

Journey to the River Sea



By
Eva Ibbotson

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

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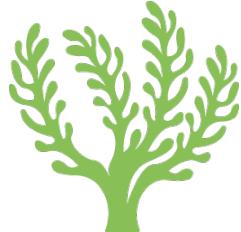


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About the Author: Nat Reed, a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years, served as a full-time instructor at Trent University's Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, please visit reednovelstudies.com.

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Suggestions and Expectations

Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two or three chapters of *Journey to the River Sea* 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 courage and heroism, respect for indigenous cultures, duty and responsibility, personal growth, class and privilege, the conflict of good and evil.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying/creating *alliteration*
4. Identify *similes*
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *anagrams*
7. Listing compound words
8. Identifying parts of speech
9. 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. Five W's and an H Chart
4. Create a synopsis
5. Identify the climax of the novel

Character Activities

1. Determine perspectives
2. Identify the protagonist
3. Relating personal experience
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. Create a journal entry
9. Opinion writing

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a movie poster
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip

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Synopsis

It is 1910 and Maia, tragically orphaned at thirteen, has been sent from England to start a new life with distant relatives in Manaus, hundreds of miles up the Amazon. She is accompanied by an eccentric and mysterious governess who has secret reasons of her own for making the journey. Both soon discover an exotic world bursting with new experiences.

An Amazon adventure set in the wilderness of Brazil, *Journey to the River Sea* is filled with mystery and memorable characters. [Courtesy of the Publisher]

Author Biography

Eva Ibbotson

Eva Ibbotson (born Maria Charlotte Michelle Wiesner in Vienna, Austria, on January 21, 1925) was an Austrian-born British author of children's books and adult romances known for her imaginative and descriptive storytelling, with notable works including *Journey to the River Sea* and *The Secret of Platform 13*. Forced to flee to England from Austria due to Hitler's rise, she later became a teacher and began writing in the 1960s, with her first novel published in 1975 and her career spanning over twenty novels. She died on October 20, 2010, at the age of 85, leaving behind a significant legacy in children's and young adult literature, and winning numerous awards, including the Smarties Prize for *Journey to the River Sea*. [AI Overview]



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Student Checklist

Student Name

Journey to the River Sea



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Name:

Journey to the River Sea

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Chapters 1-2



Before you read this section:

The protagonist of *Journey to the River Sea* is Maia Fielding, a kind-hearted 13-year-old orphan sent to live with relatives in the Amazon rainforest of far-off Brazil. What personality characteristics do you think would be valuable for a young girl to have who is forced into such adventures? Defend your answer.



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

prospered	exceptional	tethered	belabored
capybara	impertinent	bandana	quoits

1. Despite her broad smile, I found Gwen to be a most _____ little girl.
2. The family moved to Brazil, got into the rubber business and _____.
3. She _____ the point so much that we all became very bored.
4. The _____ is a rodent who often lives by a riverbank.
5. We played a game of _____ until dinner.
6. Vladimir Guerrero Jr. is an _____ ballplayer.
7. She wore a yellow _____ to keep the rain from her hair.
8. They quickly _____ the canoe to the dock before the storm struck.

Questions



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

2. What had happened to Maia's parents?

3. What news did Mr. Murray deliver to Maia? How would you describe the manner in which Maia received this news?

4. How did Maia try to prepare herself for the trip? How did the teacher try to help out in preparing her?

5. What was your own impression of Miss Minton? What was her responsibility regarding Maia?

6. Why didn't Maia's Portuguese lessons go well?

7. Why was Clovis so upset when he met Maia?

8. Why did Clovis regret taking the job with the Goodleys (two reasons)?

9. What play was the acting troupe planning to perform in Manaus?

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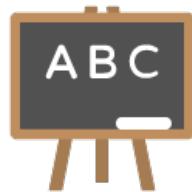
10. Maia has such high hope for what awaits her in Manaus. Predict what you think awaits her. Will her hopes be realized? Please defend your answer.

Language Activities



A. Alliteration

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 words beginning with the same consonant (i.e. *Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers*). The following from this section also serves as an example: ... *she asked Miss Minton*.

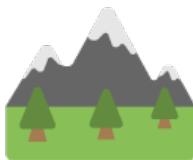


Using your imagination, create your own examples of **alliteration** from the following topics. Each example must contain a minimum of three words.

A sailing vessel.	
A parrot.	
Your choice.	

B. Research ~ Brazil

The country of Brazil plays a significant role in the coming pages. Brazil is a most fascinating nation. It is the largest country in South America covering nearly half the continent. The Amazon Rainforest (where Maia will call home) takes up 60% of the country. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, research three additional facts about Brazil or the Amazon and record them below.



