

THE GLENCOE LITERATURE LIBRARY

Study Guide

for

**Across Five
Aprils**

by Irene Hunt



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To the Teacher

The *Glencoe Literature Library* presents full-length novels and plays bound together with shorter selections of various genres that relate by theme or topic to the main reading. Each work in the *Library* has a two-part Study Guide that contains a variety of resources for both you and your students. Use the guide to plan your instruction of the work and to enrich your classroom presentations.

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- *About the Work*: pertinent background information on the work, including a character list, a plot synopsis, major themes, and an annotated bibliography
- *Media Links*: annotated listings of audio, visual, electronic, and print resources related to the work
- *Teaching Options*: high-interest activities for introducing the work and individualizing instructions
- *Assessment Options*: alternative assessment activities for greater flexibility in evaluating students' understanding of the work
- *Options for Using Related Readings*: suggested approaches to the Related Readings included with the work
- *Answer Key and Assessment Rubrics*: detailed answers to all questions and reading activities and evaluations for alternative assessment activities

For the Student consists of these reproducible blackline masters:

- *Meet the Author*: a lively overview of the author's life
- *Introducing the Work*: background information that provides a meaningful context in which to read the work
- *Before You Read* and *Responding* pages: pre- and postreading questions and activities
- *Reading*: graphic organizers for students to complete as they read
- *Test*: a comprehensive two-part test of the work

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About the Work

ACROSS FIVE APRILS

BY IRENE HUNT

Irene Hunt's award-winning first novel, *Across Five Aprils*, is the moving tale of a boy's coming-of-age during the Civil War. Young Jethro Creighton never actually goes to war himself, but he grapples with the difficult responsibilities, moral dilemmas, and personal losses that it causes. In the process, he comes to terms with some of the war's harsh realities.

CHARACTER LIST

Jethro ("Jeth") Creighton, age nine and youngest child; intelligent and sensitive

Ellen Creighton, hardworking farm wife and mother of the Creighton children

Matthew Creighton, well-respected farmer; Ellen's husband and father of the Creighton children

Jenny Creighton, Jethro's spirited, affectionate fourteen-year-old sister

John, Bill, and Tom Creighton, Jethro's older brothers. John and Tom fight for the Union; Bill, for the Confederacy

Eb Carron, Jethro's cousin, who lives with the Creightons; fights for the Union

Shadrach Yale, schoolmaster and special friend to Jethro, who is in love with Jenny

SYNOPSIS

Across Five Aprils begins in mid-April 1861 on a large southern Illinois farm. The Creightons learn that Confederate soldiers have fired on Fort Sumter and that the Civil War is about to begin. Jeth's brothers go off to war—John and Tom to fight for the Union; Bill, for the Confederacy. Jeth's cousin Eb joins the Union army, as does Shadrach Yale, the local schoolmaster.

On a solo trip into town, Jeth stands up to local bully, Guy Wortman, who harasses Jeth because Bill is fighting for the South. On Jeth's way home, Wortman tries to ambush him, but another man saves the boy from attack. Jeth's father, Matthew, is distraught and suffers a heart attack the next morning. He survives but is in too frail a condition to do the farm work. At the age of ten, Jeth becomes the man of the household, shouldering a man's work.

Jeth, aided by Jenny and men from nearby farms, plows the fields. The Creightons live in fear after they have been threatened with violence for having a son in the Confederate army. The threats materialize when vandals burn down their barn and poison their well. The family is devastated when they learn that Tom has been killed in battle.

As the war rages on, Jeth tries to make sense of it through newspaper accounts, conversations, and letters from the battlefield. By late 1862, many Union soldiers begin to lose heart as casualties mount and disease and death take their toll. Deserters begin returning to Illinois. Among them is Eb. Looking after Eb in secret and struggling to decide the right thing to do, Jethro writes a letter to President Lincoln. Amazingly, Lincoln responds and reveals his plan to enable deserters to return to their regiments.

When Shad is critically wounded at Gettysburg in July 1863, Jenny, now sixteen, goes to him in a hospital in Washington, D.C. Jenny marries Shad, who eventually recovers. The war continues until April 1865, when peace is finally declared. The rejoicing ends with the news that Lincoln has been assassinated. Jeth takes this loss particularly hard, but while he is still grieving, Shad and Jenny return with the news that they plan to take Jeth back east with them so that he can get a good education.

MAJOR THEMES IN THE NOVEL

In the first scene of *Across Five Aprils*, Ellen Creighton says, “Yore hopes is makin’ a fool of yore reason, Jeth.” The tendency to let hope overtake reason is an important theme in the novel. When war breaks out, for example, many people are confident that it will be over quickly. When Tom and Eb go off to war, Jeth never doubts that they will return. After learning of Tom’s death in battle, Jenny admits that she has been behaving too optimistically, focusing on making a home for herself and Shad, not realizing that the war could deprive them of a future together. As the war finally ends, Jeth wants to hold onto his “shining dream” of peace, while Ross Milton warns him not to expect peace to be “a perfect pearl.”

Another theme of the novel is the need to make difficult choices. When Jeth wonders why Lincoln is reluctant to go to war, Ellen says: “He’s like a man standin’ where two roads meet, Jeth, and one road is as dark and fearsome as the other; there ain’t a choice between the two, and yet a choice has to be made.” Bill does not want to lose his family by fighting for the South, but he cannot in good conscience do anything else. Shad does not want to go to war but does so because he feels it is his duty. Jeth cannot see a way to reconcile his loyalty to Eb with what the law requires, but he must make a choice.

The third theme is the brutality of war. This theme is driven home as the war drags on for four years. Tom’s enthusiasm for war quickly gives way to disillusionment. “You tell Jeth that bein a soljer aint so much,” he says in a letter home from the battlefield. Later, John writes, “The sufferin and scenes of deth was sech as to make a mans hart hate war.”

APPROACHES TO TEACHING THE NOVEL

- Tell students that *Across Five Aprils* is a work of **historical fiction**—a story set in the past, often in a real place, in which the action revolves around an actual event or a particular historical period. Point out that this novel takes place on a farm in southern Illinois during the Civil War. Explain that the author invented the Creightons and many of the other characters in the book. Other characters, however, are actual historical figures.
- Emphasize the fact that *Across Five Aprils* is a **coming-of-age story**. When the novel begins, nine-year-old Jethro Creighton is only vaguely aware of “the adult world of trouble.” By the story’s end, however, he has successfully met a series of physical, moral, and emotional challenges that have helped him to mature from a sensitive boy to a wise young man. You might suggest to the students that, as they read, they keep track of the challenges Jethro faces and how he responds to each one.

FURTHER READING FOR THE TEACHER

- *Everyday Life During the Civil War* by Michael J. Varhola, 1999. This rich Civil War digest includes facts, statistics, definitions, illustrations, maps, and time lines.
- *Voices of the Civil War* by Richard Wheeler, 1976. The purpose of this book was to portray the war’s leading military events as participants saw them.
- *Secret Yankees: The Union Circle in Confederate Atlanta* by Thomas G. Dyer, 1999. This suspenseful saga was brought to light by the recent discovery of an Atlanta woman’s 1864 diary and by the author’s painstaking research.

Media Links



Videos

This film adaptation of the novel may add to students' appreciation of the work.

- *Civil War Diary*, also known as *Across Five Aprils* (1990, 82 minutes).



Audiocassettes

These recordings can acquaint students with some of the music and verse of the Civil War.

- ***The Civil War Through Music and Verse*** Civil War Music Store, four cassettes includes a guide featuring lyrics, song notes, and reproducible handouts.



CD-ROMs

These discs can help students gain a deeper understanding of the Civil War era.

- *American Journey—History in Your Hands: The Civil War* (Primary Source Media) is a collection of multimedia primary sources.
- *The Civil War: Two Views*, available from the Social Studies Service Catalogue (1999), is a visually rich tutorial in which the impact of the war on the industrialized North and agricultural South is examined through a variety of media.



Internet Connection

The following Web sites provide useful information for readers of *Across Five Aprils*.

- For biographical and bibliographical information about Irene Hunt, go to <http://www.edupaperback.org/authorbios/huntiren.html>
- For Civil War information as well as links to other sites, go to <http://homepages.dsu.edu/jankej/civilwar/civilwar.htm>
- For biographies of Northerners and Southerners who lived during the Civil War, go to <http://www.civilwarhome.com/biograph.htm>
- Images of the Civil War are accessible by subject or by location; go to <http://www.treasurenet.com/images/civilwar/>

At the time this study guide went to press, the Web sites were in operation. Before assigning students to visit the sites, check to ensure that the sites still exist.



Further Reading for the Student

- *Up a Road Slowly* by Irene Hunt, 1966. In this novel, winner of the 1967 Newbery Medal, Hunt sensitively portrays a girl's coming of age after the death of her mother.
- *The American Heritage New History of the Civil War* by Bruce Catton, 1996. Catton's detailed narrative is enhanced by drawings, paintings, maps, cartoons, and photographs.

Be sure to preview all media links to determine whether the material is appropriate for your class.

Teaching Options

Options for Motivating Students

Conflicting Loyalties

Prepare students for the moral dilemmas that arise when Bill has to choose sides in the war and when the Creightons have to suffer the consequences of that choice.

