

The Bronze Bow



By

Elizabeth George Speare

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 two chapters of *The Bronze Bow* and is comprised of five of the following 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 the importance of love and the destructive power of hate, forgiveness, First Century Palestine, courage and persistence, loyalty and friendship.

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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. Listing compound words
8. Identifying parts of speech
9. Identify *personification*.
10. 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. Complete a Plot Outline for a Sequel
5. Identify the climax of the novel.

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

After witnessing his father's crucifixion by Roman soldiers, Daniel bar Jamin is fired by a single passion: to avenge his father's death by driving the hated Roman legions from the land of Israel. Consumed by hatred, Daniel joins the brutal raids of an outlaw band living in the hills outside his village. Though his grandmother's death slows his plans by forcing him to move home to care for his sister, he continues his dangerous life by leading a group of boy guerrillas in spying and plotting, impatiently waiting to take revenge.

In nearby Capernaum, a rabbi is teaching a different lesson. Time and again Daniel is drawn to the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, only to turn away, disappointed and confused by Jesus' lack of action in opposing the Romans. Devoid of tenderness and forgiveness, headstrong Daniel is also heedless of the loyalty of his friend Joel; the love of Joel's sister, Malthace; and the needs of his own disturbed sister, Leah, dragging them down his destructive path toward disaster. [Courtesy of The Publisher]

Author Biography

Ann M. Martin

Elizabeth George Speare (Nov 21, 1908 - Nov 15, 1994) was an American writer of children's books, best known for historical novels including two Newbery Medal winners (*The Witch of Blackbird Pond* and *The Sign of the Beaver*). She has been called one of America's 100 most popular writers for children and some of her work has become mandatory reading in many schools throughout the nation. Indeed, because her books have sold so well she is also cited as one of the Educational Paperback Association's top 100 authors. Speare is one of six writers with two Newbery Medals recognizing the year's "most distinguished contribution to American literature for children". In 1989 she received the Laura Ingalls Wilder Medal for her contributions to children's literature.



Elizabeth Speare was married and had two children. She and her family lived in Connecticut. (Adapted from Wikipedia)

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Chapters 1-2



Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *The Bronze Bow* is Daniel, an eighteen-year old boy living in Palestine at the time of Christ. It is very important that the main character of a novel (or movie) is not only intriguing, but someone the reader can easily identify with. Thinking back on some of the books you have read or movies you have seen, who would be your favorite protagonist of all time? What made this character so unforgettable?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

reconcile	burgeoning	passionate	distinctly
skirmish	ferocity	interminable	patriotism

1. The waiting seemed to take an _____ amount of time.
2. The president relied on the citizens' sense of _____ to support him during the crisis.
3. The two estranged brothers were just beginning to _____ when one died.
4. I'm afraid I don't feel as _____ as you do about stamp collecting.
5. Jonas swears he _____ heard an owl hooting in the forest.
6. The raiding party was involved in a _____ outside the castle walls.
7. The country's _____ debt has many people worried.
8. The _____ of General Custer's regiment in battle was legendary.

Questions



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

2. Describe the circumstances which resulted in Daniel running away from home and living in a cave for five years.

3. Another apprentice of Amalek was a young man called _____.

4. It was the last chance for Joel and Malthace to visit the hills around their village because they would soon be moving to _____.

5. Why did Daniel hate the Romans so passionately?

6. Investigate: Malthace mentions that the plain they overlooked had once been the place that Joshua *marched out against the heathen kings*. Joshua was one of the greatest heroes in the history of the Israelites. Using resources in your school library, the Internet (or the book of **Joshua** in the Bible) research three interesting facts about this military leader and list them below. (Facts not mentioned in this novel.)

1.	
2.	
3.	

7. What was Daniel's impression of Rosh? Why did he feel this way?

8. What was Rosh's purpose in attacking the caravan?

9. Describe the assignment Rosh gave to Daniel in the raid on the caravan.

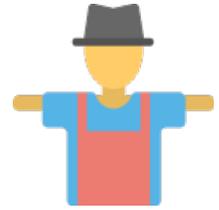
10. What warning did Rosh give to Joel before letting him return to the village?

11. What task did Rosh give to Daniel after they had all returned to their cave?

Good to Know ~ Simon the Zealot (Spoiler Alert)

Simon the Zealot, mentioned in Chapter One, would become one of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ. Not much is known about this obscure apostle, but tradition says that he was martyred for his faith in Persia (Iran) by being sawn in half.

Language Activities



A. A simile is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter Two is, *A boy about twelve, thin as a scarecrow ...* In this example, what two things are being compared?

--	--

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

a) a glistening spear

b) the flight of an arrow

B. Tiberius, the Roman Emperor referred to in Chapter One, was an actual historical figure (like many of the characters in this novel). Using resources found in your school library or on the Internet investigate this person and record three important facts about his life/accomplishments from your research.



1.	
2.	
3.	

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 **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 the first two chapters of *The Bronze Bow*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
Palestine		Sanctions.
earth		Like some houses, this has four chambers.
lives		Depravities.
years		Repeat.
sober		Provided by fancy hotels.
leader		Casino employee.
waste		Physical exertion consequence.

D. Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here is such an example from Chapter Two: ... a pack of *lily-livered* jackals.



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

A sword fight.	
A storm in the desert.	
Your choice.	

E. 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



Picture's Worth a Thousand Words



Use the three boxes to describe and illustrate the beginning, middle and end of the second chapter.

Beginning Picture:	Beginning:
Middle Picture:	Middle:
Concluding Picture:	Concluding: