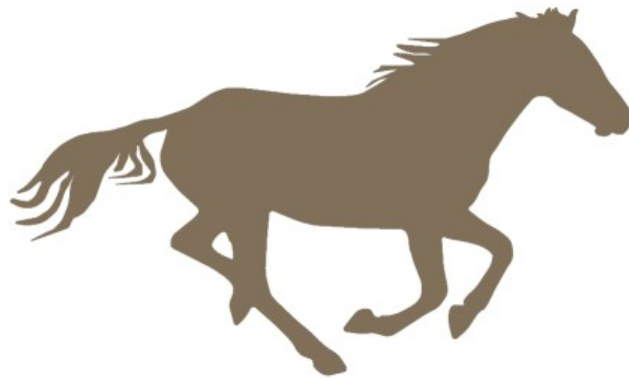


Pony



By

R.J. Palacio

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 Part of **Pony** 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

- 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 honor and loyalty, personal growth, perseverance, America in the late 1800s, ghosts/the afterlife, accepting responsibilities, facing your fears, coming of age, and dealing with loss.

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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 *personification*.
7. Identify *anagrams*
8. Listing compound words
9. Identifying parts of speech
10. Identify/create *similes*
11. 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. 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. 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

Twelve-year-old Silas is awoken in the dead of night by three menacing horsemen who take his father away. Silas is left shaken, scared, and alone, except for the presence of his companion, Mittenwool . . . who happens to be a ghost. When a pony shows up at his door, Silas makes the courageous decision to leave his home and embark on a perilous journey to find his father. Along the way, he will face his fears to unlock the secrets of his past and explore the unfathomable mysteries of the world around him. [The Publisher]

“Perfection ... Hands-down the best children’s book I’ve read all year.” – *The Wall Street Journal* (Review)

Author Biography

R.J. Palacio

(Author of *Wonder*)

Date of Birth July 13, 1963

Place of Birth New York City

Grew up in Flushing (Queens) New York

Currently lives in Brooklyn, NY

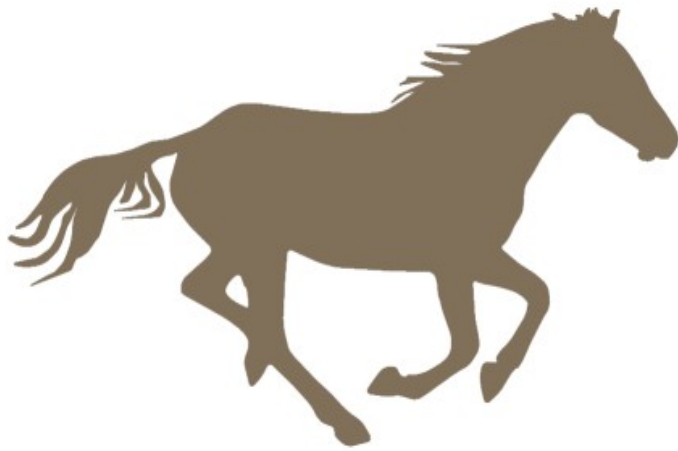
Children 2 (Caleb and Joseph)

Dogs 2 (Bear and Beau)

Nationality American (Colombian ancestry)



Pony



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Name: _____

Pony

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Part One



Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *Pony* is twelve-year-old Silas a young boy growing up in a very remote area with a father who is quite extraordinary. 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 **protagonist**? (One that's hard to forget.)



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

proprietary	allure	deference	proposition
perplexed	malevolent	perceptions	rationally

1. As the horsemen approached the house they slowed in _____ to Pa's rifle.
2. Silas sounded a bit _____ when answering the difficult question.
3. He could talk me out of things, cast doubt on my _____.
4. He used his own _____ formula for the sensitizer.
5. “Let's think this through _____, all right?” he said soundly.
6. The extra charge added even more _____ to the mysterious photographs.
7. Even the trees seemed mysterious and _____ as Silas entered the woods.
8. He has a business _____ he would like to discuss with you.

Questions



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

b. Think of one thing you would enjoy about living in this setting (both time and place), and one thing you would not enjoy.

Enjoy	
Not so much	

2. What two advantages did Pa's ironotypes have over daguerrotypes?

1	
2	

3. What was unusual about Mittenwool? Why do you think the author might have included such a character in the story?

4. Do you think it was a wise decision for Silas's dad to accompany these men? Why or why not?

5. The night riders were looking for a man named _____, but Silas's father told them that his name was _____.

6. What hint in Chapter Two do we have that Mr. Ollerenshaw didn't live that far away?

7. Cite two ways that Rufe tried to persuade Martin to accompany them that night. What compromise did Martin force Rufe to make before agreeing to go with them?

