

Carry On, Mr. Bowditch



By

Jean Lee Latham

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

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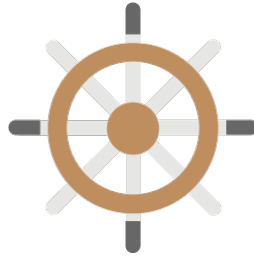


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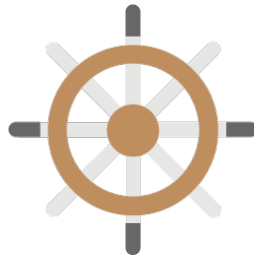
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About the author: Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit novelstudies.org.

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Suggestions and Expectations

Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two chapters of *Carry On, Mr. Bowditch* and is comprised of four distinct sections:

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 development of America, the relationship between social class and education, courage and diligence, the importance of friends and family, personal growth 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. Identification of root words
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *anagrams*
7. Listing compound words
8. Identifying parts of speech
9. Identify *personification*.
10. Identify *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. Complete a Plot Outline for a Sequel
5. Identify the climax of the novel.

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Compare characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

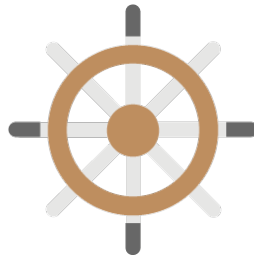
1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Create a poem
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Chart
9. Complete a KWS Chart
10. Create a friendly letter.

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

Readers today are still fascinated by “Nat,” an eighteenth-century nautical wonder and mathematical wizard.

Nathaniel Bowditch grew up in a sailor’s world—Salem in the early days, when tall-masted ships from foreign ports crowded the wharves. But Nat didn’t promise to have the makings of a sailor; he was too physically small.

Nat may have been slight of build, but no one guessed that he had the persistence and determination to master sea navigation in the days when men sailed only by “log, lead, and lookout.” Nat’s long hours of study and observation, collected in his famous work, *The American Practical Navigator* (also known as the “Sailors’ Bible”), stunned the sailing community and made him a New England hero. [Summary Courtesy of the Publisher]

Author Biography

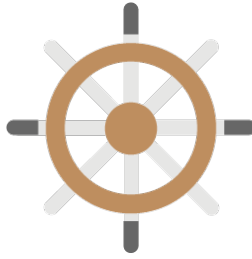
Jean Lee Latham

Jean Lee Latham was born in Buckhannon, West Virginia. Her father was a cabinetmaker and her mother was a teacher. She attended West Virginia Wesleyan College and received an B.A. in 1925. She earned her Masters of Arts degree from Cornell University in 1930. While in Wesleyan College, she wrote plays. In Ithaca, she taught English, history and play production. She continued teaching in Ithaca after finishing her studies at Cornell. During World War II Latham trained inspectors for the United States Signal Corps. Her first book for children was *The Story of Eli Whitney*. Her book *Carry On, Mr. Bowditch* won the Newbery Medal in 1956. (Courtesy of the Publisher)



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Student Checklist

Student Name _____

Assignment	Grade / Level	Comments

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Name:

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Chapters 1-2



Before you read this section:

The **protagonist** of *Carry On, Mr. Bowditch* is Nat Bowditch, who grows up in Salem, Massachusetts in the late-1700s. The son of a sea captain, Nat soon finds himself following in his father's footsteps, and carves for himself a very successful career on the high seas. What characteristics do you think an interesting protagonist should have? Why do you think it is important for such a person to have these qualities?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

squinted	kindling	towhead	gables
privateer	expectation	cooper	bowsprits

1. Nathaniel Hawthorne's house had seven lonely _____.
2. A _____ doesn't carry cargo. It carries guns.
3. A _____ makes barrels.
4. Nat _____ his eyes shut and then opened them.
5. If you want to buy an _____, you talk to a sailor about it.
6. "Come on you little _____," she said.
7. The ships _____ hung like long beads, slanting into the air above him.
8. She dumped the coals on _____, and with the bellows puffed air on the coals.

Questions



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

2. What are the ages of the Bowditch children in these two chapters?

Mary -	Hab -	Nat -	Lizza -	William -
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3. Put the following 18th Century expressions in modern day English:

a) Those men will make <u>a hurrah's nest of it</u> .
b) If Granny knew you didn't eat your breakfast, <u>you'd catch it</u> .
c) Granny said it ' <u>took the tuck</u> ' out of Father.

4. What is a privateer?

5. What deal did Nat cook up with the sailor? If you were Nat, would you have made this deal? Why or why not?

6. What was the one misfortune that Nat's dad endured which made the older man think he was a Jonah?

7. Find evidence from the first two chapters that the family is in financial difficulties.

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:



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 this section of *Carry On, Mr. Bowditch*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
elbow		At a lower level.
ready		A term of endearment.
silver		Body organs
stairs		Stringed musical instruments.
minute		A stately ballroom dance.
secret		Constructs.
garden		Peril.

B. Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human. Here is an example from this section: *The fire spurted out in red tongues*. The author is using personification by giving tongues to the fire.

Think of a way to use personification when describing a clipper ship caught in a storm.

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.

C. Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Alliteration is usually seen as a series of several words beginning with the same consonant (i.e. *Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers*). The following from Chapter One also serves as an example: *Father tramped up the steep stairs ...*



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

A privateer.	
A wild storm at sea.	
Your choice.	

D. 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



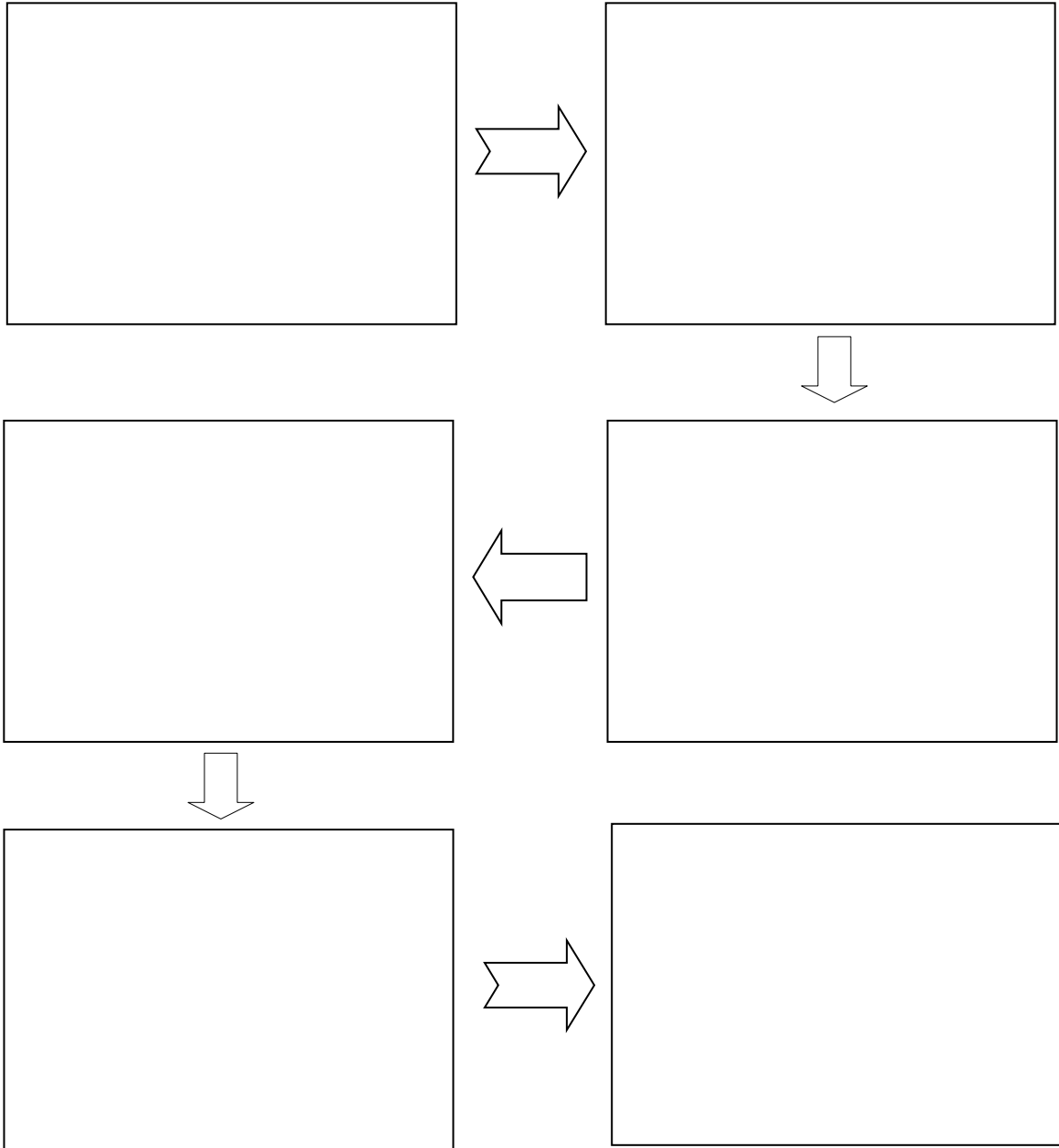
The Acrostic Poem

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: _____

E. Sequence Chart

Choose what you consider to be the six most important events in this section. 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 Activity



A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words

Use the three boxes to describe and illustrate the beginning, middle and end of this section.



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