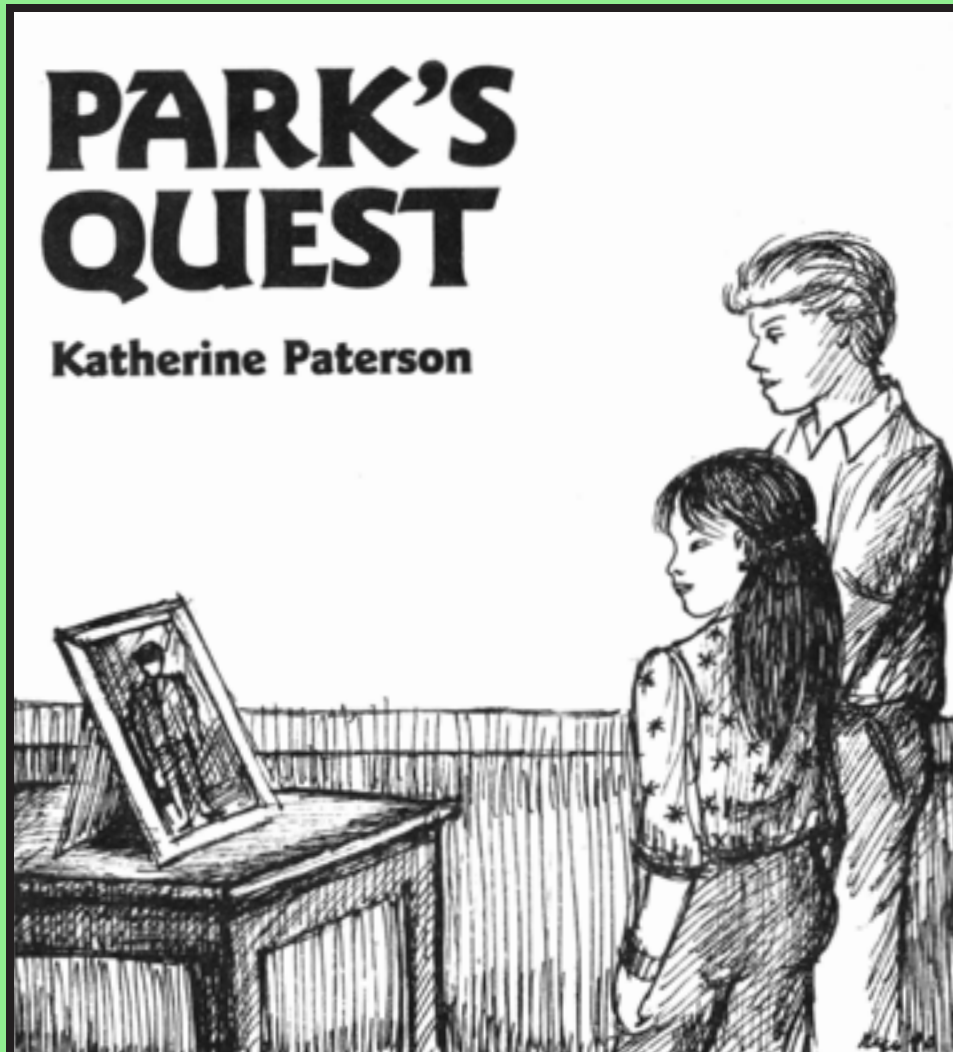


# Novel·Ties



## A Study Guide

Written By Norma Marsh

Edited by Joyce Friedland and Rikki Kessler

**LEARNING LINKS**

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

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Synopsis . . . . .	1
Background Information . . . . .	2 - 3
Pre-Reading Activities . . . . .	4 - 5
Chapters 1, 2 . . . . .	6 - 8
Chapters 3, 4 . . . . .	9 - 10
Chapters 5, 6 . . . . .	11 - 13
Chapters 7-9 . . . . .	14 - 16
Chapters 10-12 . . . . .	17 - 19
Chapters 13, 14 . . . . .	20 - 21
Cloze Activity . . . . .	22
Post-Reading Activities . . . . .	23 - 24
Suggestions For Further Reading . . . . .	25
Answer Key . . . . .	26 - 28

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## For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide consists of lessons to use in conjunction with the book *Park's Quest*. 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.

## King Arthur

The figure of King Arthur, a legendary monarch, is one of the most famous in medieval literature. When Arthur was a boy, England was enduring a civil war caused by the lack of a reigning monarch. In an attempt to settle the dispute, the archbishop of Canterbury invited all the British nobles to London. Sir Ector took his son Kay and foster son Arthur with him. The archbishop showed the nobles a block of stone with an iron anvil on top. A sword was driven through the anvil into the stone. An inscription said that whoever withdrew the sword was the rightful heir to the throne. Many tried, including Kay, but without success. It was Arthur who finally pulled the sword from the stone and became the king.

With the help of the sword and the friendship of Merlin the Magician, Arthur was able to defeat his enemies and build a splendid court at Camelot. During one campaign, he broke the sword in combat and was given a magnificent jeweled sword, Excalibur, by the Lady of the Lake of Avalon. Arthur married Guinevere and happily reigned at Camelot surrounded by the noble knights of the Round Table. Because no one could sit at the head of a round table, it ensured that all of the knights would be equal. One night, a vision of the Holy Grail, the cup used by Jesus at the Last Supper, floated into the hall where the knights were dining. After the vision left, many of the knights vowed to go in search of the Grail. The dispersal of the knights on their quest for the Holy Grail served to weaken the foundations of Camelot, which was soon to suffer yet another blow.

Sir Lancelot, the bravest of the knights, won the heart of Queen Guinevere. Arthur tried to ignore this betrayal to keep the peace. Finally, one night, several of the knights broke into a room where Lancelot and Guinevere were together. Arthur had no choice but to confront the unfaithful pair. When the knight and his love escaped, the court was left divided.

Arthur pursued Lancelot to France, leaving his kingdom in the hands of his son Modred, who took the opportunity to seize the throne. When Arthur returned to confront Modred, fighting broke out. Arthur killed Modred, who managed before he fell to give his father a mortal wound. Facing death, Arthur ordered Excalibur to be returned to the Lady of the Lake. Guinevere, remorseful for her part in this tragedy, retired to a convent. Lancelot lived the rest of his life as a hermit. The few remaining knights of the Round Table journeyed to the Holy Land to fight in the Crusades.

## Pre-Reading Activities (cont.)

7. Katherine Paterson, the author of *Park's Quest*, said the following about writing:
- . . . it would be silly to say that stories cannot be ruined by writers: they can be and have been. But the marvelous thing to behold in your own work or the work of other writers is the story that overcomes the weakness of the writer.\*

How can a writer ruin a story? In what way can a story overcome the weakness of the writer? Give examples from books you have read. As you read the novel, see if you find that the story overcomes any weakness in the writing.

\* From *Something about the Author*, Vol. 53, p. 126. (Detroit: Gale Research, 1988.)