

# The True Blue Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp



By

Kathi Appelt

A Novel Study  
by Joel Michel Reed

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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 several chapters of **The True Blue Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp** and is comprised of five of the following different activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language Activities
- Extension Activities

### 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.**

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking. Students will also be expected to provide clear answers to questions and well-constructed explanations. It is critical as well that students be able to relate events and the feelings of characters to their own lives and experiences and describe their own interpretation of a particular passage.

A strength of the unit is that students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A **portfolio cover** is included (p.7) so that students may organize their work and keep it all in one place. A **Student Checklist** is also included (p.6) so that a record of completed work may be recorded.

**Themes** which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include perseverance when facing difficult circumstances, leadership, respect, family relationships, caring for others.

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## List of Skills

### Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homonyms
3. Identifying/creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *anagrams*
7. Use of singular / plural nouns
8. Listing compound words
9. Identifying parts of speech
10. Determining alphabetical order
11. Identify *personification*
12. Identify/create *similes*

### 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.

### Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Relating personal experiences

### Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
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. Complete an Observation Sheet

### Art Activities

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

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## Synopsis

Raccoon brothers Bingo and J'miah are the newest recruits of the Official Sugar Man Swamp Scouts! This opportunity to serve the Sugar Man – the massive creature that rules over the swamp and delights in delicious sugar cane – is an honor, yes it is. And, in fact, all the critters in the swamp rely heavily on the intel of these hardworking Scouts.

Twelve-year-old Chap Brayburn, on the other hand, is not a member of any such organization. But he does know the canebrake lullaby and how to fry a sugar pie like nobody's business. Plus, he loves the swamp something fierce. He'll do anything to protect it. And good for that – because there is trouble headed for this here swamp. Trouble from every direction. Suddenly the fate of the swamp, and everyone who lives there, depends on Chap and the Scouts! (The Publisher – **Simon and Schuster**)

A complete synopsis and other helpful reviews can be found on the following website:  
<http://www.kathiappelt.com> (Warning: Website may contain plot spoilers)

## Author Biography

Kathi Appelt

**Kathi Appelt** (born July 6, 1954) is an American children's writer and writing teacher. She won the annual PEN USA award for Children's Literature recognizing *The Underneath* (2008).

Kathi Appelt was born in Fayetteville, North Carolina, and grew up in Houston, Texas. She graduated from Texas A&M University and lives in College Station, Texas. Appelt is the author of more than 30 books. She writes novels, picture books, poetry, and nonfiction for children and young adults. Her books have been translated into several languages: Spanish, Chinese, French and Swedish.



Her first novel was *The Underneath*, illustrated by David Small and published by Simon & Schuster in 2008. It features a cat and dog who live mainly beneath an old house in the Louisiana–Texas bayou. For that work she received the annual Children's Literature award from PEN Center USA and she was also a runner-up for the National Book Award and the American Library Association Newbery Medal (Newbery Honor Book).

Courtesy of Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kathi\\_Appelt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kathi_Appelt)

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## Student Checklist

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

Assignment	Grade / Level	Comments

# The True Blue Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp



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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Chapters 1-9



### Before you read the chapter:

Briefly predict what you think the plot of our novel will be about.




### Vocabulary:

Draw a straight line to connect the vocabulary word to its definition. Remember to use a straight edge (like a ruler).

- 
- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 1. Silhouette    | A. Remarkably or impressively great in size.       |
| 2. Sinuous       | B. Having many curves and turns.                   |
| 3. Contagious    | C. To be sad or disappointed.                      |
| 4. Relegated     | D. To spread disease from one person to another.   |
| 5. Prodigious    | E. A pine tree in the southern United States.      |
| 6. Crestfallen   | F. The dark outline of someone or something.       |
| 7. Consternation | G. Fussing about something trivial or nonsensical. |
| 8. Loblolly      | H. Assign an inferior rank, task, or position.     |
| 9. Falderal      | I. A feeling of anxiety or dismay.                 |
| 10. Proprietor   | J. The owner of a business or holder of property.  |



# Questions



1. Briefly describe the setting of Chapter One.


2. What are the five OFFICIAL SUGAR MAN SWAMP SCOUT ORDERS?


3. Where did the raccoons make their home in Sugar Man Swamp?

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4. What was it that made Grandpa Audie's drawings so unique?


5. Briefly describe what happened to Great Uncle Banjo.


b. How does *Mission Longleaf* relate to Great Uncle Banjo?


## Language Activity



**A.** There are many writers that enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here's an example of an alliteration: “. . . screeching, screaming, shrieking about something or other.”



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

The sound of an animal of your own choosing.	
The sounds of a swamp.	
The appearance of a swamp.	

**B.** A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. The following is an example taken from Chapter Four: “*The raccoons could also see that the hood ornament cast an eerie orange glow, like a faded firefly.*”



What two things are being compared in this example?

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Invent two of your own **similes** comparing two different things using your imagination:

a)	

b)	

## C. The Eight Parts of Speech

Find at least two examples of each of the eight parts of speech from these chapters and list them in the appropriate section of the chart below.



<b>Interjections</b>	
<b>Nouns</b>	
<b>Pronouns</b>	
<b>Conjunctions</b>	
<b>Prepositions</b>	
<b>Adjectives</b>	
<b>Adverbs</b>	
<b>Verbs</b>	