

The Yearling



By

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

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 three chapters of *The Yearling* 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, loyalty, personal growth, ecology and the environment, accepting responsibilities, and learning to accept life's difficulties, coming of age, loss and loneliness.

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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 Yearling is the 1938 novel written by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. It was published in March 1938. It was the main selection of the Book of the Month Club in April 1938. It was the number one best seller for twenty-three consecutive weeks in 1938. As well as being the best-selling novel in America in 1938, it was the seventh-best in 1939. It sold over 250,000 copies in 1938. It has been translated into Spanish, Chinese, French, Japanese, German, Italian, Russian and twenty-two other languages. It won the *Pulitzer Prize* for the novel in 1939. [Courtesy of Wikipedia]

A more detailed synopsis is available on such websites as www.wikipedia.org.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Yearling

Author Biography

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings (1896-1953) was an American author who lived in rural Florida and wrote novels with rural themes and settings. Her best known work, *The Yearling*, about a boy who adopts an orphaned fawn, won a *Pulitzer Prize* for fiction in 1939 and was later made into a movie of the same name. The book was written long before the concept of young adult fiction, but is now commonly included in teen-reading lists. (Courtesy of Wikipedia)



Learn more by visiting: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marjorie_Kinnan_Rawlings

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Name: _____

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Chapters 1-3



Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *The Yearling* is Jody, an enterprising twelve-year-old boy living in Florida during the 1870s. 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 **protagonist**?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

feist	sanctuary	indolent	irresistible
dexterous	replete	adjacent	beneficence

1. The prince had the reputation of being a pleasure-seeking, _____ rascal.
2. The peace of the vast scrub had drawn him with the _____ of its silence.
3. The foreman found the new man was very _____ with an axe or shovel.
4. Sharon found the lure of gaining a new friend on the first day of school _____.
5. The travelers took _____ under the bridge during the cloudburst.
6. Jody and his dad were both disappointed in the performance of the _____ during the hunt.
7. Our grandparents lived in a house _____ to the school.
8. The math textbook is _____ with examples of that sort of algebra problem.

Questions



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

b. Think of one thing you would enjoy about living in this setting (both time and place), and one thing you would not enjoy.

Enjoy	
Not so much	

2. What was a particular drawback to the location Penny had chosen to farm?

3. What is meant by the following: *Ora Baxter was plainly built for child-bearing. But it had seemed as though his seed were as puny as himself?*

4. Jody's mom was harder and more demanding on Jody than was his dad. True or False

5. Cite one thing you learned about Jody's mother's personality from the following exchange with her son: "I'm turrrible ugly, Ma," he (Jody) called. She responds, "Well there ain't been a purty Baxter since the name begun."

6. Describe the crisis faced by the Baxter family in Chapter Three. Why was this event such a serious blow to them?

7. Match each character from these chapters with the most accurate description.

a	Julia		1	The novel's protagonist
b	Ora Baxter		2	Grandma Hutto's son
c	Betsy		3	Jody's mom
d	Penny		4	A nasty bear
e	Oliver		5	A small mongrel
f	Rip		6	Jody's dad
g	Slewfoot		7	The milk cow
h	Jody		8	Brood sow
i	feist		9	A hound dog
j	Trixie		10	A bulldog

Language Activities



A. Florida Wildlife

Animals play important roles in the lives of the Baxter family and Florida in the 1870s. During this time Florida was a state teeming with wildlife. Research one of the following creatures native to Florida and record three important facts about it.



- Florida Panther, alligator, raccoon, opossum, water moccasin, armadillo, deer.

1.	
2.	
3.	

B. 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 Yearling*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
nest		Dispatched.
slept		Hides.
bolsters		Crustaceans.
plate		Flower power.
scrub		Street rims.
cleared		Proclaim.
trace		Respond.

