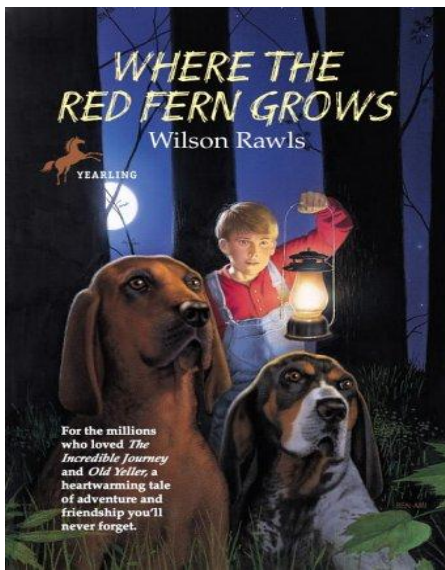


Where the Red Fern Grows:
A 5th Grade Literacy Focus Unit
created by:
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FEATURED SELECTION

Where the Red Fern Grows by Wilson Rawls. Toronto: Bantam Books, 1985.



Where the Red Fern Grows tells the exciting story of 10-year old Billy living in the Ozark Mountains during the Great Depression. After saving for two years Billy earns enough money to buy two hound pups, Ol'Dan and Li'l Ann. Together Billy and these two hounds go coon hunting almost daily, and even enter a coon hunting tournament. They beat all of the men who had competed in a lot of tournaments even through a blizzard and some injuries. Several weeks after the competition his dogs tree a mountain lion, the lion comes after him and the dogs attack it and kill it, but Ol'Dan gets hurt. He dies that night and Li'l Ann dies soon after from sadness. The money from the dogs winning gives the family enough to move to town, so after they have buried the dogs they move away from the Ozarks. Before they leave Billy goes to visit them and

finds a beautiful red fern growing between the two graves.

RELATED MATERIALS

Rose's Journal by Marissa Moss. San Diego: Harcourt, Inc., 2001.

4th Grade Reading Level

Set on a Kansas farm, Rose's pink-lined pages contrast with her handwritten account of dust storms and drought so severe that birds, lacking their usual materials, made nests of barbed wire. This is a story of a young girl living through the Great Depression and gives another perspective a child during this time period. It can be related to the book by the situation that the girl is living in and how it is similar to the poor environment Billy is living in as well.

Talking Leaves the Story of Sequoyah by Bernice Kohn. Canada: Prentice-Hall, 1969.

3rd Grade Reading Level

Although Sequoyah was small and walked with a limp, he grew up to be the greatest Cherokee of them all. He taught his people how to read and write and with the help of his daughter created the Cherokee alphabet. This book shows another Sequoyah story that is passed along through the people just like the one about the red ferns. It will help the students see another legend and see how they were used to teach the younger generation older legends.

Saving Grace by Priscilla Cummings. New York: Dutton Children's Books, 2003.

4th Grade Reading Level

Grace is a young girl whose family loses their home. With her mother pregnant and with eleven brothers and sisters her mother can't care for them. This book is about her time in a local mission home for children. It shows another perspective a child who's family is struggling to survive through the Great Depression. The issue of money during the Great Depression and how families survived will help connect this story to *Where the Red Fern Grows*.

Backwoods America by Charles Morrow Wilson. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1935.

This story is about a family living in the Ozarks. It tells all about their religious gatherings, medicine, and ways of doing things. This book tells about how people in the Ozarks live. It will help the students to understand why Billy's family may have done some of the things they did.

The Complete Dog Book by The American Kennel Club. New York: Howell Book House Inc, 1980.

This book is a great resource for gathering information on dog breeds. It separates into groups and then gives information including pictures and specific characteristics about each breed. This will be a good resource when researching redbone coonhounds to find out the specifications and characteristics of the coonhound. With Billy's purchase of coonhounds this will help the students get a better picture of Ol'Dan and Little Ann.

The New Encyclopedia of the Dog by Bruce Fogle. New York: Dorling Kindersley, 2000.

This is a huge book on everything you want to know about dogs. It gives the body parts of dogs, how to care for dogs as pets, where you might see dogs on film, and also some specifics about groups of dogs. This is a great resource for reinforcing what Billy had to do to keep his dogs alive and also to show how his dogs hunted because of their body build. It also will help the students to see what is needed to care for any dog to help them grow up to be big and strong.

GOALS

- 1 Students will have a better understanding of themselves by looking at different types of memories they have had to create a portfolio of themselves.
- 2 Students will be able to compare and contrast two characters from the story.
- 3 Students will be able to compare and contrast something they have personally experienced with something from the story.
- 4 Students will be able to identify a real setting from a story on a map.
- 5 Students will better comprehend the sense of sound see how not only animals but people use sound to communicate.

