

A Note To Teachers

In this extension activity you will be provided with a synopsis of each chapter in *Shark Beneath the Reef* along with suggested activities. Of course, these activities are not meant to be assigned to all students. Rather, a variety of suggestions are made so that you can pick and choose appropriate activities to meet the needs of your students and to achieve your educational goals.

Activities include the following:

Vocabulary for each chapter is introduced with a list of new words that will be encountered and suggested activities. These words are introduced in context. The sentences have been written to allow students to determine the meaning of the targeted word based upon the context of the sentence. In this way it is hoped that students will not only learn new words, but also will learn the important skill of using context to determine meaning. Word searches, games, and writing activities are presented to reinforce the vocabulary.

Literal comprehension questions that serve as pre-reading guides are included for each chapter. These questions can also be assigned as discussion questions for groups or cooperative learning partners. It is helpful to ask students to note the page number where the question is answered by the author. This helps readers learn to use the text to prove their answers (a skill that is helpful when taking standardized tests and a study skill that can be applied in subject area classes). The exercise gives you a quick check as to students' understanding of the book without having to read written answers to literal type questions. Your valuable time can be spent helping students refine critical reading and writing skills.

After each chapter is read, there are critical reading questions, writing ideas, and activities for students to complete. These may be done by individuals, partners, or groups of students. Any number of these thinking and writing questions/activities may be assigned or chosen by the students depending upon your classroom situation, the level of the students, and goals to be achieved. Suggested activities include understanding character traits, developing cause and effect relationships, understanding author's purpose, relating situations to students' life experiences, and map reading skills.

Spelling skills are developed by using Word Study activities. A list of words is harvested from each chapter that relates to a specific goal in the Syllables and Affixes Stage as described in *Words Their Way*, Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, and Johnston. The lists follow the sequence described in the book. Spelling sorts are suggested and game ideas are provided.

A Few Notes For the Teacher About Jean Craighead George

I'm sure this isn't your first introduction to this Newbery award winning author. Many of us have enjoyed reading her books to our classes or using them as instructional books in literature groups. I began reading *Julie of the Wolves* with my classes when I first started teaching twenty years ago. It seems there has always been something in every book to capture a student's imagination. Many of my children have been fascinated with the way she weaves animal behavior into the story line. Specific details about robins come to life in *Who Really Killed Cock Robin?* Crows, ducks, and owls take on human behavior in the autobiographical, *The Tarantula In My Purse*. Animals, always a favorite of children, open the door to a higher level of reading for many. Other students have been able to see their own struggles in the characters even though the cultural settings may be different. Students are able to visit unique areas when they read the many books Jean Craighead George has to offer.

A prolific author of over one hundred books, Jean graduated from Penn State University with a degree in Science and Literature. She was a reporter for *The Washington Post* and a member of the White House Press Corps during the 1940's. Coming from a family of naturalists, it is not surprising that she turned to writing about the natural world she grew to love as a child. Her father was an entomologist but looked to an entire ecosystem to help explain behaviors of various insects. Perhaps this is the background for her eco-mystery, *The Fire Bug Connection*, which integrates information about insects, birds, mammals, and plants to shed light on an environmental question. It was her father who taught Jean and her twin brothers to hunt, fish, and live in harmony with nature. The

family would often spend weekends camping in the woods around their Washington D.C. home. Jean's first pet was a baby turkey vulture who grew into a wing span of almost six feet. Finally, after too many trips around the kitchen, the bird had to be shipped to a zoo in Scotland. At the time this was devastating to the young Jean. She came to appreciate the laws, passed in the 1970's, which would protect nature by requiring licenses to keep migratory birds and certain mammals. She and her family were "foster parents" to many wild creatures that came to their home for a time, taught them their ways, and then moved back to the wild when the time was right.

Jean and her three children, Luke, Craig, and Twig enjoyed the company of nature in their brown-shingled home in Chappaqua, New York. They carried on the tradition of caring for and learning about the many creatures that made their way to the George home. Her children have not forgotten their upbringing and all now enjoy careers in the environmental field. Craig is a biologist in Barrow, Alaska. Luke has a Ph.D. in conservation biology, and Twig is an accomplished writer of children's books. You may enjoy reading her latest book about sharks, *Swimming With Sharks*. Set in the Florida Keys, it details a young girl's understanding of her grandfather and their battle against the distressing practice of finning.

Jean Craighead George remains an active traveler, researcher, and animal lover. She returns to the family home in Chappaqua to write and enjoy her current pets. You and your students may contact her at jean@jeancraigheadgeorge.com