

Adam of the Road



By

Elizabeth Janet Gray

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 curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two or three chapters of **Adam of the Road** and is comprised of the following different 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 medieval life, importance of patience and perseverance, the spirit of poverty, the importance of family, overcoming obstacles in life, courage and sacrifice.

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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*
14. Identify *personification*

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 Coat of Arms

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Synopsis

"I want to go with you," Adam tells his father. But the roads of early England were home to bands of thieves and robber knights – not just to minstrels like Adam and his father.

Before their journey had hardly begun, Adam's beloved dog, Nick, is stolen and his father disappears. Adam is eleven years old, but he travels the road alone, searching the fairs and market towns for his father and his dog. (The publisher)

A complete synopsis and other helpful reviews can be found online at such sites as:
http://www.edocere.org/book_summaries/adam_of_the_road.htm

Author Biography

Elizabeth Janet Gray

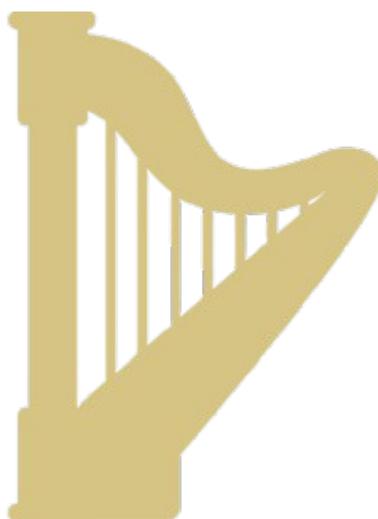
Elizabeth Janet Gray was an American professional librarian and author who tutored Emperor Akihito of Japan in English while he was crown prince. She was also a noted author whose children's book, *Adam of the Road*, received the Newbery Award in 1943.

Elizabeth was born in Philadelphia in 1902. In 1933 she was involved in a very serious car accident in which her husband was killed and she was severely injured. From 1946 to 1950, during the Allied occupation of Japan after the war, Vining was selected by Emperor Hirohito himself (and not the United States government, as is erroneously claimed) to become a private tutor to Crown Prince Akihito, the heir apparent to the Chrysanthemum Throne.



During her lifetime she authored over 60 books. She died at the age of 97 in 1999.

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Name:

Adam of the Road

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Chapters 1-2

Adam - Nick



Before you read these chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of *Adam of the Road* is Adam Quartermayne, an eleven-year-old boy who experiences many exciting adventures as the novel 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**? (Try to come up with at least three characteristics.)

The novel is set over 700 years ago in the year 1294. It seems from the title that Adam will be traveling the roads of England during his adventures. Think of three things a traveler would probably not be able to enjoy back then that travelers today might take for granted.

1	
2	
3	



Vocabulary:

A. Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

dormitory	minstrel	interlude	persuade	meager
affectionate	fragrant	distinctly	delicately	abruptly

- The car stopped so _____ that it was rammed by a truck which was following it.
- Jake is such an _____ little puppy that everyone loves him.
- A string quartet came out during the _____ to play for everyone.
- Adam's dad was a _____ who traveled the highways and byways of England.
- My scout leader will try to _____ Letitia to join.
- You must handle the butterfly most _____ or it will die.
- Lilacs are a most _____ flower.
- The meals he received at the boarding school were very _____.
- "I don't care what everybody else says," Timothy shouted. "I _____ heard an owl hoot in the night."
- More than a hundred boys slept in the _____.

B. There are many words in this novel which are peculiar to the 13th Century. Words, that we seldom hear anymore. Use a dictionary (or the Internet) to match each word on the left with its correct meaning on the right.

1	viol
2	abbot
3	wimple
4	burgess
5	parchment
6	prior
7	coif
8	valerian

A	A British member of Parliament.
B	Next in authority to the abbot in a monastery.
C	Head of an abbey of monks.
D	A plant with small white or pink flowers.
E	A six-stringed musical instrument.
F	A woman's close-fitting cap.
G	A manuscript usually written on animal skin.
H	A cloth headdress.

Questions



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

2. What was Adam's father doing while Adam attended school?

3. What three things did Adam comfort himself with while attending St. Alban?

1		3	
2			

4. What circumstances made it possible for Perkin, who was only the son of a ploughman, to attend St. Alban?

Good to Know - St. Alban

The Cathedral and Abbey Church of St. Alban is the oldest site of continuous Christian worship in Britain. It stands on the site where St. Alban, the first martyr, was buried after giving his life for the faith over 1700 years ago. (The *saint's bones* are mentioned in Chapter Two.) Building of the abbey began in the year 1077 A.D. It is located a few miles north of London.



5. Who kept Nick for Adam?

6. Why do you think that Adam took such an indirect route to the place where Nick was kept?

7. Think of three appropriate **adjectives** which would accurately describe the personality of Adam.

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8. In Adam’s time Kings and nobles had messengers carry letters for _____ T or F them, but ordinary folk got news slowly and by roundabout ways. If at all.

9. What startling piece of news did Adam receive from Dame Malkin? What did he assume this news meant to him?

Language Activity

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 Two, “A **w**asp, a **w**easel and a **w**oman.” Using your imagination, create your own examples of **alliteration** from the following topics. Each example must contain a minimum of three words.

A minstrel playing his harp.	
A spaniel barking at a squirrel.	

B. The word “**fire**” can be used as a **noun** or a **verb**, depending on the sentence. Use your imagination and write sentences to illustrate how this word can be used as both a noun and a verb.



FIRE

Noun	
Verb	

C. Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human.

Here's an example from Chapter Two: *The gray cat stepped delicately through the window, gave Adam a look of disdain....*



Describe how the cat is personified in this example.

Create your own example of personification.

If you come across another example of personification later in the novel, return to this question and record it below.

D. A simile is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. The following is an example from Chapter Two: *You sound as doleful as a hen in the snow ...*

What two things are being compared in this example?

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Invent your own **similes** comparing the following items with something from your own imagination:

a) a racehorse at the Kentucky Derby

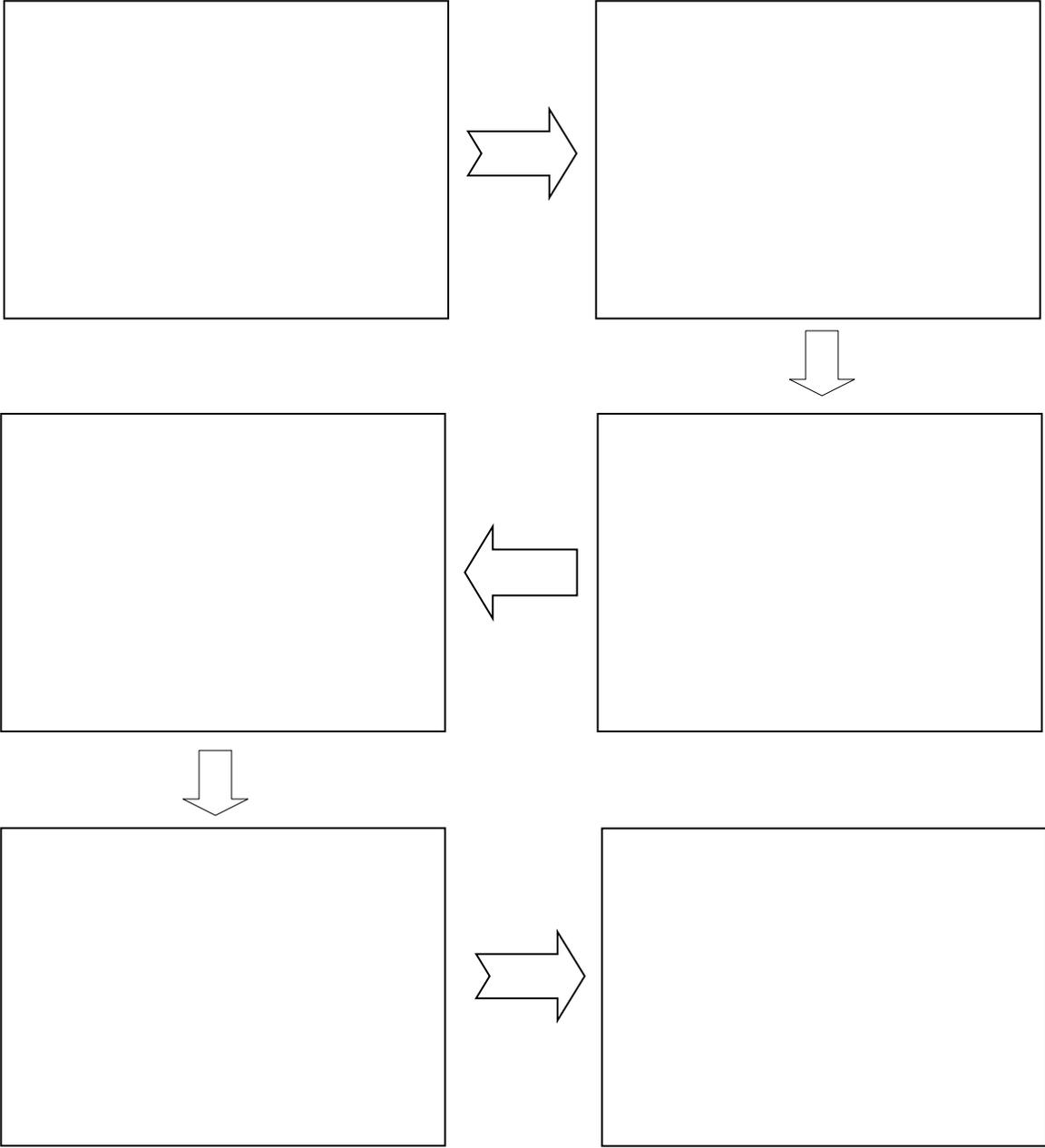
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b) the croak of a toad

--

E. Sequence Chart

Choose what you consider to be the six most important events in these chapters. In each of the six boxes below list the six events that you have chosen, describing what happened and telling why you consider this to be an essential part of the story.



Extension Activities



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 Chapters 1 and 2 of *Adam of the Road*. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6