

# Readers in Residence

SAMPLE

Volume 1

Sleuth

by Debra Bell, PhD

with

Colette Bailes

Lauren Bailes



Apologia Educational Ministries, Inc.



READERS IN RESIDENCE, VOLUME 1

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For  
Joseph Francisco

With love,  
Situ

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# Quick Guide

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**The Answer Key** (sold separately) includes teaching notes about the philosophy and methods of *Readers in Residence*. These notes also explain the repeated elements in the Student Text and Workbook and their purpose. You will also find information about how to use the program with a co-op and how we choose the books that are used.

**T**he *Readers in Residence* (RIR) series is a reading comprehension, literature, and vocabulary program. It may be used alone or in conjunction with the *Writers in Residence* series. Together the two programs provide a full year of language arts. In *Readers in Residence*, while studying some of the finest books in children's literature, students learn how to do the following:

- ☆ understand the author's craft, choices, and intentions
- ☆ recognize the literary elements authors use to create fiction and nonfiction
- ☆ make inferences from the details in the text plus their own prior knowledge and experience
- ☆ decode the meaning of unfamiliar words from context clues
- ☆ build a rich and varied vocabulary
- ☆ identify and understand figures of speech such as personification, metaphor, and hyperbole
- ☆ notice how expert writers employ the conventions of the English language (punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and usage) to achieve clarity
- ☆ A short overview of the books and topics taught in volume 1 is provided on the next page. Systematic review of these topics is incorporated throughout the *Readers in Residence* series.

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## ***Readers in Residence, volume 1 – Sleuth***

### **Unit 1: *Sarah, Plain and Tall***

**Genre:** historical fiction

**Focus:** character development, inferences, context clues, analysis, theme

**Unit project:** character map

### **Unit 2: On Your Own Historical Fiction**

**Genre:** historical fiction

**Focus:** character development, comparison and contrast

### **Unit 3: *Charlotte's Web***

**Genre:** animal fantasy

**Focus:** plot development, denotation, connotation, figures of speech

**Unit Project:** storyboard

### **Unit 4: On Your Own Animal Fantasy**

**Genre:** animal fantasy

**Focus:** plot, comparison and contrast

### **Unit 5: *Because of Winn-Dixie***

**Genre:** contemporary realistic fiction

**Focus:** setting, figures of speech, turning point, theme

**Unit Project:** set design

### **Unit 6: On Your Own Your Choice**

**Genre:** fiction

**Focus:** setting, comparison and contrast



**Forthcoming:**

**Volume 2 – Detective, Volume 3 – Investigator, Volume 4 – Analyst**



# Preface

When I reflect on the highlights of our homeschool experience with my adult children, the books we shared together rank high on our list of fond memories. When I think of the most valuable tools my husband and I found to help us raise children with a moral compass, those same books rank high on that list too. The benefits of sharing books together are numerous:

- ☆ Books help children to develop moral character and spiritual insight.
- ☆ Books help children to develop compassion for and understanding of others.
- ☆ Books awaken children's intellectual curiosity.
- ☆ Books give children access to experiences, knowledge, and possibilities they would not have otherwise.
- ☆ Books form bonds among the readers who experience them.

But this expansive world of books is diminished if children do not read with full understanding. If they cannot read critically with insight, recognize figurative language and the additional layer of meaning it contributes, or most importantly, make inferences the author assumes readers will catch, then much of the benefit of reading is lost.

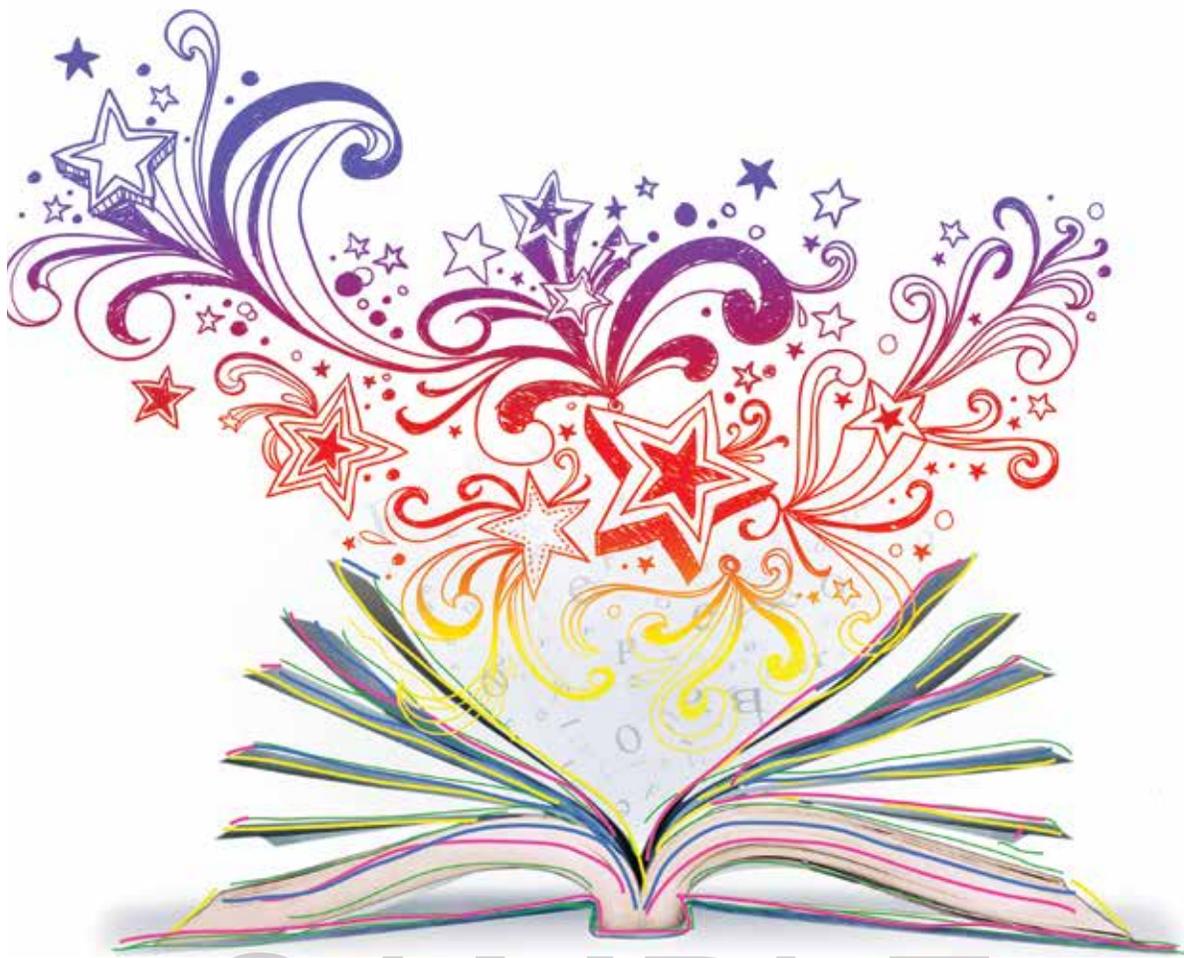
While reading a lot is essential to learning to read with full understanding, it isn't the only necessity. Reading analytically is also required: children need to learn to identify, examine, and understand the mysteries hidden between the lines. The *Readers in Residence* series provides this training. Students learn to recognize the overarching patterns of a story as seen through such elements as character development, plot, and theme. At the same time, they learn to inspect an author's style at close range—reading for inference, connotation, and figurative meaning.

Understanding how a musician composes, how an artist paints, or even how a coach outwits an opponent increases the pleasure we derive from experiencing music, art, or an athletic contest. In the same way, a close analysis of an author's craftsmanship in a few select books will deepen your child's appreciation and enjoyment of all the books he or she reads—and whet an appetite for more.

Finally, at its heart *Readers in Residence* is a celebration of the gift of language from our Creator. What a marvelous thing it is that we can spin words into stories that entertain, surprise, caution, and instruct! My prayer is that reveling in the complexities and possibilities of language will deepen and enrich your family's worship of the Creator—the ultimate giver of stories and language.

Soli Deo Gloria,

Debra Bell



# Welcome, Students, to Readers in Residence!

Hey there! I'm glad you're here. I'm Dr. Debra Bell, and I will be your guide as you work through the reading assignments in this volume.

In this volume of the *Readers in Residence* series, you will complete the following activities:

- ☆ study six books that represent three genres of narrative fiction
- ☆ add many new words to your vocabulary
- ☆ practice new skills you can use to increase your reading comprehension
- ☆ create several fun projects that demonstrate all that you have learned
- ☆ share the joy of reading with your family or friends through the *Readers in Residence* book clubs and discussion starters



In the process you will discover the strategies that expert readers use to crack open the secrets inside the books they read.

Reading well is like detective work.

Detectives solve mysteries by figuring out how to fit together the clues in a way that makes the most sense. Expert readers do the same thing. Books are filled with clues readers must fit together just right to fully understand the overall meaning of the story. This process of collecting clues and connecting dots will increase your reading comprehension and—believe it or not—increase the enjoyment you get from reading books! *Readers in Residence* will show you how to do just that.

If that is not enough to get you working on the case for reading, here are a few more reasons that show you why reading is one of God's great gifts to us.

### empathy—

The ability to understand other people's feelings and circumstances.

### Why Read?

**We read to expand our world.** Books open up the windows of the world. Through them we can soar to faraway places and different times. Reading is a shortcut to a lifetime's worth of knowledge and experience. Reading helps us safely practice making decisions, solving problems, and determining right from wrong. The more we practice these skills through the books we read, the better equipped we will be to do them well in real life.

**We read to develop empathy for others.** Books help us understand others' experiences and problems. They also show us that our own experiences and problems are not unique. Many people have faced something similar. This understanding helps us develop **empathy** for others.

God wants us to be empathetic. Books help us learn how to



do this. No matter when or where the story takes place, we can learn something from the characters' thoughts, situations, and actions. Even though we will never personally experience many of the events that happen in the books we read, we can learn to understand what it feels like to go through similar challenges. Books help us to better understand the events of our own life, and, more importantly, they help us to respond to others' problems with comfort and care.

**We read to join a community.** When you read a book, you become a part of the community of readers who have read that book. Now you have a group to talk with about what you liked or disliked, the questions you still have, and the connections you made to your own life. Not only will the characters in the book feel like friends, but you will also build friendships with other readers based on the books you read and share.

**We read to understand who we are.** In a famous play about the Christian author C. S. Lewis, his character says, "We read to know we are not alone." Even though Lewis himself may never have actually said this, it does sum up why Lewis and many Christians love to read. The books we read can teach us more about the Creator who made us and connect us more deeply to Him (even when God is not directly mentioned in the story). These same books also show us how human beings often make mistakes and hurt others who love them. Even when books are not explicitly Christian, they still show us that we are flawed and in need of a Savior. Fortunately, we are not alone! Our loving Creator has met that need.

Happy Reading!

*Debra Bell*

P.S. You can also e-mail me anything you would like—your suggestions, your stories, your questions. Write to me at [dbell@debrabell.com](mailto:dbell@debrabell.com).

**"Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn."**  
(Romans 12:15, NIV)





## Suggested Daily Schedule

**Note to parents:** You may find that some students need more time to read their OYO book than what the schedule specifies. Please adjust the schedule to fit your student’s needs. Book clubs have not been included in the suggested daily schedule because they require you to accommodate book club members. Please look ahead and schedule Book Clubs at the convenience of your group members.

Week	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
1	<b>Intro to Unit 1</b> Read welcome letter. Read Unit 1 Introduction. Study the unit project rubric.	<b>Module 1</b> Reader’s Questions – 1.7	<b>Module 1</b> 1.8 – 1.11	<b>Module 1</b> 1.12 – Checklist 1
2	<b>Module 2</b> Meet Patricia MacLachlan Reader’s Questions – 2.3	<b>Module 2</b> 2.4 – 2.6	<b>Module 2</b> 2.7	<b>Module 2</b> 2.8 – 2.9
3	<b>Module 2</b> 2.10	<b>Module 2</b> 2.11 – 2.13	<b>Module 2</b> 2.14 – Checklist 2	<b>Module 3</b> Reader’s Questions – 3.3 (Start 3.1)
4	<b>Module 3</b> 3.4 – 3.5 (Continue 3.1)	<b>Module 3</b> 3.6	<b>Module 3</b> 3.7 – 3.8 (Finish 3.1)	<b>Module 3</b> 3.9
5	<b>Module 3</b> 3.10 – 3.11	<b>Module 3</b> 3.12 – 3.13	<b>Module 3</b> 3.14 – 3.16	<b>Module 3</b> 3.17
6	<b>Module 3</b> 3.18 – 3.19	<b>Module 3</b> 3.20 – Checklist 3	<b>Module 4</b> Reader’s Questions – 4.3	<b>Module 4</b> 4.3 – 4.4



## Suggested Daily Schedule

Week	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
7	Module 4 4.5 – 4.7	Module 4 4.8 – 4.10	Module 4 4.11	Module 4 4.12 – 4.13
8	Module 4 4.14	Module 4 4.15	Module 4 4.16 Unit Project	Module 4 4.16 Unit Project
9	Module 4 4.16 Unit Project – 4.16 Rubric	Module 4 Checklist 4	<b>Intro to Unit 2</b> Read Unit 2 Introduction. Pick your book.	Module 5 5.1 – 5.4
10	Module 5 5.5 – 5.6 Read OYO Book	Module 5 Read OYO Book – (5.7 – 5.8)	Module 5 Read OYO Book – (5.7 – 5.8)	Module 5 Read OYO Book – (5.7 – 5.8)
11	Module 5 5.9 – 5.10	Module 5 5.11 – 5.12	Module 5 5.13 – 5.14	Module 5 5.15 – 5.16
12	Module 5 5.17 – 5.18	Module 5 5.19 – Checklist 5	<b>Intro to Unit 3</b> Read Unit 3 Introduction. Study the unit project rubric.	Module 6 Reader's Questions – 6.3
13	Module 6 6.4 – Meet the Illustrator	Module 6 6.5 – 6.7	Module 6 6.8 – 6.9	Module 6 6.10
14	Module 6 6.11 – 6.12	Module 6 6.13 – 6.15	Module 6 6.16 – 6.17	Module 6 6.18 – 6.19

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## Suggested Daily Schedule

Week	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
15	Module 6 6.20 - Checklist #6	Module 7 Reader's Questions - 7.3	Module 7 7.4 - 7.5	Module 7 7.6 - 7.9
16	Module 7 7.10 - 7.11	Module 7 7.12 - 7.14	Module 7 7.15 - Checklist 7	Module 8 Reader's Questions - 8.3
17	Module 8 8.4	Module 8 8.5 - 8.7	Module 8 8.8 - 8.10	Module 8 8.11 - 8.12
18	Module 8 8.13 - Checklist 8	Module 9 Reader's Questions - 9.3	Module 9 9.4 - 9.6	Module 9 9.7
19	Module 9 9.8 - 9.10	Module 9 9.11	Module 9 9.11 - 9.13	Module 9 9.14
20	Module 9 9.15 Unit Project	Module 9 9.15 Unit Project	Module 9 9.15 Unit Project	Module 9 9.15 Rubric - Checklist 9
				<b>Intro to Unit 4</b> Read Unit 4 Introduction. Pick your book.
21	Module 10 10.1 - 10.3	Module 10 10.4 - 10.6 Read OYO Book	Module 10 Read OYO Book (10.7 - 10.8)	Module 10 Read OYO Book (10.7 - 10.8)



## Suggested Daily Schedule

Week	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
22	<b>Module 10</b> Read OYO Book (10.7 - 10.8)	<b>Module 10</b> 10.9 - 10.11	<b>Module 10</b> 10.12 - 10.13	<b>Module 10</b> 10.14 - 10.15
23	<b>Module 10</b> 10.16	<b>Module 10</b> 10.17 - Checklist 10	<b>Intro to Unit 5</b> Read Unit 5 Introduction. Study the unit project rubric.	<b>Module 11</b> Reader's Questions - 11.2
24	<b>Module 11</b> 11.3 - 11.6	<b>Module 11</b> 11.7 - 11.8	<b>Module 11</b> 11.9	<b>Module 11</b> 11.9 - 11.10
25	<b>Module 11</b> 11.11 - 11.12	<b>Module 11</b> 11.13 - 11.15	<b>Module 11</b> 11.16 - 11.17	<b>Module 11</b> 11.17
26	<b>Module 11</b> 11.18 - Checklist 11	<b>Module 12</b> Reader's Questions - 12.2	<b>Module 12</b> 12.3 - 12.4	<b>Module 12</b> 12.4 - 12.5
27	<b>Module 12</b> 12.6 - 12.7	<b>Module 12</b> 12.8 - 12.9	<b>Module 12</b> 12.10	<b>Module 12</b> 12.11 - Checklist 12
28	<b>Module 13</b> Reader's Questions - 13.3	<b>Module 13</b> 13.4 - 13.5	<b>Module 13</b> 13.6 - 13.7	<b>Module 13</b> 13.8 - 13.10
29	<b>Module 13</b> 13.11	<b>Module 13</b> 13.12 - 13.13	<b>Module 13</b> 13.14 - 13.15 Unit Project	<b>Module 13</b> Unit Project

Continued on next page »



## Suggested Daily Schedule

Week	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
30	<b>Module 13</b> Unit Project	<b>Module 13</b> 13.15 Rubric - Checklist 13  <b>Intro to Unit 6</b> Read Unit 6 Introduction. Pick your book.	<b>Module 14</b> 14.1 - 14.3	<b>Module 14</b> 14.4 - 14.5 Read OYO Book
31	<b>Module 14</b> Read OYO Book (14.6 - 14.8)	<b>Module 14</b> Read OYO Book (14.6 - 14.8)	<b>Module 14</b> Read OYO Book (14.6 - 14.8)	<b>Module 14</b> 14.9 - 14.10
32	<b>Module 14</b> 14.11 - 14.12	<b>Module 14</b> 14. 13	<b>Module 14</b> 14.14 - 14.15	<b>Module 14</b> 14. 16 - Checklist 14

### Book Clubs = 5 days

Book Club 1	Book Club 2	Book Club 3	Book Club 4	Book Club 5
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Readers in Residence

# Book Club 1

## Kick-Off Party

### You're Invited!

**P**art of the joy of reading is sharing that joy with others. Each assigned book in *Readers in Residence* concludes with a social event where books are the main topic of discussion. You'll need to recruit a small group of friends or family members who want to talk about books, have some fun, and share the joy of reading with one another. Here's a tip: Book clubs are more fun when people of all ages attend—a sibling, an older friend, a grandparent, or a next-door neighbor. The only requirement is that your book club members must read the assigned book. If your grandparents or friends live out of town, they can still attend your book club using an online application such as Google Hangout, Skype, or FaceTime. Book clubs can even take place completely online.

SAMPLE

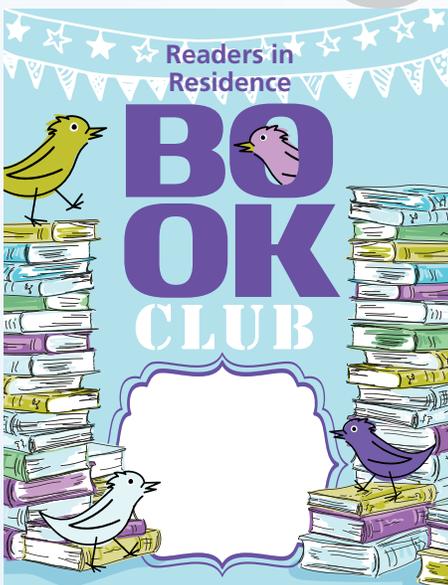
When you complete this book club, you may fill in 50 points on your **SLEUTH'S LOG**.





Ask a parent, teacher, or reading coach to help you make a list of guests to invite. It is just fine if your book club includes only you and a parent or your siblings. You decide what works best for you and your family.

Make sure everyone in the group knows the details about the book club in advance. If you would like to hand out or post invitations, you will find one in the appendix you can use.



### Theme

Let your guests know that the theme for the kick-off book club is favorites. You can use your imagination with this theme. Here are some suggestions:

- ☆ Wear a favorite article of clothing.
- ☆ Wear your favorite color.
- ☆ Bring a favorite possession.
- ☆ Use your favorite expression often in conversation.
- ☆ Talk about your favorite teams, places, movies, etc. at your party.



## Details

**Refreshments:** Ask your guests to bring a favorite snack or drink.

**Activity:** Each guest should bring a favorite book to recommend to others in the book club. Later, everyone will have a chance to do a commercial about his or her book for the group, so tell your guests to think about why their books are so great. Encourage your guests to get creative!

## Food and Festivities

While you feast on the food and drinks, ask your guests to share the name of one of the first books they remember reading—either as a read-aloud or independently. Others should ask follow-up questions about the book the guest remembers.

**Book Commercial:** Ask each guest to present a book commercial about the favorite book he or she brought to recommend. See the list in the margin for ideas.

## Book Discussion

**Ideas:** The best book discussions are free-flowing and lively. Ask an adult to serve as a moderator to kick off the discussion time, gently steer the conversation back on track if it gets too far afield, and make sure that everyone has a chance to participate. Here is a list of questions to help your book club get ready to share a year of reading together:

1. Find out what types of books your guests enjoy reading the most.
2. Find out each person's favorite place to read. Is it on the bed, in a favorite chair, or outside under a tree?
3. Ask each person to describe a book he or she might like to write someday. Who would be in it? Where would it take place? And what would happen?
4. As a group, create a list of the best reasons for reading books!

## How to Make a Great Book Commercial

- Make your listeners curious with an opening statement or question.
- Give several reasons why listeners should read the book.
- Tell listeners a little bit about the author.
- Don't reveal how the story ends.
- Get your listeners excited to read the book too.





### Close

End your party with a time of prayer. Ask the Lord to bless your school year and to help you grow in your love for learning. Thank Him for the marvelous gift of language and the treasure trove of wonderful true stories in His Word.

### Looking Ahead

A book club follows each assigned book in *Readers in Residence*, with a final book club after the last unit:

- ☆ *Sarah, Plain and Tall*
- ☆ *Charlotte's Web*
- ☆ *Because of Winn-Dixie*
- ☆ Grand Finale

Share the reading schedule and the dates you expect to meet with your group.

SAMPLE

# UNIT 1

## Introduction

# ***Sarah, Plain and Tall***

by Patricia MacLachlan

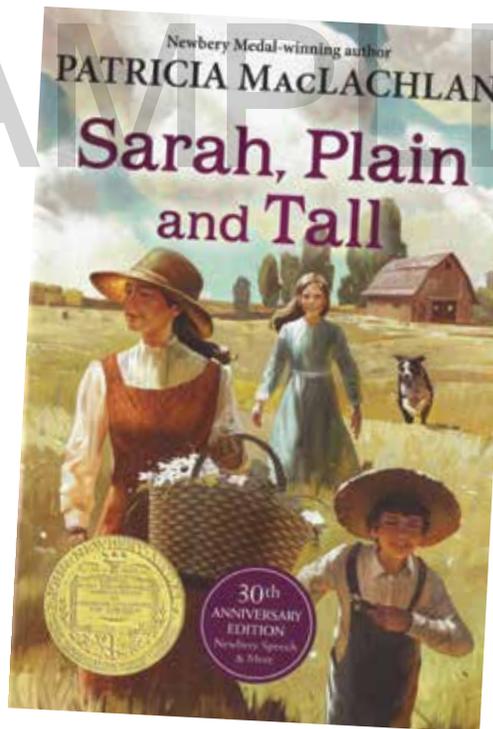
**Genre:** Historical Fiction

**Focus:** Character Development

**ISBN for page number**

**reference:** 978-0062399526

**H**ave you ever ordered something special through the mail? Do you remember the anticipation of waiting for that special item to arrive? What do you think it would feel like to order a new mother by mail? Doesn't that sound strange? But that is exactly what happens in the first book we will study in this volume of the *Readers in Residence* series. Surprisingly, it is based on historical facts. A little more than a century ago, it was not uncommon for a farmer on the American frontier to propose marriage to a mail-order bride back East—a single woman who responded to an advertisement in the newspaper, indicating her willingness to consider such an arrangement.



Use the checklist at the end of each module to keep track of your progress.



**Highlighted words** are defined in the glossary in the back of this book.

**historical fiction** – A realistic story set during a particular time in the past. The information included about the time period must be accurate.

**characterization** (n.) – The way authors create and develop characters to make them seem like real people.

**rubric** (n.) – A special checklist for evaluating or grading writing or other projects.

In this unit you will study *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, winner of the Newbery Medal, one of the most prestigious honors in children’s literature. Even if you have read this book before, you may be surprised by new details you notice this time around. Great books like *Sarah, Plain and Tall* can be read over and over again.

*Sarah, Plain and Tall* is included in *Readers in Residence* because it is an ideal book through which to learn about a type of literature called **historical fiction**. It is also a great book to use to learn about **characterization**, the way that authors create and develop characters in their stories to make them seem like real people. You’ll want to pay close attention to all you learn because at the end of this unit you’ll have a chance to plan a fictional character of your own. And of course, you’ll participate in your second RIR book club, where you and your guests can share your favorite parts of the story with each other. You can also share your plans for a fictional character at your book club meeting, if you like.

In historical fiction the story is usually about a difficult challenge facing the major characters. As the characters solve this challenge, expert readers know to pay attention to how the characters think, speak, act, make choices, and change. By watching characters go through this process, readers learn something about what it was like for the real people who faced the hardships we read about in history books.

### **Rubric for the *Sarah, Plain and Tall* Unit Project**

After studying *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, you will create your own character from a historical time period to show how much you have learned about characterization in this unit. You will complete a character map to organize information about your character. Study the **rubric** you will use for this project now. It will give you a preview of some of the things you will learn about in this unit. In the appendix you will find **REVIEWER’S RUBRIC 4.16**, which a parent, teacher, or reading coach can use to give you feedback after you complete this assignment.



<b>Rubric for Unit 1 Project</b>	
<b>Traits of Good Character Development</b>	<b>Points Earned</b>
<b>Physical Traits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have described some of my main character's physical traits.</li> </ul>	
<b>Character Traits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have described how I will show what my character is like through what he or she says.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have described how I will show what my character is like through what he or she does.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have described how I will show what my character is like through what others say about him or her.</li> </ul>	
<b>Conflict</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have described a significant problem my character faces in the story.</li> </ul>	
<b>Response</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have described how my character responds to the significant problem he or she faces.</li> </ul>	
<b>Changes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have described how my character changes because of the significant problem he or she faces.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have described how I will show this change through what my character learns, says, does, or thinks.</li> </ul>	

**Rubric Point System:**

**5 points** – This part of the project is outstanding.

**4 points** – This part of the project is very strong.

**3 points** – This part of the project shows a lot of effort.

**2 points** – This part of the project needs improvement.

**1 point** – This part of the project is missing.

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**Rubric Point System:**

**5 points** – This part of the project is outstanding.

**4 points** – This part of the project is very strong.

**3 points** – This part of the project shows a lot of effort.

**2 points** – This part of the project needs improvement.

**1 point** – This part of the project is missing.

Rubric for Unit 1 Project	
Traits of Good Character Development	Points Earned
<b>Quality</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have created a complete project with the required elements.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have created a high-quality project. I was careful, thoughtful, and creative.</li> </ul>	
<b>Effort</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I worked hard on my project, and it reflects an appropriate amount of effort.</li> </ul>	
<b>Conventions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have followed the rules for capitalization and punctuation.</li> <li>I have checked to make sure all my words are spelled correctly.</li> </ul>	
<b>Total</b>	

Unit 1 project: 65 points possible

**leuth (n.)** – A detective.

Are you ready to learn how you can become a reading sleuth? Then roll up your sleeves and let the reading begin.

# UNIT 1

## Module 1

# ***Sarah, Plain and Tall***

### **Reader's Questions**

What is an expert reader?

What clues should I gather before I begin to read a book?

What are the characteristics of a historical fiction book?

### **1.1 Reading Is Detective Work**

An expert reader is a good detective. For one thing, detectives solve mysteries by collecting clues, and books contain many mysteries to solve. Readers must figure out what the book is about. Readers must also figure out what new words mean. And readers must understand why characters behave as they do. These are just some of the mysteries you will solve by collecting clues as you read the books in the *Readers in Residence* series.

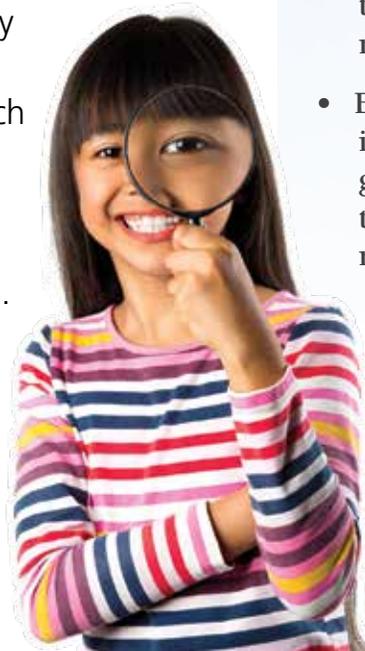
Also, like skilled detectives, expert readers know that they must be on high alert, pay close attention to every detail, and actively engage in the process. This is called **active reading**. Active reading is an approach to reading where readers pay close attention to details, ponder questions about the text, look for clues to meaning, and think deeply about the author's choices before, during, and after reading. Throughout this volume, you will practice active reading. Soon it will be second nature to you. Are you ready? It's time to get cracking on your first big case: *Sarah, Plain and Tall*.

### **Sneak Peek**



In this module you will learn:

- Expert readers study a book's cover before they begin to read.
- Expert readers identify a book's genre before they begin to read.





**active reading** – An approach to reading where readers pay close attention to details, ponder questions about the text, look for clues to meaning, and think deeply about the author's choices before, during, and after reading.

**theme (n.)** – In fiction, the theme is the author's perspective on the significant human experiences that are explored through the story. A story's theme might focus on the importance of friends or the value of hope and perseverance in overcoming loss.

### 1.2 What Is an Expert Reader?

What is an expert reader? That's a fair question to ask before we dive into reading this first book. An **expert** is someone who has special skill or knowledge in a subject acquired through experience and training. That's the goal of *Readers in Residence*—to help you gain experience and training in reading. You will use this expertise for the rest of your life. In fact, reading is a skill that will help you to become an expert in many other areas.

Perhaps you already consider yourself a reader. After all, you are reading this page. What's the difference between a reader and an expert reader? Here's a list of some of the special skills an expert reader is trained to use. Which ones do you already know something about?

- ☆ Expert readers know a lot about how authors put stories together. They know how authors create characters, action, dialogue, and a setting to make their stories believable. They expect authors to increase the tension and suspense to keep their readers reading. And they know that authors sometimes explore a significant aspect of human experience in the book, called a **theme**, to give readers something to think about long after the story has ended.
- ☆ Expert readers also know a lot about words. They understand that words can have many different shades of meaning. They know how to gather context clues from the surrounding words and sentences to make a good guess about what a word means in a specific situation.
- ☆ Expert readers know to activate their imaginations and to allow a story to play like a movie in their minds to better understand the action.
- ☆ Expert readers know to keep their minds actively engaged while reading. They ask themselves questions and look for answers in the **text**. They are aware of what they understand and don't understand, and they take steps to clear up their confusion.



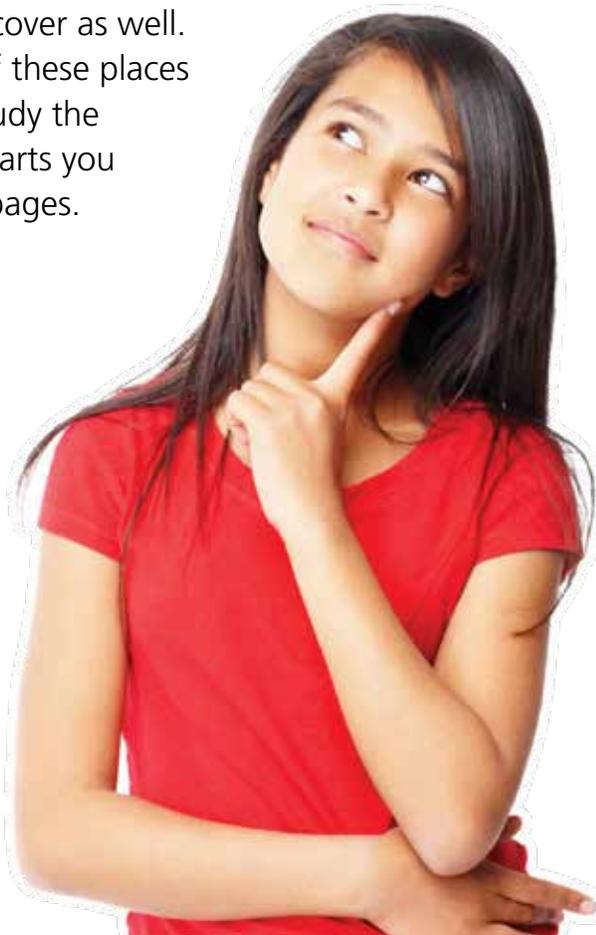
These are just a few of the numerous strategies that expert readers use to better understand what they read. Better understanding helps readers enjoy what they read more deeply.

As you read the assigned books in this volume of the *Readers in Residence* series, you will learn to think like an expert reader. It will require hard work. You'll have to learn to think differently about reading. You'll be required to read slowly sometimes so that you don't miss a single clue the author has included for you. You'll even have to reread some parts. All this will help you notice what authors do to make their stories come alive.

Did you know that expert reading begins even before you crack open the pages? In this first module, you will learn some of the things expert readers do before they start to read a book.

### 1.3 The Clues on the Cover

Expert readers know that the cover of a book contains a lot of important information, so they study it carefully. The front, the back, and the spine make up the cover of a book. Sometimes information is printed on the inside flaps of the cover as well. Make sure to inspect all of these places in each book you read. Study the information about these parts you will find on the next two pages.



**expert (n.)** – Someone who has special skill or knowledge in a subject acquired through experience and training.

**text (n.)** – Words in print or digital format, including books, magazines, newspapers, and websites.

Better understanding helps readers enjoy what they read more deeply.



### READER'S TOOLBOX

Expert readers ask themselves questions about the book and the author before they start to read.



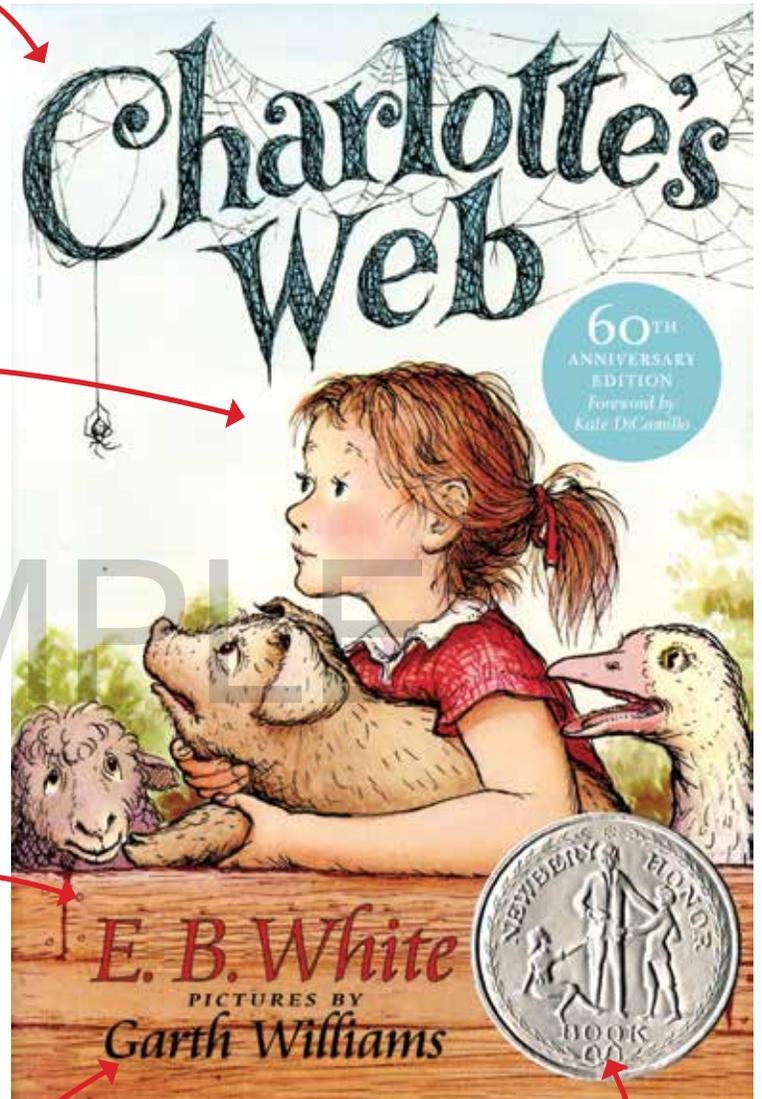
# Clues on the

The **title** of the book appears on the front and the spine. The title may tell directly what the book is about, or it may only give a clue designed to make you curious about what is inside.

The **illustration** on the front cover gives many important clues about what you can expect to learn about in this book. The illustration often shows some of the main characters in the story and can also give you clues about the time and place (called the setting).

The **author**, of course, is the person who wrote the book. If you have read books by the author before, you will have an idea about what kind of story you can expect to find inside.

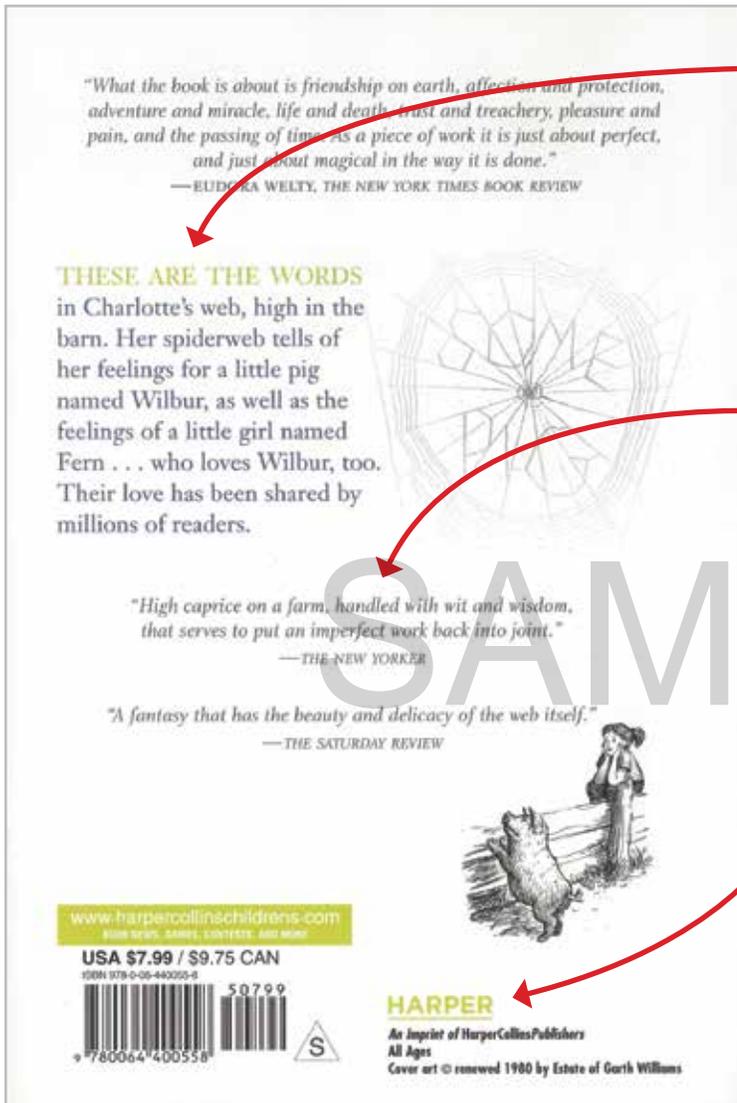
The name of the **illustrator** may also appear on the front cover if the book contains a lot of pictures. The illustrator is the artist who creates the front cover and the pictures inside the book.



