

Across Five Aprils



By

Irene Hunt

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

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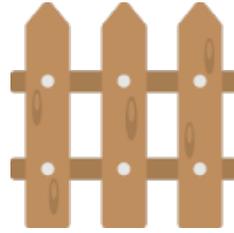


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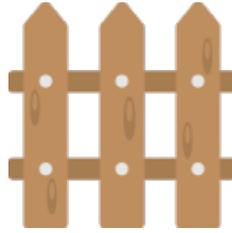
About the author: Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit novelstudies.org.

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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 one chapter of **Across Five Aprils** 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** (page 7) as well as a **Checklist** (page 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 American Civil War, Illinois in the 1860s, Abraham Lincoln, slavery, courage and sacrifice, the importance of friends and family, perseverance and courage when facing difficult circumstances.

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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 *foreshadowing*.
7. Identify *singular/plural*
8. Identify *anagrams*
9. Listing compound words
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identification of root words
13. 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/antagonist
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Compare characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

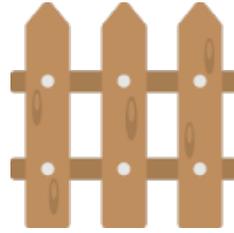
1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Write a description of personal feelings
6. Write a book review
7. Complete an Observation Chart
8. Complete a KWS Chart

Art Activities

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

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Synopsis

The Newbery Award-winning author of *Up a Road Slowly* presents the unforgettable story of Jethro Creighton – a brave boy who comes of age during the turbulent years of the Civil War. (Courtesy of the publisher)

“This is a beautifully written book, filled with bloodshed, hate, and tears, but also with love, loyalty, and compassion . . . unforgettable characters.” ~ *Chicago Tribune*

A complete synopsis and other helpful reviews can be found online at such sites as the following: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Across_Five_Aprils

Author Biography

Irene Hunt

Irene Hunt (May 08, 1907 – May 18, 2001) was an American writer of historical novels for young readers. She was a runner-up for the Newbery Medal for her first book, *Across Five Aprils*, and won the medal for her second, *Up a Road Slowly*. In 1974 she was U.S. nominee in 1974 for the biennial, international Hans Christian Andersen Award, the highest international recognition available to creators of children's books.



Born in Pontiac, Illinois, her father died when Irene was only seven years old. At that time her family moved to be near her grandparents, and it was Irene's grandfather who enthralled her with stories of the American Civil War. She became an elementary school teacher, but retired in 1969 to devote her time to writing. She was 57 years old when her first novel, *Across Five Aprils*, was published in 1964. Irene died on her 94th birthday in 2001.

Across Five Aprils



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Name: _____

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Chapter 1



Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of *Across Five Aprils* is Jethro Creighton, a young boy growing up in the shadow of the tumultuous days of the American Civil War. 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.

radiance	reverberations	accustomed	somber
amiable	esteem	inclination	intervened

1. The announcement that war had been declared left everyone in a _____ mood.
2. General McClellan was held in high _____ by most men in the Union Army.
3. Jennifer was not _____ to receiving so much attention from her family.
4. If my dad hadn't _____ when he did, I'm sure a fight would have started.
5. Karen always seems to be in an _____ mood, despite the circumstances.
6. There was a strange _____ to her face that left everyone wondering if she knew more than she was letting on.
7. The _____ from the explosion could be felt in the next town.
8. It was her immediate _____ to go ahead and let her brothers find out the hard way.

Questions



1. What is the **setting** of Chapter One?

2. What possible reasons might you suggest for Ellen Creighton’s oldest son not contacting the family for the past twelve years?

3. Cite one event in 1852 for which the Creighton family was thankful. Give three events which were especially tragic in this same year.

Blessing	
Tragedy	

4. Shadrach Yale’s present occupation was _____. He and Jethro’s sister, _____, liked one another.

5. We get to meet a number of different people in the first chapter. Match the character on the left with the correct description on the right.

	Character
1	Jethro Creighton
2	Ellen Creighton
3	Shadrach Yale
4	Abraham Lincoln
5	Travis Burdow
6	Billy Jeffers
7	Eb Carron
8	Bill Creighton
9	Jenny Creighton
10	Wilse Graham

	Description
A	Sixteenth President of U.S.A.
B	Jethro’s favorite brother
C	Veteran of the War of 1812
D	The novel’s protagonist
E	Sweet on a school teacher
F	Kin from Kentucky
G	Jethro’s cousin
H	John and Bill’s mom
I	A drunken youth
J	Attended McKendree College

6. Describe what happened to Jethro's older sister, Mary.

7. Describe how Matt Creighton showed his character during the aftermath of this tragedy.

8. How might the Creighton family's life had been different if the glacier had traveled another hundred miles further south?

9. Why do you think Bill was Jethro's favorite brother? If you had a choice between John Tom and Bill, who do you think would be your favorite?

10. Why was the Creighton family so glad to see Wilse Graham?

Language Activities



Good to Know

Jethro mentions a very famous person from American history, **John Brown**. Brown was strongly opposed to slavery and in 1859 led a raid on the arsenal at Harper's Ferry. Five men were killed in the gun battle before Brown was captured and then later hanged for treason. This raid heightened tensions between the states and was one of the many factors which eventually led to the war between the states.



A. Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here's one such example: from Chapter One "... and sat staring at the shadows. " Using your imagination, create your own examples of **alliteration** from the following topics. Each example must contain a minimum of three words.

The sound of wagon and team of horses racing down a dirt road.	
The sob of a lonely child	

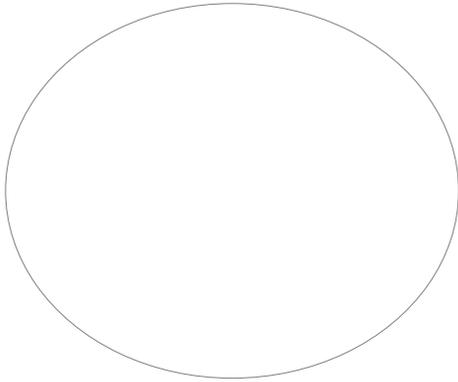
B. A **quintet** is a five-line verse that tells a story. The quintet has a syllable pattern and can bring an exciting scene to life. (It doesn't have to rhyme.)

Line 1 – tells when , 3 syllables Line 2 – tells where , 5 syllables Line 3 – tells what , 7 syllables Line 4 – describes activity , 9 syllables Line 5 – contains a thought , 3 syllables.	Now create a quintet poem using ideas from recent events in <i>Across Five Aprils</i> .
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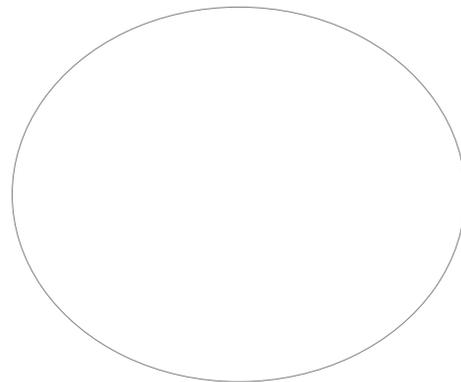
TITLE: _____

C. 5 Ws and an H.

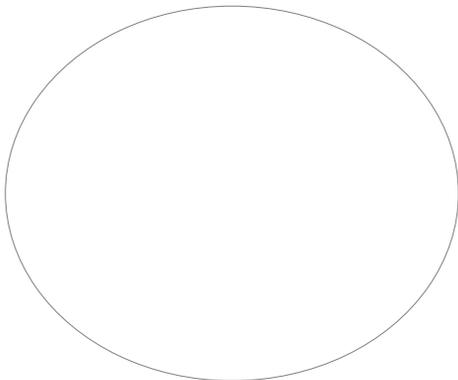
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



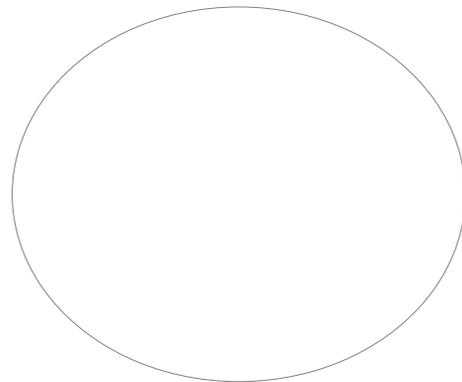
WHO?



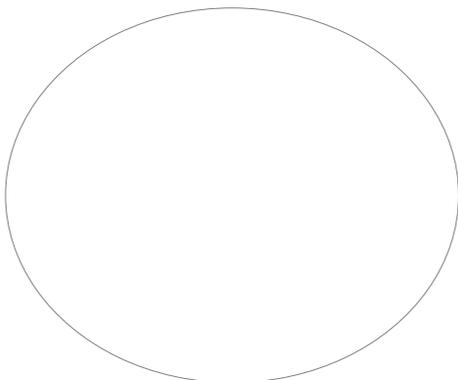
WHAT?



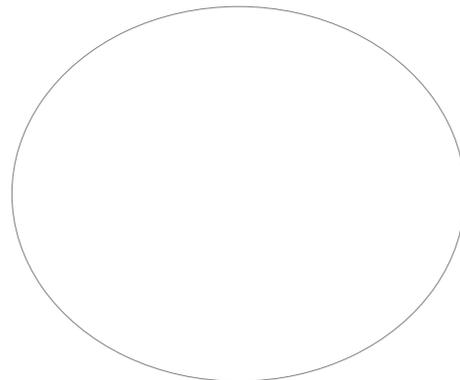
WHEN?



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 chapter of ***Across Five Aprils***. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6

B. Where Jethro Calls Home

The Creighton homestead is probably a much different home than most people live in today. Read the description of his house and farm in this chapter once again, and then sketch how you think his home would look in the box below.