STRATEGIES/SKILLS TAUGHT

- Figuring out how many coins are in a certain amount of money.
- Working in pairs or small groups to accomplish a task.
- Using something you already know to understand something you don't.
- Economic Concepts of Supply and Demand
- Seeing that events that occur in your own life may be similar to those of someone in the story.
- Using a map to find a location.
- Comparing and Contrasting two things.

STANDARDS

English/Language Arts

- 5.1.1 Read aloud grade-level-appropriate narrative text (stories) and expository text (information) fluently and accurately and with appropriate timing, changes in voice, and expression.
- 5.3.7 Evaluate the author's use of various techniques to influence readers' perspectives.
- 5.5.1 Write narratives (stories) that:
- 1 establish a plot, point of view, setting, and conflict.
 - 2 show, rather than tell, the events of the story.
- 5.5.2 Write responses to literature that:
- 1 demonstrate an understanding of a literary work.
 - 2 support judgments through references to the text and to prior knowledge.

Math

- 5.5.7 Add and subtract with money in decimal notation.

Science

- 5.4.7 Explain that living things, such as plants and animals, differ in their characteristics, and that sometimes these differences can give members of these groups (plants and animals) an advantage in surviving and reproducing.
- 5.6.2 Demonstrate how geometric figures, number sequences, graphs, diagrams, sketches, number lines, maps, and stories can be used to represent objects, events, and processes in the real world, although such representation can never be exact in every detail.

Social Studies

- 5.1.1 Give examples of early cultures and settlements that existed in North America prior to contact with Europeans.
- 5.4.6 Predict the effect of changes in supply* and demand* on price.

UNIT PLAN

Pre-reading

- Journal entry's for Portfolio of Self that activate prior knowledge.
 - Most Vivid Memory
 - Something you really wanted and you finally got
 - Description of Self
 - What does your name mean? Why were you named that?
 - When did you learn to do something new?
 - Best Accomplishment
 - A time when someone close to you died or left
 - My best friend.
 - A time when you were part of a team
 - The best present you ever received.

Reading

- Chapter 1, 6, 11, 16 Read Aloud by the teacher
- Chapter 2, 4, 7, 9, 12, 14, 17, 19 read in groups (buddy)
- Chapter 3, 5, 8, 10, 13, 15, 18, 20 (Individual Reading)
- *Backwoods America* selections (Individual Reading for homework)
- *Rose's Journal* Selections (Individual Reading for homework)
- Use *The Story of Sequoyah*, *The Encyclopedia of the Dog*, and *The Complete Dog Book* as resources for projects (group reading).

Responding

- Venn Diagram (Compare and Contrast the lives of people from the Ozarks and yourself). (Whole Class)
- Venn Diagram (Compare and Contrast the city and the country) (Partners)
- Chart giving the descriptions of the girl dog and the boy dog. Compare and contrast the two. (Individual)
- Making Scarecrow: using the description given by Grandpa in the story create your own scarecrow. (Small Groups of 4 students)
- Summarizing the Dangers: Rawls uses a variety of dangerous situations that he puts the characters in. Have the students pick three that they have found while reading the story and explain how the character got in the predicament, what happens while he/she is caught up in it, and how they get out of the situation (if they do). (Individual)
- Venn Diagram (After watching the movie compare and contrast the movie and the book). (Partners)

Exploring

- Word of the day for Word Wall related to the story. (Whole Class)
- Map Activity 1: On a map locate and label the following: The Ozark Mountains, Illinois, Kentucky, Illinois River) (Individual)
- Nature Walk: Walk around the grounds around your school and if possible around the area near your school (Whole Class). Create a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting

your nature walk with that of Billy's. (Individual)

- Working with Money: Adding decimals (Calculating how many coins Billy would of had if he earned it all in dimes, nickels, or quarters). (Whole Class)
- Map Activity 2: Locate the city where Billy is from and the city he went to get the dogs. Label both on your map and then calculate the distance between the two cities. (Individual)
- Self-Portraits: Bring in mirrors for everyone to use. By looking in the mirror have the students draw themselves. (Individual)
- Redbone Coonhounds: Research the breed (*The Complete Dog Book*). Fill out an information sheet about the breed. Research how to care for a dog and write a paragraph explaining how you would care for a new Coon puppy (*The Encyclopedia of the Dog*). (Partners)
- Scavenger Hunt: Using math problems (the answers will lead them to a different room) send the students around the school if possible on a trail like the dogs followed the trail of the coon. (Small Groups of 3-4 students)
- Supply and Demand: Teach this economic concept and talk about its effect during the Great Depression. (Whole Class)
- Morse Code: Teach about what it is and connect it to the story by explaining how humans can talk to each other through sounds as well as vocal communication. (Whole Class)
- Sense of Smell: Have them use their sense of smell to guess what things are. Make a connection to how Little Ann find the coon smell. (Whole Class)
- Weather: Discussion of the effects of cold weather on the human body. Talk about what happens when a blizzard occurs. (Whole Class)
- Leaf Rubbings: Take the students outside and have them collect a bunch of different leaves from different trees (needles from pines work as well). Have them put them under a piece of paper and rub a crayon over the paper to get a rubbing. Then have them look in a book to find the type of leaf. Make sure to have some samples of red ferns for them to add to their collection. (Individual)
- Cherokee Legends: Use the book *The Story of Sequoyah* and discuss what a Cherokee legend is. Use it in relationship to the legend of the red fern. (Whole Class)

