

Irish Red



By

Jim Kjelgaard

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 chapter of *Irish Red* and is comprised of these 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 the following:

- 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 and **topics** which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include Irish and English setters, wilderness survival, trapping, the importance of friends and family, sacrifice, perseverance and personal growth, loyalty and courage.

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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. Identify *personification*
8. Use of singular / plural nouns
9. Listing compound words
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identification of root words
13. Identify/create *similes*
14. Identification of a *cliffhanger*

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. Identify the climax of the novel
4. Five W's Chart

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Protagonists/antagonists
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Comparing two Characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Write a letter to a friend
4. Complete an Observation Chart
5. Conduct an interview
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete a KWS Chart

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Design an Information Card

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Synopsis

No one except Ross Pickett expects anything of Mike, the runt of a litter of purebred Irish setters, and the son of a champion, Big Red. Constantly causing trouble and getting into mischief, Mike is given up on and locked away in the kennels of Mr. Haggin. When Mike escapes, however, and joins Ross and Danny Pickett in their wilderness cabin for the winter, he slowly rounds into the champion that Ross always suspected him to be. This stirring sequel to **Big Red** is a classic in its own right, and a real page-turner.

"A worthy sequel...a rousing story." -*Library Journal*

Author Biography

L. M. Montgomery

Jim Kjelgaard (1910-1959) was born in New York City but spent most of his childhood in the Allegheny Mountains of Pennsylvania. It was these adventures in the mountains that inspired many of his novels, including **Irish Red**, and instilled in him a love of nature and animals. Jim loved to read and began writing at a very early age. His first story was published when he was a senior in high school, and soon he sold many more. In 1941 Jim's first novel was published. It was called **Forest Patrol**, based on his adventures with his brother in the Wisconsin forest. In Jim's short lifetime he wrote many novels, but the most beloved of all is **Big Red**, which was made into a movie in 1962 by Walt Disney Studios. (The publisher)



Irish Red



By Jim Kjelgaard

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 *Irish Red* is Danny Pickett, a young boy whose love of Irish setters is put to the test with the arrival of the rebellious pup, Mike. 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 interesting and memorable **protagonist**?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

tepid	incredulous	staunch	wistful
disengaged	sarcasm	gamboled	propensity

1. You will never again have so _____ a friend as Peter.
2. Danny was aware of the puppy's _____ for digging holes in the garden.
3. She stuck her toe into the _____ water.
4. Some consider _____ to be a form of bullying.
5. Charlene gave her boyfriend a _____ smile, then drove away.
6. I could tell he was _____ from the task by his bored expression.
7. Karen gave the clerk an _____ look when told the price of the purse.
8. The dog _____ across the yard, glad to be out of the house.

Questions



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

2. Match each name with the proper description:

1	Danny Pickett		A	A bear.
2	Ross Pickett		B	A wealthy industrialist.
3	Mr. Haggin		C	The mate of Big Red.
4	Joe Williams		D	He favored English setters.
5	John Price		E	The novel's protagonist.
6	Old Majesty		F	Originally a hound man.
7	Sheilah MacGuire		G	A dog trainer.

3. What had upset Danny at the beginning of this chapter?

4. What arrangement had the Picketts made with Haggin regarding the Irish setters?

5. Why did Ross sense that trouble was afoot?

6. What do you think the following expression means: *No use killin' your bears before you see 'em?* (Or think of another way of expressing this thought.)

7. What happened to Big Red that prevented him from being a show dog?
(To read all about this event, read the exciting prequel to *Irish Red - Big Red.*)

8. Why did Danny believe that Mike would never be a show dog?

9. What were the names of the other four dogs in Sheilah MacGuire's litter?

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10. Danny states that he could always think more clearly in the woods. Where do you go when you need to think clearly or have an important decision to make?

11. How did Ross earn his living?

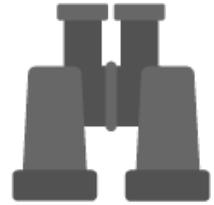
12. Why caused Ross to make the comment about Mike: *nothing wrong with his heart?*

Language Activities



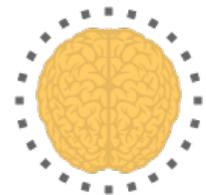
A. What Do You Know About Irish setters?

As you might have guessed from the title of this novel, Irish setters play an important part in the book's plot. But what do you know about this beautiful breed of dog? Did you know, for instance, that the Irish setter is a high-spirited gundog, known for its grace, swiftness and flashy red coat? Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, research three fascinating facts about the Irish setter and record this information below.



1	
2	
3	

B. Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human. In Chapter One the author writes, *She waved an apologetic tail, left Danny, and went over to receive her share of petting from Ross.* In this example the tail takes on human characteristics by being apologetic.



a) Why do you think personification is a literary device used by many authors?

b) Create your own example of personification.

c) Rewrite the above sentence without changing the overall meaning so that the dog's tail is no longer personified.

