



level 2

LITERATURE DISCOVERY GUIDE

Rascal

by Sterling North

Guide written by
Sara Evans



blackbird & company

EDUCATIONAL PRESS

Kindly respect copyright laws and do not make additional copies without permission.

How This Guide is Organized

This guide consists of the following elements:

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

A checklist used for tracking, evaluating, and recording student progress

SECTIONS 1-4

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Read | Weekly reading assignment |
| Journal | Summarizing significant aspects of characters, setting, and plot |
| Acquire | Vocabulary development and acquisition exercises |
| Recollect | Observation and comprehension questions |
| Explore | Discussion questions and writing assignment |
-

SECTION 5

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Glean | A final project which may involve research, writing, and hands-on activities related to different aspects of the story |
|--------------|--|

How to Use This Guide

The guide is designed to be completed in five weeks. The reading and the core of the guide should be completed in four, with the fifth week devoted to the final project or assignment.

Assignment Checklist

This form is to be used by both the student and the teacher. Encourage your student to utilize this as a time management device and have them mark off each element as it is completed. The teacher can then comment, evaluate, and grade each element. Depending on the student's learning style, and classroom logistics, each element can be evaluated individually or each section can be evaluated when all its elements are complete. On the following pages we have included sample grading and writing guidelines to assist you.

Read

Keeping the flow of a story intact should be a priority. Therefore, we encourage students to set aside substantial blocks of time for reading through each section's assignment. We understand that people read, experience, and absorb stories in many different ways and at different rates. However, we recommend students read through the section's entire assignment before beginning the elements of the guide.

Journal (Characters, Setting, Plot)

Summarizing the characters, setting and plot is the first element encountered in the guide after reading each section's assignment. In addition to outlining the foundational components of the story, this element should be used for recording impressions such as how the setting makes you feel, what your opinion of the characters is, and what you think about how the story is unfolding. Notes should be recorded in the form of bullet point phrases.

Characters

Notes regarding character qualities may include physical appearance, personality traits, background, strengths, weaknesses, and anything else interesting and pertinent. Character notes should be about who a character is, not what he does. What a character does should be recorded as plot information.

Setting

Students should note the broad, general aspects of the setting, including historical time period and geographic location. Details of the setting such as the description of a house or a room, the weather, season, or time of day are important as there will often be more than one setting in any particular reading assignment.

Plot

Notes regarding the plot should be simple reminders of the major events in each chapter and of the overall direction of the story. Do not retell the entire story.

Acquire

This element focuses on vocabulary acquisition. When looking up definitions, we recommend using a traditional printed dictionary as opposed to one that is computer based. The tactile work of actually searching for words in a book has many crossover benefits that cannot be gained from a keyboard and monitor, not to mention the fun of stumbling across words never encountered before!

For Level 2 and 3 guides, vocabulary sentences should attempt to creatively illustrate a word's meaning. For example, the following sentences all use the word picture, but it only takes a little extra effort to transform a dull exercise into a piece of creative expression.

I saw a picture.

This may be a complete sentence but it doesn't say much of interest.

I saw a nice picture on the wall.

Better, but still rather dull.

Whenever I look at the picture I painted of my dog, it reminds me of how much I love him.

Precise and descriptive language makes this sentence thoughtful, illustrative, and interesting.

continued >

How to Use This Guide (cont.)

Recollect

Following the vocabulary section is a series of questions that will help students check their basic understanding of what has been read. Answering questions in complete sentences is a good practice as it reinforces clear thinking and writing skills. It may be helpful for some students to survey the questions before beginning the reading assignment, however, they should not be answered until the reading assignment has been completed so as to maintain continuity. Encouraging students to refer to the book and to note page numbers as they complete the *Recollect* section is useful, especially if the guide is used in group settings where information will be discussed.

Explore (Writing & Discussion)

This element consists of a writing assignment and discussion questions for each core section.

Writing

The writing assignment is intended to make the reader think, respond and apply, with the added challenge of requiring a crafted and articulate answer. This element introduces and reinforces the process of writing, helping students to transform abstract thoughts and ideas into tangible words, sentences, and paragraphs. Writing a rough draft is the first step in completing the assignment. The student should then self-edit the rough draft as much as possible with the usual checks for spelling, grammar, and punctuation, while also paying attention to readability, clarity, and creativity. The student should also conference with their teacher at this time. The rough draft should then be rewritten as the final draft, incorporating all edits for a clean and polished paragraph. (See the following pages for more direction on writing.)