Applying

- Making Dog Collars: Using pieces of leather and tools etch words or drawings into leather to make dog collars like Billy did. (Individual)
- Cooking Corn Meal Pancakes: Show them how corn was ground and then in groups let them make cornmeal pancakes. When finished have each group write the recipe they used. (Small Groups of 3-4 students)
- Cherokee Legends: Write your own legend (Individual)

TIME SCHEDULE: This schedule is planned for 4 weeks and has an estimated time of one to two hours a day depending on the activities.

<p>day 1 Chapter 1 Journal: Most vivid memory Send home selections from <i>Backwoods America</i> for homework along with creating a Venn Diagram.</p>	<p>day 2 Chapter 2 Map Activity Journal: Something you really wanted. Homework selections from <i>The Great Depression: "Rose's Journal"</i></p>	<p>day 3 Chapter 3 Nature Walk Venn Diagram (School walk and Billy's walk) Math-working with money</p>	<p>day 4 Chapter 4 Map Activity 2 Venn Diagram (City to Country) Self-Portraits Journal: Describe yourself</p>	<p>day 5 Chapter 5 Redbone Coonhounds</p>
<p>day 6 Chapter 6 Chart Comparing and Contrasting two dogs. Making Dog Collars Journal: What does your name mean?</p>	<p>day 7 Chapter 7 Journal: When did you learn to do something new?</p>	<p>day 8 Chapter 8 Scavenger Hunt (following trails)</p>	<p>day 9 Chapter 9 Making Scarecrows Journal: Best accomplishment</p>	<p>day 10 Chapter 10 The Great Depression: Saving Grace Supply and Demand Lesson</p>
<p>day 11 chapter 11 Morse Code- Using sounds to pass messages</p>	<p>day 12 chapter 12 Cooking: Corn Meal Pancakes</p>	<p>day 13 chapter 13 Journal: A time when someone close to you died</p>	<p>day 14 chapter 14 Sense of Smell Journal: My best friend.</p>	<p>day 15 chapter 15 Summarizing the Dangers</p>
<p>day 16 chapter 16 Journal: A time when you were part of a team.</p>	<p>day 17 chapter 17 Weather: Blizzards</p>	<p>day 18 Chapter 18 Journal: The best present you ever received.</p>	<p>Day 19 Chapter 19 Leaf Rubbings Cherokee Legends: What are they and writing your own.</p>	<p>Day 20 Chapter 20 Watch the movie Venn Diagram (Compare and Contrast them)</p>

ASSESSMENT

I will assess the students on this lesson in two ways. The first is through observation where I will observe the students working.

- Did they listen attentively when being read the book?
- Were they actively involved in the nature hike?
- Did they participate in the scavenger hunt?
- Where they actively involved in reading while in groups?
- Did they participate in the group compare and contrast sessions?

The second way I will assess the students is based on their completion and accuracy of the following assignments:

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

- ___ Venn Diagram - Living in the Ozarks vs. Your Life
- ___ Map with places and distances labeled
- ___ Venn Diagram – Nature Walk (Billy’s vs. Ours)
- ___ Math Worksheet on Money
- ___ Venn Diagram (City vs. Country)
- ___ Information sheet on coon hounds
- ___ Paragraph on how to care for a new coonhound puppy
- ___ Chart comparing and contrasting Ol’Dan and Little Ann
- ___ Dog Collar
- ___ Scarecrow
- ___ Cornmeal Pancake recipe
- ___ Summarizing the Dangers (3 dangerous situations in the story)
- ___ Leaf Rubbings (pictures with labels of what tree they are from)
- ___ Venn Diagram -- Movie vs. Book
- ___ Self-Portrait Portfolio (Containing 10 journal entries, self-portrait picture)

Ideas for Focus Unit taken from:

<http://www.burke.k12.nc.us/instructionaltech/webquests/redfern/>

http://www.mce.k12tn.net/dogs/fern/where_the_red_fern_grows.htm

<http://library.thinkquest.org/TQ0312212/index.html>

http://www.mce.k12tn.net/dogs/fern/lesson_plans.htm

<http://www.literatureplace.com/bookfolios/bookfolio.asp?BookfolioID=19>