

Shane



By
Jack Schaefer

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

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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 one or two chapters of *Shane* 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 American west of the late 1800s, agrarian society, loyalty and integrity, heroism, friendship and sacrifice, coming of age.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying/creating *personification*
4. Identify *similes*
5. Identify *anagrams*
6. Listing compound words
7. Identifying parts of speech
8. Identify *syllables*

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Five W's and an H Chart
3. Create a synopsis
4. Identify the climax of the novel

Character Activities

1. Compare characters
2. Identify the protagonist
3. Relating personal experience

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Create a poem
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Write a description of personal feelings
6. Write a book review
7. Create a journal entry
8. 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

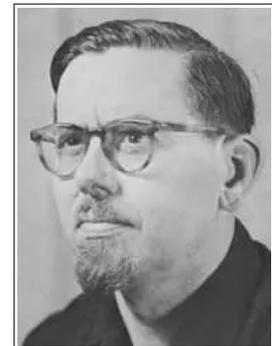
This classic Western is a profoundly moving story of the influence of a singular character on one boy's life. The Starrett family's life forever changes when a man named Shane rides out of the great glowing West and up to their farm. Young Bob Starrett is entranced by this stoic stranger who brings a new energy to his family. Shane stays on as a farmhand, but his past remains a mystery.

Many folks in their small Wyoming valley are suspicious of Shane and make it known that he is not welcome. But dangerous as Shane may seem, he is a staunch friend to the Starretts—and when a powerful neighboring rancher tries to drive them out of their homestead, Shane becomes entangled in the deadly feud.

"If you read only one Western in your life, this is the one." (Roland Smith, author of the Peak Marcello adventure novels) (Courtesy of the Publisher)

Author Biography Jack Schaefer

Jack Schaefer (1907–1991) was an American author and journalist best known for writing classic Western novels, most notably *Shane* (1949), written before he ever visited the West. Born in Cleveland, Ohio, he graduated from Oberlin College in 1929. Before making a name for himself as a writer of fiction, he was a journalist and editor for various newspapers. His work is characterized by simple, direct prose focusing on themes of honor and the changing American frontier. He was a prolific writer who later moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico. Although he was an easterner, he captured the spirit of the American west. (Adapted from Wikipedia)



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Name:

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Chapter 1



Before you read this section:

It is important for an author to create an interesting **protagonist** for any work of fiction. The author of *Shane* presents one of the most memorable protagonists in American fiction – the quiet, deadly gunfighter, Shane. Think back on some of the most interesting main characters you have met in previous stories you’ve read or movies you have seen. What do think makes for an intriguing character that really keeps your attention?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

intentness	intricate	habitual	precision
deft	intangible	homesteader	courteous

1. There was something mysterious and _____ about the stranger.
2. The two cowhands loped passed him, staring after him with curious _____.
3. He twirled the lariat over his head and with calculated _____, brought the noose down over the calf’s head.
4. My grandfather was a _____ on the Canadian prairies during the 1880s.
5. He was a _____ handler of the long rifle.
6. Doffing his hat before a lady was an _____, old-world custom of his.
7. She wove a most _____ pattern into the elaborate quilt.
8. Always remember to be _____ to the elderly.

Questions



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

2. Shane made quite a first impression on young Bob. Other than his clothing, list two things about Shane that Bob found most impressive.

3. Describe the impression that the following two characters made on you:

Joe Starrett	
Marian Starrett	

4. **Foreshadowing** is defined as *a warning or indication of a future event*. What is there in the discussion between Joe and Shane that might include an example of this literary device?

5. Why do you think that Shane was reluctant to talk about himself?

Language Activities

A. Research: Wyoming.

The American state, Wyoming, has been called the last bastion of the west. Although presently the least populated state in America, Wyoming is regarded by many as one of the most beautiful. It boasts glorious and rugged landscapes, majestic mountains, a clear blue sky . . . It has been called “nature’s wonder park”. Using resources in your school library or the Internet, research three pertinent facts about this fascinating state.



1	
2	
3	

B. 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. *He hesitated briefly, studying the choice, and moved again steadily on our side.*

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

2. *The handkerchief knotted loosely around his throat was black silk.*

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

3. *He rode easily, relaxed in the saddle, leaning his weight lazily into his stirrups.*

→ In this sentence the adverb _____ modifies the verb _____

C. A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. We find an example of a simile in this section: *His past was fenced as tightly as our pasture.* What two things are being compared in this example?

