

# A Handful of Time



By

Kit Pearson

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 *A Handful of Time* and is comprised of five different sections:

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 time-travel, parent-child relations, the importance of family, acceptance and forgiveness, gender roles and societal expectations, home and security.

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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. Determining alphabetical order
11. Identification of root words
12. 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. 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 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

When Patricia's mother sends her to her cousins' cottage for the summer, Patricia doesn't want to go. She doesn't know her cousins at all, and she's never been good at camping or canoeing, let alone making new friends.

When she arrives at the cottage, her worst fears come true: her cousin Kelly teases her: Aunt Ginnie and Uncle Doug feel sorry for her. She doesn't fit in.

Then Patricia discovers an old watch hidden under a floorboard. When she winds it, she finds herself taken back in time to the summer when her own mother was twelve...  
(Summary courtesy of the publisher)

"Rarely is [time travel] handled so logically or so poignantly as it is in *A Handful of Time*... Pearson weaves a summer out of time and weaves as well a spell over her readers."  
(Courtesy of The Globe and Mail)

A synopsis can be found online at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A\\_Long\\_Walk\\_to\\_Water](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Long_Walk_to_Water)

## Author Biography

*Kit Pearson*

Born in Edmonton, Alberta, Kit Pearson graduated in English at the University of Alberta before going on to get her MLS at the University of British Columbia and an MA in children's literature at the Center for the Study of Children's Literature, Simmons College, Boston.

A former librarian as well as a writer, Ms Pearson has written several novels, including *The Daring Game*, *A Handful of Time* and a trilogy consisting of *The Sky is Falling*, *Looking at the Moon* and *The Lights Go On Again*. Her most recent novel, *Awake and Dreaming*, won the Governor General's Award for Children's Literature. (The publisher)





# A Handful of Time



*By Kit Pearson*

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

# A Handful of Time

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Chapters 1-2



## Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. *A Handful of Time* features twelve-year-old Patricia Potter, who has been sent by her parents to spend the summer with her cousins at the family cottage in Western Canada. 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 fascinating **protagonist**? Who was your favorite protagonist of all time?




## Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

desperation	neglected	marinated	prominence
averted	hysterical	tentative	expanse

1. My aunt went completely \_\_\_\_\_ when she saw the lizard crawl up her leg.
2. We gazed over the broad \_\_\_\_\_ of Lake Erie and felt completely overwhelmed.
3. She immediately \_\_\_\_\_ her eyes when the boys turned and stared at her.
4. Abraham Lincoln rose to \_\_\_\_\_ just before the start of the war.
5. I'm afraid I \_\_\_\_\_ to tell you that I am allergic to cats.
6. The secretary gave us a \_\_\_\_\_ date for First Term Report Cards.
7. In a fit of \_\_\_\_\_, Tom leaped from the roof and landed in the haystack.
8. The chef \_\_\_\_\_ the steak for several hours.

# Questions



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


2. What evidence do we have from the first two chapters to prove that Patricia's mother is not the most attentive and thoughtful of parents?


3. What did Patricia do in Chapter One which upset Kelly?


4. What was your impression of Kelly? Please support your answer with evidence from the story.


5. Patricia's mother's name was \_\_\_\_\_ . She was the host of the television program, \_\_\_\_\_ . Her father's name was \_\_\_\_\_ . He worked as a \_\_\_\_\_ .

6. What hadn't Uncle Doug told his children about Patricia's parents?


7. What did Patricia enjoy doing, and seemed to be very good at?


8. Match each character from the first two chapters with the most accurate description. Write the letter of the correct description in the third column from the left.

	Character	Letter		Description
1	Patricia		a	A beautiful career person.
2	Doug		b	Stuck her tongue out at Patricia.
3	Kelly		c	Stocky with a round, freckled face.
4	Patricia's Mom		d	Aunt.
5	Rosemary		e	Awkward on the drive to the cottage.
6	Trevor		f	Always in a good mood.
7	Maggie		g	Her parents wanted her out of the way.
8	Peggy		h	The family pet.
9	Ginnie		i	Accused a cousin of being snobby.

## 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:



- read the clue in the right-hand column.
- Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters.

Word	Anagram	Clue
steak		Lays hold of something.
lake		A hardy cabbage.
what		Liquefy.
plane		Console.
stuck		Turns the edges or ends of something.

**B.** A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter Two is “Patricia had shivered, picturing a huge expanse of water covering Western Canada like a small sea.” 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 taste of a hot chili pepper


b) the smell of a skunk


Look for a **simile** in the remaining chapters of the novel. When you find one return to this question and record it below.


**C.** Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device in which the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here's one such example: from Chapter Two “... *in the spotlight of her parents' prominence.”*

Using your imagination, create your own examples of **alliteration** from the following topics. Each example must contain a minimum of three words.

The chatter of a monkey.	
The sound of a locomotive.	
Your choice	

## D. KWS Chart ~ Alberta

Patricia will be spending her summer in the Canadian province of Alberta. Alberta is one of Canada's larger provinces (660,000 sq km or 250,000 sq mi), just a little smaller than the state of Texas. Alberta is also one of the more prosperous of the country's provinces, with a wide variety of beautiful geographical features.



Now you have the opportunity of getting to know more about the area where Patricia will be spending the summer. In each of the columns below add helpful details which would assist someone who is researching the province of Alberta.

What I Know	What I Want To Learn	Possible Sources

### Good to Know - Edmonton, Alberta

Patricia's plane lands in the city of Edmonton. Edmonton is the capital of the province of Alberta and its largest city. It has a population of almost a million people and is known as "The Gateway to the North". It is home to North America's largest mall, West Edmonton Mall (the world's largest mall from 1981 until 2004), and Fort Edmonton Park, Canada's largest living history museum.



## 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?**

## Extension Activities



### A. 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 this section of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.



1	2
3	4
5	6

## B. Quatrain Poems About Cottage Life.

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, **A Tough Way to Spend the Day**.

*I'm off to the cottage, I'm gonna spend,  
Two months of the summer in Old Grand Bend.  
Where there ain't no plumbing or sanitation  
It's the backwardest place in the whole of the nation.*



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: ABCA, 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 theme should have something to do with the themes established in the first two chapters of our novel (i.e. cottages, canoes, lakes, airplane rides, annoying family members, etc.)

### 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:** \_\_\_\_\_
