

A Guide for Using
Sarah, Plain and Tall
and
Journey
in the Classroom

Based on the novel written by Patricia MacLachlan

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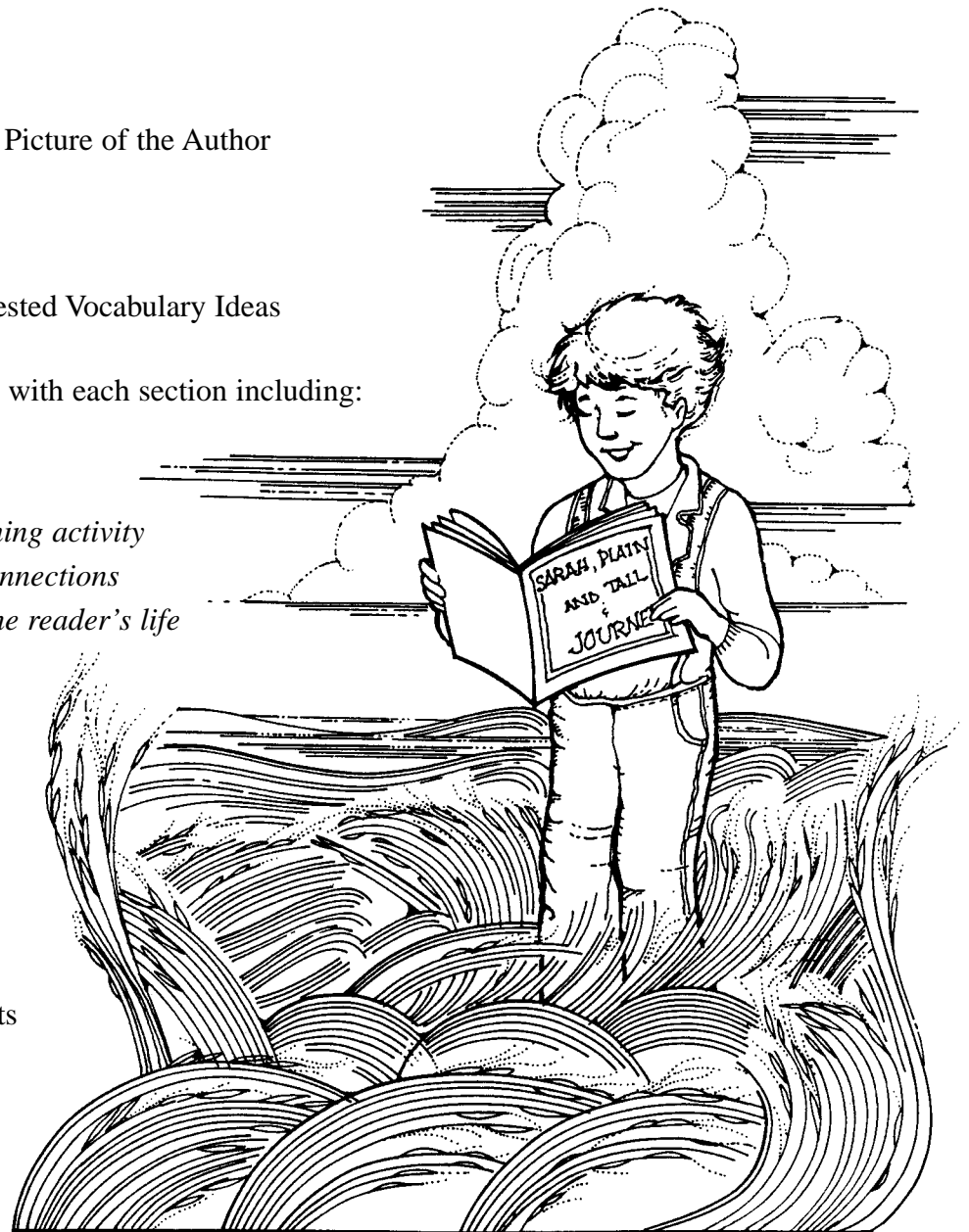
Introduction

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, knowledge, and guidance. It can make us laugh out loud, or cry at its tenderness. 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 literature unit will find a special section for comparing and contrasting the selections. Teachers will discover the following features to supplement their own valuable ideas.