--

Invent your own **similes** comparing the following item(s) with something from your own imagination:

a) a strong wind sweeping across the prairie

b) your choice

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:



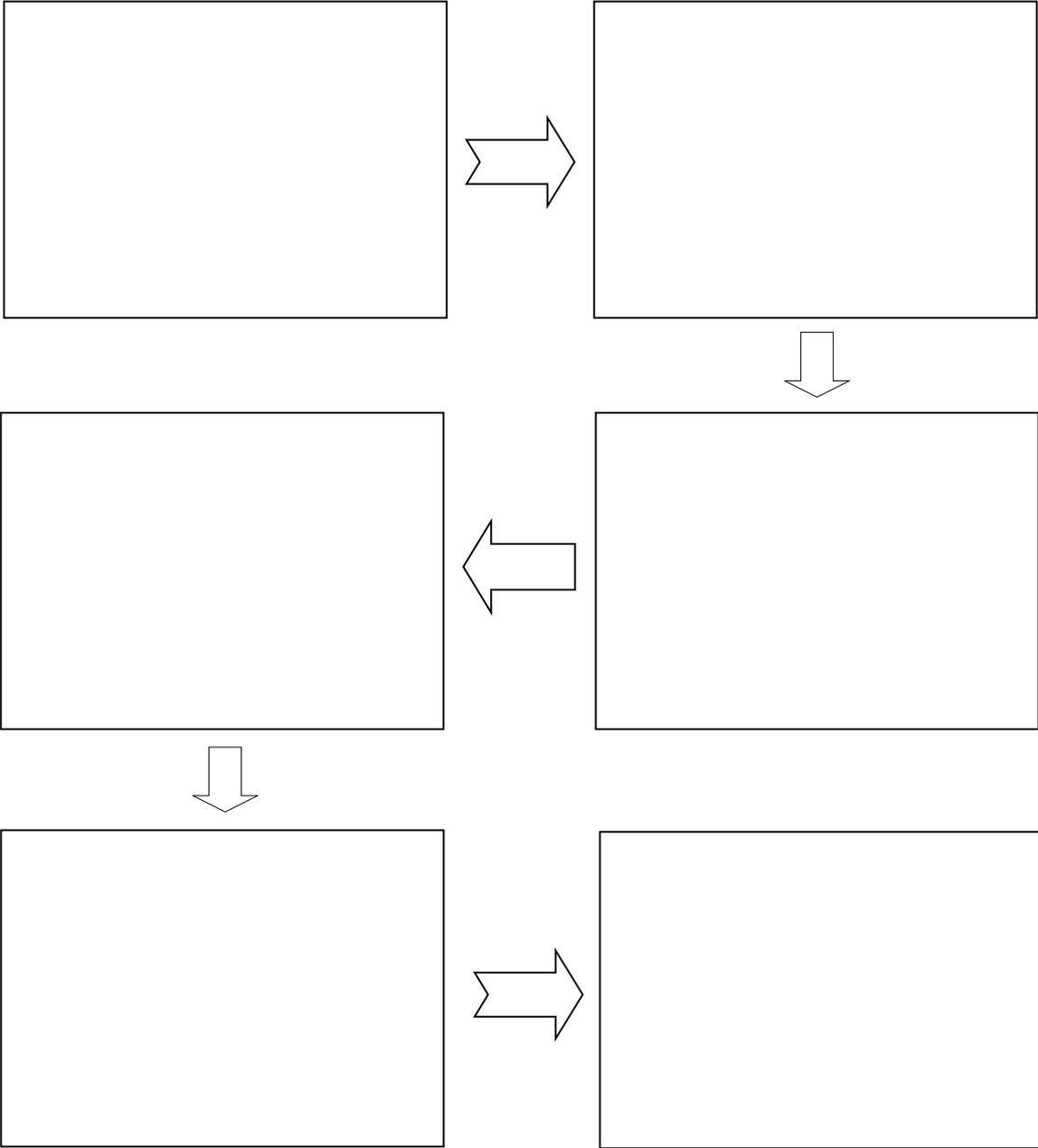
a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

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 *Shane*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
north		A woody projection.
trap		Something you might do with your hair.
untied		Joined together.
strode		Organized.
saddle		Muddles.
listen		Inaudible.

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: