

A Guide for Using

The Sign of the Beaver

in the Classroom

*Based on the novel written by
Elizabeth George Speare*

*This guide written by John and Patty Carratello
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Introduction

A good book can touch our lives like a good friend. Within its pages are words and characters, that can inspire us to achieve our highest ideals. We can turn to it for companionship, recreation, comfort and guidance. It can also give us a cherished story to hold in our hearts forever.

In *Literature Units*, great care has been taken to select books that are sure to become good friends!

Teachers who use this unit will find the following features to supplement their own valuable ideas.

- Sample Lesson Plans
- Pre-reading Activities
- A Biographical Sketch and Picture of the Author
- A Book Summary
- Vocabulary Lists and Suggested Vocabulary Activities
- Chapters grouped for study with each section including:
 - *quizzes*
 - *hands-on projects*
 - *cooperative learning activities*
 - *cross-curriculum connections*
 - *extensions into the reader's own life*
- Post-reading Activities
- Book Report Ideas
- Research Ideas
- A Culminating Activity
- Three Different Options for Unit Tests
- Bibliography
- Answer Key

We are confident this unit will be a valuable addition to your planning, and we hope your students will increase the circle of “friends” they have in books as you use our ideas!



Sample Lesson Plan

Each of the lessons suggested below can take from one to several days to complete.

LESSON 1

- Introduce and complete some or all of the pre-reading activities found on page 5.
- Read “About the Author” with your students. (page 6)
- Read the book summary with your students. (page 7)
- Introduce the vocabulary list for SECTION 1. (page 8) Ask students to find all possible definitions for these words.

LESSON 2

- Read Chapters 1 through 4. As you read, place the vocabulary words in the context of the story and discuss their meanings.
- Play a vocabulary game. (page 9)
- Make johnnycakes. (page 11)
- Construct a cabin. (page 12)
- Discuss the book in terms of history and geography. (page 13)
- Begin “Reading Response Journals.” (page 14)
- Administer the SECTION 1 quiz. (page 10)

LESSON 3

- Read Chapters 5 through 10. Place the vocabulary words in context and discuss their meanings.
- Play a vocabulary game. (page 9)
- Learn about fishing and practice what you can! (page 16)
- Ask students to teach a skill to each other. (page 17)
- Discuss the book in terms of science and health. (page 18)
- Determine ways to teach reading. (page 19)
- Administer SECTION 2 quiz. (page 15)
- Introduce the vocabulary list for SECTION 3. (page 8) Ask students to find all possible definitions.

LESSON 4

- Read Chapters 11 through 15. Place the vocabulary words in context and discuss their meanings.
- Play a vocabulary game. (page 9)
- Learn about archery and practice what you can! (page 21)
- Find things in your own environment that could help in a survival situation. (page 22)
- Discuss the book in terms of social studies. (page 23)

LESSON 4 (cont.)

- Learn about the different types of animal homes. (page 24)
- Administer SECTION 3 quiz. (page 20)
- Introduce the vocabulary list for SECTION 4. (page 8) Ask students to find all possible meanings.

LESSON 5

- Read Chapters 16 through 19. Place the vocabulary words in context and discuss their meanings.
- Play a vocabulary game. (page 9)
- Create and play an Indian game. (page 26)
- Prepare a celebration! (page 27)
- Discuss the book in terms of art, music, and dance. (page 28)
- Learn about the art of storytelling and tell stories. (page 29)
- Administer SECTION 4 quiz. (page 25)
- Introduce the vocabulary list for SECTION 5. (page 8) Ask students to find all possible meanings.

LESSON 6

- Read Chapters 20 through 25. Place the vocabulary words in context and discuss their meanings.
- Play a vocabulary game. (page 9)
- Sew a pair of pants. (page 31)
- Study and practice how a community works. (page 32)
- Discuss the book in terms of math. (page 33)
- Discuss becoming an adult. (page 34)
- Administer SECTION 5 quiz. (page 30)

LESSON 7

- Discuss any questions your students have about the story. (page 35)
- Assign book report and research projects. (pages 36 and 37)
- Begin work on a culminating activity. (pages 38–41)

LESSON 8

- Administer Unit Tests: 1, 2, and/or 3. (pages 42–44)
- Discuss the test answers and possibilities.
- Discuss the students’ enjoyment of the book.
- Provide a list of related reading for your students. (page 45)

The Sign of the Beaver

by Elizabeth George Speare

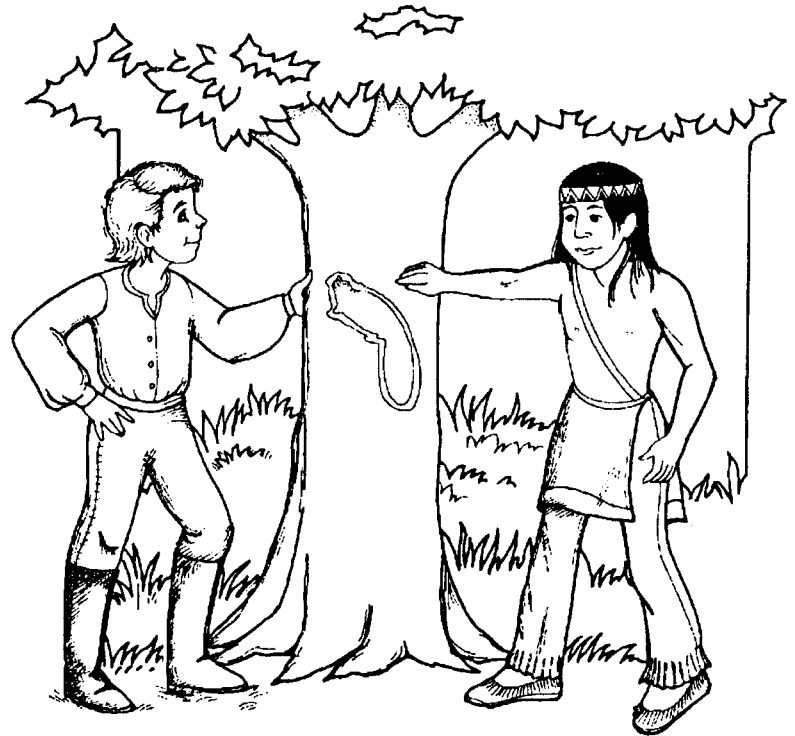
(Dell, 1983)

Matt and his father work hard to build their new home in the wilderness of Maine Territory. When his father returns to Massachusetts to help move the rest of the family, Matt is left to watch over the cabin and face the wilderness by himself. He soon discovers he is not alone. When he nearly drowns while being attacked by a swarm of bees, an old Indian and his grandson, Attean, save his life.

Matt and Attean become good friends. Matt teaches Attean the English language, and Attean teaches Matt the skills necessary to survive in the wilderness. Attean also teaches Matt special trail-making techniques and markings, such as the sign of the beaver, which shows tribal possession of hunting grounds. It isn't long before Attean must abandon his boyhood life and begin the search for his spirit, his "manitou," that will signal his passage into manhood.

After completing his passage, Attean returns to Matt and invites him to go west with his people as his white brother. Attean's people need to find a new hunting ground, free from white settlers, who are turning Indian hunting grounds into new settlements. Matt, however, decides to wait for his family although they are long overdue. Before the two friends part, they give each other special gifts. Attean gives Matt his loyal dog, and Matt gives Attean his heirloom watch.

After Attean's departure, Matt's family arrives, and they are thrilled to see their son alive and well. Matt can't wait to tell them about the "brother" he has found who taught him so much.



Vocabulary Lists

On this page are vocabulary lists which correspond to each sectional grouping of chapters. Vocabulary activity ideas can be found on page 9 of this book

SECTION 1

blunderbuss	pewter
chinking	proprietors
daubed	puncheon table
deprived	quavering
flint	ruefully
gravely	shambles
halfheartedly	solitary
matchlock	surveyor
passel	venturing

SECTION 2

bellowing	mercilessly
boggy	nonchalantly
contemptuous	ordeal
defiance	pesky
detested	pondering
dumfounded	resentment
grudgingly	spliced
finicky	stalked
heathen	stout
incomprehensible	thrashing

SECTION 3

cascades	inflict
chagrined	nestling
disdainful	nudge
disgruntled	plodded
disposition	rasping
goaded	retorted
improvise	shrewdly
indifference	tuft
indignant	wary

SECTION 4

boisterous	medley
contortions	Muster Day
flaunting	nimbly
gaunt	ordeal
genial	ramshackle
glinting	relenting
gourd	stern
indignant	taggle

SECTION 5

clamor	poised
comradeship	prowess
despised	reproach
floundered	soberly
grave	solemn
intricately	spunky
lustrous	trenchers
persisted	typhus
pewter	unhampered