thoughts upon awakening*, and *the day's first activities*. Are you and Jess kindred spirits, or do you exist in two different worlds?

Organize your thoughts and then write a composition about *August Mornings*. (See **Graphic Organizer #1**)

Jess was the only boy sandwiched in between two older sisters and two younger sisters.

- Do first-borns have a better family position than their younger siblings? Use your personal experience or observations to support your answer.
- Do you think the family "baby" is often given special attention? Explain your answer.
- From your way of thinking, does being the *middle child* often prevent young people from getting the attention or recognition they deserve? Elaborate on your answer by giving examples.
- Which group do you think an *only child* is most like—oldest child, middle child, or youngest child? Give details to explain your thinking.

Jess's dad made a long drive to and from Washington each day. The work he did involved digging and hauling. In the afternoon he was too tired to do the chores or spend time with his son.

- What kind of work do you suppose Jess's dad did?
- Name the state where you believe Jess's family probably lived.
- What clues in the story helped you answer the above questions?

The Aarons family lived in the country, had a milk cow, and only one vehicle. Mrs. Aarons was a stay-at-home mom.

- What evidence can you offer to prove that Jess's family was on a tight budget? Would you classify them as poor? Why or why not?
- From what you know so far, would you characterize Mr. and Mrs. Aarons as people who lived primarily by using their brainpower or their muscle power? Do you think they were intelligent? Explain your answers.
- Do you suppose the neighbors were any different from Jess's family? Elaborate to explain your answer.

Think, Write, Create

Whole Book Activities

Jess's family did not have a lot of money to spend. In Leslie's family money was not a problem.

- Though there was a huge difference in the amount of money each family had, how was each one wealthy?
 - Other than having money, what are **four** conditions that you think make a person rich? Explain why you chose each one.
-

Sisters surrounded Jess, but Leslie was an only child. In spite of their differences, the two became fast friends

- Much of Jess's life was connected to the fact that he had four sisters. Would his situation have been better if there had been another boy in the family? Do you think it would have changed his friendship with Leslie? Elaborate on your answers.
 - If there had been a brother or sister in Leslie's life, how do you imagine her personality would have been different? Do you believe having a sibling, or several of them, is a type of wealth? Explain your answer.
 - What do you imagine would have happened to Leslie if Jess had not smiled at her in Miss Edmunds' music class?
 - What would have remained missing from Jess's life if Leslie hadn't accepted his offer of friendship?
 - Do you think having a **best** friend is an important part of life, or do you believe it is better to develop friendly relations with a number of people without choosing a best friend? Can a person have **too** many friends? Explain your position.
 - In your opinion, can a boy and a girl be best friends in real life? Why or why not?
-

Leslie called her parents Judy and Bill, and Mr. Burke insisted that Jess call him Bill.

- Why do you suppose the Burkes wanted their daughter to call them by their first names rather than Mom and Dad?
 - Do you agree with the Burkes? Why or why not?
 - What do the titles *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Miss*, or *Ms.* signify in a relationship? When is it good manners to use them?
 - What would be different, if anything, if students were on a first name basis with their teachers? Do you think communicating with first names would be a good idea? Explain your answer.
 - Ask several of your teachers to tell you how their professors addressed them when they were college students. Why do you suppose things change at this level?
 - Would you approve if **you, your fellow students**, and **your teachers** were required to address each other with a **courtesy title** and their given (first name) **or** surnames (last name)? Elaborate on your thinking. (**Note:** The word *Master* is the courtesy title used before the given or full name of a boy not considered old enough to be addressed as *Mister*. What would you think of having to call a good friend *Master Michael* when you were at school?)
-

In expecting him to perform certain chores and by not giving him the attention he needed, Jess's parents treated him more like an adult than one of their children. They, in fact, took him for granted.

- What does the phrase *take for granted* mean? Use examples from the story to explain how it applies to Jess's situation within his family.
- How would you characterize the Burkes' attitude toward Leslie? Did they see her as a child or as a small adult? Do you think they took their daughter for granted? Cite events from the story to support your answer.
- What suggestions would you make to all parents to insure that their children never feel taken for granted?

