

The Search for Delicious



By

Natalie Babbitt

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

The Search for Delicious

By Natalie Babbitt



Table of Contents

Suggestions and Expectations	3
List of Skills	4
Synopsis / Author Biography	5
Student Checklist	6
Reproducible Student Booklet	7
Answer Key	73

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.

Copyright © 2017 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.

The Search for Delicious

By Natalie Babbitt



Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on several chapters of *The Search for Delicious* and is comprised of five of the following 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 good versus evil, loyalty, personal growth, the power of words, accepting responsibilities, and leadership.

The Search for Delicious

By Natalie Babbitt

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

The Search for Delicious

By Natalie Babbitt



Synopsis

Twelve-year-old Gaylen, the King's messenger, is off to poll the kingdom, traveling from town to farmstead to town on his horse, Marrow. At first, it is merely a question of disagreement at the royal castle over which food should stand for Delicious in the new dictionary.

Then Gaylen's quest leads him to unusual characters, including a minstrel who sings about a mermaid child, and Ardis, who might save the kingdom from havoc. And soon it seems that the search for Delicious had better succeed if civil war is to be avoided. [Summary courtesy of the publisher]

Spirited and humorous, sensitive without ever being sad. - New York Times Book Review.

Author Biography

Natalie Babbitt

Natalie Babbitt (1932-2016) was an American writer and illustrator of books for young readers. Born in Dayton, Ohio she studied at Smith College. She married Samuel Babbitt and the couple had three children. She began writing novels for children in the 1960s and was awarded a Newbery Honor for *Knee-Knock Rise* in 1971. In 1975 she wrote the classic, *Tuck Everlasting*, which was later ranked Number 16 among the "Top 100 Chapter Books" of all time by the *School Library Journal*. Her popular, self-illustrated novel, *The Search for Delicious*, was one of her first being published in 1969. Natalie died of cancer at the age of 74.



[Adapted from Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natalie_Babbitt.]

The Search For Delicious



By Natalie Babbitt

Name: _____

The Search for Delicious

By Natalie Babbitt

Prologue – Chapter 2 (Gaylen had lived...)



Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *The Search for Delicious* is Gaylen, a twelve-year-old boy sent on a critical mission by the King – to poll the people of the kingdom to find out the meaning of *Delicious*. 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 and memorable **protagonist**?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

submerged	eventually	flawless	serene
occasional	upheaval	calamitous	triumphant

1. I think it would be _____ to disagree with the King when he's cranky.
2. They _____ the raw carrot in a pan of cooking oil.
3. It was such a peaceful and _____ setting that we fell in love with it immediately.
4. I knew that she would _____ come around.
5. After the queen's death, the country was in a state of _____ for weeks.
6. The Chicago Black Hawks were _____ in their game last night.
7. Milos Raonic played a _____ game of tennis.
8. She took the _____ dip in the swimming pool.

Questions



1. What is the **setting** of the story at the beginning of Chapter One? (Chapter One follows the Prologue.)

2. What four *creatures* are mentioned near the beginning of the Prologue, and where did each live?

3. Describe how the stone house came to be and explain why after a time the dwarfs were no longer able to use it.

4. Describe how it came about that Ardis wasn't able to enter the stone house anymore.

5. What strange crisis had caused so much turmoil in the King's palace?

6. What was your impression of the King? Please support your observation with evidence from the story.

7. Describe how Gaylen became a member of the Prime Minister's family.

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 part of *The Search for Delicious*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
great		Shred (as in vegetables).
spill		Medicinal substances.
ears		Burn lightly.
lived		Beelzebub.
trees		Boy bovine.
forest		The ___ (A TV series which began in 2013.)
earth		Principal organ.

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

Word	Anagram	Clue

Good to Know ~ Mermaids

As most everybody knows, a mermaid is a legendary creature with the head and upper body of a female human and the tail of a fish. But did you know that the first stories of mermaids appeared many centuries ago in ancient Assyria? Did you know that Christopher Columbus, on his journeys to the New World recorded sightings of mermaids? Since then mermaids have appeared in countless books and stories and have even been featured in popular Hollywood movies (*The Little Mermaid*, *Splash*).



C. Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human. The following example is taken from Chapter Two: ... *the castle tower rose high and watchful and serene...*

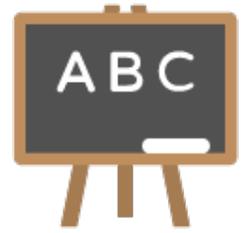


Describe how the tower is personified in this example.

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. (Hint: There is an example of personification in the Prologue.)

D. Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here's one such example: from Chapter One: ... '**B**ulky is a **b**ig **b**ag of **b**oxes.'



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

A royal crown	
A competition involving old trucks.	
Your choice.	

E. Many English words can have more than one meaning. This is especially true of words that can be used as both a noun and a verb. For the following create sentences to illustrate the meaning of each word as a noun and as a verb.

Word: place

Noun	
Verb	

Word: water

Noun	
Verb	

Word: watch

Noun	
Verb	

F. 5 Ws and an H.

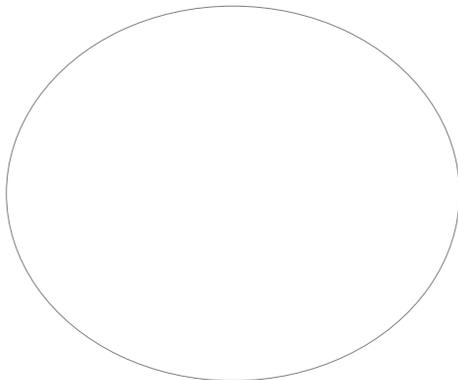
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



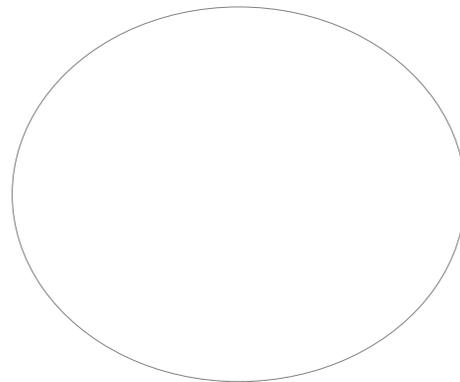
WHO?



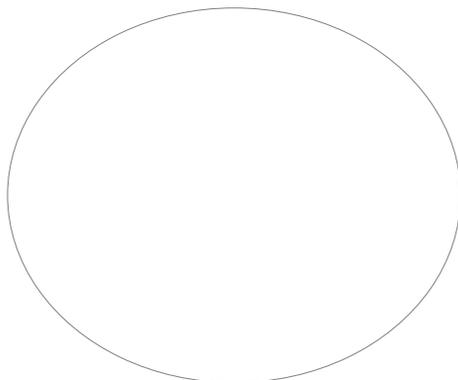
WHAT?



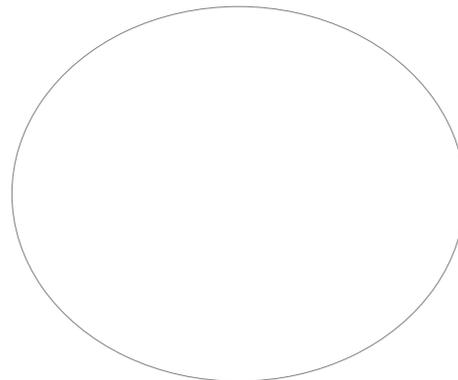
WHEN?



WHERE?



WHY?



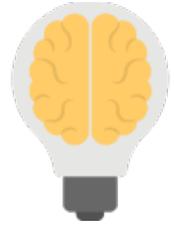
HOW?

G. An Acrostic Poem

There are many forms of poetry available to the aspiring poet other than the rhyming poem. An ACROSTIC poem is one example. In an acrostic poem the first letters of each line are aligned vertically to form a word. The word often is the subject of the poem. Here is an example written by the acclaimed poet, Atrocious Halitosis:

The Firefly

Freaky-looking
Itches me when I touch
Restless at night
Early or late
Fearless
Little
Yellowfly



The Acrostic Poem

Now create your own Acrostic Poem on a subject featured in this novel. Your poem must have at least four lines (and doesn't need to rhyme).

Title: _____

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 Prologue and first section of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.



1	2
3	4
5	6