

The Great Gilly Hopkins



By

Katherine Paterson

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 or two chapters of *The Great Gilly Hopkins* 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** (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 family and friendship, belonging, anger vs. love, peer pressure, racism, loyalty, personal growth.

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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

The one thing Gilly wants is a home of her own. If only she could find her mother, Courtney, and live with her. Instead, she finds herself in yet another ugly foster home, the responsibility of frumpy Maime Trotter, who is almost illiterate. How can the great Gilly Hopkins be expected to tolerate Maime, or a freaky foster brother named William Ernest? Or the poetry-loving black man who lives next door but is considered part of the “family”?

At first Gilly despises them all. Then she finds herself slowly drawn into their circle of love. But if there's anything her short life has taught her, it's that a person's got to be tough. Determined not to care, Gilly engineers her own rescue. Unfortunately the rescue doesn't turn out the way Gilly plans and she realizes too late that she never really wanted to be rescued at all – she just wanted to be wanted. [The Publisher]

A complete synopsis and other helpful resources can be found on the following website:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gilly_Hopkins

Author Biography

Katherine Paterson

Katherine Paterson was born in China to missionary parents in 1932. In 1937 the family was forced to flee China because of the war between China and Japan. Katherine's first language was Chinese, so when she returned to the United States she found it difficult to learn how to read and write in English. Katherine's first book was published in 1976, and the next year her highly-acclaimed children's novel, ***Bridge to Terabithia*** was published. This book, and some of her other novels feature difficult themes, such as the death of a loved one. She has twice won prestigious Newbery Awards for her novels ***Jacob Have I Loved*** and ***Bridge to Terabithia***.



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Name:

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Chapter 1

(Welcome to Thompson Park)



Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *The Great Gilly Hopkins* is eleven-year-old Galadriel (Gilly) Hopkins who is about to embark on a tumultuous few months that will change her life forever. 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 especially interesting **protagonist**?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

maneuver	elaborately	obligingly	satisfaction
salvage	unfortunate	bolster	guardian

1. When she was asked, Gilly _____ removed the gum from her mouth.
2. We were able to _____ most of the timber from the old dock.
3. My older brother acted as my _____ when the bullies started bugging me.
4. We made sure to _____ decorate her gingerbread house.
5. Gertie seemed to get a lot of _____ out of being right all the time.
6. I think it is very _____ that Charles has waited so long to become king.
7. The little boy attempted to _____ his bumper car into a safe corner.
8. His glowing review of my essay did a lot to _____ my confidence.

Questions



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

2. After reading Chapter One, what three **adjectives** do you think would be good choices in describing Gilly's personality?

1	2.	3.
---	----	----

3. Why had caused Mrs. Richmond to fail at being Gilly's foster mother?

4. Find proof from Chapter One to show that Gilly seems to have a fairly high opinion of herself.

5. Describe Gilly's first impression of Mrs. Trotter.

6. What was William Ernest's first impression of Gilly?

7. As Gilly adjusts to her new home, it becomes apparent as to what is most important in helping her feel comfortable in her new home. What is it?

Good to Know ~ Foster Children

Did you know that in the United States alone there are about 400,000 children living without permanent families? 101,666 of these children are eligible for adoption, but nearly 32% of these children will wait over three years in foster care before being adopted. Around the world, there are an estimated 153 million children who have lost one parent. There are 17,900,000 orphans who have lost both parents and are living in orphanages or on the streets.



Language Activities



A. 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 chapter of *The Great Gilly Hopkins*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
golden		Yearned.
trace		Packing case.
staring		Rankings.
real		A British nobleman.
used		What is owed someone.
table		The sound of a sheep.
never		Bravery in the face of danger.

Now find two additional words from the first chapter which have interesting anagrams to see if you can stump a classmate.

Word	Anagram	Clue

B. Even Shakespeare liked to write Quatrain Poems.

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 famous quatrain was written by the great writer, William Shakespeare, and is taken from *Sonnet 18*.

*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.*



Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A - B - A - B**. Other rhyming schemes include: AABB, 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 the first chapter 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: _____

C. Exaggeration

Exaggeration in a literary device defined as *a statement that represents something as better or worse than it really is*. We find an example of this in Chapter One: *The door had opened, and a huge hippopotamus of a woman was filling the doorway.*



Think of an exaggerated way of describing the following:

The wail of the bag pipes.	
The sound of a cricket.	
Sunset.	
Moans of a haunted house.	

D. Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human. Here's an example from Chapter One: *A matching brown chair with worn arms slumped at the opposite side of the room.*

Describe how the chair is personified in this example.

Create your own example of personification.

As you continue to read through the novel be on the lookout for other examples of this literary device. If you should find one, come back to this question and enter it below.

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 the first chapter of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.



1	2
3	4
5	6