If the book or author has won an **award**, this information is often noted on the cover.



# Cover of a Book



A **synopsis** of the book is typically on the back cover. This short description tells what the book is about. This information is intended to make you curious about the story inside.

The back cover may also include endorsements. An **endorsement** is a formal statement of support or approval, usually from a publication that reviews books or from a respected author.

The **publisher** is the company that pays to edit and print the book and then ships or uploads it to a place where you can buy it. The publisher's name or company logo is usually found on the spine as well as the back cover.



## 1.4 Nonfiction or Fiction

**nonfiction (n.)**  
– Information that is primarily factual.

What was the first task God gave to Adam? Naming the animals, of course. Humans have been naming things ever since. Naming is how we classify God's creation. When we classify, we put things that are similar into categories and subcategories. Salmon, goldfish, and minnows all belong to the class of fish. Ostriches, eagles, and peacocks all belong to the class of birds. In science we classify animals by kingdom, phylum, class, order, family, genus, and species.

**fiction (n.)** – A story having to do with imaginary events.

Humans classify books too. Classification of the animal kingdom begins with dividing animals into either vertebrates (with a backbone) or invertebrates (without a backbone). Books are divided into two categories as well.

**infographic (n.)** – A visual representation of information in the form of a chart, graph, or image.

Every book is first classified as either **nonfiction** or **fiction**. Nonfiction books contain information that is primarily factual. They are filled with facts, knowledge, and sometimes opinions. The primary reason an author writes a nonfiction book is to *explain* a subject. Because nonfiction focuses on communicating information, readers must be able to determine the main ideas, identify key details, and understand how to read **infographics** (such as charts and graphs). *Readers in Residence* is a nonfiction book.

**plot (n.)** – The main events of a story and the order in which they occur.

Fiction books contain stories that emerge from the writer's imagination but are usually based on observations of people and life. The purpose of fiction is to share a new experience with readers and help them understand their own experiences better. The information in fiction books is connected by a **plot** or theme. Authors of fiction use many tools to engage the reader's imagination, such as characterization and **setting**. When readers read fiction, they have to activate their imaginations in order to take part in the experience the author has created. You will learn exactly how to do this in *Readers in Residence*.

**setting (n.)** – The time and place of a story.



**Directions:** Look around your house. Can you find both nonfiction and fiction books? List some of the titles below.

Nonfiction and Fiction Books in My Home	
Nonfiction	Fiction

### 1.5 Narrative or Nonnarrative Texts

Books are also classified as **narrative** or **nonnarrative**. Those terms describe the book's organization. Narrative texts are organized according to a storyline. They follow a plot structure that has a beginning, a middle, and an end. The book contains characters who face a problem. The problem gets more and more complicated until the characters resolve it. Readers' curiosity about *the characters* is satisfied at the end of a narrative text because the author shows how the characters' problems are resolved.

Nonnarrative texts are not organized according to a storyline. Instead, they are organized by topics that are related to the subject of the book. Often there are no characters in a nonnarrative text. Readers' curiosity about *the subject* is satisfied at the end of nonnarrative books because the author provides information about the topic that answers readers' questions.

In general, nonfiction books are organized as nonnarratives and fiction books are organized as narratives. But this is not always so. For example, a biography tells the true *story* of someone's life, so we classify biographies as narrative nonfiction.

**narrative (adj.)** – Organized around a storyline.

**nonnarrative (adj.)** – Organized by topics.



**Directions:** Can you find both narrative and nonnarrative books in your home? List some of them below.

Narrative and Nonnarrative Books in My Home	
Narrative	Nonnarrative

### 1.6 Literary Genres

Just like animals are classified into subcategories, such as order and family, books are classified into subcategories called **genres**. The word *genre* is borrowed from the French language; in French, the word means “kind” or “type.” Practice saying it. It is pronounced zhon’-ruh.

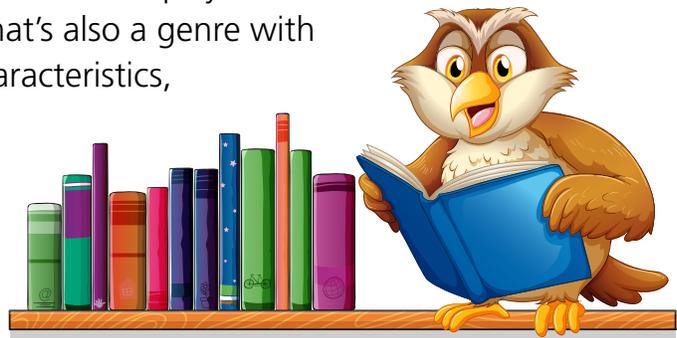
The word *genre* may be new to you, but you probably already group books with similar characteristics together in your mind. When you describe the kind of book you like, you probably mention the book’s genre. Do you like to read mysteries? *Mystery* is the name of a genre. All mystery books have similar characteristics: the main character must uncover a secret or solve a puzzle. Perhaps you like to read fairy tales. That’s also a genre with many predictable characteristics, such as fairies and princesses, witches and dragons, long-ago settings, and happy endings.

**genre (n.)** – A category of literature or art.



#### READER’S TOOLBOX

Expert readers determine a book’s genre before they read it.





Expert readers begin by determining a book's genre. The books you will read in this volume of *Readers in Residence* represent three different **literary** genres. Each book is used to introduce reading strategies that will help you better understand the story you find inside that type of book. After you have completed the assigned book, you will practice what you have learned with a book of your choice from that genre in an On Your Own (OYO) unit. You will have completed your sleuth's training, and you'll then be ready to tackle the next level of the *Readers in Residence* series—*Detective* (volume 2).

**literary (adj.)** –  
Related to literature.

## 1.7 Why Genre Matters

When expert readers pick up a new book, they automatically identify whether the book is classified as nonfiction or fiction. Then they identify whether the book is organized as a narrative or a nonnarrative.

Before you read further, think about this question: How does identifying a book as fiction or nonfiction and narrative or nonnarrative help you get ready to read?



### Expert Reader's Thinking Process

An expert reader might think:

I wonder if I will enjoy reading this book? Let me see what kind of book it is. Hmm. The title makes me think this is a true book about airplanes. The illustration on the cover shows several different planes with a lot of details. I think I will learn a lot of facts I didn't know about planes if I read this book. Let me see what the synopsis on the back cover tells me. Yup, this is a nonfiction book. The author was a fighter pilot for the U.S. Navy. He knows a lot about the history of planes used in the military. That's a topic I want to learn more about. I can use this for my history assignment.



### Expert Reader's Thinking Process

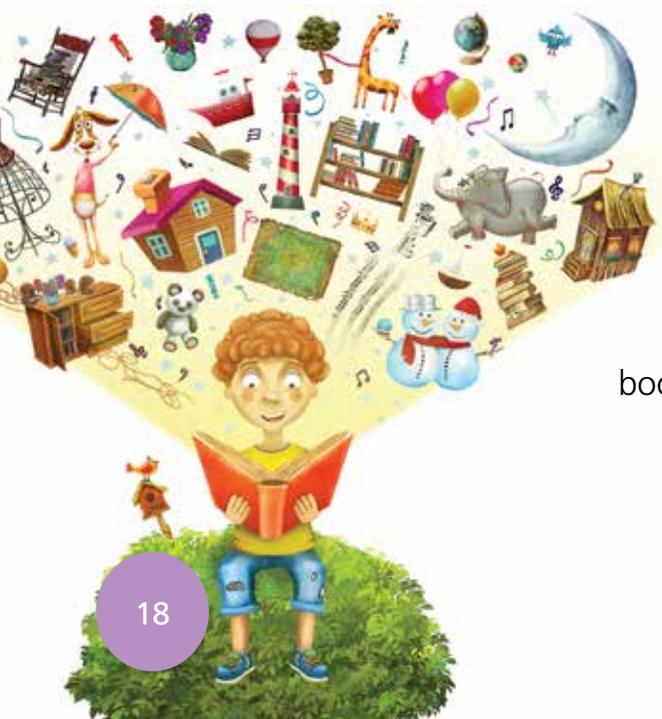
Another expert reader might think:

Wow, the cover of this book looks really cool. I can tell that this story is set in another world. I'm in the mood for a fantasy. Let me see what the back cover tells me. Oh, I've read a book by this author before. I lose track of time when I'm reading one of her books. I'm going to start this as soon as I finish my schoolwork for the day. I need a break from the real world.

If your book is nonfiction, you know you will be learning new information. This new information will probably contain new words. Perhaps you will have to take notes to help you keep track of what you are learning. You might have to read slowly at times so you can process the new information. You might read only a few pages at a time, or you might even have to reread sections to make sure you understand everything the author is explaining. Reading a nonfiction book is like learning an unfamiliar subject in school. You might have to *study* the book.

On the other hand, if you recognize that your new book is fiction, activating your imagination is a must. The more the world inside your fiction book becomes real in your mind, the more you will block out distractions and focus all your attention on the story. You still must use strategies to understand the events in the book, but your primary goal is not to study something new. Your primary purpose is to enter the fictional world the author has created.

While reading a nonfiction book is like studying a subject in school, reading a fiction book is like sitting down to enjoy a fascinating movie.





**Directions:** Here is a list of some of the literary genres you will study in the *Readers in Residence* series. Which ones do you know something about already? Find a book in your home or at the library that you think fits into each genre and fill in the chart with its title. Examine each one inside and out. Talk about the differences you notice with a parent, teacher, or reading coach.

Student Sample

Literary Genres	
Literary Genre	Book That Fits This Genre
<b>Autobiography</b> – A factual story about the author’s life.	<i>Bill Peet: An Autobiography by Bill Peet</i>
<b>Biography</b> – A factual story about a real person, dead or alive.	<i>Who Was Albert Einstein? by Jess Brallier and Robert Andrew Parker</i>
<b>Fantasy</b> – A story that involves events that couldn’t possibly happen. The story is usually set in another world or involves supernatural power.	<i>The Indian in the Cupboard by Lynne Reid Banks</i>

Literary Genres	
Literary Genre	Book That Fits This Genre
<b>Autobiography</b> – A factual story about the author’s life.	
<b>Biography</b> – A factual story about a real person, dead or alive.	
<b>Fantasy</b> – A story that involves events that couldn’t possibly happen. The story is usually set in another world or involves supernatural power.	

Continued on next page »



### Literary Genres

<b>Historical fiction</b> – A realistic story set during a particular time in the past.	
<b>Informational nonfiction</b> – A factual text about real people, places, things, or events.	
<b>Mystery</b> – A story with a mystery, puzzle, or crime to solve.	
<b>Poetry</b> – The expression of an idea with language selected for sound, rhythm, and meaning.	
<b>Realistic fiction</b> – A story that could happen in the real world.	
<b>Reference book</b> – A catalogue of information, such as a dictionary, thesaurus, atlas, almanac, or encyclopedia.	
<b>Science fiction</b> – A story based on real or imaginary science or technology.	
<b>Traditional literature</b> – Stories handed down through cultures either orally or in writing, including fables, fairy tales, folktales, myths, legends, and tall tales.	

SAMPLE



## 1.8 Introduction to Historical Fiction

*Sarah, Plain and Tall* by Patricia MacLachlan is an example of historical fiction. This genre blends actual historical facts with fiction. In this book Patricia MacLachlan puts characters she created from her imagination into a real historical setting: the Midwest during the late 1800s. During this time period, real farmers, like the character Jacob Witting in the novel, worked hard converting the prairies to sustainable farms that would eventually feed America. Real women, like the character Sarah, responded to advertisements for mail-order brides. And real children, like the characters Anna and Caleb Witting, often lost a parent when they were very young.

The Witting family in this book never actually lived, but *Sarah, Plain and Tall* gives us a realistic picture of what it was like to live more than one hundred years ago on the prairies of the Midwest. Writers of historical fiction must do a lot of research to make sure that

their setting and made-up characters match the real-life setting and the sorts of people who lived in that time period.

Historical fiction uses a narrative organizational pattern. It follows a storyline with a beginning, middle, and end. The characters face a problem that gets more and more complicated until something happens to resolve it.

**Directions:** The infographic on the next page shows you what you can expect to find in a historical fiction book. Study it carefully now. Then discuss the unique features of a historical fiction book with a parent, teacher, or reading coach.





## Characteristics of Historical Fiction

### Characters

All the characters in the story behave in ways that are consistent with the time period. The characters may be fictional or may be a mix of fictional and real historical figures.

### Setting

The time period is an authentic period in history. The setting is a real historical place. The setting is the most important clue that indicates a book is historical fiction.

### Dialogue

The words spoken by the characters reflect the knowledge and thoughts of the people who lived during that time period and in that locale.

### Plot

The storyline is a mixture of fictional and historically accurate events.

### Description

The story contains vivid historical details. The author explains historical references that may not be familiar to readers.