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

Word	Anagram	Clue

Good to Know ~ The Florida Black Bear

Although we aren't told the type of bear Old Slewfoot is, experts claim that only one type of bear has inhabited Florida – the Florida black bear. The Florida black bear is the largest native land mammal in the state. Male bears can weigh between 250 and 450 pounds and are between 5 and 6 feet long. It is believed that at one time more than 12,000 black bears lived in Florida. It is estimated that only 1500 remain.



C. A Bear Quatrain Poem.

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 quatrain was written by the famous poet, Atrocious Halitosis. It is called, *The Simpleminded Bear*.

*A big brown bear just ain't too smart,
He can't even tell his cubs apart.
His tiny little brain's so dad-blamed dull,
it rattles all around in his big thick skull.*



Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A - A - B - B**. Other rhyming schemes include: ABAB, AAAA, AABA, ABBA, ABBA, 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 three chapters 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: _____

D. Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human. The following example is taken from Chapter 3: *The hair grieved him on the occasions when he went to church...*



Describe how Jody's hair 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.

E. Chapter Two contains an example of an important literary device called **foreshadowing**. Foreshadowing is defined as a warning or indication of a future event. In Chapter Two Ma Baxter mentions that *a big ol' doe watered there today*. Considering that the book is about a yearling (a young deer) why do you think the author might have included this statement by Jody's mother? See if you can find another example of foreshadowing in Chapter Two.



1. Why did the author include this statement?
2. Example from Chapter Two:

F. 5 Ws and an H.

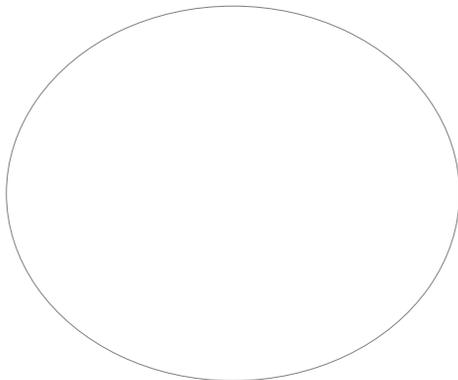
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



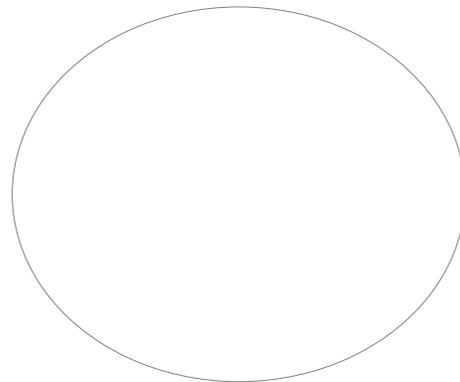
WHO?



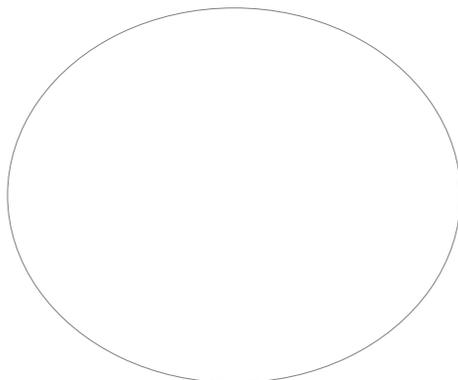
WHAT?



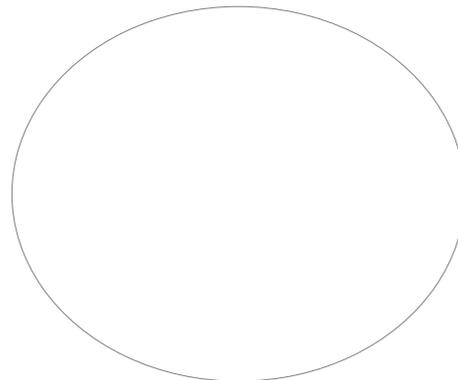
WHEN?



WHERE?



WHY?



HOW?

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 three chapters of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.



1	2
3	4
5	6