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 **PAN** can also form the word **NAP**. 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.

Each of the words in the left-hand column are found in this section of our novel.

Word	Anagram	Clue
margin		Furnishing with weapons.
grouse		Rascals.
curled		Sour milk.
plumed		When things gets piled together.
aspen		Homophone of <i>pains</i> .
serve		Part of a poem.

D. A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. We find an example of this in Chapter One: *That Mike pup, he's got about as many brains as a half-witted jack rabbit.*

In this example what two things are being compared?

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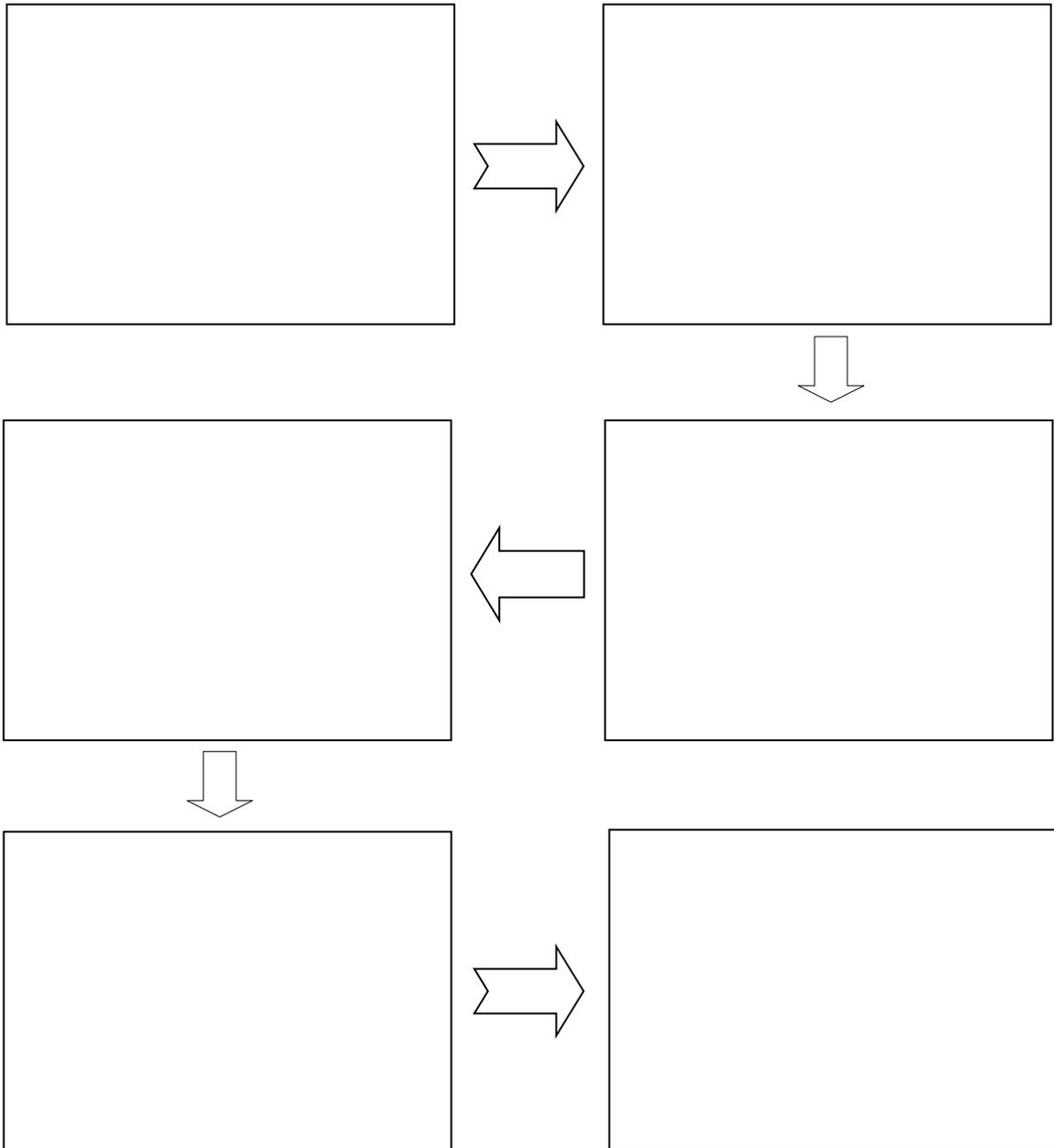
Invent your own **similes** comparing the following items with something from your imagination:

a) The growl of an angry grizzly.

b) your own example

E. Sequence Chart

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

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

1	2
3	4
5	6