8. How does Chapter Three end on an ominous note?

9. How did Silas and his dad's perception differ as to who Mittenwool was?

10. How do you think Pony ended up back at Silas' place?

11. Silas believed that Pony's appearance was a sign. What did he think this meant?

12. What compromise did Silas make with Mittenwool so his friend would let him go?

Language Activities



A. The Pony

A pony is defined as a horse of a small breed whose height at the withers (highest part of a pony's back) is below 58 inches (147 cm.). Ponies usually have a stocky body and a round shape. Investigate the pony further and record three interesting facts about the animal below.



1.	
2.	
3.	

B. 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 column can be found in Part One of **Pony**.

Word	Anagram	Clue
stern		Leases.
duster		Most impolite.
faces		Small restaurants.
horses		Lakefronts.
promise		A rude individual.
solemn		Fruits.
devil		Dwelt.

C. A Quatrain Poem Celebrating the Pony.

The **quatrain** is a popular form of rhymed verse. It is a poem of four lines, is usually light and can be humorous. The following quatrain was written by the famous poet, Atrocious Halitosis. It is called, ***Pony on the Moor***.

*When I was a lad, 'bout three or four,
A speckled pony knocked on my door.
He shook his head and stamped his hoof,
'Til I rode with him out on the moor.*



Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A - A - B - A**. Other rhyming schemes include: ABAB, AABB, AAAA, ABBA, ABBB, and AAAB.

Your task is to write your own quatrain poem. You may choose a rhyming scheme that fits with your own personal creation. The theme should have something to do with the themes established in Part One of our novel.

The Quatrain Poem

Now create your own Quatrain Poem. Your poem must follow the format of a quatrain poem described above (and must rhyme).

Title: _____

D. A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Part One is: *It was then that I heard Argos howling like a banshee downstairs.*

What is being compared in this example?

--	--

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

a) A pony galloping across a field.

b) Catching a big fish.

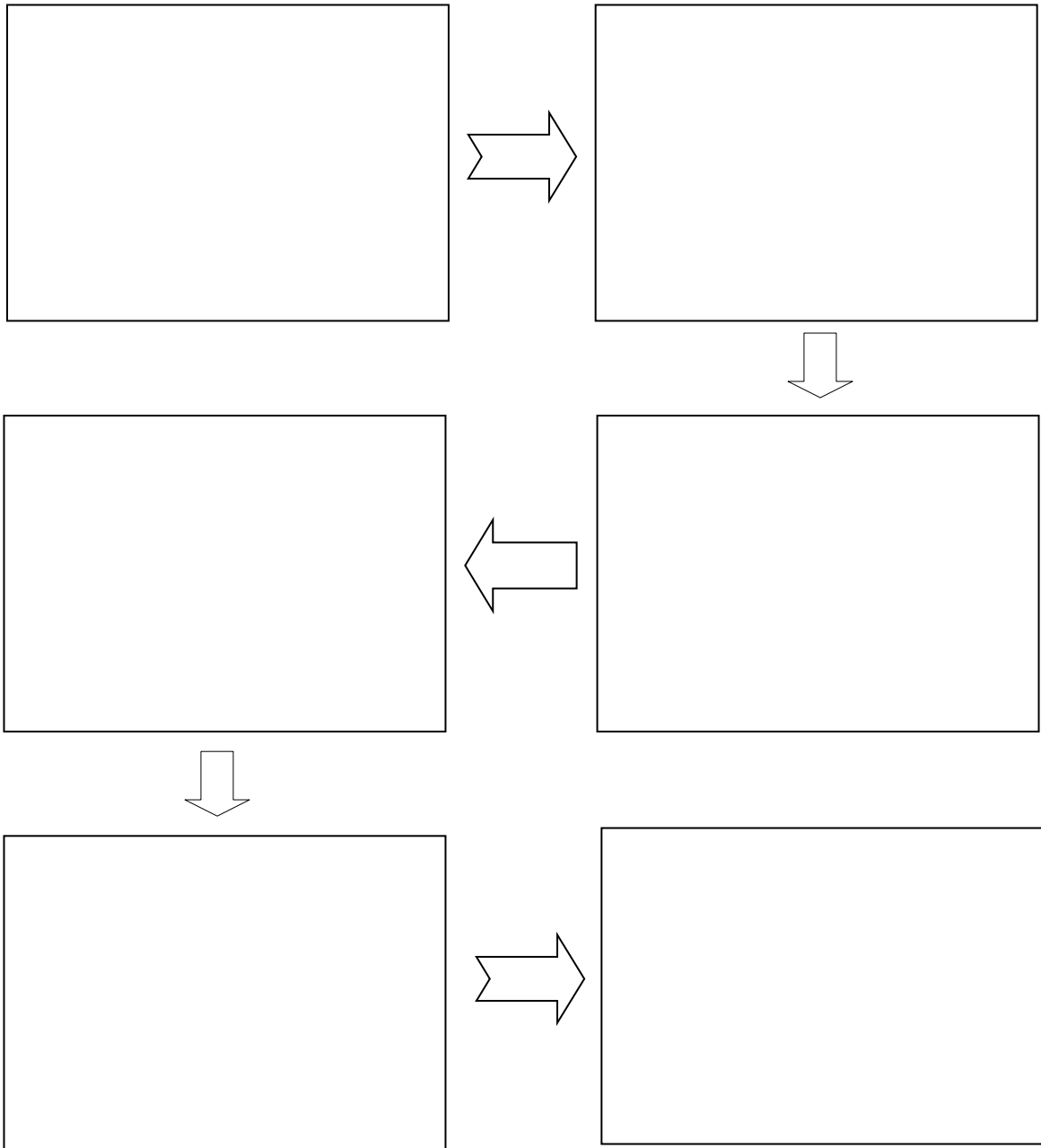
E. Chapter One contains an example of an important literary device called **foreshadowing**. Foreshadowing is defined as *a warning or indication of a future event*. Chapter One ends with the statement, *It was at this time that our lives were forever changed by the predawn visitation of three riders and a bald-faced pony.*