- Ask students to define *loyalty*. Invite volunteers to name people, institutions, and things to which they feel loyal. Then have them consider how they might react under conditions that test their loyalty. For example, if a family member or friend made an important decision with which they strongly disagreed, would they still be loyal to that person? Why or why not?
- Explain that *Across Five Aprils* is set on a farmstead in southern Illinois, a border state during the Civil War. A number of people in the area either came from Southern states or had family members living in them. Some of these people felt more loyalty to the South than to the North, even though they were living in a Union state. Ask students what kinds of problems might arise in such a situation. In a Union state, how might people react if they learned that a person in their community had decided to support the Confederate cause?

Appealing to the Senses

Help students understand and appreciate Irene Hunt's use of imagery.

- Remind students that sensory details appeal to one or more of the five senses—sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. Then ask them to identify the sensory details in the following passage and the sense to which each appeals: “The deep ruts in the road were frozen and glazed with ice; the wind had a clean sweep across the prairies, a sweep that sometimes seemed about to carry Jethro before it. Tears froze on his cheeks, and the cold pounded against his forehead as he trudged along, weighted by the heavy, oversized shoes and the many layers of clothing” (page 39).
- Ask students to explain how the imagery in the passage helps them vividly imagine the scene and the experience that the author is describing. Does this description remind students of an experience

of their own? Invite volunteers to use sensory details as they describe such an experience.

- Point out that rich sensory descriptions tend to slow down the action a bit, creating the sense that one is looking back to a time or a place that has been fixed in memory. Explain that in *Across Five Aprils*, these descriptions tend to occur just before some event happens that will render the “golden” experience the last of its kind.

Point of View

Help students identify the point of view from which the story is told.

- Ask whether anyone can explain the difference between first-person and third-person point of view. If necessary, point out that in a story told from the first-person point of view, the narrator is a character in the story, and refers to himself or herself as “I.” In a story told from the third-person point of view, the narrator is someone outside the story and refers to all of the characters by name or as “he,” “she,” or “they.” Examine passages from the novel with students to help them recognize that it is told from the third-person point of view.
- Explain to students that in a story told from the third-person limited point of view, the narrator usually reveals the thoughts, feelings, and observations of only one character, referring to that character as “he” or “she.” In a story told from the third-person omniscient, or all-knowing, point of view, the narrator knows everything about the characters and events and may reveal details that the characters themselves do not know.
- As they read, challenge students to determine which specific point of view Hunt uses to tell her story. After they have finished reading, invite volunteers to identify the point of view (third-person omniscient) and to give examples of passages that show that the narrator is omniscient. Then challenge students to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of Hunt's choice. For what reason might Hunt have chosen to focus most heavily on Jeth's thoughts, feelings, and observations?

Meeting Individual Needs

The subject matter, writing style, literary elements, vocabulary, and use of dialect in *Across Five Aprils* make the novel appropriate for students who enjoy more challenging reading material. The following activities are designed to help you present the novel in ways that meet the needs and interests of all students.

Less-Proficient Readers

Help students keep track of major story events by creating a time line.

- *Across Five Aprils* includes a large number of events—both real and fictional—that take place over the four years of the Civil War. Have students create a time line to help them keep track of these events. On a bulletin board, draw a time line with April 1861 as the beginning date and April 1865 as the end date.
- After they read each chapter or section of the novel, have students jot down the major events on index cards. Call on students to share and compare the events they have listed. Then ask volunteers to post their cards in the appropriate locations on the time line.
- Review the time line with students to make sure that all the major events in the story have been listed. Then discuss which events are historical and which are fictional. Make sure that students understand that for many events, Hunt has combined fact and fiction—for example, Shad is a fictional character, but Gettysburg, where Shad is critically wounded, was the actual scene of a famous Civil War battle.

English-Language Learners

Help students read and understand the regional dialect spoken by many characters in the novel.

- Tell students that the Creightons and many of the other characters in *Across Five Aprils* speak in a dialect. Explain that a dialect is a regional variety of a language that is distinguishable by features of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Invite volunteers to share any experiences they have had with dialects.

- On the chalkboard, write several examples of dialect from the novel. Then, help students restate each example in Standard English.
- Pair students with native English speakers and have them work through several more examples of dialect from *Across Five Aprils*. As they read the novel, students should ask their partners for help if they have trouble understanding any of the dialect in the work.

Gifted and Talented

Challenge students to explore and debate the causes of the Civil War. (Interdisciplinary: History)

- Have students review what they have learned about the causes of the Civil War from reading *Across Five Aprils*. For example, they might reread pages 18–23, in which the Creightons and Wilse Graham debate the political and moral issues over dinner.
- Encourage students to research to learn more about the causes of the war. You may wish to refer them to sources in **Media Links** (page 4).
- Have students meet to share the results of their research. Encourage them to discuss and debate such questions as: Was the issue of slavery the main cause of the war? What role did the issue of states' rights play in the conflict? How did differing values, lifestyles, and economic systems contribute to the tensions between Northerners and Southerners?

Have students make Civil War chess sets and play team chess.

- Tell students that Civil War chess sets are popular with collectors. Explain that during the war, soldiers and prisoners of war played chess and cards while stationed in camps. Some even made their own sets.
- Explain that chess pieces can be labeled with names of presidents, generals, and soldiers from both of the Civil War armies.
- Have students work in small groups to create their own sets and play team chess. Students who know the game can explain the rules. Teams can decide to set up a tournament ladder or to play one game, taking turns with each move.

Assessment Options

Writing

The Elements of Historical Fiction

- Have students write essays in which they analyze the historical elements in *Across Five Aprils*. They should answer the following questions: In what time and place do the events of the story occur? Is Hunt's re-creation of the setting realistic? Which characters were historical figures and which did the author invent? Do the attitudes, speech, and behavior of the characters fit the time and place in which they lived?

You Are the Author

- Have students write fictional narratives of their own that are set during the Civil War. Narratives should be based on scenes from the novel that impressed students. Students may invent their characters, use historical figures, or if they wish, use both.
- Invite volunteers to share their narratives with the class.

Listening and Speaking

Interview a Character

- Have students work in pairs to role-play an interview with one of the characters in the novel.
- Students should write a script for the interview, with questions that they would like to ask the character, as well as responses the character would be likely to give. For example, in a postwar interview with Bill Creighton, students might wish to ask Creighton whether he regrets his decision to fight for the Confederacy.
- Students should rehearse their interviews after deciding which role each partner will play. Then they should present their interviews to the class.

Viewing and Representing

Battle Report

- Have students choose a battle mentioned in the novel. Ask them to research and

prepare an in-depth multimedia report on the battle. Students may wish to work in pairs or in small groups.

- Remind students that Civil War battles often have two different names. The Union named battles for the nearest body of water—for example, the Battle of Bull Run; the Confederacy named them for the nearest settlement—for example, the Battle of Manassas.
- Point out to students that their presentations will be more interesting if they explain the battle strategies employed by the leaders of the military units involved, describe the personal impact of the battle on some of its participants, and note the larger strategic significance of the outcome of the battle. Students may wish to use photographs, illustrations, maps, soldiers' letters, recordings of authentic war hymns or drummer's songs, three-dimensional models with movable armies, and computer simulations of the battle.
- Invite students to share their multimedia presentations with the class.

Interdisciplinary Connection

Disease and Death

- Tell students that during the Civil War, more soldiers died from sickness than from battle wounds during the Civil War. Have them do research to find out what diseases commonly killed the soldiers, as well as the causes of those diseases. What preventive measures might have saved many soldiers from contracting the diseases?
- Have students present their data in a chart. You may wish to have students post their charts on a bulletin board, along with copies of any related photographs or illustrations they may have downloaded from the Internet.

Options for Using Related Readings

Related Readings	Making Connections to Across Five Aprils
<p>from <i>Reluctant Witnesses: Children's Voices from the Civil War</i> by Emmy E. Werner (BLM page 32)</p>	<p>In the novel, readers learn how Jeth reacts to the outbreak of the Civil War. Werner describes, often in their own words, how other young people reacted to the beginning of the war. She also describes the roles played by the many underage boys who served in the military while other boys, such as Jeth, labored on the home front.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may wish to use this as a prereading activity before beginning the novel. • Before they read, ask students to share any knowledge they may have about the roles that children and young teenagers played in the military during the Civil War. Does it surprise students to learn that underage boys served in combatant as well as noncombatant roles in the armies of the Union and the Confederacy? • As they read, have students carefully note the firsthand accounts that young people give of their reactions to the start of the war. Also have them note the specific roles that underage boys played in the military during the Civil War. • Have students discuss possible reasons why they think so many young people eagerly joined the war effort, finding ways to circumvent age restrictions and, if necessary, the disapproval of parents. Why would they want to go to war at such a young age? What dangers did they face that young people on the home front, such as Jeth and Jenny, did not face? What might have happened to the Creightons if Jeth had become a drummer boy in the Union army?
<p>Come Up from the Fields Father and An Army Corps on the March by Walt Whitman (BLM page 33)</p>	<p>Whitman describes two common wartime experiences, which also appear in the novel: the experience of learning that a loved one has died in battle and that of soldiers marching forward into battle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These might work well as prereading activities before students begin chapter 7 of the novel. • Before they read, ask students to imagine what a “perfect” autumn day would be like on a farm. What would the weather be like? How would the trees, the fields, and the skies look? Write students’ responses on the board. • After they read the first poem, ask students why Whitman may have chosen an idyllic setting as the backdrop for the delivery of tragic news. What message may he have wanted to convey? • Have students read the second poem. Then ask them to identify the overall impression created by the poet’s description of soldiers marching forward into battle. Is the march glamorous? Foreboding? Gritty? Frightening? Laborious? Orderly? • Ask students which poem had the greater emotional impact on them. Have them give reasons for their choices.