### Conflict

The major characters face a significant problem common to the time period that creates a conflict that is resolved by the end of the story.



### 1.9 The Cover of *Sarah, Plain and Tall*

Pick up your copy of *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. Examine the front and back covers closely. **Previewing** a book will help you to become a better reader. How much information can you glean before you even start to read this book?

**Directions:** Answer the questions by using the clues you find on the front and back covers of *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. When you have finished, compare your answers with the sample answers in **ANSWER KEY 1.9**.

**preview (v.)** – To view or examine beforehand.

1. Who is the author of this book?

---

2. What can you find out about the author's life from examining the book?

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3. Who is the publisher of this book?

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4. Why do you think the author decided to call this book *Sarah, Plain and Tall*?

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SAMPLE



5. Study the illustration on the front cover. What can you tell about the people in the illustration?

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---

6. What are the names of some of the characters you will meet inside?

---

7. What are some things that you think you will learn about as you read *Sarah, Plain and Tall*?

SAMPLE

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8. How do you think the lives of the characters in this book will be different from your life?

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9. What do you think you might have in common with the characters?

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### 1.10 Clues to Genre

Authors want you to know what genre their book fits into because they want you to know what to expect inside. Unlike clever criminals, authors leave *lots* of clues for their readers. They want you to solve all the mysteries in their stories. You can find these clues in many places on the outside of a book.



### READER'S TOOLBOX

Expert readers use the clues they collect from the cover of a book to help them make predictions about the story inside.

**Directions:** Write your best ideas for answers to these questions. Then talk about your answers with a parent, teacher, or reading coach. When you have finished, compare your answers with the sample answers in **ANSWER KEY 1.10**.

1. How can the title of a book be a clue to the genre of the book?

SAMPLE

2. How can the illustration on the front of a book help you guess the genre?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. How can you figure out the genre of *Sarah, Plain and Tall* from the synopsis on the back?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**confirm (v.)** – To establish as true or accurate.

**revise (v.)** – To improve or alter. Originally, revise meant “to see in a new way.”

### 1.11 Make a Prediction

When detectives begin a case, they start with a working theory. This is a possible explanation for the crime or mystery they are assigned to solve. As they collect clues, they **confirm** or **revise** their working theory based on what the clues tell them. Expert readers do the same thing. They use the information they collect from examining the cover of the book to help them predict what will happen in the story. This is their working theory. Predictions are an important part of active reading. Predictions help you activate your imagination. Try making some predictions now. Remember to base your predictions on the clues you find on the cover.



**Directions:** What difficulties do you expect the characters in *Sarah, Plain and Tall* to face? How do you think they might solve these challenges? What will it be like for Anna and Caleb to have a stranger become a part of their family? What will it be like for Sarah to leave the only home she has ever known? On the lines below, use the clues you gathered from the cover to make some predictions about what will happen in this book. When you have finished, discuss your predictions with a parent, teacher, or reading coach.

Handwriting practice area with a purple dashed border, a purple header box containing a pencil icon, and four horizontal lines for writing.



## 1.12 Create Your Own Book Cover

Now that you have examined your copy of *Sarah, Plain and Tall* closely and have scoured your home to find books that represent the different literary genres, why not start working on a book of your own? Start by making the front and back covers for a book you might write someday.

As you now know, there are many different kinds of genres—fantasy, science fiction, realistic fiction, and many more. Think about what interests you, what kind of a book you might like to create, and what genre it fits. Think about the major characters that might appear in your book. Think about a time and place for your story to happen. If you need help deciding, ask a parent, teacher, or reading coach to help you brainstorm about this assignment.

Before you begin, gather your favorite markers, paints, or colored pencils. Perhaps you would like to cut a picture out of a magazine or print out your title in a fancy font.

<p><b>A brief description of your book</b></p>	<p>BOOK TITLE</p>	<p><b>Book Title</b></p> <p><b>Draw an illustration about your book.</b></p>		
<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="256 1583 391 1772"> <p><b>Author's picture</b></p> </td> <td data-bbox="418 1583 581 1772"> <p><b>Short biography of author</b></p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p><b>Author's picture</b></p>	<p><b>Short biography of author</b></p>		<p><b>Author's Name</b></p>
<p><b>Author's picture</b></p>	<p><b>Short biography of author</b></p>			

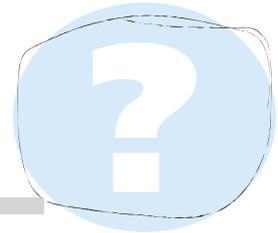
Use this template to help you design a book cover of your own, following the directions on the next page.



**Directions:** Create a front and back cover for a book you might like to write someday. Glue an 11 x 17 piece of sturdy paper to a similar-sized piece of cardboard. Bend the cardboard to create a front, back, and spine. Include plenty of clues for your readers so they will know what they can expect to find inside. You may want to include information about the genre, major characters, and/or the time and place of your book. When you have finished, ask several family members and friends to use the questions in **1.9 THE COVER OF SARAH, PLAIN AND TALL** and **1.11 MAKE A PREDICTION** to answer questions about your cover.

### 1.13 Review: Reader's Questions

**Directions:** Before you move on to the next module, review the **READER'S QUESTIONS** from the beginning of this module. How would you answer the questions based on what you have learned in this module? Talk about your answers with a parent, teacher, or reading coach.



- ☆ What is an expert reader?
- ☆ What clues should I gather before I begin to read a book?
- ☆ What are the characteristics of a historical fiction book?

### 1.14 Book Talk



Books are meant to be shared. Use the suggestions listed in the Book Talk sections at the end of each module as discussion starters to talk about books with your family and friends.

**Directions:** Find a time when some of your friends or family members are sharing a meal. Use these questions to get a discussion going about the books each person enjoys.

1. What are your favorite genres to read?
2. Who are some of your favorite authors?



## Checklist for Module 1

**Directions:** When you have completed a task, make a ✓ in the “Done” column. Ask a parent, teacher, or reading coach to award you points for each task using the checklist point system. Fill in the points you have earned on the **SLEUTH’S LOG** in the appendix.

Tasks	Done ✓	Points Earned
<b>1.4 Nonfiction or Fiction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List examples of nonfiction and fiction books that you have in your home.</li> </ul>		
<b>1.5 Narrative or Nonnarrative</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List examples of narrative and nonnarrative books that you have in your home.</li> </ul>		
<b>1.7 Why Genre Matters</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find a book in your home or library that fits each genre listed and fill in the chart with the book titles.</li> <li>Examine the different parts of each book and talk about the differences you notice with a parent, teacher, or reading coach.</li> </ul>		
<b>1.8 Introduction to Historical Fiction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss the unique features of a historical fiction book with a parent, teacher, or reading coach.</li> </ul>		
<b>1.9 The Cover of <i>Sarah, Plain and Tall</i> (SPT)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer the questions by using the clues you find on the front and back covers of the book.</li> </ul>		
<b>1.10 Clues to Genre</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write your best ideas for answers to these questions.</li> <li>Discuss your answers to the questions with a parent, teacher, or reading coach.</li> </ul>		

### Checklist Point System:

1–6 points may be awarded by a parent, teacher, or reading coach for each task completed. Here are the recommended guidelines:

- 6** – exemplary in quality *and* effort
- 5** – exemplary in either quality *or* effort
- 4** – acceptable in quality *and* effort
- 3** – acceptable in either quality *or* effort
- 2** – needs improvement in quality *and* effort
- 1** – incomplete

Continued on next page »



**Checklist Point System:**

1–6 points may be awarded by a parent, teacher, or reading coach for each task completed. Here are the recommended guidelines:

- 6** – exemplary in quality *and* effort
- 5** – exemplary in either quality *or* effort
- 4** – acceptable in quality *and* effort
- 3** – acceptable in either quality *or* effort
- 2** – needs improvement in quality *and* effort
- 1** – incomplete

Tasks	Done ✓	Points Earned
<b>1.11 Make a Prediction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write your predictions about what you expect to happen based on the clues you find on the cover of <i>SPT</i>.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss your answers to the questions with a parent, teacher, or reading coach.</li> </ul>		
<b>1.12 Create Your Own Book Cover</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a front and back cover for a book you might like to write someday.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include plenty of clues for your readers so they will know what they can expect to find inside.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask several family members and friends to use the questions in 1.9 and 1.11 to answer questions about your cover.</li> </ul>		
<b>1.13 Review: Reader's Questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss your answers to the <b>READER'S QUESTIONS</b> from the beginning of the module with a parent, teacher, or reading coach.</li> </ul>		
<b>1.14 Book Talk</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the questions to get a discussion going about the books your family or friends enjoy.</li> </ul>		
<b>Total</b>		

Module 1: 102 points possible



## Meet the Author Patricia MacLachlan

**P**atricia MacLachlan (born 1938) is the author of *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. She was born in Wyoming but grew up in Minnesota. Even though she moved to the East Coast as an adult, she says she still thinks of the prairies of the Midwest as her home. MacLachlan became a writer after many years as an English teacher. She and her husband had three children, and family has always been very important to her. Not surprisingly, most of her books are about families, and many of her stories are based on real events that happened to her or a relative.

How does she get ideas for her stories? MacLachlan says, "I do not think up topics. They tap me on the shoulder." As her characters take shape in her mind, she holds conversations with them. "We talk in the car; we talk in the bathtub or in the shower. We talk sometimes when I'm in bed at night and the lights are off and I'm thinking" ("Meet the Author: Patricia MacLachlan").

MacLachlan said in an interview once, "I think what happens is you write how you grew up. And I was born



on the prairie and so everything is kind of spare on the prairie. And so I'm just used to writing in that way. *Sarah, Plain and Tall* was that way. And most of my fiction is" (Roper).

As you read the story, think about what Patricia MacLachlan means when she says her writing is "spare," like the prairie.

**spare (adj.)** – Without excess; bare or thin.

## ***Sarah, Plain and Tall***

### **Reader's Questions**

How do authors show readers what their characters are like?

How do I make inferences about the characters I meet?

How do I make educated guesses about new words in the books I read?

### **Sneak Peek**

In this module you will learn:

- Expert readers get to know characters by paying close attention to what they say, think, and do.
- Expert readers get to know characters by paying close attention to what the narrator and other characters say and think about them.
- Expert readers use context clues and their prior knowledge to make inferences.

### **2.1 Recipe for a Narrative**

*Sarah, Plain and Tall* is historical fiction. Remember, the books in this genre are organized as narratives. That means they tell a story. All stories have certain ingredients. Here are a few important ones:

- ☆ Stories have to have characters. They are *who* the story is about. In this unit you will learn how authors create these characters and bring them to life.
- ☆ Something has to happen to the characters in the story. That something is *what* the story is about. In unit 3 you will study the “what happened” part of the story, also called a plot.
- ☆ A story has to occur at some time and in some place. This is the *when* and *where* of the story. In unit 5 you will study the “when and where” part of the story, also called the setting.



You will study one more ingredient in *Readers in Residence*, volume 1. Someone has to *tell* the story. That someone is called the **narrator**.

Stories can have other ingredients. But these are the basics: characters, plot, setting, and a narrator. Expert readers know a lot about these ingredients. Knowing how authors create stories will help you to understand the books you read more completely.



**narrator (n.)** – The teller of the story.

## 2.2 Character Development: Meet New Friends

When readers begin a book, it is like meeting a lot of new people for the first time. These new people are the characters in the story. We get to know characters in some of the same ways we get to know any new person we meet. We pay close attention to the following:

- ☆ what the character says or thinks
- ☆ what the character does
- ☆ what others say or think about the character

This is how the author leaves clues for the reader. The more information an author reveals about a character, the more readers understand the character's behavior. This understanding causes us to care about what happens to the character. That's one way an author keeps readers reading.

An author's number one job is to keep readers reading.

## 2.3 Main, Major, and Minor Characters

Some characters in the story are more important than other characters. These are the characters most involved with what happens in the story. They are called **major characters**. In the book you are about to read, the major characters are the Witting family (Papa, Anna, and Caleb) and Sarah Wheaton, a mail-order bride from Maine.

**major characters** – Characters who have a significant influence on the main character or the plot.



**main character –**  
The most important character in a story, around whom all the action revolves.

The most important character in a book is called the **main character**. (Some books have more than one main character, but not often.) Here are four clues you can use to identify the main character in a book:

1. Most of the action in the story revolves around this character.
2. This character appears most often in the story.
3. This character is most affected by what happens.
4. Readers get to know this character better than any other character.

In *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, the main character is not entirely clear. At the end of this unit, you will decide which character in the story you think is the main character and list the clues you used to decide. That's another mystery you get to solve as you read. (Do you have a working theory already?)

**minor characters –**  
Characters who appear in a story but do not have as strong an influence on the plot or main character as the major characters do.

**Minor characters** are not as important to the story. They appear less often in the action than major characters. Minor characters may be friends, acquaintances, or enemies of the main character. They help to move the story along by affecting the action, and they are often used to show us more about the main character. For instance, in *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, a character named Maggie appears in only one chapter in the book. We do not even learn her last name. But the author uses Maggie to influence both Sarah and Anna in an important way. Maggie is a minor character.

**dialogue (n.) –**  
Conversation among characters.

The conversation among characters in a story is called **dialogue**. Talking with your friends tells you many interesting things about them and their lives. Readers learn a lot about characters by paying close attention to what they say through the dialogue in the story.

