

# The Wind In The Willows



By

Kenneth Grahame

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 one or two chapters of **The Wind In The Willows** 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 fantasy adventures with unusual characters facing difficult circumstances, (dysfunctional) families and friendships, and putting right to a wrong.

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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 *foreshadowing*.
7. Identify *personification*
8. Use of singular / plural nouns
9. Listing compound words
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identification of root words
13. Identify/create *similes*
14. Identify *anagrams*

### 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. Complete a story pyramid

### 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
3. Create an Information Card
4. Design a cover for the novel
5. Create a comic strip

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## Synopsis

'Spend a season on the river bank and take a walk on the wild side ...'

'Spring is in the air and mole has found a wonderful new world. There's boating with Ratty, a feast with badger and high jinx on the open road with that reckless ruffian, Mr Toad or Toad Hall. The four become the firmest of friends, but after Toad's latest escapade, can they join together and beat the wretched weasels?' (The publisher)

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

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Wind\\_In\\_The\\_Willows](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Wind_In_The_Willows)

## Author Biography

*Kenneth Grahame*

Kenneth Grahame was born on March 8, 1859 in Edinburgh Scotland. Kenneth wrote a number of well-known novels throughout the course of his lifetime, including **The Golden Age, Dream Days, The Reluctant Dragon, Pagan Papers, Berties Escapade** and **The Headswoman**. He also wrote a number of light stories in London periodicals such as the *St. James Gazette*.

At the age of 5, Kenneth lost his mother due to complications resulting from childbirth. He was eventually given over to his older brother Willie by his father [who was suffering from a drinking problem].

Grahame began his career at the Bank of England in 1879, and was promoted to the rank of bank secretary in 1908.

Unfortunately Graham was forced into retirement shortly after a shooting incident at the bank when was shot at three times, but did not sustain injury.

Grahame married Elspeth Thomson in 1899 [at the age of 40], and had one child, Alastair. Alastair was born blind in one eye and was plagued with a number of physical and mental problems throughout his lifetime.

Kenneth Grahame eventually passed away in Pangbourne, Berkshire in 1932 at the age of 73, and was buried next to his son in Holywell Cemetery.





# The Wind In The Willows



*By Kenneth Grahame*

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

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## Chapter 1 The River Bank



### Before you read the chapter:

There have been a number of stories written over the last century that incorporate the use of \*anthropomorphic animals. List at least 4 different books that make use of this technique.


\* Definition: Ascribing human characteristics to nonhuman things.



### Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

subject	sprawled	hedgerows	curiosity
forbearance	whitewashing	struggling	pettishly
shouting	stumble	forepaw	jumping

1. 'This is fine!' he said to himself. 'This is better than \_\_\_\_\_!'
2. Hither and thither through the meadows he rambled busily, along the \_\_\_\_\_, across the copses, finding everywhere birds building, flowers budding, leaves thrusting - everything happy, and progressive, and occupied.
3. 'Oh, its all very well to TALK,' said the Mole, rather \_\_\_\_\_, he being new to a river and riverside life and its ways.

4. The Rat sculled smartly across and made fast. Then he held up his \_\_\_\_\_ as the Mole stepped gingerly down. 'Lean on that!' he said.
5. 'What's inside it?' asked the Mole, wriggling with \_\_\_\_\_.
6. 'No one else to—well, I mustn't be hard on you,' said the Rat with \_\_\_\_\_. 'You're new to it, and of course you don't know.'
7. The Mole knew well that it is quite against animal-etiquette to dwell on possible trouble ahead, or even to allude to it; so he dropped the \_\_\_\_\_.
8. 'I came up this backwater to try and get a moment's peace, and then \_\_\_\_\_ upon you fellows!—At least—I beg pardon—I don't exactly mean that, you know.'
9. The Mole looked down. The voice was still in his ears, but the turf whereon he had \_\_\_\_\_ was clearly vacant.
10. Over went the boat, and he found himself \_\_\_\_\_ in the river.

## Questions



1. Why was Mole working so hard at the beginning of chapter 1?

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2. What did Mole see as he was gazing into the hole on the opposite side of the river?


3. What did the Water Rat retrieve from his hole as they drifted by in their boat?


4. Rat describes a number of items from the picnic basket as he rattles off in one long string of words to describe the contents. Name at least 4 of these items.


5. Which place did Rat say was beyond the Wild Woods?

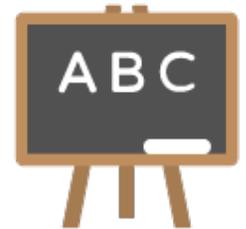

6. Rat said that Toad had recently taken up a hobby called 'punting'. Explain what is meant by *Punting*. (Feel free to discuss this with your fellow classmates)


7. What did Rat say when Mole asked if he could paddle the boat?


## Language Activities



**A.** 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: "... **g**rouching, **g**rouching, **g**rumbling 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 bark of a dog	
A construction worker using a jack-hammer	
The sound of an engine running	

**B.** A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter One is “. . . Then, as he looked, it winked at him, and so declared itself to be an eye; and a small face began gradually to grow up round it, like a frame round a picture.”

What two things are being compared in this example?

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

a) a boy jumping on a trampoline

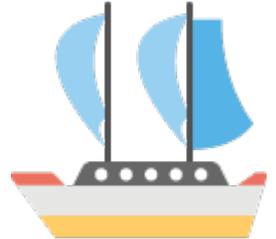
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b) a girl swimming in a pool of water

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### C. What Exactly Is a 'Punt' Anyway?

Websters dictionary defines a punt as follows: *A long narrow flat-bottomed boat with square ends usually propelled with a pole.*



Keeping this description in mind, draw a 'Punt' style boat in the box below. Be sure to make your drawing as accurate as possible.

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## Extension Activity



### Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A storyboard can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel.



Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first 3 chapters of *The Wind In The Willows*. You may wish to practice your drawings before you begin.

1	2
3	4
5	6