- Sample Lesson Plans
- Pre-reading Activities
- A Biographical Sketch and Picture of the Author
- Book Summaries
- Vocabulary Lists and Suggested Vocabulary Ideas
- Chapters grouped for study with each section including:
 - a quiz
 - a hands-on project
 - a cooperative learning activity
 - cross-curricular connections
 - an extension into the reader's life
- Post-reading Activities
- Book Report Ideas
- Research Ideas
- A Culminating Activity
- Three Options for Unit Tests
- A Bibliography
- An Answer Key



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

Sample Lesson Plan

Each of the lessons suggested below can take from one to several days to complete. The lesson plan has been organized with the assumption that you will first have your students read *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. Then, do the activities in Sections 1 and 2. Next, read *Journey* and complete the activities in Sections 3 and 4. The activities in Section 5 focus on comparing and contrasting the two novels.

Lesson 1

- Introduce and complete some or all of the pre-reading activities on page 5.
- Read About the Author with your students. (page 6)
- Introduce the vocabulary list for Section 1. (page 9)

Lesson 2

- Read chapters 1 through 5 in *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. As you read, place the vocabulary words in the context of the story and discuss their meanings.
- Choose a vocabulary activity. (page 10)
- Make relief maps. (page 12)
- Compare and contrast hometowns. (page 13)
- Research material for Getting From Here to There and present reports to class. (page 14)
- Make dried flowers. (page 15)
- Administer the Section 1 quiz. (page 11)
- Introduce the vocabulary list for Section 2. (page 9)

Lesson 3

- Read chapters 6 through 9 in *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. Place the vocabulary words in context and discuss their meanings.
- Choose a vocabulary activity. (page 10)
- Have students learn a new skill. (page 17)
- Learn to barter. (page 18)
- Discuss the book in terms of art. (page 19)
- Begin Sarah's Diary. (page 20)
- Administer the Section 2 quiz. (page 16)
- Introduce the vocabulary list for Section 3. (page 9)

Lesson 4

- Read chapters 1 through 6 in *Journey*. Place the vocabulary words in context and discuss their meanings.
- Choose a vocabulary activity. (page 10)
- Continue Sarah's Diary. (page 20)
- Make a simple camera. (pages 22-23)
- Discuss the book in terms of its photographic history. Take photos and create a photo album based on a theme. (page 24)
- Write a want ad for *Journey*. (page 25)
- Discuss making changes in one's life. (page 26)
- Administer the Section 3 quiz. (page 21)
- Introduce the vocabulary list for Section 4. (page 9)

Lesson 5

- Read chapters 7 through 13 in *Journey*. Place the vocabulary words in context and discuss their meanings.
- Choose a vocabulary activity. (page 10)
- Complete Sarah's Diary. Share diary entries. (page 20)
- Plant a family tree. (page 28)
- Develop oral reading skills. (page 29)
- Listen to classical music. (page 30)
- Conduct a photo guessing contest. (page 31)
- Administer the Section 4 quiz. (page 27)
- Review vocabulary words. (page 9)

Lesson 6

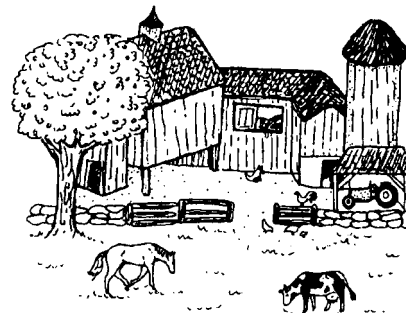
- Use the quiz and activities in Section 5 to evaluate the students' knowledge and understanding of *Sarah, Plain and Tall* and *Journey*.
- Read summaries of both novels. (pages 7 and 8)
- Choose a vocabulary activity. (page 10)
- Make collage banners. (page 33)
- Write about and draw window scenes. (page 34)
- Scientifically categorize flowers. (page 35)
- Plan an imaginary journey. (page 36)
- Administer the Section 5 quiz. (page 32)

