The Wolves of Willoughby Chase

By

Joan Aiken

A Novel Study by Nat Reed
# The Wolves of Willoughby Chase

*By Joan Aiken*

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**About the author:** Nat Reed has been a member of the teaching profession for more than 30 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, please visit the websites [www.reedpublications.org](http://www.reedpublications.org) and [www.novelstudies.org](http://www.novelstudies.org).

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This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on one chapter of *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* and is comprised of five of the following different activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language Activities
- Extension Activities

**Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)**

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to:

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases... including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story ... and many others.

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking. Students will also be expected to provide clear answers to questions and well-constructed explanations. It is critical as well that students be able to relate events and the feelings of characters to their own lives and experiences and describe their own interpretation of a particular passage.

A strength of the unit is that students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A *portfolio cover* is included (p.7) so that students may organize their work and keep it all in one place. A *Student Checklist* is also included (p.6) so that a record of completed work may be recorded.

**Themes** which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include family and friendship, loyalty, personal growth, hypocrisy, child abuse and learning to accept life's difficulties.
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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words / phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homonyms
3. Identifying / creating alliteration
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify personification.
7. Identify anagrams
8. Listing compound words
9. Identifying parts of speech
10. Identify/create similes
11. Identification of root words

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a time line of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Complete Five W's Chart
4. Identify cliffhangers
5. Identify the climax of the novel.
6. Complete a Story Pyramid

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist/antagonist
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Compare characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Create a poem
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Chart
9. Complete a KWS Chart
10. Create a friendly letter.

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip
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Synopsis

‘The ship on which your mamma and papa set sail has been sunk off the coast of Spain. You are an orphan, Miss Green, like your cousin, and from now on it is I who have sole say in your affairs. I am your guardian.’

Even the wolves that surround the great house of Willoughby Chase are not as cruel and merciless as the evil Miss Slighcarp. Bonnie and Sylvia must use all their wits to survive.

The first title in the now classic Willoughby Chase saga is set in 1832 in a period of English history that never happened. King James III is on the throne and a newly opened Channel Tunnel gives access to ravaging wolves... [The Publisher]

One genuine small masterpiece. Time Magazine.

Author Biography

Joan Aiken

Aiken was born in Rye, Sussex in 1924. Her father, Conrad Aiken was a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet and both her brother and sister were also accomplished writers. Joan Aiken wrote more than 100 books including more than a dozen collections of fantasy stories, plays and poems. She was a lifelong fan of ghost stories. Aiken was married to the landscape painter and teacher, Julius Goldstein. They had two children and divided their time between Sussex, England and New York. Joan Aiken died in 2004 at the age of 79.
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Student Checklist

Student Name: ________________________________

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade/Level</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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Name: ___________________________
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Chapter 1

Before you read the chapter:

The protagonist in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* is Bonnie, a young girl born into a rich family, who will find her fortunes turned upside down as events unfold. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. What do you think makes for an intriguing and memorable protagonist?

Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>indigence</th>
<th>inevitable</th>
<th>impetuosity</th>
<th>indulgence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dignified</td>
<td>deportment</td>
<td>reverence</td>
<td>commodious</td>
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</table>

1. It seemed ____________ that sooner or later he would win a game of chess.
2. The family always treated the old lady with a high degree of ____________.
3. The spoiled little rich girl received every ____________ the family could bestow on her.
4. The prince carried himself in a most ____________ manner.
5. She opened the door revealing a ____________ set of rooms.
6. The butler's ____________ from being ignored was soon felt by everyone present.
7. Charlie's ____________ was always getting him into trouble.
8. The governess will attempt to improve her ward's ____________ so that she might be received into polite company.
Questions

1. What is the **setting** of the story at the beginning of Chapter One?

2. Whose arrival was Bonnie eagerly expecting at the beginning of this chapter?

3. What was your first impression of Miss Slighcarp? On what evidence did you base this?

4. Describe the physical altercation which occurred between Bonnie and Miss Slighcarp. What does this incident reveal about Bonnie's personality/character?

5. What responsibilities did Miss Slighcarp assume at Willoughby Chase?

6. What did Sir Willoughby find mysterious about Miss Slighcarp's arrival? What was her explanation?
A. Anagrams

An anagram is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word WAS can also form the word SAW. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:

a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in the first chapter of *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Anagram</th>
<th>Clue</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>great</td>
<td>Price something once more.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shovel</td>
<td>Small, squalid buildings.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>golden</td>
<td>Yearned.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>snow</td>
<td>Possesses.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>slender</td>
<td>Banks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>wrestle</td>
<td>Bake under the noonday sun.</td>
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<tr>
<td>secret</td>
<td>Builds.</td>
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Now find two additional words from the first chapter which have interesting anagrams to see if you can stump a classmate.

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<tr>
<th>Word</th>
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**Good to Know ~ Timber Wolves (Fascinating Facts)**

Wolves are the largest members of the dog family, which also includes coyotes and dingos. There are approximately 150,000 wolves in the world today. Did you know that a hungry wolf can eat 20 pounds of meat at a single meal, which is akin to a human eating 100 hamburgers. Male and female wolves that mate usually stay together for life. Under certain conditions a wolf's howl can be heard six miles away. Wolves do not make good guard dogs as they are naturally afraid of the unfamiliar and will hide from visitors.
B. Quatrain Poems about Wolves.

The *quatrain* is a popular form of rhymed verse. It is a poem of four lines, is usually light and can be humorous. The following quatrain was written by the famous poet, Atrocious Halitosis. It is called, *Where Wolves Walk.*

*The timber wolf’s a furry chap,*  
*He’s got sharp teeth and claws to match.*  
*He hunts and prowls amid the trees,*  
*And goes wherever he may please.*

Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of A – A – B – B. Other rhyming schemes include: ABAB, AAAA, AABA, ABBA, ABBB, and AAAB.

Your task is to write your own quatrain poem. You may choose a rhyming scheme that fits with your own personal creation. The theme should have something to do with the themes established in the first chapter of our novel.

**The Quatrain Poem**

Now create your own Quatrain Poem. Your poem must follow the format of a quatrain poem described above (and must rhyme).

**Title:** ________________________________

<table>
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<th>Line 1</th>
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**C. Personification** is giving human qualities to something that is not human. The following example is taken from Chapter 1: … *the sombre sighing of the wind*…

Describe how the wind is personified in this example.

Create your own example of personification.

As you continue to read through the novel be on the lookout for other examples of this literary device. If you should find one, come back to this question and enter it below.

**D.** Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here's one such example: from Chapter One: *It would have taken me a weary while to walk*…

Using your imagination, create your own examples of **alliteration** from the following topics. Each example must contain a minimum of **three** words.

| A wolf's howl. |  |
| A blizzard. |  |
| Your choice. |  |
Extension Activity

Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A story-board can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel. Complete the story-board below illustrating the events described in the first chapter of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

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