Options for Using Related Readings

Related Readings	Making Connections to Across Five Aprils
<p><i>from The Odyssey of Pvt. Rosetta Wakeman, Union Army</i> by Eugene L. Meyer (BLM page 34)</p>	<p>In this article, as in the novel, contributions made by enlisted personnel during the Civil War are described. Here, however, the soldiers are women disguised as men. The author focuses on one woman in particular.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This might work well as a prereading activity before students begin the novel. • Invite students to share what they know about the contribution that women made to the war effort during the Civil War. Write their responses on the board. • After they have read the selection, ask students whether their ideas have changed regarding women’s roles during the war. • Ask students whether they think Lauren Cook Burgess should have won her court case. In their opinion, should Burgess have had to go to trial to be included? Why or why not?
<p>Tenting on the Old Camp Ground by Walter Kittridge (BLM page 35)</p>	<p>This song, popular with both Union and Confederate troops, expresses emotions that soldiers—and characters in the novel—commonly experienced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may wish to have students read this song as they read chapters 7–9. • Before they read the song lyrics, ask students to characterize homesickness. On what does a homesick person often focus? Remind students that homesick soldiers have no guarantee that they will ever return home to see family and friends. • After they have read the lyrics, ask students whether they were surprised by anything in the song. What, do they suppose, accounted for the song’s popularity? • Challenge students to create an additional verse of their own for the song. Invite students to share their verses with the class.
<p><i>from When Heaven and Earth Changed Places</i> by Le Ly Hayslip and Lament of Ben Hai River by Nhat Hanh (translated by the author and Helen Coutant) (BLM page 36)</p>	<p>These two selections deal with the Vietnam War, a civil war that tore apart a nation and turned members of some families into enemies—just as the American Civil War had done.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These selections might work well as postreading activities after students have read the novel. • Before students read, invite volunteers to share what they know about the Vietnam War. You may wish to provide additional background about the war by reading a brief description of the war from an encyclopedia article or a history textbook. • After they have read the two selections, ask students to identify the incidents or images that made the strongest impression on them. Have them give reasons for their choices. • Have students compare and contrast the memoir excerpt and the poem. In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different?

Answer Key

ACTIVE READING

Chapters 1–3

Sample answers: Ellen: loving, hardworking, practical; Matt: compassionate, independent thinker, well respected; Jenny: spirited, cheerful, loyal; John: outspoken, impatient; Nancy: quiet, aloof; Bill: serious, studious, introspective; Tom: high-spirited, impulsive; Eb Carron: impatient, impulsive; Shadrach Yale: studious, intelligent, kind.

Chapters 4–6

Answers will vary depending upon the place or event chosen.

Chapters 7–9

Possible answers: Creightons learn Tom has died in battle; Milton prints letter condemning those who vandalized Creighton farm; Sam Gardiner gives Wortman his comeuppance; Neighbors raise barn for Creightons amid bad news from war front; Shad reports victory at Antietam and slaughter at Fredericksburg; John writes home about heavy casualties at Stones River, many Union soldiers start deserting; Union men look for Eb, whom Jeth later finds; Jeth helps Eb and writes to Lincoln for advice; Lincoln writes to Jeth with good news for deserters.

Chapters 10–12

Answers will vary depending on the letters students choose.

RESPONDING Chapters 1–3

Recall and Interpret

1. The Creightons are a hardworking, close-knit farm family whose way of life is threatened by the possibility of war.
2. Mary was Jethro's sister, killed in a wagon accident caused by Travis Burdow. Matthew kept an angry mob from hanging him, which suggests a forgiving nature.
3. Cousin Wilse Graham from Kentucky is the guest. The main topic is the bitter differences between the North and South. The debate gets so angry that Ellen orders it stopped.
4. He tells them about the fall of Fort Sumter and Lincoln's call for 75,000 militia volunteers. The prevailing attitude seems to be anger and an eagerness to join the fight. Matt seems troubled, Ellen is pained, and Shad is weary.
5. Bill has decided to fight for "the southern farmer," even though he hates slavery. He thinks his decision will cost him his family because they support the Union.

Evaluate and Connect

6. The visit allows the author to present the Southern perspective on the brewing conflicts, as well as to foreshadow the fact that families will be torn apart over these conflicts.
7. Students should support their answers with good reasons.

RESPONDING Chapters 4–6

Recall and Interpret

1. Tom tells of his and Eb's role in two Union victories. On the march to the second battle, many soldiers got so hot that they tossed their bedrolls and coats. Later, many froze to death. Tom says that being a soldier "ain't so much." A family needs to be alone in case the letter has bad news.
2. Tom's letter has upset Ellen, making it hard for her to let Jeth go. Shad and Jeth discuss family matters and the war, which Shad believes is far from over. Shad tells Jeth to read the books he's leaving with him.
3. She tries to do without coffee because it's gotten so expensive despite the horrible headaches she gets without it. Matt can't bear to see her suffer.
4. Wortman hassles Jeth for having a brother who is a Copperhead. Later, he unsuccessfully ambushes Jeth's

wagon. Jeth's response shows that he's fiercely loyal to his family and that he is courageous.

5. Matt has a heart attack and can no longer farm. Troublemakers burn down the Creightons' barn and poison their water. At the age of ten, Jeth becomes the "man of the family."

Evaluate and Connect

6. The mood is one of dread and fear; details are sagging roofs, a sense of evil, and a feeling of vague dread.
7. Answers should compare and contrast the burdens that Jeth must assume with specific ones that students have borne.

RESPONDING Chapters 7–9

Recall and Interpret

1. Tom has died in battle. Jenny is now afraid to plan for the future. She seems to realize the seriousness of the war and the very real danger that more of her loved ones will die.
2. Gardiner hides in his store while pretending to be out of town. When Wortman and his gang break in, Gardiner shoots Wortman in the buttocks. Wortman is ridiculed, especially after Milton prints the story in his paper. The incident suggests that humor and ridicule may be effective tools for handling bullies.
3. The battles discourage everyone. Soldiers lose faith and begin to desert. Both battles result in heavy casualties, made worse by the incompetence of Union generals. People wonder whether the war will ever end and if it is worth the cost.
4. Jeth finds Eb, who is now a deserter. If he helps Eb, Jeth is breaking the law and being disloyal to those who stayed and fought. If he turns him away, Eb will probably die soon. Jeth decides to write to President Lincoln for advice.
5. Lincoln tells Jeth of his plan to let deserters return to their regiments with no penalty except loss of pay. Lincoln seems to be compassionate and values mercy over revenge.

Evaluate and Connect

6. Some may say that Jeth was right not to tell his father. Others may say that Jeth should have told his father, as he was too young to handle the situation alone.
7. Some students may say that the decision is unfair because the only punishment is loss of pay. Others may say that it is fair, because the deserters have suffered enough already.

RESPONDING Chapters 10–12

Recall and Interpret

1. A Union victory follows three days of fighting and high casualties. People cannot understand why the Northern generals let the Confederates withdraw and regroup.
2. Shad was critically wounded at Gettysburg and asks for Jenny. This journey marks the start of Jenny's adult life, and Matt finally lets her marry Shad.
3. John finds Bill among a group of Confederate prisoners. After learning of Tom's death, Bill asks John to tell their mother that he was not at the battle in which Tom was killed. This request suggests that Bill's decision to join the Confederates has caused him a lot of mental anguish.
4. Word comes in the second week of April 1865. Lincoln is killed shortly afterward, and the joy caused by the end of the war turns to sadness. It is cruel that Lincoln will not be alive to enjoy the victory he worked for so long.
5. Jethro will leave the farm with Shad, and Jenny will live with them while attending school full time. This decision reflects the value the Creightons place on education.

Answer Key (continued from previous page)

Evaluate and Connect

- Possible answer: No. Bill's family would welcome him and try to forget the past, but Bill would face hostility and perhaps even violence from people in the community.
- Possible answer: Milton knows that the emotional scars of the war will take even longer to heal than the physical ones. He knows that many people will be unwilling to forgive and forget the hurts inflicted by the enemy.

RELATED READINGS

from *Reluctant Witnesses: Children's Voices from the Civil War*

- Northern boys: most sought adventure; some wanted to teach Southerners a lesson; a few wanted to end slavery. Southern boys: wanted adventure and glory and to defend their homes. Many boys seemed to view war as an adventure.
- Drummer, bugler, and fifer. More than 40,000 boys were drummers in the Union army; in the Confederate army, about 20,000 boys were musicians. Some students will say that the battlefield was too dangerous for boys; others will say that the boys knew the dangers but took the risks.
- A drummer boy had to play many times a day, cook, and care for horses. He had to relay orders to the soldiers, care for the wounded, and bury the dead. He needed discipline, stamina, and the ability to withstand suffering and death.
- Some students will say yes—he would have wanted to do his part in the war. Others will say no—he wouldn't have wanted to leave home.

Come Up from the Fields Father/An Army Corps on the March

- Pete has been mortally wounded in battle. His mother is overcome with shock and grief.
- It is a beautiful, tranquil autumn day on a prosperous Ohio farm during the Civil War. In contrast to this idyllic scene comes the news that the only son of this farm family has been wounded in battle; soon they will learn that he is dead.
- Possible answer: His purpose may have been to convey the experience of a marching army. The images and details chosen allowed him to vividly re-create the experience.
- The incident in which Dan Lawrence tells the Creightons about Tom's death in battle is similar to the incident in which Pete's father receives a letter telling him of his son's fate. The ways in which the families receive the news are different, but in both cases, the families are shocked and devastated.

from *The Odyssey of Pvt. Rosetta Wakeman, Union Army*

- They considered a female's presence as a soldier in a Civil War battle to be absurd. Burgess filed a federal lawsuit alleging sex discrimination.
- She learned that Ruth Goodier had a female ancestor who fought in the Civil War disguised as a man. Students may say that the family may have feared being ostracized for having a relative who had impersonated a man.
- Wakeman ran away from home, disguised herself as a man, and became a boatman. Then she enlisted in the Union army, again pretending to be a man. Her experiences suggest that women were thought incapable of working in such "male" occupations as boatman and soldier.
- Possible answer: These letters provide firsthand accounts of what the war was like for soldiers on the front line. The letters bring the war to a personal level, helping readers better understand the dangers soldiers faced.