1. What is the author hinting at in this statement?
2. Why might the author have included this statement?

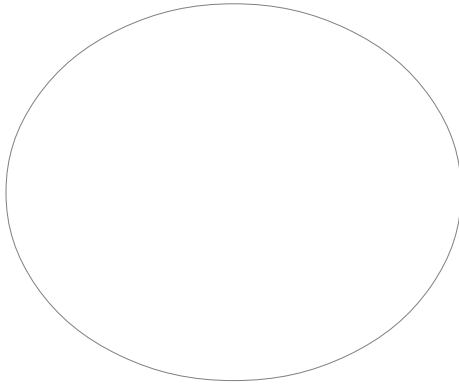
F. Sequence Chart

Choose what you consider to be the six most important events in Part One. 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.

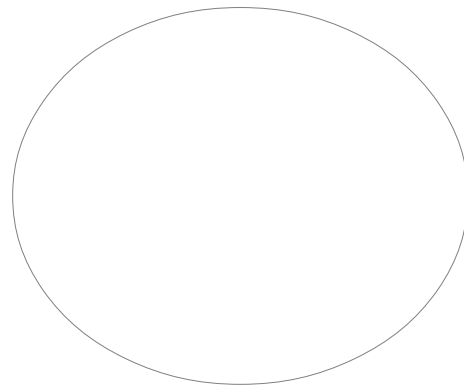


G. 5 Ws and an H.

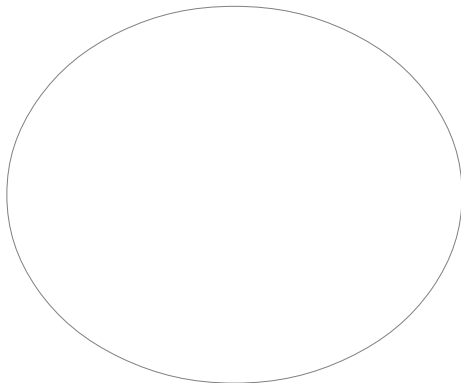
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



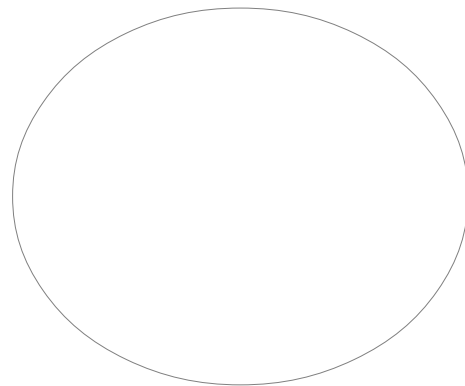
WHO?



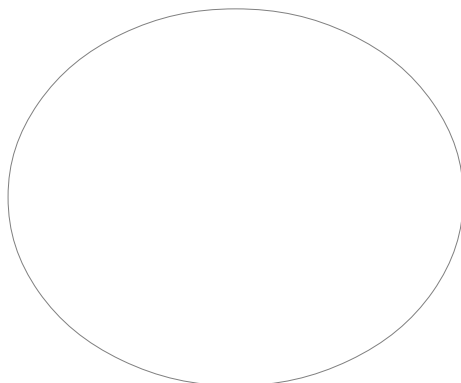
WHAT?



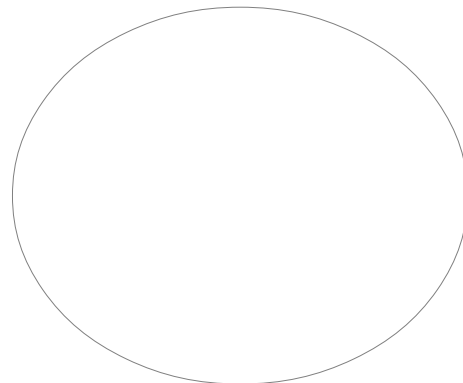
WHEN?



WHERE?



WHY?



HOW?

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



1	2
3	4
5	6