Discussion

Discussion time is the culmination of each week's activities and as such is probably the most important in terms of stimulating the reader's heart, mind, and soul. Discussion time gives opportunity for the ideas woven throughout a great story to impact the reader's life and it is the point where the person meets the page. The discussion questions are more subjective in nature than the comprehension questions and should be used as a springboard to help students think more broadly and deeply about what they have read. Answers to the questions will sometimes be found in the reading, other times students may be asked to give their opinion on a theme, or to analyze different aspects of a character's behavior. These questions will often give the reader opportunity to imagine and articulate what he would do in a particular situation or how he might have responded differently than a particular character. This element is designed to help students see that a good story is about much more than just the characters, the setting, and the plot; it is about life.

Do's and don'ts for a good discussion time:

Do encourage students to think.

Don't settle for "I dunno."

Do rephrase questions that are not understood.

Don't worry if the discussion goes a little off track as long as students are thinking creatively.

Do be inspired by student's responses and guide the discussion where it wants to go naturally.

Don't worry about answering every question if some provoke more response than others.

Do use the questions creatively. Suggestions: assign each question to a different student for presentation to the group; allow two groups to take sides and debate the pros and cons of a particular question; use the questions as writing prompts for paragraphs or essays; allow students to role play their response to a question. Use your imagination. The possibilities are endless.

Learning Objectives

Students are required to read and respond to a wide variety of literature throughout the process of their education. The titles for Blackbird & Company's guides are carefully selected to ensure students have every opportunity to experience excellent classic and contemporary children's literature. Our guides have been constructed with elements that will challenge readers to engage a literary work and to dig for the treasure hidden in every great story.

Reading

In addition to reading silently, students should be given opportunities to read aloud in a group or one-on-one if a group is not available. Reading aloud improves fluency and accuracy and helps to develop appropriate pacing, intonation, and dramatic expression. Responding to comprehension questions and participating in story discussion facilitates deeper comprehension and application of literary themes. Additionally, opportunities to distinguish between and analyze the structural features and literary elements of the story such as characters, setting and plot in the *Journal* section of the guide will further deepen the reading experience.

Vocabulary

Reading is the most effective means for vocabulary development. While students should always be challenged to use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words, each week they will practice using a dictionary to define specific vocabulary and be challenged to use their acquired knowledge in a new context.

Writing

Responding to the deeper themes underlying a narrative through writing is an important skill that is the student's expression of how he has understood and been impacted by a story. Students should be encouraged to create clear and coherent writing that expresses their ideas and to consider the audience and purpose of their writing. Students are encouraged to progress through the stages of the writing process each week.

Stages of the writing process:

- > **Brainstorm** - *Think about it*
- > **Rough Draft** - *Get your thoughts on paper*
- > **Conference** - *Read it yourself then talk to someone about it*
- > **Re-write** - *Make changes*
- > **Edit** - *Check for spelling and grammar errors*
- > **Final Draft** - *Copy your work in your best penmanship*

Grading Guidelines

Full points are awarded for complete and creative work that goes beyond the basic requirements. No points are awarded when the work has not been done. Know your student and individualize the following grading guidelines by awarding points accordingly.

Reading 4 Points

Journal 4 Points (Character 2, Setting 1, Plot 1)

Acquire 2 Points

Recollect 3 Points

Explore 7 Points (Writing 4, Discussion 3)

Total 20 Points

Grading Your Student's Writing

When evaluating your student's writing use the following guidelines:

Accomplished (4 points)

- > Creatively focuses on the topic
- > Uses logical progression of ideas to develop and supports topic with details
- > Varies sentence structure
- > Uses interesting transitions and strong word choice
- > Mature understanding of writing conventions

Proficient (3 points)

- > Focuses on topic and includes adequate support
- > Uses logical progression of ideas to develop and loosely supports topic
- > Some varied sentence structure
- > Transitions and word choice are adequate but not creative
- > General understanding of writing conventions

Basic (2.5 points)

- > Topic is addressed, but unclear
- > Lacks logical progression of ideas and support is weak
- > Sentences are stagnant and uninteresting
- > Lack of transitions and average choice
- > Partial understanding of writing conventions

Limited (2 points)

- > Topic may be mentioned, but not clearly addressed and supported loosely
- > Organization pattern is weak
- > Writing contains sentence fragments and run-on's
- > Poor transitions and word choice
- > Definite misunderstanding of writing conventions

Poor (1 point)

- > Topic is not addressed or clearly supported
- > Organizational pattern is lacking
- > Sentence structure is insufficient
- > Non-existent transitions and inappropriate word choice
- > Frequent errors in basic writing conventions

ASSIGNMENT POINTS TEACHER COMMENTS GRADE

Section 1: Chapters 1-2 (May through June)

