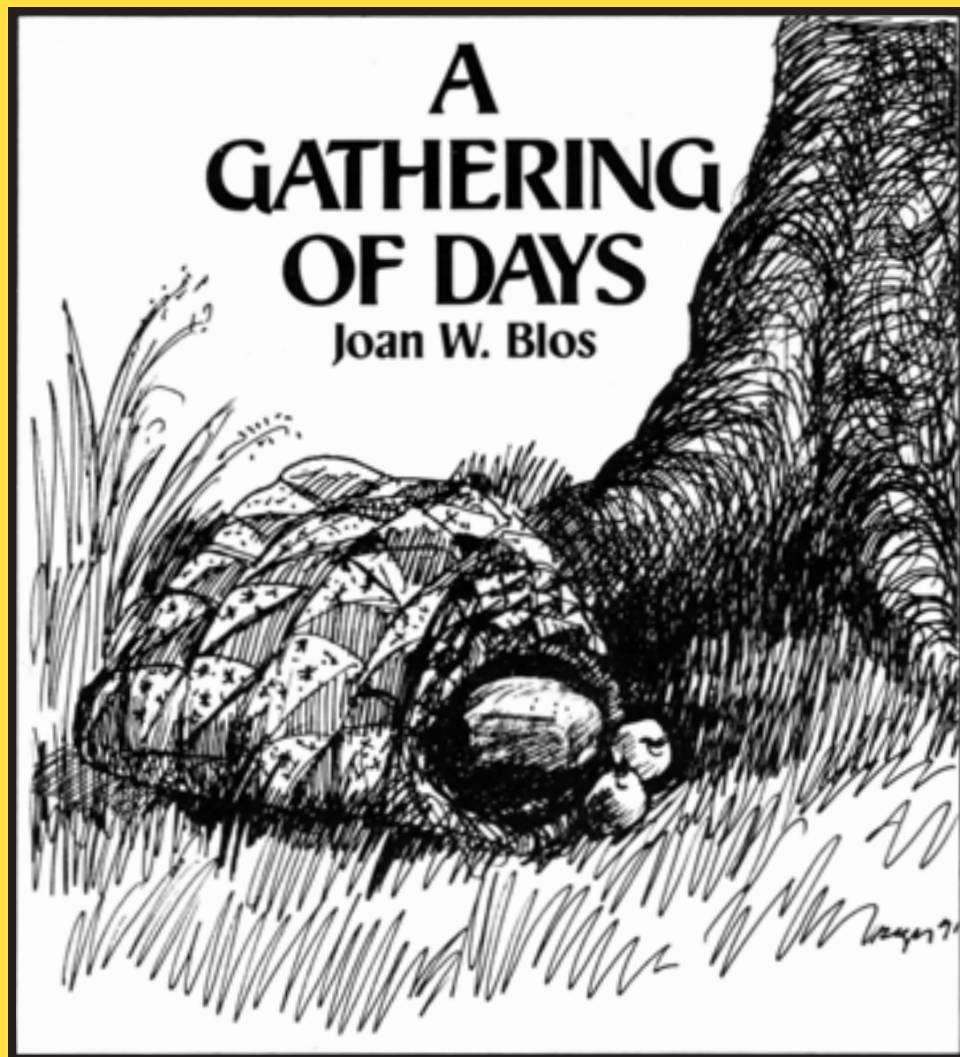


Novel•Ties



A Study Guide

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LEARNING LINKS

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide consists of lessons to use in conjunction with the book *A Gathering of Days*. 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 on 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 guided reading 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 or group of chapters; 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 will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Preview the book by reading the title, looking at the illustration on the cover, and reading the publisher's blurb on the back cover of the book. What do you think the book will be about? When and where does it take place? Notice the Newbery Medal printed on the cover. What does this tell you about the book? Have you ever read any other Newbery winners?
2. Read the letter "To my namesake, Catherine" that appears before Chapter One in the book. What does this reveal about the book's contents? Why do you think the author included this letter?
3. *A Gathering of Days* is a book written in the form of a journal. Have you ever tried to keep a diary or a journal? What are some of the advantages of keeping a record of the events that happen to you and your family? Why is a journal a good place to record your thoughts and ideas? Are there any events or feelings that would be too private to record in a journal?
4. In this book, you will learn about some of the chores and household responsibilities of young people in the 1830s. Think about how young people help out around their homes today. Make a list of the chores that you regularly perform. Then write two paragraphs in which you describe the chores you like to do and those that you dislike.
5. In this story, Catherine must decide whether to follow her father's advice or her own conscience when faced with the dilemma of whether to help someone in trouble. Think of a time you have wanted to help someone but felt your decision might lead to problems. Write about this issue, telling how you resolved it.
6. **Cooperative Learning Activity:** Work with a small cooperative learning group to discuss what life might have been like in a small New Hampshire town in the 1830s, a time before the invention of the automobile, indoor plumbing, central heating, electrical appliances, or lights. Consider the following topics:
 - transportation
 - school life
 - food preparation
 - entertainment
 - clothing
 - medicine
7. During the time of the story, Catherine's father remarries and a stepmother and stepbrother come to live in the Hall household. What might be some of the advantages for Catherine and her younger sister when Father remarries? Can you anticipate any disadvantages? What could Father and his new bride do to make this change easier for the children to accept? What could the children do to make it easier for the adults?
8. Locate pictures of antique quilts or bring actual quilts to display in your classroom. Do some research to learn about the significance of quilts in America as objects of practical importance, as vehicles for social interaction, and as objects of love and sentiment.

Chapters 1 - 3 (cont.)**Questions for Discussion:**

What do you think is meant by the precept, "To thine own self be true"? Do you think this is a good rule to live by?

Literary Element: Characterization

Choose five adjectives that best describe Catherine as revealed in the first three chapters. Write these describing words in the ovals on the word web below. As you continue to read the book, write an example of each trait in the connecting rectangle.