Tenting on the Old Camp Ground

- The soldiers wish for a song about home and friends that will cheer their weary hearts; they also want the war to end. These wishes suggest that they are tired of war.

- The soldiers are thinking about "days gone by" and the loved ones who tearfully bid them goodbye. The mood is nostalgic and more somber; instead of wishing for a song of home to cheer them up, they are remembering sad good-byes.
- The soldiers were in battle that day; some are dead, and others dying. The mood changes from nostalgic to grim.
- In the last two lines, the word *tenting* is replaced with *dying*. The soldiers are no longer recuperating; instead, some are losing their lives; many seem to be losing hope.
- Sample answer: Shad would think of Jenny, Jethro, and the other Creightons, and of the day he said goodbye to them. He would think about wanting the war to end but would wonder about his chances of surviving it.

from *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places and Lament of Ben Hai River*

- She played war games with other children. She didn't enjoy them because they reminded her that her brother was a Viet Cong and her sister was a republican. To take sides meant that her brother or sister had to become her enemy.
- The river separates the northern and southern zones of Vietnam. Symbolically, it divides the people of Vietnam into two camps, with each regarding the other as the enemy.
- Her attitude seems to be one of pain. She writes, "[the] hearts wither and feel sore"; "How our hearts ache!"
- Possible answer: Both are civil wars, in which people fight fellow countrymen. Both are conflicts between the northern and southern regions of a country. In both conflicts, family members sometimes find themselves on opposite sides.

TEST

Recall and Interpret

- c 4. a
- b 5. d
- d
- Jethro is her youngest child and seems to have special talents that Ellen values highly.
- Tom dies, and Eb deserts but returns to his unit.
- Matt thinks Jenny is too young. Shad's being critically wounded makes him regret his decision.
- Their dog is stolen, their barn is burned down, and their well is poisoned.
- He is deeply grieved. He admired Lincoln, considering him a friend because of the letter Lincoln had written to him.

Evaluate and Connect (any 2)

Sample answers to use in evaluating students' essays:

- Meaning: Your hopes are unrealistic. Examples: People think the war will be short. Soldiers die in badly planned battles. Jeth views peace as a "shining dream."
- Matt: Saves Travis Burdow from hanging. Bill: Fights for South, not North. Eb: Deserts, then returns to regiment. Jethro: Stands up for Bill in front of bullies.
- Eb decides to desert. He is overwhelmed by defeats and deaths. He has to stay hidden and nearly starves. The consequences were expected, but he could not help himself. He regrets his decision. Students should tell what they think they would have done in Eb's situation and why.
- Event: Shad is critically wounded. Clues: Shad's telling Jenny to prepare herself for the probability of heartbreak.
- Students should give specific reasons for their opinions.

Assessment Rubrics

Use these criteria as guidelines for evaluating students' performance on Assessment Options activities presented in this study guide.

Writing

The Elements of Historical Fiction

The essay should

- identify the novel's setting and evaluate its realism
- give examples of invented and historical characters
- evaluate whether characters' behavior, attitudes, and speech fit the historical context
- be supported with examples and details from the novel

You Are the Author

The narrative should

- be based on a scene from the novel
- use invented characters or historical figures, or both
- include historically accurate details
- feature characters whose behavior, attitudes, and speech fit their era

Listening and Speaking

Interview a Character

The interview should

- be based on a question-answer script prepared in advance
- include the character's likely answers to the interviewer's questions
- be supported with examples and details from the novel
- be presented for the class

Viewing and Representing

Battle Report

The report should

- use a variety of media to show what happened during the battle
- explain battle strategies, the impact of the battle on participants, and the strategic importance of the outcome

Interdisciplinary Connection

Disease and Death

The chart should

- include columns that list diseases such as diarrhea, dysentery, measles, smallpox, typhoid, gangrene, and chicken pox
- include causes (improper food and sanitation)
- include preventive measures (safer food and better sanitary practices)

Meet Irene Hunt



I don't want to aim at a special age of reader. I write when I have something to say, and I hope to say it as well and as gracefully as I can.

—Irene Hunt, quoted in *Publisher's Weekly*

Irene Hunt was born in 1907 in Pontiac, Illinois, but soon moved with her parents to the town of Newton in southern Illinois. The innocence of Hunt's childhood ended abruptly at the age of seven, when her father died. After her father's death, a child said to her, "You aren't going to live here anymore, are you?" On hearing these words, a grief-stricken Irene went off and hid in a closet.

Before long, Hunt and her mother did leave Newton. They went to live with Hunt's maternal grandparents on a farm close by. It was there that Hunt first heard her grandfather's many captivating stories about his life during the Civil War. Of her grandfather, Hunt writes:

He was a good storyteller, and he gave his listeners a wealth of detail that enabled us to share with him the anxiety and sorrow of the times as well as the moments of happiness in a closely-knit family.

Many years later, Hunt would draw on the rich legacy of her grandfather's stories to write an award-winning historical novel. This novel would feature a farm boy from

southern Illinois who comes of age during the Civil War—just as Hunt's grandfather had done.

Persistence Pays Off Before winning acclaim as a writer, Irene Hunt had a long and successful career in education. Despite the demands of teaching, she found time to work on her writing. Year after year, she sat at the typewriter at her kitchen table creating stories that she hoped would one day be published. Finally, in 1964, she met with success when *Across Five Aprils* was published. The novel was named a Newbery Medal Honor Book in 1965.

Critics praised the novel for its historical accuracy and its engaging story of the Creightons, a southern Illinois farm family caught up in the momentous events of the Civil War years. Hunt did extensive research to ensure the historical accuracy of the novel. Regarding the family story that forms the backbone of the book, she has noted:

As to the story of the Creightons, there is hardly a page in this book on which a situation has not been suggested by family letters and records and by the stories told by my grandfather.

Hunt's next novel, *Up a Road Slowly*, was, like *Across Five Aprils*, a coming-of-age story. Based on her own experience, it is the story of a young girl named Julie who lost a parent at the age of seven. It won the Newbery Medal in 1967.

Later Years Hunt was not content to rest on her laurels after the success of her first two books. She continued to write books featuring complex, realistic characters who confronted life's challenges. Hunt also spent time pursuing her hobbies and interests—cooking, traveling, and "[reading] beautiful, well-written books and [listening to] beautiful very loud music." After living in Illinois for many years, Hunt moved to Florida in the early 1970s, where she still lives.

Introducing the Novel

This is a beautifully written book, filled with bloodshed, hate, and tears, but also with love, loyalty, and compassion, with unforgettable characters, and with ideas and implications that have meaning for young people today.

—Chicago Tribune

Across Five Aprils is the story of the Creightons, a farm family from southern Illinois that struggles to survive the upheaval of the Civil War years. Jethro Creighton, the main character, is nine years old when the story begins, and his sister Jenny is fourteen. The story takes place over the five Aprils of the Civil War: April 1861 through April 1865. The tale is focused, in particular, on Jethro's coming of age—and, to a lesser extent, his sister Jenny's journey into young adulthood.

Through Jethro, readers grasp the impact that the Civil War had on the soldiers who fought it as well as on the people who remained behind to tend to farms and families. Readers also witness the kinds of conflicts that sometimes tore families and communities apart in border states such as Illinois.

The novel's historical accuracy is due to Hunt's meticulous research and attention to detail. The Creightons' tale is based on stories that Hunt's grandfather told about his own experiences during the war, as well as on family letters and records. Hunt noted that her grandfather, like Jethro, was nine years old at the outbreak of the Civil War.

THE TIME AND PLACE

Across Five Aprils begins within days of the bombardment of Fort Sumter, the first armed conflict of the Civil War. At that time, seven Southern states had already seceded, or formally withdrawn, from the Union. They had declared themselves a new nation, the Confederate States of America.

The Confederacy had taken over most of the federal operations in the South. President Lincoln, determined to hold the Union together, warned Southerners that the government would continue to “hold, occupy, and possess” all its property in the secessionist states. Southerners did

not want outsiders doing business on their soil. Tensions escalated.

Fort Sumter, located on a rocky island in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina, was, at that time, one of only two federal forts still held by federal troops in the South. Supplies were running low, so its commander, Major Robert Anderson, had contacted Lincoln to request more soldiers and provisions. Meanwhile, P. G. T. Beauregard, a general in the new Confederate army, had surrounded the harbor with cannons to prevent federal supply ships from reaching the fort.

The Confederates waited for Major Anderson and his troops to withdraw. Anderson waited for Lincoln's response. Lincoln, not wanting to anger Southerners even more, decided not to send troops—but he did send supply ships with provisions. The Confederates considered even the order to send supply ships an act of war. On April 12, 1861, soon after learning that a fleet was on its way, General Beauregard fired on the fort.

“Showers of balls . . . and shells . . . poured into the fort in one incessant stream, causing great flakes of masonry to fall in all directions,” according to Captain Abner Doubleday, a soldier inside the fort during the attack. On the second day of the attack, one of the major's men came to him to plead for surrender. With rubble and raging flames all around, Major Anderson could not reasonably do anything else. After thirty-four hours of bombardment, but no loss of life on either side, Anderson surrendered. The Confederates hoisted their flag over the fort and fired its guns in a victory salute.

Three days later, President Lincoln asked for seventy-five thousand volunteers to serve in the army for ninety days to help restore order in the South. So many men volunteered that there was not enough equipment to outfit them or enough experienced soldiers on hand to train them.

Meanwhile, in response to Lincoln's call for volunteers to suppress the rebellion in the South, four more states joined the Confederacy. Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederacy,

requested that a hundred thousand volunteers step forward. Southern men—just as certain of a quick victory as were their counterparts in the North—joined the Confederate army.

Although both sides were expecting a quick and easy end to the war, four years of bloodshed, death, and disease would follow before the North and South would again be one nation.

Did You Know?

The Civil War really did set brother against brother. For example, the Halsey brothers, Edmund and Joseph, fought on opposite sides—Edmund for the Union and Joseph for the Confederacy. Like some of his other family members, Ed was a passionate antislavery Republican. His older brother Joe, who had moved to Virginia as a young man, married the

daughter of a wealthy plantation owner and slave trader and was just as passionate for the Southern cause. During the war, Edmund kept a diary, and both brothers wrote numerous letters that provide valuable insights into a war that not only pitted North against South but also brother against brother.



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CRITIC'S CORNER

An impressive book both as a historically authenticated Civil War novel and as a beautifully written family story. . . . The realistic treatment of the intricate emotional conflicts within a border-state family is superb. The details of battles and campaigns are deftly integrated into letters and conversations, and the characters are completely convincing.

—University of Chicago Center for Children's Books

Before You Read

Across Five Aprils Chapters 1–3

FOCUS ACTIVITY

Think of a time when you were forced to “take a side” in an argument or another conflict. What did you do? Why?

Think-Pair-Share

List some of the factors you might consider when choosing sides in an argument or another conflict. Then share and compare your list with a classmate. Discuss which factors might influence you the most.

Setting a Purpose

Read to learn about the difficult choices characters face at the outbreak of the Civil War.

BACKGROUND

Dialect

Many of the characters in this novel speak a **dialect**—a variety of language used in a particular region or by members of a particular group. Dialects may differ from the standard form of the language in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Here are two examples of dialect from *Across Five Aprils*:

It 'mazes me, Jeth, it does fer a fact, the way you kin recollect all the things Shad tells you and how you kin put them from his way of talkin' into mine.

It's been days that I've looked for'ard to hevin' a meal with you, and here I've lost myself in talk that gits me worked up and loud of voice.

Notice how Irene Hunt uses phonetic spellings to represent the characters' pronunciation of certain words. For example, she writes *fer* for *for*, *kin* for *can*, *hevin'* for *having*, and *gits* for *gets*. She uses apostrophes to indicate that they do not pronounce particular letters. For example, she writes *'mazes* for *amazes* and *for'ard* for *forward*. As you read, use context clues to help you understand the dialect. In Standard English, the example sentences above might be written as follows:

It really amazes me, Jeth, how you can remember all the things that Shad tells you and how you can translate them from his way of speaking into mine.

For days, I've looked forward to having a meal with you, and here I've lost myself in talk that gets me upset and makes me loud.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

aloof [ə lōōf'] *adj.* removed or distant either physically or emotionally (p. 12)

comeuppance [kum' up' əns] *n.* a deserved penalty or punishment (p. 5)

desolate [des' ə lit] *adj.* miserable; forsaken (p. 29)

hedge [hej] *v.* avoid giving a direct answer; evade the risk of commitment (p. 20)

secession [si sesh' ən] *n.* formal withdrawal from an organization; withdrawal from the Union by the eleven Southern states that formed the Confederacy (p. 9)

tumult [tōō' məlt] *n.* mental or emotional agitation (p. 21)

Active Reading

Across Five Aprils Chapters 1-3

In this section, the author introduces many characters. Pay attention to qualities that help define each character. Summarize your ideas in a few words, and then jot them down in the appropriate spaces in the chart below.

Character	Distinguishing Traits
Jethro	intelligent, sensitive, curious
Ellen	
Matt	
Jenny	
John	
Nancy	
Bill	
Tom	
Eb Carron	
Shadrach Yale	

Responding

Across Five Aprils Chapters 1–3

Personal Response

What images from the Creighton farmstead are still in your mind? Identify the scenes, people, and things that you remember the most vividly. Then discuss with a partner what made them so memorable to you.

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. Briefly describe what you learn in chapter 1 about the Creightons and their way of life. What threatens to disrupt their lives?

2. Who was Mary Creighton, and what happened to her? What does Matthew's reaction to this tragedy seem to suggest about his character?

3. Who is the Creightons' dinner guest? What is the main topic of conversation? Why does Ellen finally order the young men to change the subject?

4. What news does Shad bring back to the family? What appears to be the prevailing reaction to this news? Who appears to be troubled by it? Explain.

5. Why is it so hard for Bill to go off to war? What does he think his decision will cost him? Explain.

Responding

Across Five Aprils Chapters 1–3

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

6. Why might the author have chosen to have a family member from a Southern state visit the Creightons at this time? What could the visit **foreshadow**?

7. Review your response to the **Focus Activity** on page 16. What factors appear to have influenced Bill the most in his choosing sides in the war? Give reasons for your answer.

Literature and Writing

Analyzing Character

Review the character chart that you completed in the **Active Reading** on page 17. Then, in a paragraph or two, write an analysis of one of these characters. In your analysis, answer questions such as the following: What are the defining characteristics of this person? What do the character's words, actions, and relationships with other characters reveal about him or her? Does this character seem true to life? Is this a person with whom readers can identify or sympathize? In your opinion, is this person admirable? Support your ideas and opinions with evidence from the novel.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

In your group, list the issues that Wilse and the Creightons discuss and debate over dinner. What opinions do different characters express about each issue? What facts or reasons do they give to support their viewpoints? How do their differences of opinion help you better understand the conflicts that led to the Civil War? After your group discusses these questions, share and compare your ideas with the members of another group.

Science Connection

Jethro explains Copernicus's revolutionary idea to his mother in such a way as to make it familiar and understandable to her (see pages 5–6). Imagine that you have been asked to explain a simple scientific concept to a group of first-graders. Choose a concept and write a brief story that presents this idea in a way that would be understandable to young children. If you wish, you may personify the objects, animals, or forces of nature involved in what you are explaining—that is, you can give them human qualities.



Save your work for your portfolio.

Before You Read

Across Five Aprils Chapters 4–6

FOCUS ACTIVITY

What is the biggest responsibility you have ever been asked to handle?

Journal

Write about the thoughts that went through your mind when you were asked to assume an important responsibility. Then write about the experience of actually tackling this responsibility. What did you discover about yourself in the process?

Setting a Purpose

Read to find out about the new responsibilities that Jethro must assume.

BACKGROUND

Did You Know?

An ironclad was a type of warship developed in Europe and the United States in the mid-1800s. It was characterized by iron casemates that protected the hull. On March 8, 1862, off Hampton Roads, Virginia, the Confederate ironclad *Virginia* (formerly the *Merrimack*) destroyed two Northern wooden warships and chased three others ashore. The next day, when the Union ironclad *Monitor* met the *Virginia* at Hampton Roads, ironclad battled ironclad for the first time in naval history. Although neither ship suffered much damage in the four-hour fight, the battle marked a turning point in naval warfare: afterward, wooden warships were replaced with ironclads. Refinements in the years to follow would convert the ironclad into the battleship.

The Origin of the Term *Copperhead*

Even in the North, many people were critical of President Lincoln. Abolitionists criticized him for his willingness to tolerate slavery. They felt that the elimination of slavery should be a goal of the war. Some members of Lincoln's own party, who were known as Radical Republicans, opposed the president's position that the primary goal of the war should be to preserve the Union. Within the Democratic Party was a group called the Peace Democrats, who favored ending the war at any cost. They were willing to allow the South to return to the Union, or to let the slave states secede from the Union in peace. Republican journalists compared these Democrats to the poisonous copperhead snake. The name caught on. Some Copperheads openly supported the South; others encouraged Northerners to resist the war.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

abolitionist [ab'əlish'ənɪst] *n.* a person in favor of abolishing, or ending, slavery (p. 44)

demotion [di mō'shən] *n.* a reduction to a lower rank or a grade of lesser importance (p. 68)

detain [di tān'] *v.* to delay or hold back (p. 38)

dissipate [dis'əpāt'] *v.* to break up and scatter (p. 75)

forte [fôrt] *n.* one's strong point (p. 58)

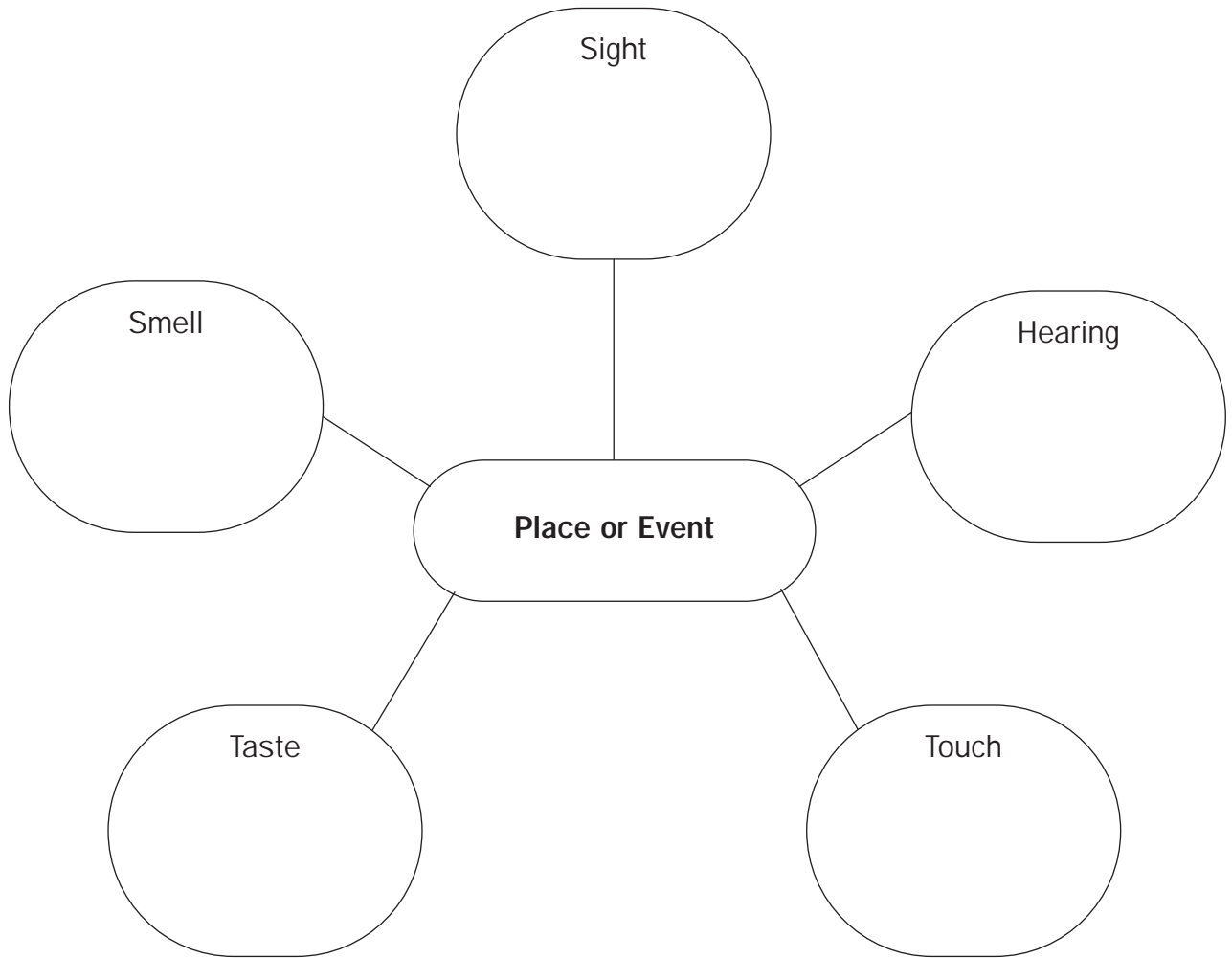
indistinct [in'dis tɪŋkt'] *adj.* not sharply outlined (p. 50)

pompous [pɒm'pəs] *adj.* self-important or arrogant (p. 45)

Active Reading

Across Five Aprils Chapters 4–6

To help readers vividly imagine people, places, and events, writers use **sensory details**—descriptions that appeal to one or more of the five senses. As you read the following chapters, choose a place or an event that comes across vividly to you. In the appropriate circle, jot down details that help you imagine this place or event. If a detail appeals to more than one sense, record it in each appropriate circle.



Responding

Across Five Aprils Chapters 4–6

Personal Response

What went through your mind as you read about Jethro's encounters with Guy Wortman and Dave Burdow?

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. Summarize what Tom says in his letter (page 36). Why does Ed Turner remark, "A fam'ly needs to be alone when one of these letters comes"?

2. Why, do you suppose, does Ellen detain Jeth so long before finally sending him off to Shad's? Describe Jeth's visit with Shad.

3. What does Ellen try to do without and why? What happens as a result of her decision? What might explain Matt's contradictory instructions?

4. Describe Jeth's encounters with Guy Wortman. What does Jeth's response to Wortman's question suggest about Jeth's character and his loyalties? Explain.

5. What are the two major misfortunes that befall the Creightons during the spring of 1862? What impact do these events have on Jeth?

Responding

Across Five Aprils Chapters 4–6

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

6. What is the **mood** in the novel as Jethro approaches the Burdow place on his way home from Newton? Give examples of details that evoke to this mood.

7. Review your response to the **Focus Activity** on page 20. Then compare and contrast the biggest responsibility you've ever tackled to the responsibility Jethro is entrusted with at the age of ten.

Literature and Writing

Comparison and Contrast

In chapter 6, the narrator says, “If someone had asked Jethro to name a time when he left childhood behind him, he might have named that last week of March in 1862” (page 70). Write a couple of paragraphs in which you compare and contrast the person Jethro was before his trip to Newton with the person he is by the time he discovers the coal oil in the well. Identify the events that force Jethro to leave childhood behind.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

In your group, consider the situation that develops after it becomes known that Bill has most likely joined the Confederate Army. Why are certain people are so angry about this? Is their anger justified? Why or why not? How does the expression “guilt by association” apply to the situation in which the Creightons find themselves? What makes the idea of “mob justice” so frightening? Discuss and debate these issues in your group. Have one group member present your group’s conclusions to the class.

Performing

With a group of classmates, choose a scene from chapters 4–6 that you would like to dramatize. Assign roles and plan how you will stage the scene. You may wish to create scenery and use props. Some group members may want to design costumes for their characters. Rehearse your scene and present it for the class.



Save your work for your portfolio.

Before You Read

Across Five Aprils Chapters 7–9

FOCUS ACTIVITY

What is your definition of a *bully*? What are some effective ways to deal with bullies?

Share Ideas

In a small group, brainstorm possible ways to get a person to stop behaving as a bully. Examine your ideas and consider the likely consequences of using them. Then select the three best strategies on your list and share them with the rest of the class.

Setting a Purpose

Read to learn how a bully provides some comic relief amid the tragedy of war.

BACKGROUND

Did You Know?

Many Civil War battles have two names. This is because the Union usually named battles after the nearest body of water, while the Confederacy named them after the nearest settlement. For example, the battle that Northerners called the Battle of Bull Run—after a creek—Southerners called the Battle of Manassas—after a settlement. Keep this fact in mind to avoid getting confused when you are reading about the Civil War or doing your own research about it.

Verbal Irony

Verbal Irony is the use of words to express something other than, and especially, the opposite of, the literal meaning. A person says one thing but means another. In chapter 7, for example, Ross Milton writes a letter and prints it in his newspaper. It begins as follows: “To the patriots who defiled the well and burned the barn on Matthew Creighton’s farm sometime during the night of May 10, 1862” (page 85). Milton’s use of the word *patriots* is an example of verbal irony. Milton does not consider the men who committed these acts to be patriots—people who love and support their country with enthusiasm—but rather cowards. As you read the letter, look for evidence that Milton is using the word *patriots* ironically. Look for other examples of verbal irony in the letter and in the rest of this section of the novel.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

compassion [kəm pəʃən] *n.* concern for another’s distress; pity (p. 115)

disillusioned [dɪs’i lōʊ’ zhənd] *adj.* stripped of hopes or optimistic notions (p. 99)

hoard [hōrd] *v.* to keep [something] to oneself (p. 96)

inept [i nept’] *adj.* lacking in fitness or aptitude (p. 90)

interminable [ɪn tər’mi nə bəl] *adj.* having or seeming to have no end (p. 113)

lurk [lɜrk] *v.* to lie in wait in a place (p. 83)

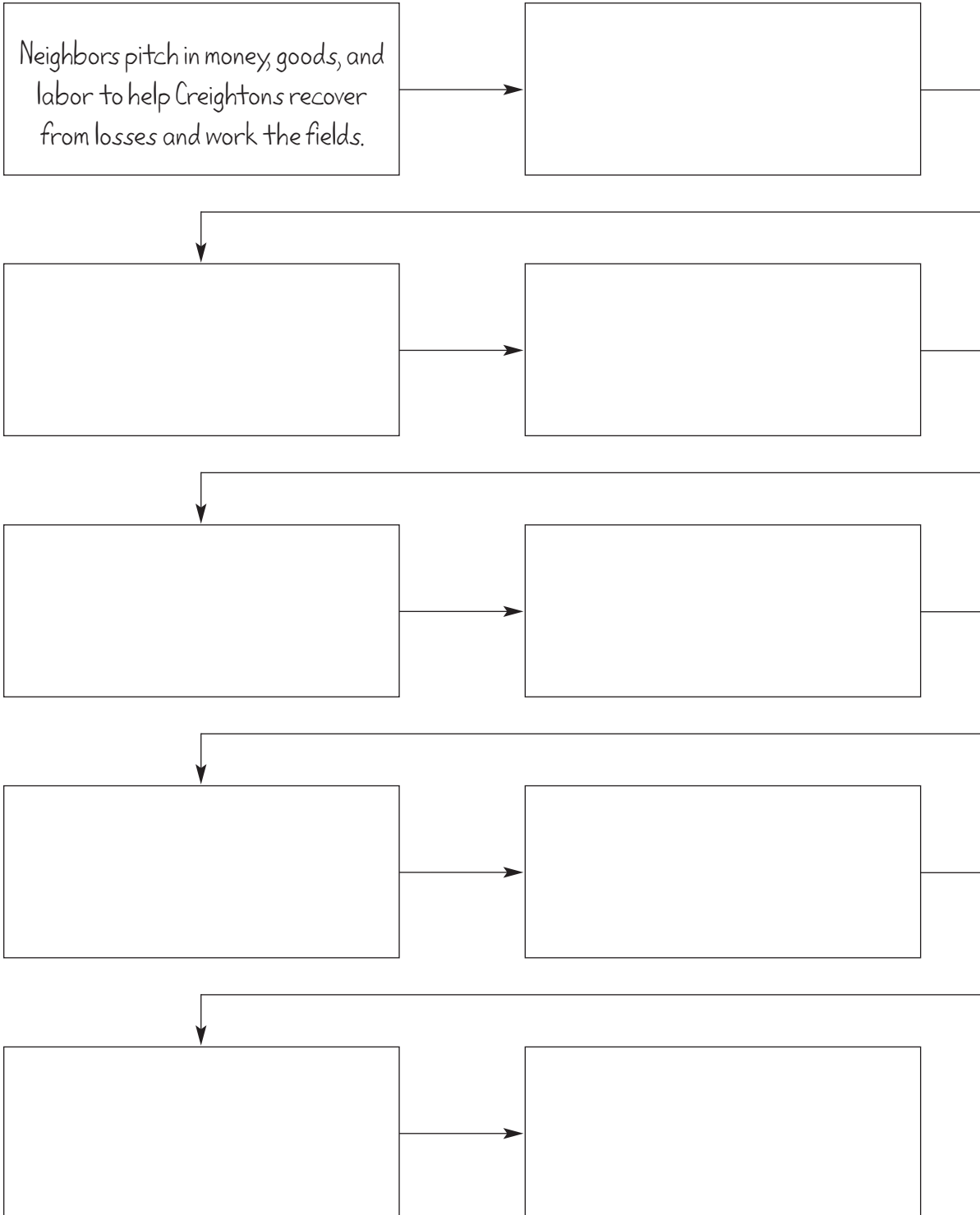
provoke [prə vōk’] *v.* to call forth a feeling or an action (p. 103)

tenacious [tɪ nā’shəs] *adj.* determined; unyielding; persistent (p. 89)

Active Reading

Across Five Aprils Chapters 7-9

Jotting down events on a diagram such as the one below can help you keep track of the order in which events occur. As you read chapters 7-9, follow the arrows as you note important events in the boxes.



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Responding

Across Five Aprils Chapters 7–9

Personal Response

What did you find most surprising or most inspiring about this section of the novel? Explain your choice.

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. What news does Dan Lawrence bring to the Creightons? How does Jenny's outlook change as a result of this news? What does she seem to realize for the first time?

2. Describe the incident involving Sam Gardiner and Guy Wortman. What does this incident suggest about methods of dealing with bullies? Compare the approach used by Gardiner and Ross Milton with the strategies your group suggested in the **Focus Activity** on page 24.

3. According to the narrator, what effect do the battles of Fredericksburg and Stones River have on Union soldiers and their supporters? In your opinion, why do these battles have this effect?

4. Whom does Jeth find hiding in the woods? What **internal conflict**, or inner struggle, does this discovery create for Jeth? How does he try to resolve this conflict?

5. What response does Jeth receive to his letter? What does this response suggest about the character of the person who wrote it?

Responding

Across Five Aprils Chapters 7–9

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

6. Evaluate Jethro’s decision not to tell his father about the situation with Eb. Did he make the right choice? Why or why not?

7. What is your opinion of the decision that President Lincoln has made with regard to deserters? Is his decision fair? Give reasons for your answer.

Literature and Writing

Letter to the President

Chapter 9 ends with President Lincoln’s response to Jethro’s letter. Use this response, as well as other information in the chapter, to try to imagine what Jethro wrote in his letter. Then write your own version of Jethro’s letter to Abraham Lincoln. Before you begin, jot down the main points Jethro wanted to make. Include a description of Eb’s situation as well as a request for the president’s advice. Be sure to use the proper form for a business letter.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

How do the Creightons’ friends and neighbors help them recover from the damage inflicted by the vandals? How do they help the family keep the farm running despite Matt’s illness? Answer these questions in your group. Then discuss what might have happened to the Creightons without the support and generosity of people in their community. What resources exist in your own community to help individuals or families facing problems? Explain ways in which today people are more or less willing to help others than they were in the past. After discussing these questions, share your group’s ideas with the entire class.

Social Studies Connection

In your local library or on the Internet, do some research to find letters, diary accounts, and photographs from the Civil War era. Try to find materials that help you better understand what the war experience was like for soldiers and for the loved ones they left behind. Then, use your materials to create an “up close and personal” view of the war—or if you wish, of a particular battle. Present the results of your research to your classmates.

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Before You Read

Across Five Aprils Chapters 10–12

FOCUS ACTIVITY

Think of a time when a person said or did something that caused deep hurt to you or to someone you know. Was it possible to forgive the person and forget the incident, or did it damage or even ruin the relationship?

Journal

In your journal, explore your ideas about hurtful behavior, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Consider the aftermath of conflicts between individuals or groups when one or both parties are unwilling to forgive and forget.

Setting a Purpose

Read to learn whether the end of the war will also mean an end to the conflicts between North and South.

BACKGROUND

Did You Know?

On September 22, 1862, President Lincoln issued a preliminary proclamation that in its revised form would later become the Emancipation Proclamation. This official public announcement declared that in states that had seceded from the Union, all enslaved persons would be “forever free” unless the states returned to the Union by January 1, 1863. When these states failed to reenter the Union that January, the proclamation went into effect, but it did not actually free all enslaved people. More than eight hundred thousand enslaved people lived in border states that had remained in the Union or in Union-occupied areas. Under the terms of the proclamation, these people were not made “forever free.” By wording this early version of the amendment as he did, Lincoln was able to win the much-needed support of abolitionists and weaken the Confederacy without angering slaveholders in the Union.

Dramatic Irony

Dramatic irony is a situation in which the audience is aware of something that a character does not know. For example, most readers of *Across Five Aprils* know that President Lincoln was assassinated in April 1865. Thus, when Ross Milton says that he is counting on Lincoln to help heal the bitterness between North and South, readers know, but Milton cannot know, that this will not be possible. As you read, look for other examples of dramatic irony.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

bigot [big'ət] *n.* a person stubbornly devoted to his or her own prejudices and opinions (p. 142)

complicity [kəm plis'ə tē] *n.* participation in a wrongful act (p. 127)

egotism [ē'gə tiz'əm] *n.* an exaggerated sense of self-importance: conceit (p. 117)

gracious [grā'shəs] *adj.* characterized by charm, good taste, and generosity of spirit (p. 139)

irreparable [i rep'ər ə bəl] *adj.* not able to be fixed, repaired, or undone (p. 147)

siege [sēj] *n.* a military blockade of a city or fortified place to force its inhabitants to surrender (p. 133)

Active Reading

Across Five Aprils Chapters 10-12

In this novel, characters write letters that help the reader understand the human dimensions of war. Many of these letters are written by soldiers and include eyewitness accounts of battles. Such letters help the reader imagine what it was like to be on the battlefield and to participate in scenes of mass destruction and death. As you read the letters in chapters 10-12, take notes on what you learn from selected letters, following the model below.

Letter from Shad (page 117)

Shad has escaped injury in three battles but has seen much suffering. Has become pessimistic about surviving the war. Warns Jenny to prepare for his probable death.

Letter from

Letter from

Letter from

Responding

Across Five Aprils Chapters 10–12

Personal Response

What events in this last part of the novel did you find the most memorable or powerful? Give reasons for your choices.

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. What happens at Gettysburg? After this battle, why do people begin to suspect a conspiracy among the generals?

2. Why does Jenny go to Washington, D.C.? How does this journey mark an important turning point in her life? Explain.

3. Describe John's meeting with Bill. What does Bill's request suggest about the cost of following his conscience?

4. When does word come that the war has finally ended? Why does the narrator say that this April is the "saddest and most cruel" of the five?

5. What will Jethro do now that the war has ended? How does his decision reflect the Creightons' values?

Responding

Across Five Aprils Chapters 10–12

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

6. Do you think that Bill should come home now that the war is over? Give reasons for your answer.

7. Recall your response to the **Focus Activity** on page 28. In your opinion, why does Ross Milton say, “Don’t expect peace to be a perfect pearl, Jeth”?

Literature and Writing

Letter of Persuasion

Imagine that you are Shadrach Yale. You are writing to Matt and Ellen to request permission to take Jethro back East with you and Jenny. Your plan is to help Jethro get a good education. List reasons that are likely to convince the Creightons to agree to your plan. Note how your plan is likely to benefit not only Jethro but other members of the Creighton family as well. Anticipate objections that the Creightons may raise and respond to each possible objection in your letter.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

If you could go back to the time of the Civil War, which character in the novel would you most like to be? Why? Share your choice and your reasons for it with the other members of your group. Invite group members to give their opinions of your choice. Was the same character chosen by more than one group member? If so, compare the reasons given for choosing that character. Meet with the members of another group to share and compare your choices.

Learning for Life

Choose a newsworthy event from this section of the novel—for example, the Battle of Gettysburg, the signing of the peace treaty to end the war, or the assassination of Lincoln. Research the event in your library or on the Internet. Then, write the script for an in-depth news report on this event. You may include accounts provided by eyewitnesses to these events, but these accounts must be historically accurate. Present your news report to the class, or videotape it and play the tape for your classmates. Be prepared to submit copies of your source materials to verify your information.