○ Read	___ /4	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> / 20 </div>
○ Journal:			
○ Characters	___ /2		
○ Setting	___ /1		
○ Plot	___ /1		
○ Acquire	___ /2		
○ Recollect	___ /3		
○ Explore:			
○ Writing	___ /4		
○ Discussion	___ /3		

Section 2: Chapters 3-4 (July through August)

○ Read	___ /4	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> / 20 </div>
○ Journal:			
○ Characters	___ /2		
○ Setting	___ /1		
○ Plot	___ /1		
○ Acquire	___ /2		
○ Recollect	___ /3		
○ Explore:			
○ Writing	___ /4		
○ Discussion	___ /3		

Section 3: Chapters 5-6 (September through October)

○ Read	___ /4	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> / 20 </div>
○ Journal:			
○ Characters	___ /2		
○ Setting	___ /1		
○ Plot	___ /1		
○ Acquire	___ /2		
○ Recollect	___ /3		
○ Explore:			
○ Writing	___ /4		
○ Discussion	___ /3		

Section 4: Chapters 7-9 (November through April)

○ Read	___ /4	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> / 20 </div>
○ Journal:			
○ Characters	___ /2		
○ Setting	___ /1		
○ Plot	___ /1		
○ Acquire	___ /2		
○ Recollect	___ /3		
○ Explore:			
○ Writing	___ /4		
○ Discussion	___ /3		

Section 5

○ Glean	___ /20	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> / 20 </div>

	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> / 100 </div>
--	---

FINAL GRADE

Characters

As you read, note interesting and important things you learn about the characters. Describe such things as their personality and appearance, including details about the way they act, think and feel.

Sterling

Rascal

Vocabulary

Use a dictionary to define the following words.

epaulet

martinet

parsonage

phosphorescent

shrill

tremolo

Use each vocabulary word in a complete sentence that illustrates your understanding of the words meaning.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Comprehension Questions

Answer the following questions using complete sentences. You may refer to both the book and your journal notes.

1. What things does Sterling describe as the signature of Spring?

2. What do Sterling, Wowser and Oscar find within the den at the oak tree?

3. What fear does Sterling have when he is hacking through the limb?

4. What does the distant lightening and low rumble of thunder remind Sterling of?

5. What particular thing does Sterling think unfair about his mother?

6. Who is Rascal's guardian at the foot of the oak tree?

7. What lesson does Rascal learn about the lump of sugar?

Discussion Questions

Think about and discuss the following questions.

1. What do you think it would be like to have freedom like Sterling enjoyed, where no one is concerned about the hours you keep? What would be the possible downsides?
2. What do you think of Sterling's plans to catch the mother raccoon? Was this a good idea? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think Sterling was frightened by the enormous responsibility he now faced of taking care of Rascal? What do you imagine are those responsibilities? What is the biggest responsibility you have?
4. In 1918 there were different expectations of boys and girls, and boys had more freedom. What are some of the ways girls have more freedom today?
5. How do you think Rascal knew how to catch the shiner and wash it before eating it? Hint. Look up the word instinct. If you have a pet, what are some behaviors they have that are instinctual?
6. How do you think Sterling learned so much about Rascal? What interesting things have you noticed about your pets behavior by watching them over time?
7. What do you think the expression, "Once pinched, twice shy" means?
8. Why do you think Sterling was "filled with contentment" when he and Rascal rode home after their day fishing? What activities fill you with contentment?

Assignment Options

Complete one or more of the following assignments.

1. Research three wild animals that you are interested in and make a journal with information and drawings about them. Draw them in their natural habitats.
2. What is a “war garden” or “victory garden”? Research the topic and write what you discover. Plant a small container garden and grow some of your own quick growing vegetables, such as, radishes and carrots, or herbs.
3. Research catfish, bass, pickerel and sunfish. Describe the different fish and draw them on watercolor paper and watercolor them.
4. Watch the Wildlife documentary *Understanding the Hidden World of Scavenger Pests / Raccoon Nation / Wildlife Documentary* on youtube.com. Write what you learn about raccoon behavior.
5. On page 46 Sterling refers to Tennyson’s Poem, “Maud”. Read the poem and create an art project with typical Victorian images. Write about why you think Sterling chose “Maud” as a reference for his sister Theo.
6. Research Thune Ludwig Theodor Kumlien (1819-1888). Write about his accomplishments and his life as a naturalist.
7. Research canoe building and write about it. Make a model of a canoe.
8. Create a poster detailing the life of a seed and how the seed making process begins over again. Draw several different seeds and watercolor them.
9. Research the Spanish Influenza. Write a report about it and how it traveled around the globe.