

Afternoon of The Elves



By

Janet Taylor Lisle

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 one or two chapters of *Afternoon of the Elves* and is comprised of five of the following different activities:

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 appearances can be deceiving, independence and survival, courage and persistence, loyalty and friendship.

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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. Listing compound words
8. Identifying parts of speech
9. Identify *personification*.
10. Identification of root words

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. Complete a Plot Outline for a Sequel
5. Identify the climax of the novel.

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. 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

"If you don't believe it's elves, that's your problem. I know it's elves."

Something strange and wonderful has appeared in Sara-Kate's junky and overgrown yard – a tiny, delicate village built of sticks and leaves.

Who could have made it?

Sara-Kate says it was elves, but Hillary isn't sure at first. Why would elves have anything to do with Sara-Kate? There's nothing soft or mysterious about her, and she wears ugly clothes that don't fit and work boots.

But what if the elves saw something special in Sara-Kate? Something only they, and maybe Hillary, can see. [Courtesy of The Publisher]

Author Biography

Janet Taylor Lisle

Children's fiction writer Janet Taylor Lisle was born in Englewood, New Jersey, the eldest in a family of five, and the only girl. She and her brothers grew up in Connecticut and on the Rhode Island seacoast, a rugged landscape she would later use in many of her novels. She worked as a VISTA volunteer in Georgia and was a newspaper reporter before turning to fiction. Since the mid-1980s when her first book appeared, she has published sixteen novels for children and young adults, including **Afternoon of the Elves**, a Newbery Honor book and **The Art of Keeping Cool**, which won the Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction. She lives with her husband in Little Compton, Rhode Island.



Courtesy of the author's website: www.janettaylorlisle.com/about/bio.html

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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 main character of *Afternoon of the Elves* is nine-year old Hillary, whose neighbor, Sara-Kate, turns Hillary's world completely upside down. It is very important for the main character of a story to be appealing in some way, and be able to hold the reader's interest. What is one book (or movie) that you have read or seen which features an unforgettable protagonist? What was it about this character that made him/her so memorable?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

consideration	innocence	dissolve	invisible
expressionless	critical	significant	delicately

1. The science teacher attempted to _____ a sugar cube in water.
2. The newspaper was very _____ of the mayor's speech.
3. He placed the robin's egg _____ back in the nest.
4. “Please show your old aunt some _____,” Matilda said.
5. After popping her sister's balloon, Jack was the picture of _____.
6. It was difficult to tell if he was lying because his face remained _____.
7. Do you think it is _____ that Mr. Rose arrived shortly after the theft?
8. Becoming _____ would be quite the magic trick.

Questions



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

2. What was there about Sara-Kate's backyard which made it so fascinating for Hillary?

3. Sara-Kate is ____ years old.

4. How would you describe Sara-Kate's personality?

5. Do you think you would like to have Sara-Kate for a friend? Think of one reason why she would make for a fascinating friend, and one reason why she would not.

Good Friend.	
Not so much.	

6. What did the other girls find objectionable about Sara-Kate?

Language Activities



A. Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human. The following is an example from Chapter One: ... *not a ray of light could escape*.

Describe how a ray of light is personified in this sentence.

Create your own example of personification.

As you continue to read through the novel be on the lookout for other examples of this literary device. If you should find one, come back to this question and enter it below.

B. Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here is such an example from Chapter One: ... *with the paint peeling off*.



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

The sneeze of an elf.	
A full moon.	
Your choice.	

C. 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:



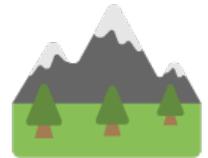
a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in the first chapter of *Afternoon of the Elves*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
Kate		Lay hold of something.
face		A small restaurant.
first		Cracks, splits.
shop		Stylish.
shapes		Stages; periods.
shades		Short races.
stage		Entranceways.

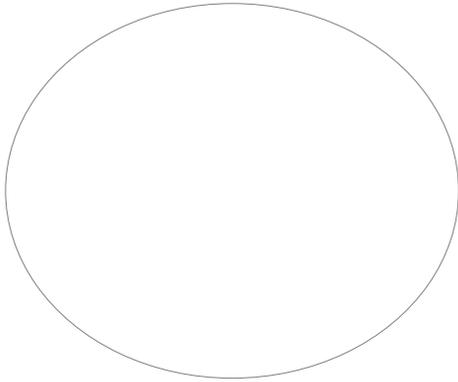
D. Cliffhanger

Chapter One contains an important literary device called a **cliffhanger**. A cliffhanger usually occurs at the end of a chapter when the author leaves the reader in suspense. How is this true in Chapter One? Why do you think the author ended the chapter this way?