Emmy E.
Werner

from Reluctant Witnesses: Children's Voices from the Civil War

Before You Read

Focus Question

Recall a time when you were told that you were too young to assume a particular responsibility. How did you react? What were your thoughts and emotions?

Background

During the Civil War, scores of boys under the age of eighteen served in the Union and Confederate armies. Thousands were musicians or drummers, but many others saw combat. It was not difficult for mature-looking boys to enlist in regular army units, especially if their parents did not oppose their desire to join.

Responding to the Reading

1. According to Werner, what prompted Northern and Southern boys to enlist? What do these reasons seem to suggest about the boys' views of war?

2. What jobs were considered "non-fighting positions" in the army? How many boys served in such positions in the Union army? In the Confederate army? What is your opinion of the fact that boys were allowed on the battlefield? Explain.

3. Describe the job of a drummer boy. What qualities did a boy need to do this job well?

4. **Making Connections** If Jethro had not been needed on the farm, do you think he might have wanted to enlist in a nonfighting position at the start of the war? Why or why not?

Journal Entry

Imagine that you are a drummer boy in the Union or Confederate army. Record in your journal the events of a typical day and your thoughts and feelings about them.

Walt Whitman

Come Up from the Fields Father *and* An Army Corps on the March

Before You Read

Focus Question

What are some ways in which people react when they receive bad news?

Background

In December 1862, poet Walt Whitman got off a train near Fredricksburg, Virginia, where he hoped to find his wounded brother, George. There he saw a pile of body parts—limbs amputated from a recent battle. This sight, and others haunted Whitman and inspired him to write many moving war poems.

Responding to the Readings

1. In the first poem, what has happened to Pete? Explain how his mother reacts to this news.

2. What is the contrast between the **setting** of the first poem and the news that the letter brings?

3. What may Whitman’s purpose have been in writing “An Army Corps on the March”? Explain.

4. **Making Connections** Which incident in *Across Five Aprils* is similar to that described in the first poem? Compare and contrast the ways in which the news is delivered and received in both.

Art Connection

Many artists painted pictures of Civil War battles and of people and places that were affected by the war. These artists included Conrad Wise Chapman, Francis Bicknell Carpenter, and Winslow Homer. Find one of their paintings to illustrate either of these Whitman poems. Write a caption linking it to the poem.

Eugene L.
Meyer

from The Odyssey of Pvt. Rosetta Wakeman, Union Army

Before You Read

Focus Question

Do you think that women should have been allowed to serve as soldiers in the Civil War? Why or why not?

Background

Some women disguised themselves as men to enlist in the Union and Confederate armies. This article recounts the story of Sarah Rosetta Wakeman, who served as “Private Lyons Wakeman” in the Union army.

Responding to the Reading

1. Why did National Park Service officials ban Lauren Cook Burgess from playing the role of a soldier in a reenactment of a Civil War battle? What did she do in response?

2. What family secret did Burgess learn in a letter from Ruth Goodier of Chipley, Florida? Why might the family have still been guarding this secret up until the present time?

3. What did Wakeman do at the age of nineteen? What do her experiences suggest about the limitations most women faced at that time?

4. **Making Connections** How do Wakeman’s letters home, as well as those sent by soldiers in *Across Five Aprils*, help you gain a deeper understanding of what it was like to fight in the Civil War?

Learning for Life

Imagine that you are Sarah Rosetta Wakeman and that you are writing to President Lincoln to ask that he grant women the right to enlist in the Union army. Use facts and valid reasons to build your case. You may wish to mention that you are already serving in the army, disguised as a man. You also may want to mention that women are already being exposed to the horrors of war in hospitals and war-ravaged areas.

Walter
Kittridge

Tenting on the Old Camp Ground

Before You Read

Focus Question

Imagine a Civil War campground. What kinds of songs might soldiers sing before or after a battle?

Background

Civil War soldiers passed the time in the same ways. When not in battle, drills, or serving guard duty, they played checkers, chess, or cards; had races; read books or magazines; wrote letters or diary entries; or sang. A popular song was “Tenting on the Old Camp Ground.”

Responding to the Reading

1. What do the soldiers wish for in the first verse and the chorus? What do these wishes suggest?

2. What are the soldiers thinking about in the second verse? How does the **mood** of the second verse seem to differ from that of the first?

3. What do you learn in the third verse that was not obvious in the first two verses? What shift in **mood** occurs from the second verse to the third?

4. How does the last chorus differ from the first two? How does the change reveal the reality of war?

5. **Making Connections** Choose a character from the novel who has gone off to war. Describe the thoughts and images that he might have while listening to this song.

Writing Song Lyrics

Write a song that you think might appeal to soldiers camped at the battlefield. Your song should have at least two verses and one chorus. You may wish to set your lyrics to music and perform your song for the class.

Le Ly Hayslip
(translated
by the author
and Helen
Coutant)

from *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places*, & Lament of Ben Hai River Nhat Hanh

Before You Read

Focus Question

How does it feel to be caught in the middle of two people who have opposing views?

Background

Le Ly Hayslip wrote the memoir subtitled “A Vietnamese Woman’s Journey from War to Peace” after a return visit to her native Vietnam following a sixteen-year absence. The poem “Lament of Ben Hai River” is from the collection *From Both Sides Now*. It concerns the Vietnam War and its aftermath.

Responding to the Readings

1. What did the author do before she “was twelve and knew better”? Why didn’t she enjoy this activity?

2. What political division is marked by the Ben Hai River? Symbolically, what does the river divide?

3. What is the speaker’s attitude toward the conflict between North and South Vietnam? Explain.

4. **Making Connections** Cite the similarities between the conflict in the novel and that in these selections.

Interdisciplinary Connection: History

Have students research to learn more about the Vietnam War. Students may wish to work in small groups as they gather their information. Encourage them to look for sources in a variety of media.

TEST: *Across Five Aprils*

Recall and Interpret (40 points total; 4 points each)

A. Write the letter of the best answer.

- _____ 1. At the beginning of *Across Five Aprils*, Shad is leaving for
- a. the war.
 - b. a new teaching position.
 - c. supplies and news.
 - d. a trip back to visit family in Pennsylvania.
- _____ 2. Bill leaves home because
- a. he isn't getting along with his parents.
 - b. he feels that he must fight for the South.
 - c. he wants to be the first to enlist in the Union army.
 - d. he's trying to evade the draft.
- _____ 3. Jethro's interactions with Dave Burdow most likely teach him that
- a. all Burdows are trouble and not to be trusted.
 - b. Travis Burdow is not a ruffian after all.
 - c. good things come to good people.
 - d. he shouldn't prejudge a person.
- _____ 4. The most important thing that Ross Milton does for Jethro is to
- a. give Jethro a book he wrote on English.
 - b. ask Charley to take Jethro's horses for water and feed.
 - c. take him to dinner at a restaurant.
 - d. talk with him about the difference a good teacher can make.
- _____ 5. If Jethro had to name the time he left childhood behind, he would probably say that it was
- a. when he drove the horses to and from Newton.
 - b. when he first got to sit at the adult dinner table.
 - c. when he saw what malicious, spiteful people could do.
 - d. after his father nearly died from a heart attack and Jeth had to take over a lot of responsibilities for him.

B. Write a short answer for each question below.

6. Why does Ellen favor Jethro over her other children?

7. Tom and Eb enlist in the Union army together. What happens to them?

8. Why won't Matt let Shad and Jenny get married before Shad goes off to war? What makes Matt later regret his decision?

9. What happens to the Creightons as a result of Bill's decision to follow his conscience?

10. How does Jethro respond to Lincoln's assassination? Why do you think he responds in this manner?

TEST: Across Five Aprils (continued)

Evaluate and Connect (60 points total; 30 points each)

C. Answer two of the following essay questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. When Jethro hopes to be finished planting potatoes by dinnertime, his mother says, “Yore hopes is makin’ a fool of yore reason, Jeth” (page 1). Later, Shadrach reminds Jethro of this saying when the two are talking about the war (page 41). Explain what you think this expression means. Then give other examples of situations from the novel to which this expression might be applied.
2. *He’s like a man standin’ where two roads meet, Jeth, she said finally, and one road is as dark and fearsome as the other; there ain’t a choice between the two, and yet a choice has to be made* (page 10).

In this passage, Jeth’s mother is referring to Abraham Lincoln; but at different points in the novel, her description could fit other characters, such as Matt, Bill, Eb, or Jethro. Choose three characters to whom this description could apply and explain how the description fits each character’s situation.

3. Choices have consequences, as the characters in this novel already know or soon learn. Examine an important choice that a character makes. How does the character reach the decision? What are the consequences of that choice? Were the consequences expected or unexpected? Explain. Do you think the character regrets the decision? Why or why not? If you had been in the same situation, what choice do you think you would have made? Why?
4. **Foreshadowing** is a literary device by which the writer provides clues to events that will happen later in a story. Choose an event that is foreshadowed in *Across Five Aprils*. Identify clues that Hunt provides in order to prepare readers for the event.
5. Read the following excerpt from a book review of *Across Five Aprils*. Then explain whether you agree or disagree with the ideas and opinions expressed in the review. Give reasons for your answers.

An impressive book both as a historically authenticated Civil War novel and as a beautifully written family story. . . . The realistic treatment of the intricate emotional conflicts within a border-state family is superb. The details of battles and campaigns are deftly integrated into letters and conversations, and the characters are completely convincing.

—University of Chicago Center for Children’s Books