**Directions:** Think about the characters in three of your favorite books. Can you use the clues in this section to decide who the main, major, and minor characters are in each one? Fill out the chart with the names of each type of character. A sample is provided for you.



### Characters in My Favorite Books



**Favorite Book**



**Main Character**



**A Major Character**



**A Minor Character**

*Pippi Longstocking*

*Pippi Longstocking*

*Tommy Stettergren*

*Mighty Adolf*

SAMPLE



**inference (n.)** – A conclusion or opinion based on collected evidence combined with what is already known.

**prior knowledge** – What a reader already knows from his or her experience and reading.

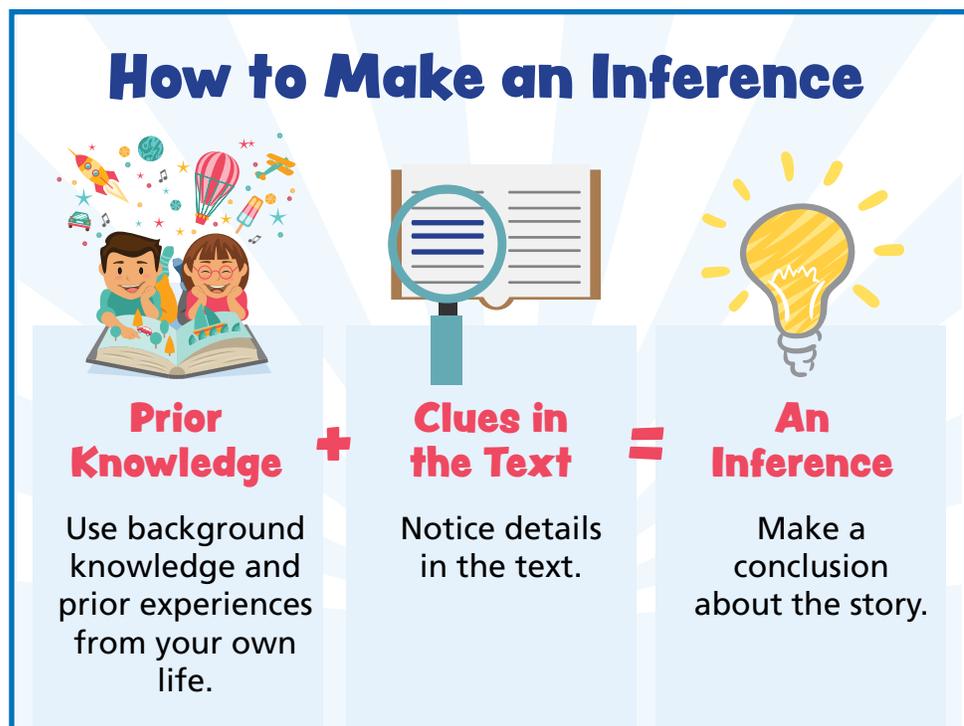
## 2.4 Making Inferences: Read between the Lines



I'm sure you are ready to get started reading this first book! There's just one more thing we have to talk about before you dive in.

A primary goal of *Readers in Residence* is to teach you to make **inferences** as you read. Have you ever heard that word before? Maybe not. It isn't a common term. However, you make inferences all the time, even though you are probably not aware you are doing so. You make inferences not just about what you read, but also about what you experience in the world around you. An inference is a conclusion or opinion formed from evidence you collect plus your **prior knowledge**.

Throughout the entire *Readers in Residence* series, we will talk about making inferences. It is a big topic, and there are many different strategies expert readers use to help them make accurate inferences. When you need to make inferences in this volume, you will see the magnifying glass symbol  beside the question or activity.





Here is an example from everyday life:

You notice that your father grabs an umbrella out of the closet before opening the door to leave for work. What conclusions can you draw based on this event? What clues from this event do you use? What prior knowledge about this subject do you use?

Did you conclude that it might be raining outside or that it might rain later? The clue you used is the umbrella, right? And from your prior knowledge, you know that people use umbrellas to help them stay dry when it rains.

Now let's try an example that you will find in chapter 1 of *Sarah, Plain and Tall*:



And then the days seemed long and dark like winter days, even though it wasn't winter. And Papa didn't sing. (page 6)



What conclusions can you draw about the narrator of this passage by using clues you find in the sentences and your past experience? What conclusions can you draw about Papa from just those two sentences?

Did you think the narrator and Papa both might be sad about something? The narrator doesn't say she and Papa were sad, though, does she? Concluding they might be sad is an inference.

One clue you might have used is "the days seemed long and dark like winter days." From your prior knowledge about the seasons, you know that people often feel happy or energetic on sunny days and sad or dull on long, dark, wintry ones.

Another clue you might have noticed is "Papa didn't sing." This clue tells readers that Papa has a habit of singing. From your prior knowledge about singing, you may know that people often sing or hum when they are happy. When the narrator tells us that Papa has stopped singing, we conclude (or infer) that Papa is also sad.



**READER'S TOOLBOX**

Expert readers use their prior knowledge to make inferences as they read.

When we make an inference, we draw a conclusion based on the clues we collect from the text as we read, combined with what we already know about a topic. If we don't make inferences as we read a book, we will not fully understand the story. As you read *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, you will begin to practice making inferences about the characters you meet in this book. Ready? Then it is finally time to get started.

**2.5 Read *Sarah, Plain and Tall*: Chapter 1**



**Directions:** Read chapter 1 of *Sarah, Plain and Tall* by Patricia MacLachlan. Use the chart on the next page to list the characters you meet in chapter 1. Write some of the details you learn. Write how you learned each detail about the character using the list provided below. When you've finished, compare your list with the sample list in **ANSWER KEY 2.5**.

**NOTICE**

Notice that a character in the story—Anna—is also the narrator of the story.

Here are some ways authors reveal characters:

1. the character's words
2. the character's actions
3. the character's thoughts
4. the narrator's or another character's words or thoughts about the character

Introduction of the Characters in <i>Sarah, Plain and Tall</i>		
Character	What I Learned	How I Learned It
Caleb	He asks a lot of questions.	Caleb asks Anna questions in this chapter.

Student Sample



**Introduction of the Characters in Sarah, Plain and Tall**

Character	What I Learned	How I Learned It
	<h1>SAMPLE</h1>	

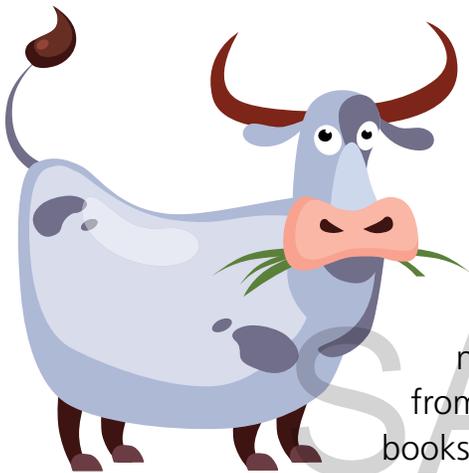


**ruminate (v.)** – To meditate, muse, or ponder.

## 2.6 Ruminare: Chapter 1



**Ruminate** means “to meditate, muse, or ponder.” But it also means “to chew the cud”—what grazing animals like cows do when they chew, swallow, and regurgitate their food over and over again. Even though that sounds unpleasant, *ruminate* is the perfect verb to describe how expert readers think about what happens in the books they read—even when they aren’t reading!



The Ruminare sections of *Readers in Residence* ask you to think deeply about an aspect of the story and to make a connection to your life. How you respond to these questions is your choice. You can use the questions as a discussion starter with your family. You can draw a picture to show what you think. Or you can write your thoughts in a reading response journal. The journal can be as simple as a three-ring notebook or as unique as a beautifully bound journal from a bookstore. You can use it to write about any of the books you are reading as well as recording your reactions to the questions in the Ruminare sections. Its purpose is to create a keepsake that traces the influence of good books on your life.

**Directions:** Ruminare on the following questions about chapter 1. Discuss, draw, or write your answers.

1. How can you tell that the Witting family members love one another?
2. How can others tell that your family members love one another?



### READER'S TOOLBOX

Expert readers ask themselves important questions while they read.

## 2.7 Aha! Chapter 1



Expert readers ask themselves questions and hunt for the answers to them while they read. This skill helps them understand the characters and the story more completely. The reading



comprehension questions included in the Aha! section after you read a chapter or group of chapters show you the kinds of questions expert readers ask themselves while they read.



Expert Reader's Thinking Process

An expert reader might notice these clues and think about these questions while reading page 3:

I wonder whom Caleb is talking to? He is sitting close to the fire. The room must be chilly. I wonder if this is a cabin? The narrator sounds impatient with Caleb. He must be pretty young. Why does he ask the same question every single day? Something has happened to Mama because Papa doesn't sing anymore.

SAMPLE

**Directions:** Use the lines provided to answer these questions about chapter 1 of *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. Refer to the chapter as you answer them. To answer some of the questions, you will need to make an inference 🔍. (Draw a conclusion based on the clues in the story and what you already know.) When you have finished, compare your answers with the sample answers in **ANSWER KEY 2.7**.

- 1. What question does Caleb ask Anna all the time? (page 3)

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 **2.** How does Anna end the retelling of the night Caleb was born? (page 5)  
Why do you think this ending is important to Caleb? Make an inference.

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**3.** How did Anna feel about Caleb when he was born? Include a sentence from the chapter that supports your answer. (page 5)

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SAMPLE

 **4.** What regret does Anna have about the night her mother died? Make an inference. (page 5)

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---

**5.** What time of year is it? (pages 5–6)

---



 6. What does this passage mean: “And then the cousins and aunts and uncles had come and tried to fill up the house. But they couldn’t”? Make an inference. (page 6)

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7. Why does Caleb want Anna to remember Mama’s songs? (pages 6–7)

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 8. What reason does Papa give for not singing anymore? (page 8) Can you think of another reason why Papa doesn’t sing anymore? Make an inference.

SAMPLE

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9. Why does Papa put an advertisement in the newspaper? (page 9)

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 10. Why does Anna want to ask Sarah if she sings? Make an inference. (page 11)

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### 2.8 Read *Sarah, Plain and Tall*: Chapter 2



Do you remember that Patricia MacLachlan says her writing is spare, like the prairies? (If not, read the end of **MEET PATRICIA MACLACHLAN** at the end of module 1.) *Spare* can mean “without excess, bare, or thin.” It can also mean “controlled or limited.” MacLachlan limits the number of words she uses to tell her story. Every single word has a purpose. She chooses words that will tell us the most about the characters in her story. Think about this when you read this next chapter.



Notice how Patricia MacLachlan uses just a few words to tell readers a lot.

**Directions:** Read chapter 2 of *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. What do you learn about Sarah from her letters? Use the chart on the next page to list what you learn and what you expect Sarah to be like when she arrives at the Wittings’ home. We’ve provided the first clue for you. When you have finished, compare your answers with the sample answers in **ANSWER KEY 2.8**.

SAMPLE



Clues in Sarah’s Letters			
What I Learn about Sarah from Her Letter to Anna	What I Expect Sarah to Be Like Based on Her Letter to Anna	What I Learn about Sarah from Her Letter to Caleb	What I Expect Sarah to Be Like Based on Her Letter to Caleb
Sarah can braid hair, bake bread, and make stew.	She is capable.	She has a cat named Seal.	She likes animals.



**Clues in Sarah's Letters**

<p><b>What I Learn about Sarah from Her Letter to Anna</b></p>	<p><b>What I Expect Sarah to Be Like Based on Her Letter to Anna</b></p>	<p><b>What I Learn about Sarah from Her Letter to Caleb</b></p>	<p><b>What I Expect Sarah to Be Like Based on Her Letter to Caleb</b></p>

SAMPLE



### 2.9 Ruminating: Chapter 2



**Directions:** Ruminating on the following questions about chapter 2. How you respond to these questions is your choice. You can use the questions as a discussion starter with your family. You can draw a picture to show what you think. Or you can write your thoughts in a reading response journal.

1. Why do you think Sarah loves the sea?
2. What is one thing you love about the place where you live? Why?

### 2.10 Aha! Chapter 2



**Directions:** Use the lines provided to answer these questions about chapter 2. Refer to the chapter as you answer them. To answer some of the questions, you will need to make an inference. (Draw a conclusion based on the clues in the story and what you already know.) When you have finished, compare your answers with the answers in **ANSWER KEY 2.10**.

1.  Anna says Sarah’s letters arrived “before the ice and snow had melted from the fields.” Do you think Sarah wrote back quickly or took her time? Explain your answer. (page 12)

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2.  Why does Caleb read Sarah’s letters over and over? (pages 13 and 15)

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 **3.** What feelings are revealed through the questions Anna and Caleb ask in this chapter? (pages 13–15)

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 **4.** What does it mean that Sarah has said she will come for a month's time "To see how it is. Just to see."? (pages 15–16)

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 **5.** Why does Anna first set the table for four people and then put one place setting away? (page 16)

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 **6.** What is the special message Sarah includes at the bottom of her letter to Papa for the children? (page 17) Why does this make Papa smile?

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SAMPLE



## 2.11 New Words: Clues in the Context

What do you do when you come across a word in a book and realize you have no idea what it means? This happens to us all. But expert readers have a solution to this problem. They learn to make educated guesses about the meaning of the words they do not know. (Educated guesses are inferences too.) To do this, they look for clues in the sentence that contains the word. They also look closely at the sentences that surround the word. And they use their prior knowledge. Here's an example:



BOOK  
EXCERPT

He was **homely** and plain, and he had a terrible holler and a horrid smell. (page 5)

**context (n.)** –  
The information  
around a word  
that helps  
readers guess  
its meaning.

The word we need to guess is *homely*. What's the context? The **context** is the information around the word that helps us detect the meaning.