1	
2	
3	

C. The Good Old Indispensable Adverb!

An **adverb** is a part of speech defined as *a modifier (or helper) of a verb* (usually an action word). Often an adverb will end in the letters *ly* (i.e. *slowly*). Our novel features a good many creative adverbs.



1. *I don't really like fishing because of the hooks ...*

→ In this sentence, which verb does **really** modify? _____

2. *... her neat expensive clothes, her carefully braided hair.*

→ In this sentence, what verb does **carefully** modify? _____

3. *"It's not the chickenpox," said Maia firmly.*

→ In this sentence the adverb _____ modifies the verb _____

D. 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:



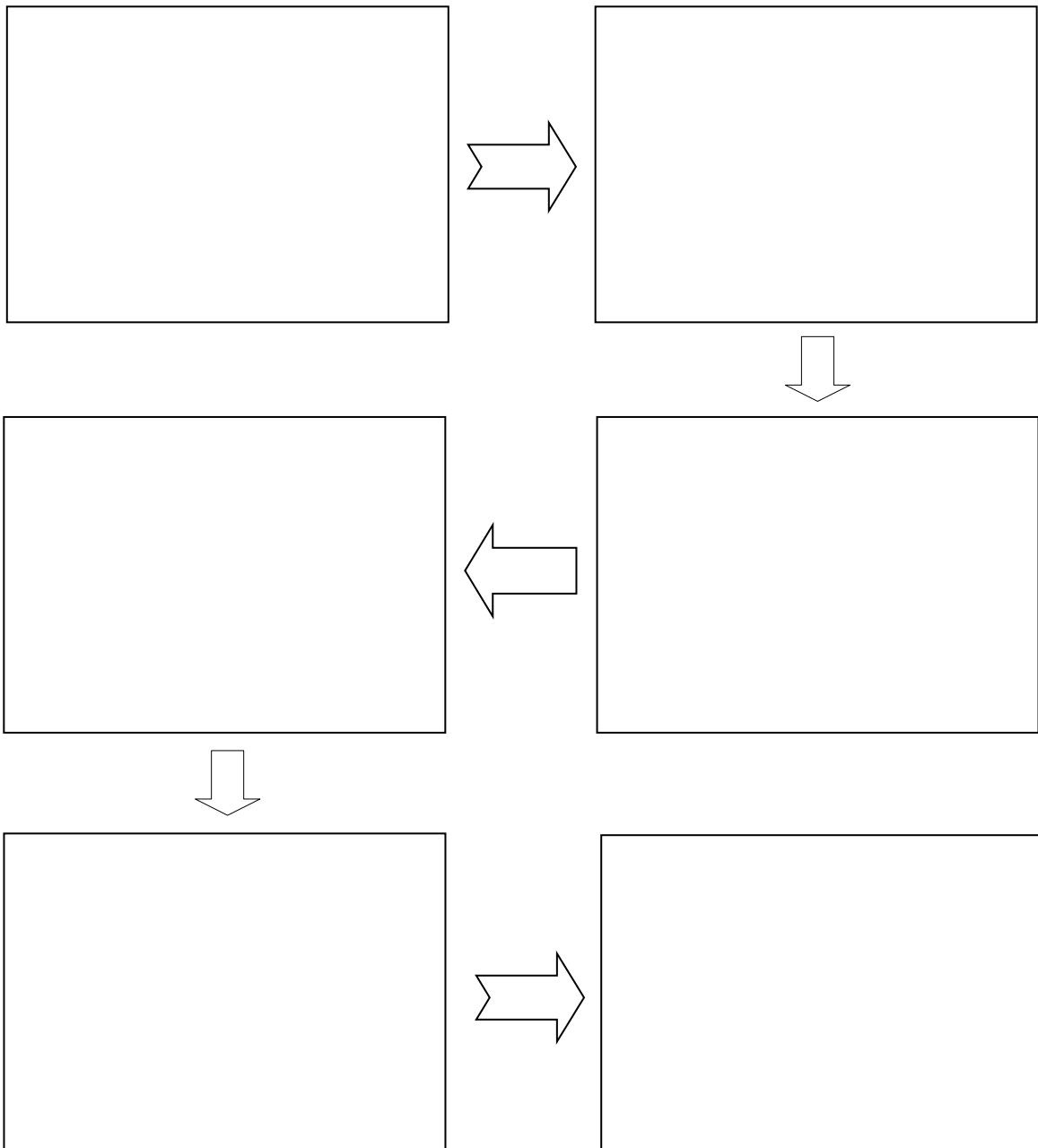
a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

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 *Journey to the River Sea*

Word	Anagram	Clue
spots		Sends a letter.
tears		Look at fixedly.
first		Divisions (between people).
slender		Bankers.
shriek		Those who take long walks.
strange		Deep red gems.
forest		Not harder.

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: