

Novel•Ties

My Louisiana Sky

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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 *My Louisiana Sky*. 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.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Louisiana

Louisiana is one of the West South Central states of the United States. It is on the northwestern coast of the Gulf of Mexico, at the mouth of the Mississippi River. The warm wet climate and the rich soils deposited by the Mississippi and other waterways make Louisiana a leading agricultural state.

Named for the French King Louis XIV, Louisiana was ruled by France from 1714 until 1762, when Spain gained possession. In fact, the state's present name is a combination of the French *Louisiane* and the Spanish *Luisiana*. During the 17th and 18th centuries, both French and Spanish settlers colonized the state. After 1763, the Acadians came from formerly French Canada. The Latin culture of these people's descendants, who are called Creoles and Cajuns, is evident in the speech, food, and religion of the southern part of the state.

After the United States purchased Louisiana in 1803, Anglo-Saxon Protestants from the other states settled north Louisiana. Louisiana became a state in 1812. It seceded in 1861, but was readmitted in 1868 following the Civil War.

The state's civil code is based on Roman law and its counties are known as parishes. "Parish" is actually a church term for administrative areas of the Roman Catholic Church. There are sixty-four parishes in Louisiana, each providing local services.

The state capital is Baton Rouge, meaning "red stick" in French. The city got its name when a French explorer spotted a red stick on the bluffs above the Mississippi River. The stick marked the territory of two Native American nations. In 1719, the French set up a fort on the strategic site. Baton Rouge became the permanent state capital in 1882. Located on the east bend of the Mississippi River in the south-central part of the state, the city is one of Louisiana's leading communities.

Segregation

Although the Civil War freed the slaves, by the early 1900s Southern African Americans were rigidly separated from whites in almost all aspects of everyday life. This separation was called segregation. Put into effect by various state laws, segregation was approved by the Supreme Court in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. In that decision, the Court upheld the principle of "separate but equal."

Southern African Americans found it more and more difficult to receive a good education, to obtain other than menial jobs, or to be served in public establishments. Local laws often denied them the right to vote. They were forced to use separate facilities, such as drinking fountains and restrooms; they had to sit in the back of buses and streetcars; and black children could not go to school with white children, nor could black athletes play on teams with whites. This system of segregation became so common that by the 1950s most people assumed that it had always existed.

Louisiana