Lesson 7

- Discuss any questions your students may have about the stories. (page 37)
- Assign book reports and research projects. (pages 38 and 39)
- Begin work on the culminating activity. (pages 40-42)

Lesson 8

- Administer unit tests 1, 2, and/or 3. (pages 43-45)
- Discuss the test answers and responses.
- Discuss the students' opinions and enjoyment of the books.
- Provide a list of related reading for the students. (page 46)
- Celebrate the Family Reunion Culminating Activity.



Sarah, Plain and Tall

by Patricia MacLachlan

(Harper & Row, 1987)

(Also available in Canada and Australia from Harper Collins and in U.K. from J. MacRae)

The day Caleb Witting is born, he is handed to his sister, Anna, in a yellow blanket. His mama thinks he is beautiful, but Anna considers him troublesome. She thinks he is homely and plain, and he has a terrible holler and a horrid smell. But the worst is yet to come—mama dies the next morning. Anna is left to be both mother and sister. Her resentment doesn't last more than three days. Caleb's smile warms and captivates her.

When he's old enough to talk, Caleb asks Anna about his mother every day. He is especially interested in the songs she used to sing. He knows his father used to sing, too. But Papa doesn't sing anymore. Anna doesn't remember the songs. Caleb thinks that if Anna could remember the songs, then he might remember his mama. When Caleb questions his father about the old songs, he replies: "I've forgotten the old songs, but maybe there's a way to remember them." He goes on to tell them that he has placed an advertisement in a newspaper for a wife, like their neighbor Matthew did when Maggie came to be his wife and a mother to his children.

Sarah Elizabeth Wheaton, from Maine, answers the ad. She and the Wittings get to know each other through letters. The day comes when Sarah announces that she will visit the Wittings to "see how it is." In a short letter Sarah writes, "I will come by train. I will wear a yellow bonnet. I am plain and tall." And at the bottom of the letter she adds, "Tell them I sing." Caleb can hardly wait. He wants so much for Sarah to like them all, even before he sees what she is like. It doesn't matter to him whether she is mild-mannered or not.

Sarah arrives with treasures from the sea, and her pet cat, Seal. So many things are different for Sarah that Anna and Caleb worry that perhaps she will soon long for the sea and the family she has left behind. Sarah is introduced to life on a farm on the prairie, so far from town that it is a day's journey there and back. Sarah pitches in to help however she can. Even when nature strikes a blow in the form of a squall, the pioneer family bounces back. Sarah's songs, and Sarah herself, endear the Witting family into wanting her to stay forever. Sarah discovers that even though she will always miss the sea, she would miss the family more. So she decides to stay.



Vocabulary Lists

On this page are vocabulary lists which correspond to each sectional grouping of chapters, as outlined in the Table of Contents on page 2. Vocabulary activity ideas can be found on page 10 of this book.

SECTION 1

(Chapters 1 through 5: *Sarah, Plain and Tall*)

hearthstones	holler	wretched	feisty
shuffling	energetic	pesky	wild-eyed
windbreak	flax	paddock	mica

SECTION 2

(Chapters 6 through 9: *Sarah, Plain and Tall*)

reins	tumbleweeds	petticoat	sputtering
whickering	primly	squall	pungent
nasturtiums	eerie	peering	squawk

SECTION 3

(Chapters 1 through 6: *Journey*)

rantry	dimwitted	unearthing	stills
sun-dappled	mingling	besotted	grainy
dialogue	shimmery	haughtily	banished
bureau	introspection	running-board	passenger pigeon

SECTION 4

(Chapters 7 through 13: *Journey*)

beckoned	tuckered	blotted	humane
twitch	compost	barren	clapboard
groused	tripod	wryly	motes
claque	chicory	rivulet	metronome