

Novel•Ties

REDWALL

BRIAN JACQUES



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 *Redwall*. 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.

Pre-Reading Activities (cont.)

7. Redwall Abbey is modeled after a medieval abbey in which a large community of men or women belonging to a religious order lived off the land self-sufficiently. Wealthy abbeys were constructed like castles with high walls for protection against hostile forces. To learn more about the construction and social organization of medieval abbeys and castles, look through David Macaulay's book *Castle* (Houghton Mifflin) and Fiona MacDonald's book *Medieval Cathedral* (Bedrick). You might also want to do some research about medieval times by looking at these websites: <http://www.castlesontheweb.com> and <http://www.learner.org/exhibits/middleages>.
8. Brainstorm with your classmates to fill in the first two columns of a K-W-L chart, such as the one below, to determine what you know about life in medieval times. Be sure to consider castle life, the function of monasteries during this era, and the traditions of chivalry and courtly love. When you finish the book, return to the chart and fill in the third column.

Medieval Life

What I Know — K —	What I Want to Know — W —	What I Learned — L —

9. Learn about the legend of King Arthur and his search for the Holy Grail. As you read *Redwall*, compare this book to the legend upon which it is based.

Book One: Chapters 1 - 9 (cont.)

Questions:

1. Why did the Abbot chide Matthias for wanting to be a warrior mouse like his hero Martin?
2. What unexpected event happened near the Abbey during the preparations for the Abbot's Golden Jubilee feast?
3. What evidence shows that the abbot of Redwall Abbey and those of his order are generous to their neighbors and live in harmony with them?
4. Why did Matthias and Constance bring their passengers in the haycart back to the abbey instead of taking them home?
5. How did the abbot and members of the Council of Elders respond to the report of Matthias and Constance?
6. Why was Cluny's dream frightening?
7. How did Cluny the Scourge gain power over his troops?
8. Why did the abbot hesitate before making the decision to defend the abbey?
9. Why did Methuselah compare Matthias to the legendary Martin?

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why do you think the author alternated chapters about the abbey and its inhabitants with those about Cluny the Scourge and his horde?
2. How has the author set up this novel as a conflict between the forces of good and evil?
3. In novels, dreams are often used by authors as a way of predicting future events. What important story event might Cluny's dream foretell?

Literary Devices:

- I. *Irony* — Irony refers to a situation that is the opposite of what is expected. Considering the description of Matthias at the beginning of the book, what is ironic about his aspirations?

- II. *Point of View* — Point of view in a book of fiction refers to the person telling the story. It could be one of the characters or it could be the author narrating the story. Who is telling the story?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of this point of view?

Why do you think the author has chosen to use this point of view?