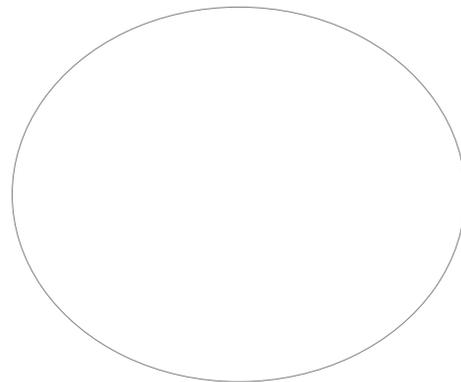


E. 5 Ws and an H.

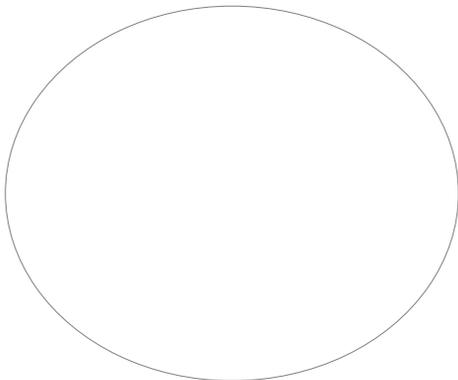
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



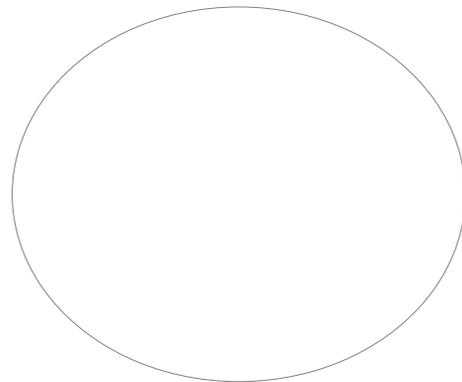
WHO?



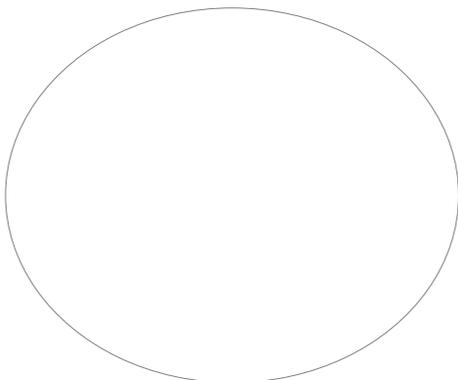
WHAT?



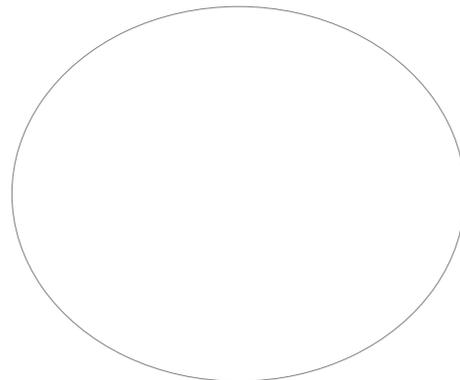
WHEN?



WHERE?



WHY?



HOW?

F. An Acrostic Poem

There are many forms of poetry available to the aspiring poet other than the rhyming poem. An ACROSTIC poem is one example. In an acrostic poem the first letters of each line are aligned vertically to form a word. The word often is the subject of the poem. Here is an example written by the acclaimed poet, Atrocious Halitosis:

The Firefly

Freaky-looking
Itches me when I touch
Restless at night
Early or late
Fearless
Little
Yellowfly



The Acrostic Poem

Now create your own Acrostic Poem on a subject featured in this novel. Your poem must have at least four lines (and doesn't need to rhyme).

Title: _____

Extension Activity



A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words



Use the three boxes to describe and illustrate the beginning, middle and end of the first chapter.

Beginning Picture:	Beginning:
Middle Picture:	Middle:
Concluding Picture:	Concluding: