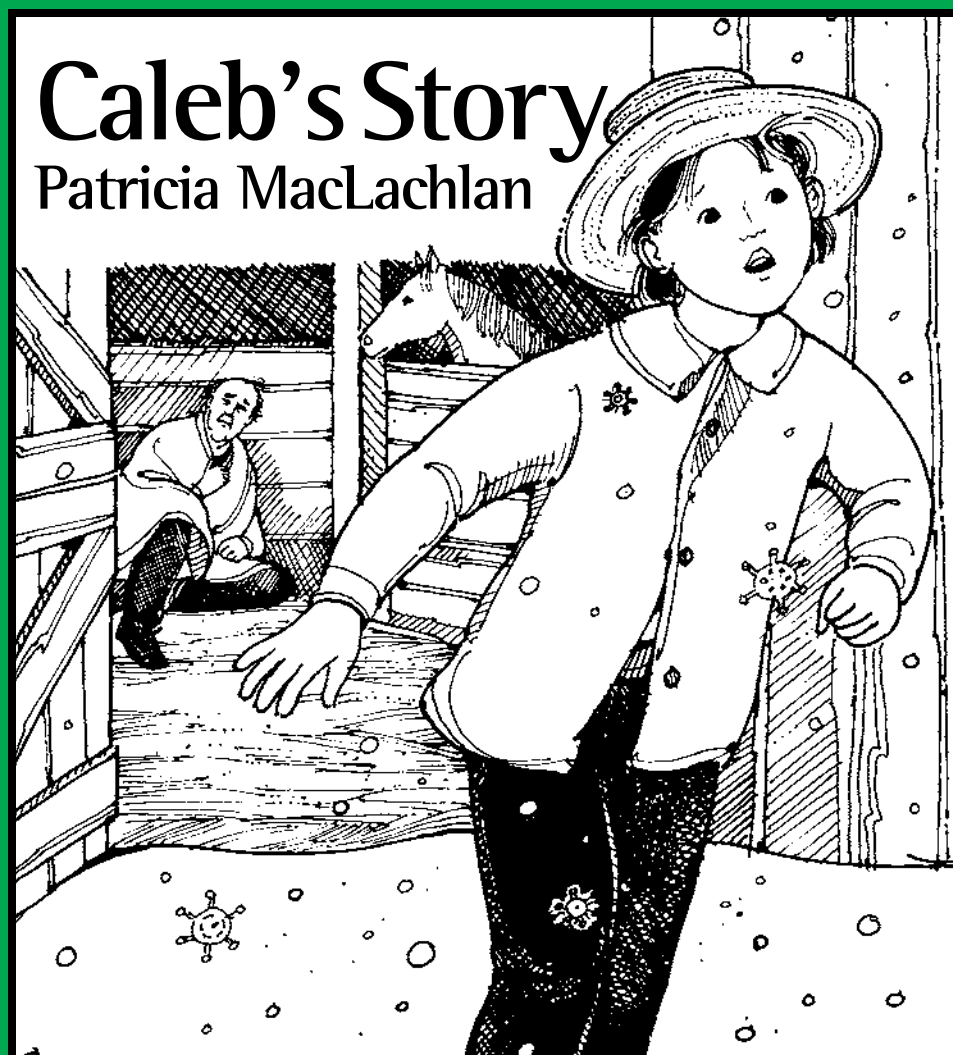


Novel·Ties



Caleb's Story

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A Study Guide

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LEARNING LINKS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Synopsis	1
About the Author	2
Pre-Reading Activities	3
Chapters 1, 2	4 - 6
Chapters 3, 4	7 - 10
Chapter 5	11 - 12
Chapters 6, 7	13 - 15
Chapters 8, 9	16 - 17
Chapter 10	18 - 19
Chapters 11, 12	20 - 21
Cloze Activity	22
Post-Reading Activities	23 - 24
Suggestions For Further Reading	25
Answer Key	26 - 27

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide to use in conjunction with a specific novel 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 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 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 ACTIVITIES

1. Preview the book by reading the title and author's name. Then look at the cover illustration. When and where do you think this story takes place? What do you think it will be about? Write a prediction and share it with a partner. Have you read any other books by the same author?
2. *Caleb's Story* describes life on the South Dakota prairie and takes place while the Great War (World War I) is being fought in Europe. Look in books or on the Internet to locate photographs showing prairie life during that period. Notice what people wore, where they lived, and the types of work they did. What were some of the hardships faced by a Midwestern farm family in the early part of the twentieth century?
3. *Caleb's Story* is the third book in the Newbery Award-winning series about the Witting family. If you have read either of the first two books in this series, talk to your classmates about *Sarah, Plain and Tall* and *Skylark*. Discuss the characters, the setting, and the plot. Comment briefly on the role of Caleb in each of these books and tell whether he was a major or a minor character.
4. As this book opens, Caleb has just been given a blank journal by his older sister Anna, who loves to write. Why do you think people keep journals? What are some of the challenges of keeping a journal? What might be some of the rewards that come from faithful journal writing?
5. Scan the book to notice that the author often begins or ends a chapter with an italicized passage, just as she did in *Sarah, Plain and Tall* and *Skylark*. Some of these passages, which are excerpts from Caleb's journal, allow him to share his hopes, his fears, and his innermost thoughts. As you read each italicized passage, think about the purpose that it serves. How does it help you to better understand the thoughts, feelings, or actions of the characters?
6. In this story, there is great tension between two family members that spills over and affects the rest of the family. Think about a time when a disagreement between others had an impact on you. How were you affected? What did you do to try to resolve the disagreement? How was the disagreement finally settled?

Chapters 1, 2 (cont.)

Questions:

1. Why did Caleb accuse Cassie of having imaginary friends?
2. Why was Anna going to town? Why did Sarah caution her to be careful?
3. How did the family prepare for the first winter storm?
4. What surprising discovery did Caleb make in the barn? How did Sarah react? What did this reveal about her character?
5. How did the family make the man feel welcome?

Questions for Discussion:

1. What role did letters play in Sarah and Papa's relationship? Do letters play the same role today? What other forms of communication do distant family members or friends use?
2. Caleb mentioned that Anna had done something terrible by giving him a journal. Why do you think he felt this way? What presents have made you feel anxious? Did this feeling change over time?
3. Anna tells Caleb that everyone is not a writer, but everyone can write. What do you think she means by this observation? Do you agree or disagree?

Literary Devices

- I. *Point of View*—Point of view in literature refers to the person telling the story. It could be the author as narrator, or one of the characters in the story. From whose point of view is this story told? How did you know?

- II. *Simile*—A simile is a figure of speech in which two unlike objects are compared, using the words “like” or “as.” For example:

In Anna's journal the words walk across the page like bird prints
in the mud.

What is being compared?

What is the effect of this comparison?
