

Charlotte's Web

Lit Link

Grades 4-6

By Ruth Solski
Illustrated by Ric Ward

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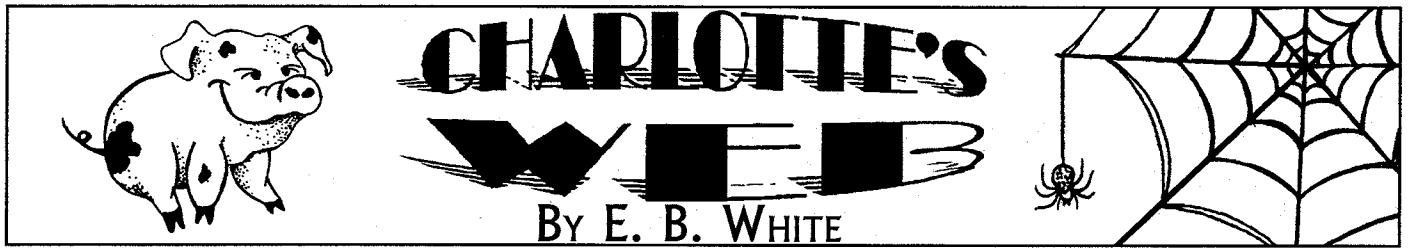
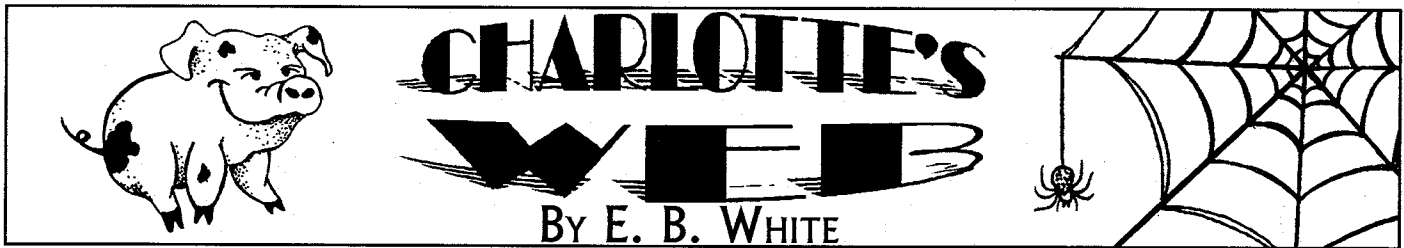


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Expectations

The students will:

- become familiar with the writing style of E.B. White
- develop and enhance their reading comprehension skills orally and in written form
- develop their independent work habits

Summary of the Story

Fern Arable is a little girl who lives with her parents and her brother Avery on a farm. She could not bear the thought of her father killing a runt piglet and begged him to let her raise it. Wilbur and Fern become great friends and their friendship endures even when he has to leave their farm.

At the Zuckerman's farm, Wilbur befriends a spider named Charlotte. She protects, calms, soothes, praises and entertains Wilbur throughout the story. With the help of Templeton the rat, Charlotte's plan to prevent Wilbur's death is successful.

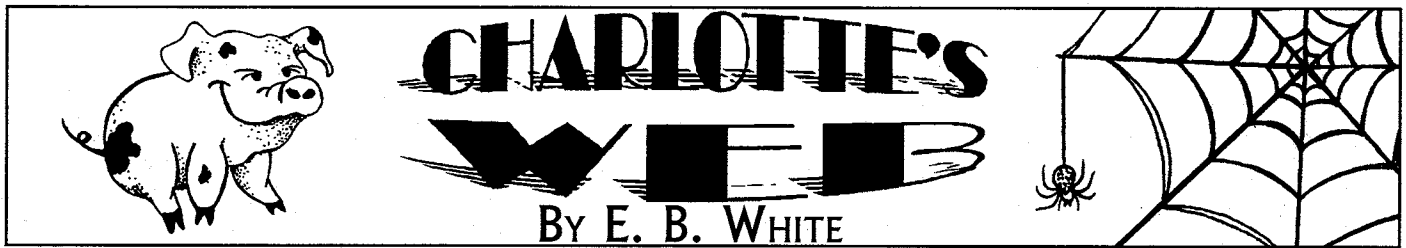
Author Biography

E.B. White

Elwyn Brooks White was born on July 11, 1899 in Mount Vernon, New York. He graduated from Cornell University and then became a reporter with the "Seattle Times" in Seattle, Washington. Later, he worked as a copywriter and eventually became editor of the "New Yorker", a magazine. His writings appeared for many years in the "New Yorker".

In 1970, he was awarded the Laura Ingalls Wilder Medal for his children's books entitled "Stuart Little" and "Charlotte's Web". His third book called "The Trumpet of the Swan" also won several awards. E.B. White is the author of seventeen books of prose and poetry. He received many distinguished literary honors and in 1973 he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Mr. White wrote "Charlotte's Web" because he was very fond of animals. His home was on a farm and he raised pigs. Everyday he fed them himself. He always felt that he was betraying his animals since he knew what would eventually happen to them. Mr. White had always wanted to save a pig and so he did in the story called "Charlotte's Web".



E.B. White also found spiders interesting creatures. He felt they were skillful, amazing and useful. He objected to the ways that parents and adults turned children against them.

One day in his barn, he watched a spider spin an egg sac and deposit her eggs into it. He took the spider and the egg sac to New York with him on a business trip. In the hotel room, he put the spider and her sac in a candy box and left them on his dresser. A few weeks later, the eggs hatched and little spiders emerged from the box through the air holes.

The little spiders strung fine lines from his comb and brush, to his mirror and to his nail scissors. They were busy and almost invisible. Mr. White enjoyed observing the little spiders and his observations helped him to write about Charlotte.

Two other children's books written by E.B. White are "Stuart Little" (1945) and "The Trumpet of a Swan" (1970). "Stuart Little" tells the story of a mouse with human parents. "The Trumpet of the Swan" is about a swan who does not have a voice. His children's books deal with friendship and love and the animals talk and act like people.

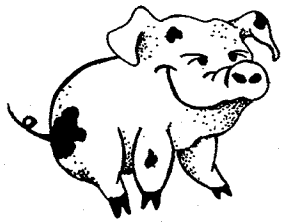
E.B. White was chiefly known as an essay writer. His essays deal with both serious and light subjects and have a clear, witty style. He wrote in an informal, personal manner.

In 1989, at the age of 86, E.B. White died. He will always be remembered by children who read his books and watch the videos about them.

Vocabulary

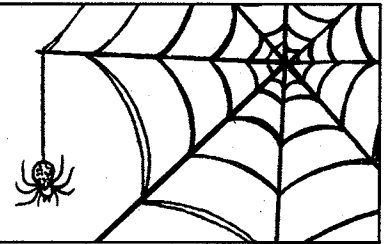
The vocabulary selected may present problems for some students while reading the novel independently. You may wish to duplicate the vocabulary pages for each chapter and discuss the words with your students. The words for each chapter could also be recorded on the chalkboard or a chart to be introduced and discussed before the students read the chapter. Many skills may be taught or reinforced in any of the following areas.

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| a) Syllabication | f) Nouns/Verbs |
| b) Root Words | g) Adverbs/Adjectives |
| c) Singular/Plural | h) Spelling Lessons |
| d) Synonyms | i) Homonyms |
| e) Antonyms | j) Word Meanings |



CHARLOTTE'S WEB

BY E. B. WHITE



Chapter I: Before Breakfast (Pages 1 to 7)

runt, injustice, blissful, appetite, blushed

Chapter II: Wilbur (Pages 8 to 12)

enchanted, oozy, peered, manure, hollered

Chapter III: Escape (Pages 13 to 24)

perspiration, grindstones, commotion, dodged, hullabaloo

Chapter VII: Bad News (Pages 48 to 51)

campaign, pestering, loathed, anaesthetic, conspiracy, hysterics

Chapter VIII: A Talk At Home (Pages 52-54)

vaguely, unremitting, rambled, gratified

Chapter IX: Wilbur's Boast (Pages 55 to 65)

boast, coxa, trochanter, femur, patella, tibia, metatarsus, tarsus, spinnerets, dragline, oblige, sedentary

Chapter X: An Explosion (Pages 66 to 76)

gullible, crisis, straddled, surly, bestirred, drowsed

Chapter XI: The Miracle (Pages 77 to 85)

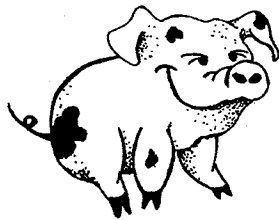
exertions, bewilderment, miracle, miraculous