Here's how an experienced reader might make an educated guess about the meaning of the word *homely*:



Expert Reader's  
Thinking Process

An expert reader might think:

I don't know what the word *homely* means, but let me look at the words around it. The rest of the sentence describes someone who is *plain*, has a terrible holler, and smells bad. So *homely* must be similar to *plain*. I'm going to guess that *homely* means not attractive or pretty. That would make sense in the context of the rest of the sentence.



### READER'S TOOLBOX

Expert readers use context clues to make educated guesses about the meanings of words they do not know.



This expert reader followed several important steps:

1. She read the whole passage *again*.
2. She decided what the *overall meaning* of the whole passage is.
3. She made a guess about the unknown word based on what *fit best* with the other clues surrounding the word.

Let's look at another example from the book.

I had gone to bed thinking how **wretched** he looked.  
(page 5)



What do you think the word *wretched* means? There aren't enough clues in the sentence to make an educated guess, are there? Notice what happens when we look at the surrounding sentences, though:

He was homely and plain, and he had a terrible holler and a horrid smell. But these were not the worst of him. Mama died the next morning. That was the worst thing about Caleb.

“Isn't he beautiful, Anna?” Her last words to me. I had gone to bed thinking how **wretched** he looked. And I forgot to say good night. (page 5)



Can you make an educated guess (inference) now? If so, why?



**adjective** – The part of speech that describes a noun or a pronoun.

In a prior sentence, Anna uses the **adjectives** *homely*, *plain*, *terrible*, and *horrid* to describe her new baby brother. From your prior knowledge about the meanings of these words, it is easy to guess that *wretched* must mean something pretty awful. In fact, it means “miserable.”

## 2.12 Word Sleuth: Chapters 1-2

### Abbreviations Legend

n. – noun

v. – verb

adj. – adjective

adv. – adverb

**Directions:** Using clues from the surrounding sentences in the book, make an educated guess (inference) about the meaning of the underlined word in each sentence taken from chapters 1–2 of *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. Write it on the line provided. When you have finished, look up the word in the *Readers in Residence* dictionary in the back of this volume. Compare your educated guess with the definition there, and write the dictionary definition on the lines provided.

1. It was dusk, and the dogs lay beside him on the warm hearthstones. (page 3)

dusk (n.)

My guess: evening

Dictionary definition: the partial darkness between daylight and evening

2. It was dusk, and the dogs lay beside him on the warm hearthstones. (page 3)

hearthstones (n.)

My guess: \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary definition: \_\_\_\_\_



3. It made a hollow scraping sound on the hearthstones, and the dogs stirred. (page 4)

hollow (adj.)

My guess: \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary definition: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. "And Jack was feisty." (page 7)

feisty (adj.)

My guess: \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary definition: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. He said it harshly. (page 8)

harshly (adv.)

My guess: \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary definition: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

SAMPLE



6. She was round and slow and shuffling. (page 9)

shuffling (adj.)

My guess: \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary definition: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. "My choice, as you can see, is limited." (page 10)

limited (adj.)

My guess: \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary definition: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. "What if she thinks we are loud and pesky?" (page 13)

pesky (adj.)

My guess: \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary definition: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

SAMPLE



## 2.13 Conventions: I Spy Capitalization

Do you know what manners are? For instance, what is the proper thing to do when someone gives you a gift? What is the thoughtful thing to do when someone new joins your Sunday school class for the first time? Or what would you do if your grandmother walked into your living room and there was no place for her to sit?



Manners are the rules we've all agreed to follow to show consideration to others in our culture. In some cultures, you might bow when you meet someone for the first time. In another culture, you might shake hands. And in yet another culture, you might kiss the person on both cheeks. Even though the appropriate way to greet someone for the first time can be different from culture to culture, the point of the gesture is the same: to show respect and consideration to another person.

The **conventions** of the English language are the manners that writers use to show consideration for their readers. They do this by following the standards of punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and usage. Writers follow these conventions to make it easier for their readers to understand what they are reading. But it is equally important for you—the reader—to know the conventions as well. Otherwise, you will miss these important signals.

For manners to work, we must know what they are. If you don't know a culture's customs for showing consideration, you are going to be confused. (For instance, what should you do if you meet the queen of England or the prime minister of Thailand? Better not offer them a handshake!)

For the same reason, readers must recognize the meaning of the conventions an author might use. In many ways, the conventions—like manners—are a secret code that authors and expert readers share. So the *Readers in Residence* series will draw your attention to these conventions as a regular part of studying the books we explore together.

The first convention we will focus on is capitalization.

**conventions (n.)**  
– The manners writers use to show consideration for their readers. They do this by following the standards of punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and usage so that readers understand their message.



### READER'S TOOLBOX

Expert readers understand the conventions of the English language—punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and usage.



**Directions:** What do you already know about the rules for capitalizing words? Write some of the rules you know below.

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Now let's see what you notice about how capitalization is used in *Sarah, Plain and Tall*.

**Directions:** Study the use of capitalization in the following sections of the book. Can you make inferences about why some of these words are capitalized? Answer the questions below. When you have finished, compare your answers with the sample answers in **ANSWER KEY 2.13**.

1. Study the front cover of your copy of the book. What are some words that are capitalized? Write them below.

SAMPLE

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2. Why do you think these words are capitalized?

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3. Study the back cover of your copy of the book. What are some of the words that are capitalized? Write them below.

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4. Read aloud every word that is capitalized on page 3 of *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. Write them below.

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5. On the lines below, write down at least three rules you think may explain why some of the words you read aloud on these pages are capitalized.

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6. Why do you think the word *troublesome* is capitalized on page 4? What rule may apply?

SAMPLE

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7. Why are the words *Tennessee* and *Maine* on page 10 capitalized? What rule do these words have in common?

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8. Why do you think capitalizing the words you found in these sections of the book is helpful for readers? How might readers be confused if these words were not capitalized?

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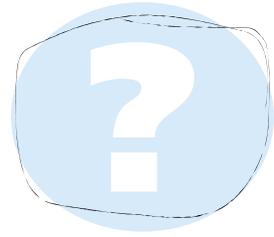
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### 2.14 Review: Reader's Questions

**Directions:** Before you move on to the next module, review the **READER'S QUESTIONS** from the beginning of this module. How would you answer the questions based on what you have learned in this module? Talk about your answers with a parent, teacher, or reading coach.



- ☆ How do authors show readers what their characters are like?
- ☆ How do I make inferences about the characters I meet?
- ☆ How do I make educated guesses about new words in the books I read?

### 2.15 Book Talk



**Directions:** Find a time when some of your friends or family members are sharing a meal. Use these questions to get a discussion going about the books each person enjoys.

1. Describe one of your favorite characters from a book. Give several reasons why you like this character.
2. If you were to write a book about a place from your childhood, what place would you choose?

### 2.16 Sowing Seeds

Spiritual growth can happen through listening to sermons or praying with your family, but it can also happen through thinking about what you read in light of Scripture. Great authors write about meaningful topics—topics that prompt us to think deeply about life and truth. When we explore these topics through the lens of God's Word, we have an extraordinary opportunity to grow. You will get the chance to try this in the Sowing Seeds sections like the one on the next page.



## Sowing Seeds

**Directions:** Discuss these ideas with a parent, teacher, or reading coach.

On page 5 of *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, Anna thinks to herself:

Caleb thought the story was over, and I didn't tell him what I had really thought. He was homely and plain, and he had a terrible holler and a horrid smell. But these were not the worst of him. Mama died the next morning. That was the worst thing about Caleb.

1. Why do you think Anna keeps these thoughts to herself?
2. Has there ever been a time when you didn't tell someone your thoughts because you didn't want to hurt his or her feelings?

### Talk about these Scriptures:

**Ephesians 4:32** – “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

**Colossians 4:6** – “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.”

1. In light of these verses, do you think Anna made the right decision about what to tell Caleb? Was leaving out those details about Caleb's birth lying or kindness?
2. How do these scriptures relate to your own life?

Anna loved her brother enough to think about how her words would impact him. It pleases God when we put ourselves in others' shoes and consider how to build them up with our words.



**Checklist for Module 2**

**Directions:** When you have completed a task, make a ✓ in the “Done” column. Ask a parent, teacher, or reading coach to award you points for each task using the checklist point system. Fill in the points you have earned on the **SLEUTH’S LOG** in the appendix.

**Checklist Point System:**

1–6 points may be awarded by a parent, teacher, or reading coach for each task completed. Here are the recommended guidelines:

- 6** – exemplary in quality *and* effort
- 5** – exemplary in either quality *or* effort
- 4** – acceptable in quality *and* effort
- 3** – acceptable in either quality *or* effort
- 2** – needs improvement in quality *and* effort
- 1** – incomplete

Tasks	Done ✓	Points Earned
<b>2.3 Main, Major, and Minor Characters</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write down a main, major, and minor character from three of your favorite books.</li> </ul>		
<b>2.5 Read <i>Sarah, Plain and Tall</i>: Chapter 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read chapter 1 of <i>SPT</i>.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List the characters you meet on the chart.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write some of the details you learn about each character.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List how you learned each detail about the characters.</li> </ul>		
<b>2.6 Ruminare: Chapter 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ruminare on the questions about chapter 1.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss, draw, or write your answers to the questions.</li> </ul>		
<b>2.7 Aha! Chapter 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answer the questions on the lines provided.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer to the chapter as you answer them.</li> </ul>		
<b>2.8 Read <i>Sarah, Plain and Tall</i>: Chapter 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read chapter 2 of <i>SPT</i>.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From studying Sarah’s letters in this chapter, list what you learn about Sarah and what you expect Sarah to be like when she arrives.</li> </ul>		



Tasks	Done ✓	Points Earned
<b>2.9 Ruminare: Chapter 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ruminare on the questions about chapter 2.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss, draw, or write your answers to the questions.</li> </ul>		
<b>2.10 Aha! Chapter 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer the questions on the lines provided.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer to the chapter as you answer them.</li> </ul>		
<b>2.12 Word Sleuth: Chapters 1–2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use context clues to make an educated guess about the meaning of the underlined word in each sentence. Write it on the line provided.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look up the word in the RIR dictionary and compare your educated guess with the definition. Write the dictionary definition on the line provided.</li> </ul>		
<b>2.13 Conventions: I Spy Capitalization</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write down some of the rules for capitalization that you already know.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer the questions about the capitalized words you find in the book.</li> </ul>		
<b>2.14 Review: Reader’s Questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss your answers to the READER’S QUESTIONS from the beginning of this module with a parent, teacher, or reading coach.</li> </ul>		
<b>2.15 Book Talk</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the questions to get a discussion going about the books your family or friends enjoy.</li> </ul>		
<b>2.16 Sowing Seeds</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss these ideas with a parent, teacher, or reading coach.</li> </ul>		
<b>Total</b>		

**Checklist Point System:**

1–6 points may be awarded by a parent, teacher, or reading coach for each task completed. Here are the recommended guidelines:

- 6** – exemplary in quality *and* effort
- 5** – exemplary in either quality *or* effort
- 4** – acceptable in quality *and* effort
- 3** – acceptable in either quality *or* effort
- 2** – needs improvement in quality *and* effort
- 1** – incomplete

Module 2: 132 points possible

***Sarah, Plain and Tall*****Reader's Questions**

How does my prior knowledge help me to make inferences when I read?

How do authors show but not tell readers what a character is like?

Why do authors have their characters face changes and challenges in their stories?

SAMPLE

**Sneak Peek**

In this module you will learn:

- Authors develop their characters with physical traits and character traits.
- Authors use changes and challenges to give readers insight into what a character is really like.

**3.1 Making Inferences: Prior Knowledge**

Recall that making inferences requires us to look for clues in the book and draw on our prior knowledge. Have you already formed pictures in your mind of what Papa, Anna, Caleb, and Sarah might look like? Think about where those images may have come from. Patricia MacLachlan's writing style is very spare, remember. She doesn't use many adjectives to describe her characters, does she? So where do the rest of the details that fill in the images in your mind come from? They come from your prior knowledge.

Perhaps you've studied this time period in history. Or perhaps you've visited a historical site from the late 1800s. If so, you can probably imagine the clothing the characters wear and the Wittings' house and barn.



Perhaps you already know that farming requires hard, physical labor. If so, you might see Papa as strong and lean. You might already know that women rarely cut their hair during this era of American history. If so, you probably imagine Anna and Sarah with long hair. You may even have taken some of the details about their physical appearance from studying the illustration on the front cover—even that is prior knowledge.

Use this exercise to notice how your prior knowledge and experiences come into play while you are reading.

**Directions:**

1. Review chapters 1–2. Then describe what you think each character on the chart on the next two pages might look like. Include the articles of clothing you think they commonly wear. Write the details in the story that help you to make an educated guess about your answer. In the third column, write the prior knowledge that also helps you make an educated guess.
2. As you read chapters 3–6 while you work on this module, add to all the columns on the chart. When you have finished this module, compare your answers with the sample answers in **ANSWER KEY 3.1**.
3. Draw a picture of your favorite character so far in the story in the space provided. Or you can find an image that looks like this character to glue in the space instead. Show the physical traits you imagine. Make sure the picture fits the time period of the story.

