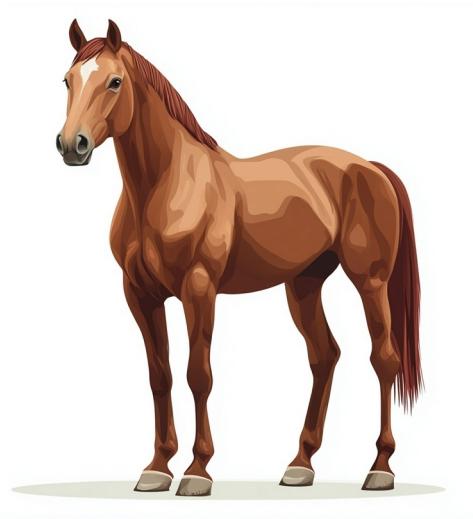


# Riding Freedom



By  
Pam Muñoz Ryan

A Novel Study  
by Nat Reed

# Riding Freedom

By Pam Muñoz Ryan



## Table of Contents

Suggestions and Expectations	3
List of Skills	4
Synopsis / Author Biography	5
Student Checklist	6
Reproducible Student Booklet	7
Answer Key	71

**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](http://novelstudies.org).

Copyright © 2024 Nat Reed  
Revisions Completed in 2025  
All rights reserved by author.

Permission to copy for single classroom use only.  
Electronic distribution limited to single classroom use only.  
Not for public display.

# Riding Freedom

By Pam Muñoz Ryan



## Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on 1 chapter of *Riding Freedom* and is comprised of the following activities:

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 keep 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 importance of friendship, courage and compassion, following one's dreams, horses, life in 18<sup>th</sup> Century America, orphanages, and personal growth.

# Riding Freedom

## By Pam Muñoz Ryan

### 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 about personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Chart
9. Complete a KWS Chart

#### Art Activities

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

# Riding Freedom

## By Pam Muñoz Ryan



### Synopsis

Charlotte Parkhurst was raised in an orphanage for boys, which suited her just fine. She didn't like playing with dolls, she could hold her own in a fight, and she loved to work in the stable. Charlotte had a special way with horses and wanted to spend her life training and riding them on a ranch of her own.

The problem was, as a girl in the mid-1800s, Charlotte was expected to live a much different life—one without the freedoms she dreamed of. But Charlotte was smart and determined, and she figured out a way to live her life on her terms.

[Courtesy of the publisher]

### Author Biography Pam Muñoz Ryan

Pam Muñoz Ryan is an American author and the 2018 U.S. nominee for the international Hans Christian Andersen Award. She is the author of ECHO, a Newbery Honor book and the recipient of the Kirkus Prize. She has written over forty books, including the novels *Esperanza Rising*, *Becoming Naomi León*, *Riding Freedom*, *Paint The Wind* and *The Dreamer*.

Born Pamela Jeanne Banducci in Bakersfield, California, on December 25, 1951, she attended McKinley Elementary, Longfellow Elementary, Bakersfield High School, and Bakersfield Community College. She married James Ryan in 1975. An early childhood teacher, she worked for the Escondido, California, school district for three years before starting her family. After her four children were born, she became the director of an early childhood program and went back to school to get her master's degree in Post-secondary Education. At the encouragement of her agent, Kendra Marcus, she included her family name, Muñoz, to her signature, to reflect her Mexican heritage.

[Adapted from the author's website]



