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Sample

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Literature Teaching Unit

Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



Where the Red Fern Grows

by Wilson Rawls

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938
www.prestwickhouse.com
800.932.4593

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Where the Red Fern Grows

Note to Teacher

This book is set in a beautiful valley near the Ozark Mountains of Oklahoma. The story takes place at the turn of the century, around 1910. Farmers, using mules to plow their fields, struggle to make a living for their families. In the mountains, hunting is a way of life, and the people survive through grit, determination, and hard work. Character, pride, and faith are as important as food in their lives. There is death and sadness in this novel, but it is mainly an adventure story filled with great love, loyalty, and faith.

All references come from the Bantam Doubleday Dell Book for Young Readers edition of *Where the Red Fern Grows*, copyright 1961.

Where the Red Fern Grows

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. understand the story and relate how the details in the novel are held together by a unifying thread.
2. recognize and point out examples of the following literary devices in the novel:
 - metaphor
 - local color
 - simile
3. discuss the following uses of the language:
 - hyperbole
 - figurative language
 - cliché
4. comment on the use of first-person narration and personal narrative in telling a story.
5. compare and contrast some of today's views with views popular at the turn of the century:
 - animal rights
 - tree conservation
 - women's rights
 - gun control
6. identify the main conflicts in this story.
7. discuss how the following themes are presented in the book and point to incidents in the book to support the following thematic generalizations:
 - humans cannot always understand why bad things happen
 - dreams can come true with determination, hard work, and prayer
 - prayers from the heart are answered
8. comment on the significance of the title in this novel by relating the legend of the red fern to the action of the story.

Where the Red Fern Grows

Questions for Discussion and Essay

1. Discuss the three different types of conflict as they apply to this book.
2. Compare today's views on conservation with the views of the characters in the story.
3. Locate and discuss three times when the color white is used symbolically.
4. Explain the terms found in this novel that are native to the setting of the novel.
5. Discuss the role of women at the turn of the century.
6. Define legend. How is a legend different from a superstition?
7. Defend or refute this statement: "This book typifies a coming-of-age story."
8. By referring to incidents in the book, prove that a theme of this book is "Humans cannot always understand why bad things happen."
10. Point out how this story could also be a loss-of-innocence novel.
11. By referring to incidents in the text, support the following generalization: "The novel makes the point that for dreams to be realized, determination, hard work, perseverance, and prayer are necessary."
12. Find and define examples of the following:
 - metaphor
 - hyperbole
 - cliché
 - simile

Where the Red Fern Grows

Chapter One

Vocabulary

residential – a type of housing
squalling – yelling
whimper – to cry
trot – to walk briskly or jog
pangs – shooting pains
caress – to stroke lovingly

1. Do you believe the narrator intends to help Buddie before he realizes the dog is a red hound dog? Explain.
2. Why does the narrator think Buddie has come a long way and has a long way to go?
3. Why does the narrator not try to keep the hound dog safe in his backyard?

Chapter Four

Vocabulary

bore – turned slightly
make amends – to make up for or apologize
gawked – stared

1. Why are Billy's dogs sent to Tahlequah instead of to his grandfather's store?
2. Why does Billy still not tell his family about the dogs when he knows they are being shipped?
3. Find an example of figurative language in this chapter.
4. Why do you suppose Billy is not too frightened to walk through the wilderness to Tahlequah but is scared of Tahlequah and the people?

Chapter Eight

Vocabulary

limber – flexible
treed – trapped up in a tree
den – nest

1. Find two examples of local color in this chapter. Make sure that at least one is a simile.
2. On the night hunting season opens, how does Billy feel?
3. On this night, how do Billy's parents treat him differently? Point out his parents' conduct toward Billy before his first hunt.
4. What trick does the raccoon pull that first night? Which dog figures it out?