The Characters in My Mind: Physical Traits			
Character	What I Think the Character Looks Like	Details in the Story That Make Me Think This	My Prior Knowledge That Makes Me Think This
<p>Anna</p> 	<p><i>She has long hair.</i></p>		<p><i>Girls in this time period wore their hair long.</i></p>
	<p><i>She wears an apron when she works in the house.</i></p>	<p><i>She wipes her hands on her apron in chapter 1.</i></p>	

Student Sample



**The Characters in My Mind: Physical Traits**

Character	What I Think the Character Looks Like	Details in the Story That Make Me Think This	My Prior Knowledge That Makes Me Think This
Anna			
Caleb			

SAMPLE



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<b>Character</b>	<b>What I Think the Character Looks Like</b>	<b>Details in the Story That Make Me Think This</b>	<b>My Prior Knowledge That Makes Me Think This</b>
Papa			
Sarah			

SAMPLE



### 3.2 Character Development: Physical Traits

Physical traits are characteristics that others can perceive with their five senses. Your physical traits are how others recognize you.

**Directions:** Answer the following questions about your physical traits.

1. Are you male or female? \_\_\_\_\_

2. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How tall are you? \_\_\_\_\_

4. How would you describe the color of your hair? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What color are your eyes? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What physical activities are you good at? (Are you strong? Are you fast?)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. How would you describe your skin color? Do you have freckles?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



8. What are your hands like? Are they rough and calloused or smooth and soft?

Authors assign physical traits to their characters. Then they have to decide how to reveal them to their readers—especially since their readers cannot see these characters. Authors must remember to include clues about their characters' physical traits in their stories. (When you complete your character sketch for your unit project, you will create clues about your character's physical appearance.)

Authors sometimes tell us directly what a character looks like. For example, Sarah tells Jacob in her letter that she is "plain and tall" (page 17). This is called **direct characterization**.

More often, authors require us to make inferences about a character's physical appearance from what the characters say and do. In other words, the author shows but doesn't tell us something about the characters. Showing what characters are like through what they say and do is called **indirect characterization**. For example, Caleb wraps his arms around Papa's neck and hangs free as Papa swings him back and forth (page 7). This shows us that Caleb must be much shorter than Papa. It also shows us that he must be a young child who still enjoys this game. Notice that Patricia MacLachlan never tells us either of these things directly.

Indirect characterization is a more interesting way for authors to develop characters. It is also closer to how we get to know other people in real life. For indirect characterization to work, authors have to depend on their readers to make the *right* inferences.

### **direct characterization**

– A method of character development where the author tells readers what a character is like (for example, "Timothy was a brave boy").

### **indirect characterization**

– A method of character development where the author shows readers what a character is like through what the character says, thinks, or does (for example, "Timothy dove into the lake and helped the struggling girl to reach the shore").



Try this exercise to see how this works.

**Directions:** Review what you have learned so far about Anna. Then answer these questions. Talk about your answers with a parent, teacher, or reading coach. When you have finished, compare your answers with the sample answers in **ANSWER KEY 3.2**.

 **1.** How old do you think Anna is? \_\_\_\_\_

 **2.** What details in chapters 1–2 help you to make an inference about Anna’s age?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**3.** What do you know from experience that helps you to determine Anna’s age?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**4.** What misunderstandings would you have about the story if you made the wrong inference and thought that Anna was younger than Caleb?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SAMPLE



### 3.3 Why Prior Knowledge Matters

Authors like Patricia MacLachlan are counting on their readers to have previous knowledge about young girls like Anna who must look after a younger sibling and complete many of the household tasks a mother traditionally fulfills. You may have had experiences similar to Anna's. Or you may have read other books or seen movies that included a character like Anna. Our prior knowledge can come from our own lives or from what we've read and seen. This is why it is so important to be a reader. Most of our prior knowledge about other times, other places, and other people comes from what we read.

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### 3.4 Character Development: Character Traits

A character's physical traits do not tell us much about a character's personality. Knowing that a character is tall or short does not tell us whether he is kind or cruel. As you read *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, notice that Patricia MacLachlan does not spend very much time on her characters' physical descriptions. Authors are much more interested in showing characters' personalities to their readers.

#### NOTICE

Notice that Patricia MacLachlan does not spend very much time on her characters' physical descriptions.

Character traits describe a person's inner qualities: Is the girl you just met selfish and cruel or generous and thoughtful? You can answer this question only if you interact with her or observe what she says and does around others. Authors reveal their characters' traits in the same way. They use what happens in the story to show but not tell what each character is like.

Expert readers know what clues to look for in order to figure out a character's personality. As they read, they think:

- ☆ What does this character *say*? What kind of character trait does this suggest?
- ☆ What does this character *do*? What kind of person acts this way?
- ☆ What do *other* characters say about this person? How do *other* characters interact with this person? How does this help me know more about both of them?



#### READER'S TOOLBOX

Expert readers know that a character's character traits are more important to the story than a character's physical traits.

## UNIT 2

### Introduction

# On Your Own: Historical Fiction

**Genre:** Historical Fiction

**Focus:** Character Development

**N**ow it's your turn to apply what you have learned about character development and historical fiction to another book. For this unit, pick a historical fiction book that interests you. You may select a book you are reading for another subject, such as history, or you might like to consider one of these suggestions.

# SAMPLE

### ***Adam of the Road***

by Elizabeth Janet Gray  
(3rd–6th grades)

Eleven-year-old Adam is thrilled to be on the road with his minstrel father, Roger, and to see clerics, knights, and travelers from all over medieval England. Unknowingly, he begins an adventure that includes the kidnapping of his beloved dog and separation from his father.

### ***The Bronze Bow***

by Elizabeth George Speare  
(6th–8th grades)

After seeing his father crucified by Roman soldiers, Daniel bar Jamin resolves to drive the Roman legions from the land of Israel as he and other outlaws wait for the coming Savior to free his people from political oppression.



***The Door in the Wall***

by Marguerite de Angeli  
(3rd–5th grades)

Robyn, a young boy separated from his parents, becomes ill and loses the use of his legs. The story follows Robyn’s struggles as he is tended to and ultimately mentored by kind Brother Luke. Robyn eventually learns to embrace the truth that even in these dangerous medieval times, “Thou hast only to follow the wall far enough and there will be a door in it.”

***The Golden Goblet***

by Eloise Jarvis McGraw  
(6th–8th grades)

Eloise Jarvis McGraw paints a comprehensive picture of the daily life of ancient Egyptian craftspeople and artisans through young Ranofer’s struggles with an evil half-brother in a stonecutting shop and a goldsmith’s shop.

***Johnny Tremain***

by Esther Forbes  
(5th–8th grades)

Twelve-year-old Johnny Tremain, an apprentice silversmith, lives in pre-Revolutionary War colonial Boston, where he meets renowned historical figures like John Hancock, Samuel Adams, and Paul Revere

and participates in pivotal events such as the Boston Tea Party and Paul Revere’s midnight ride.

***Number the Stars***

by Lois Lowry  
(4th–7th grades)

Set during the Nazi invasion of Denmark in 1943, this is the tale of a fictional ten-year-old, Annemarie, and of the real people of Denmark who courageously unite to smuggle almost the entire Jewish population of Denmark to safety in Sweden.

***A Single Shard***

by Linda Sue Park  
(5th–7th grades)

In this lovely story set in twelfth-century Korea, Tree-Ear, a young orphan boy, goes to work for Min, the master potter. He learns the art of pottery making as he finds both a family and a place of belonging for the first time.

***The Sword in the Tree***

by Clyde Robert Bulla  
(3rd–5th grades)

This story, set in Arthurian England, is about 11-year-old Shan and his struggle to defeat his uncle’s evil plot to seize his home, Weldon Castle.



## What to Expect

In this unit you will review what you have learned about character development in unit 1. You will then be asked to **analyze** how the author develops the characters in the historical fiction book you have selected.

Analysis is a very important reading comprehension skill. When you analyze, you take something apart and figure out how the pieces work together. To analyze character development, you first identify the important parts an author creates to develop characters. Some of these parts include the following:

- ☆ physical traits
- ☆ character traits
- ☆ the character's main conflict
- ☆ how the character responds to the problem
- ☆ how the character is changed by the action in the story

At the end of the unit, you will compare and contrast the book you have chosen with *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. Finally, you will show that your book should be classified as historical fiction and provide supporting details from the text. If you need help completing an activity, refer back to the same activity in unit 1.

**analyze (v.)** –  
To separate something into its essential parts and figure out how the parts work together.



Use the checklist at the end of each module to keep track of your progress.

## On Your Own Historical Fiction

### Attention, Readers:

Ask a parent, teacher, or reading coach to help you revise any questions or activities that do not fit with the book you have selected.

### 5.1 On My Own: Historical Fiction

**Directions:** On the lines on the next page, write the title and author of the On Your Own (OYO) historical fiction book you have selected to study. Explain briefly why this book captured your attention. With the help of a parent, teacher, or reading coach, print an image of the book's cover and affix it to the space provided. Remember, you may pick a book from the list of suggestions on pages 149–150 or you may choose one of your own.

Affix an image of  
your historical fiction  
book cover here.



**My On Your Own (OYO) Historical Fiction:**

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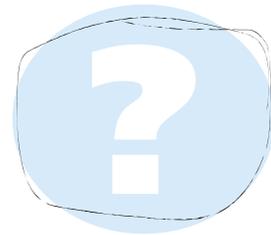
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**5.2 Reader's Questions**

Think about the things you learned while studying *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. You learned about a time and place in history you may not have known much about before. You watched characters develop and change as they faced some difficult times together. You learned that the author wants to show you something about growing up and overcoming challenges. Now it's time to start another story set in a different time and place in history.



- ☆ What do you expect to learn about the time period in this book of historical fiction?
- ☆ What kinds of characters do you think you will meet in the book?
- ☆ What changes and challenges will the characters face?

**Directions:** On the lines below, write at least five questions that you hope will be answered as you read your OYO historical fiction. You may use the example questions above as well as your own questions. Talk about your questions with a parent, teacher, or reading coach.

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### 5.3 The Cover of My Historical Fiction Book

Do you remember that expert readers start looking for clues before they even open a book? They know that the cover of a book contains a lot of important information, so they study it carefully. Previewing a book will help you to become a better reader. How much information can you glean about your OYO historical fiction book before you start to read it?

**Directions:** Pick up the book you've chosen and examine it closely. Answer the following questions about the front and back covers. Don't forget to examine the inside of both covers too.

1. Who is the author of this book? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Who is the publisher of this book? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What does the title of this book tell you about the story inside?

SAMPLE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Study the illustration on the front cover. What clues can you find about the story inside?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What are the names of some of the characters you will meet inside?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



### 5.4 Make a Prediction

As you already learned in 1.11 MAKE A PREDICTION, when detectives begin a case, they start with a working theory. This is a possible explanation for the crime or mystery they are assigned to solve. As they collect clues, they confirm or revise their working theory based on what the clues tell them. Expert readers do the same thing. They use the information they collect from examining the cover of the book to help them predict what they expect to happen in the story. This is their working theory. Predictions are an important part of active reading. They help you activate your imagination. Practice doing this now. Remember to base your predictions on the clues you find on the cover.

Predictions are an important part of active reading. They help you activate your imagination.

**Directions:** On the lines below, use the clues you gathered from the cover to make some predictions about what you expect to happen in this book.

1. Who do you think the main character will be in your OYO historical fiction book?

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2. What changes and challenges do you expect the major characters to face?

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3. What do you expect the main conflict in the story to be? How do you think this main conflict might be resolved?

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4. How do you think the lives of the characters in this book will be different from your life?

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5. What experiences do you think you might have in common with the characters?

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SAMPLE

### 5.5 Meet the Author

How much can you find out about the author of your OYO historical fiction book? Are there any clues on the cover?

**Directions:** With the help of a parent, teacher, or reading coach, see what you can find on the Internet about your author. Look for answers to the following questions, and then fill in the graphic organizer on the next page. Find an image of the author, print it, and affix it to the space provided.

1. Where does (or did) your author live? When was your author born?
2. What did you find out about your author's family?
3. What are some of the titles of other books this author has written?
4. Has this author won any awards? If so, list them.
5. What are some of the interesting details you discovered about your author on the book cover or in your research on the Internet?

# ALL ABOUT

(author's name)

**Fun Facts**

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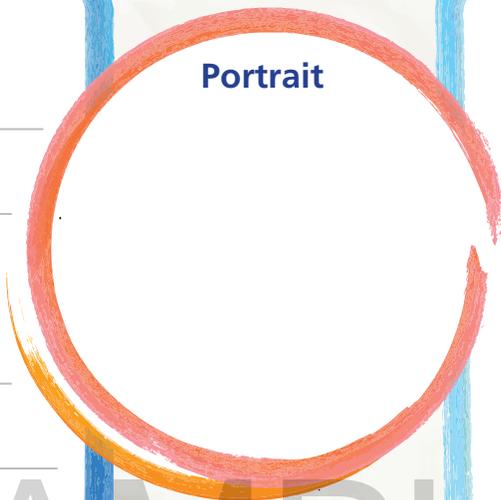
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**Portrait**



**Fun Facts**

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SAMPLE

**Family**

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**Awards**

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