

Novel·Ties

Castle in the Attic

Elizabeth Winthrop



A Study Guide

Written By Myka-Lynn Skoloff

Edited by Joyce Friedland and Rikki Kessler

LEARNING LINKS

P.O. Box 326 • Cranbury • New Jersey 08512

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide to use in conjunction with the book *The Castle in the Attic* consists of lessons for guided reading. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel at its reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for reading development by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits, formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques, will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Preview the book by looking at the title, the cover illustration, and the information on the back cover of the book. What do you think this book will be about? What period of time will be the setting of the book? What do you know about this time period?
2. **Cooperative Learning Activity:** *The Castle in the Attic* is a fantasy. Like many fantasies, however, it has several elements of realistic fiction, such as characters who are like real people and events that could really happen. What other books or films do you know that combine elements of fantasy and reality? Work with a cooperative learning group to make a list of these books and films, indicating parts that were real and those that were fantastic. Compare your responses with those of other groups in your classroom.
3. **Pair/Share:** Suppose you could go back in time on a journey to a place where you would face many challenges. Where would you go? List the items you would take with you in a small backpack. Discuss your list with a partner and tell why you made the choices you did.
4. William, the main character in *The Castle in the Attic*, is learning gymnastics. Some of the stunts he is learning are handsprings, dive rolls, roundoffs, cartwheels, and somersaults. Find out what these gymnastics terms mean. See if you can find pictures of someone performing them or ask a gymnast to demonstrate them for your class.
5. Read the Background Information on page two of this study guide and do some additional research about the process of becoming a knight in medieval times. Then fill in a chart, such as the one below, with the information you learn.

	Age	Responsibilities
page		
squire		
knight		

6. Do some research on the protective clothing worn by knights. Find sketches of armor plate, chain mail, helmets, shields, and tunics. Learn about the advantages and disadvantages of wearing and going to battle dressed in armor. Find out why the use of armor eventually ceased to exist.

CHAPTERS 1, 2

Vocabulary: Draw a line from each word on the left to its definition on the right. Then use the numbered words to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

- | | |
|------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. meet | a. soft metal |
| 2. routine | b. far away |
| 3. bureau | c. set pattern of steps |
| 4. roll | d. turn over and over |
| 5. distant | e. contest |
| 6. stall | f. place where a horse sleeps |
| 7. lead | g. chest of drawers; dresser |

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- I store my foldable clothing in the five drawers of my _____.
- Several teams will compete at the gymnastics _____.
- Once we heard the _____ sounds of people talking, we knew our boat was reaching shore.
- He practiced his gymnastics _____ again and again until it was perfect.
- Tuck your head when you do a backward somersault of a forward _____.
- Put some hay down in the _____ for the horse to lie on.
- Years ago, toy soldiers were usually made of _____.

Read to find out what surprise awaits William in the attic.

Questions:

- Why is William upset when he learns that Mrs. Phillips will be leaving his family?
- Why does Mrs. Phillips think that she has chosen the right present for William? Why had it been so important to her?