# Riding Freedom

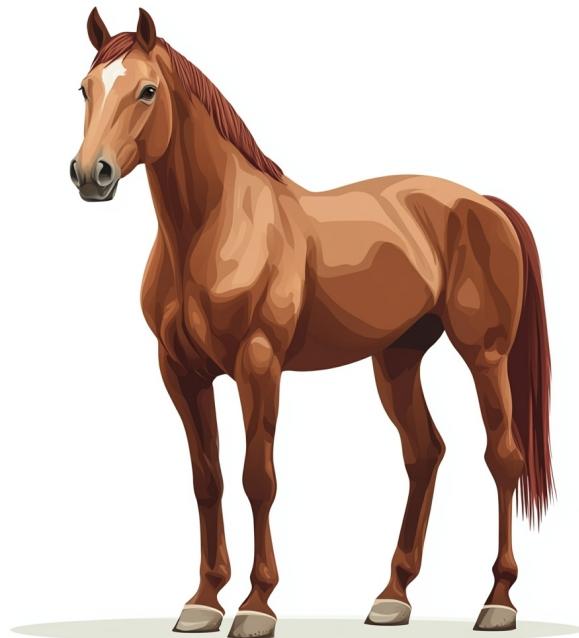
*By Pam Muñoz Ryan*



## Student Checklist

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Riding Freedom



By Pam Muñoz Ryan

Name:

# Riding Freedom

## By Pam Muñoz Ryan

### In the Beginning & Chapter 1



#### Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *Riding Freedom* is not your typical protagonist, but a feisty, determined orphan girl who manages not only to survive difficult times, but succeed in ways she probably never imagined. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. Who would you say is your *most favorite* character ever? What made you select this character?




#### Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

colic	dobbin	ruffian	persistent
skittish	lathered	pursue	misfortune

1. Big John McCrae was a \_\_\_\_\_ and was always picking on younger kids.
2. The doctor soon determined that the baby had \_\_\_\_\_ and a mild temperature.
3. After going once around the track, the horse was \_\_\_\_\_ and panting loudly.
4. “I had the \_\_\_\_\_ of meeting that boor at a party,” Velma exclaimed.
5. When the colt saw the cowboy approaching with a saddle he became \_\_\_\_\_.
6. That old nag is a \_\_\_\_\_, not a race horse.
7. Jackson was surprised when the dog began to \_\_\_\_\_ him across the schoolyard.
8. In order for a salesperson to succeed, he or she will have to be very \_\_\_\_\_.

## Questions



1. Describe the **setting** of the story at the beginning of Chapter One.


2. What was there about Charlotte that made the doctor believe she could survive living in an orphanage?


3. What did Charlotte consider to be her greatest misfortune at the orphanage?


4. How did Freedom get her name?


5. What was your impression of Mr. Millshark and Hayward? What was there about these two characters that caused you to feel this way about them?

<b>Mr. Millshark:</b>
<b>Hayward:</b>

6. Where was the only place that Charlotte was happy? Why was this the case?


## Language Activities



### A. Riding Horses

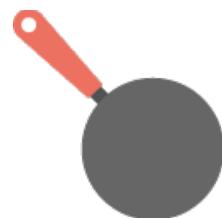
Of the hundreds of breeds of horses in the world, just about all of them fall into one of these categories: **draft horses, warmbloods, light horses, gaited horses, and ponies**. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, choose a category or breed of horse and then research three facts about this horse and record them below.

Type/breed of horse \_\_\_\_\_.

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-hand column can be found in these two chapters of *Riding Freedom*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
horse		By the sea.
face		A small restaurant.
halter		Horse sweat.
pursed		Someone overly-concerned with being proper.
rocks		Bottle-stoppers.
heart		The world.
stable		____ and chairs.

**C.** Next to each pair of words indicate whether each is an example of a Synonym (S), Antonym (A), or Homophone (H).

1	pasture - meadow		6	congratulate - curse	
2	respect - contempt		7	persistent - determined	
3	disgust - relish		8	portrait - picture	
4	rein - rain		9	stare - stair	
5	wheeze - pant		10	heard - herd	

## **D. A Quatrain Poem Celebrates Horses.**

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 is the first four lines of the famous poem, *My Palomino*, written by the renowned poet, Atrocious Halitosis.

*I gots this horse in my garage,  
I rides him everyday.  
I feeds him oats and hay and bugs,  
Until he ran away.*

Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A – B – C – B** Other rhyming schemes include: ABAB, AAAA, AABA, 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 these two chapters of our novel (like *orphanages* or *stables*).

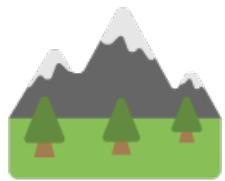
### **The Quatrain Poem**

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

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_


## E. 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?




**F.** A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter One is: . . . *her long braids waving behind her like two thick ropes...*

What is being compared in this example?


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

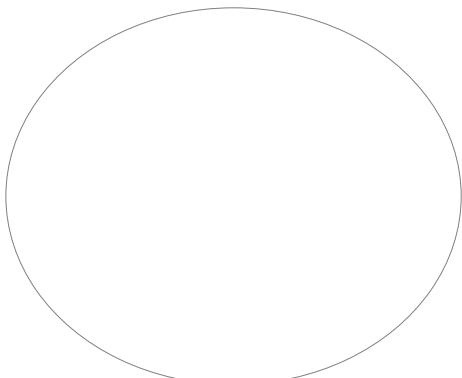
a) a horse race


b) a thunder storm

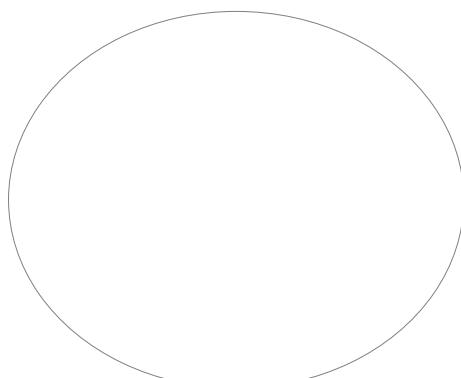

c) your choice


## G. 5 Ws and an H.

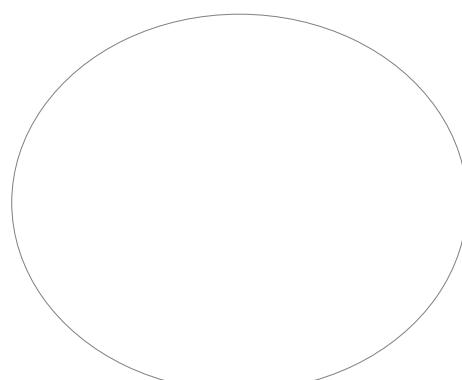
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



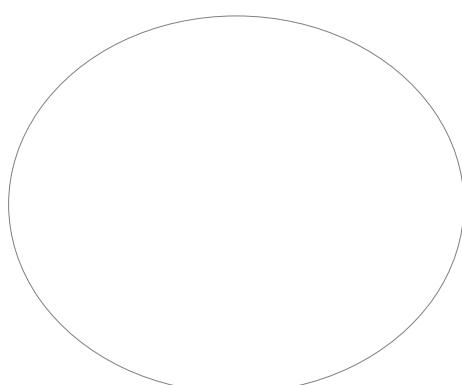
**WHO?**



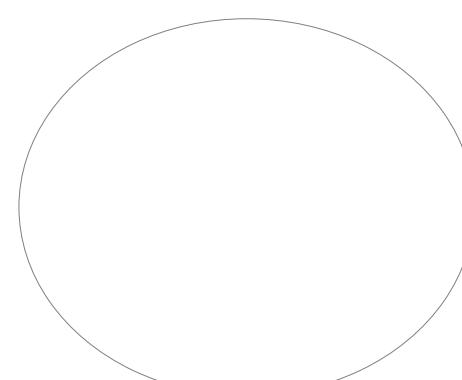
**WHAT?**



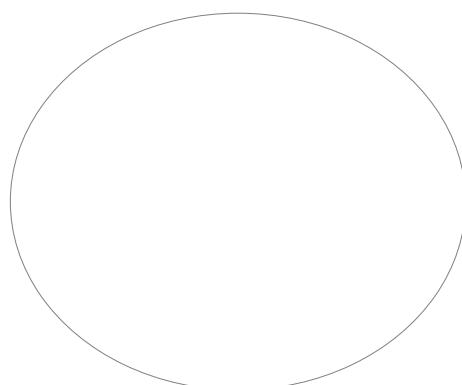
**WHEN?**



**WHERE?**



**WHY?**



**HOW?**

## Extension Activity



### Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A story-board can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel. Complete the story-board below illustrating the events described in this section of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6