Chapter XII: A Meeting (Pages 86 to 91)

idiosyncrasy, slogan, supreme, access, baser, adjourned, sensational

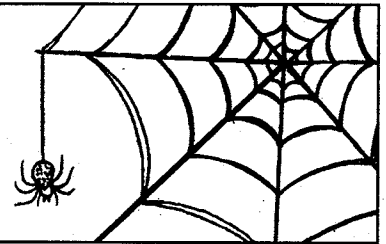
Chapter XIII: Good Progress (Pages 92 to 104)

orb, radial, noble, radiant, aeronaut



CHARLOTTE'S WEB

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Chapter XIV: Dr. Dorian (Pages 105 to 112)

fibbs, mercilessly, sociable, civilly, incessant, associate, advice

Chapter XV: The Crickets (Pages 113 to 117)

monotonous, rumor, anxiety, modest, mere, confident, versatile, management

Chapter XVI: Off to the Fair (Pages 118 to 129)

genuine, buffeted, lacerated, biffed

Chapter XVII: Uncle (Pages 130 to 137)

blatting, listless, ascended

Chapter XVIII: The Cool of the Evening (Pages 138 to 143)

humble, schemer, homesick, masterpiece

Chapter XIX: The Egg Sac (Pages 144-154)

nifty, magnum, opus, languishing, hankering

Chapter XX: The Hour of Triumph (Pages 155 to 162)

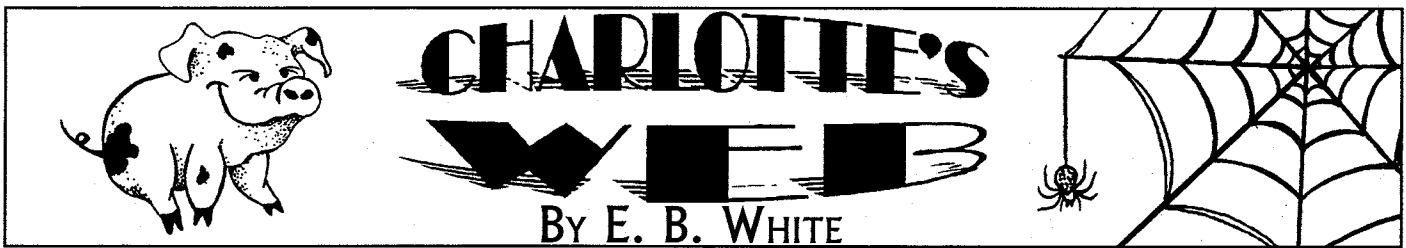
pompous, phenomenon, revived, complimentary, token

Chapter XXI: Last Days (Pages 163 to 171)

emotion, trifle, sentiments, desolation, monkeyshine, wisecracks, desperation, mimicked

Chapter XXII: A Warm Wind (Pages 172 to 184)

garrulous, honor, bleak, updraft, drearily, hallowed



Teacher Input Suggestions

NOTE:

I strongly recommend that the teacher read the novel and the material in this novel study well in advance of implementing them into his/her program. The teacher's interest and knowledge of the story is essential in order to maintain the enthusiasm of the students.

1. The novel study unit on the book "Charlotte's Web" can be used with the Science Unit entitled "All About Spiders", #SSB1- 58. Both are published by S&S Learning Materials in Canada and On The Mark Press in the United States. The novel study could be implemented into your reading program and the Science Unit could be used in your Science Program. This is an ideal way to correlate two subject areas and to make reading more meaningful.
2. Introduce the world of spiders in any of the following ways.
 - a) Read poetry and stories about spiders.
 - b) Participate in a spider hunt and have your students observe them in the environment.
 - c) Locate books and magazines on spiders from your school resource center.
 - d) Create a bulletin board display with pictures of different types of spiders.
 - e) Show films and filmstrips on spiders.
3. Discuss the reasons why people fear and dislike spiders. Record the reasons on a chart. Classify, with the students, the ones that are fact and the ones that are fiction.
4. Brainstorm for facts the students know about pigs and spiders. Record each set of facts on separate charts. As the novel study progresses add information about either animal the students find out while reading the story.
5. Show the video of "Charlotte's Web" after the students have completed the novel study for enjoyment. Discuss the story line and compare it to the novel.

Reading the Novel

1. Distribute the books to the group of students who will be reading the novel. Have them peruse the cover and discuss the title, the pictures of the characters on it, the author and the illustrator.
2. Discuss the next five pages as to the way the publisher has set them up. Have the students locate the name of the publisher and where the book was published. The students should note the copyright date of its first publication. Review the copyright statement and why it is put there.