August Mornings

Think of a typical August morning in your life. Then consider Jesse's morning as described in the first chapter. Compare the two experiences based on *the bedrooms*, *wake-up times*, *the sounds and thoughts upon awakening*, and *the day's first activities*. Are you and Jess kindred spirits or do you exist in two different worlds?

Use the form below to organize your thoughts and then write a composition about **August Mornings**.

	Jesse's Morning	My Morning
The Bedrooms		
Wake-Up Time		
Sounds and Thoughts		
First Activities		
Kindred Spirits or Different Worlds?		

A Note from the Author. . .

About Your Novel Teaching Pack

The Novel Teaching Pack you have purchased is a **convenient, ready-to-use, motivating, jam-packed** resource that you can rely upon for as many years as you wish. It sprouted from a long-standing need and grew under the watchful eyes of many classroom teachers. It has a lengthy history.

Early in my thirty-year career as a middle school language arts teacher, I realized that a substantial portion of the teaching material I wanted was not available for purchase. Afternoons, weekends, and holidays fell prey to bursts of self-imposed lesson writing. There was good news and bad news. These sessions taught me that I actually enjoyed writing for my students, but it was a personally expensive proposition.

Some things never change. Many teachers still conscientiously donate hours of private time creating their own materials. If you are one of them, take heart.

During the last decade of my career, I delved into what was then a new concept—using children’s novels as the basis for reading instruction. At that time, commercially produced resources for teaching novels were either minimal, in the *idea* (lesson larvae) stage, or so generic that students could successfully complete activity after activity without reading more than the book’s cover. I managed to create rudimentary files to accompany my paperbacks, but I wanted so much more for my students.

Meanwhile, hoards of new children’s novels were pouring onto the market. I began thinking about purchasing multiple copies of numerous books that my sixth-graders could read independently while I taught a whole-class title. In order to manage such an intricate plan, I would need materials for each title to check student progress and verify actual participation. (Love those euphemisms!) Teaching duties took priority over the necessary writing, and the reading program had to wait. But not for long!

By the second year of retirement, I had conquered my compulsion to follow yellow buses. It was time to concentrate on writing the material I had always wanted—except now it would be for the benefit of other teachers. With this new connection to the profession I love, the enthusiasm of my first year in the classroom came roaring back.

Teaching has many hidden fringe benefits, including a second career!

A year of work produced a series of Objective Tests of Comprehension for 25 popular titles. The pages outlined the rhythm of the plot and required students to notice how story events are connected. The structure doubled as a tool for writing chapter summaries, recognizing character traits, and understanding sequence. Two years of field-testing by local teachers indicated that the novel guides were useful for both whole-class instruction and independent reading.

In 1997, I founded Taking Grades Publishing Company, marketing the material by mail order. Later the company joined the World Wide Web. Teachers liked what they found, and the list of titles grew.

Since its beginning, Taking Grades has extended an open invitation for customer input. A chorus of phone calls and e-mails requesting writing prompts as companions to the comprehension tests arrived. I added the new component to the best-selling titles and waited for feedback. The expanded format was a hit. Then my customers convinced me there should be a vocabulary section. Graphic organizers, chapter summaries, and short answer questions made the most-wanted list. The teacher-driven metamorphosis continued until the original objective tests grew into the product you now own.

Within the **seven standard requested components** of each title are

*materials that **specifically address the novel**.* (Generic is definitely out.)

*a storehouse of **activities** that accommodate **curriculum requirements**.* (You pick and choose.)

***fully-developed** activities for whole-group or individual instruction.* (A-a-a-h! Another free afternoon.)

***cross-curricular** connections.* (Getting the big picture.)

***built-in fun**.* (Just add students.)

And so, your Novel Teaching Pack is the result of one teacher’s **experience** and **ten years of input from countless others**. It is **custom-designed specifically for you!** Go ahead and put your name on it.

Thanks for choosing a Taking Grades product for your classroom.

Margaret Whisnant