

# BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

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## Objectives

1. *Comprehension*—Students will demonstrate understanding of the novel through written and verbal responses to sectional comprehension questions and whole–book activities which follow four basic learning styles.
2. *Literary Techniques*—Students will define the following literary techniques and identify examples in the novel: simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia, personification, foreshadowing, hyperbole, dialect, intuition, irony, humor, and idiom. Students will also review finding main ideas, adjectives, and adverbs.
3. *Vocabulary*—Using vocabulary from the novel, students will define familiar and unfamiliar words based on context.

## Summary of Novel

Jess Aarons' life is not exactly ideal. In a place where individualism and creative expression is scorned, Jess struggles to become himself. He secretly draws any chance he gets, and he practices each day to be the fastest runner in the fifth grade. However, a new *girl*, Leslie Burke, wins on the day of the big race.

This is no ideal beginning for a friendship, but Jess soon finds Leslie to be a true friend and full of imagination. Together, the two create an imaginary kingdom, Terabithia, where they reign as king and queen. They battle their foes, both real and imaginary, and celebrate their victories together until one day, when a tragedy occurs. Only as he deals with the tragedy does Jess realize the courage and confidence he has learned from Leslie.

# A BRAINSTORMING INTRODUCTION

**Objective:** Students will interact with concepts and vocabulary from the novel in order to obtain a basic understanding of the story before they begin reading.

## Directions

1. Write each of the following questions on a piece of chart paper. Place the charts around the room.

(ST) *What does it mean to have a best friend?  
What things make up a family?*

(SF) *What qualities does your best friend have?  
How would you feel if someone close to you died?*

(NT) *Why do some families have trouble getting along or acting like they love each other?  
Why do some people have a low self-esteem?*

(NF) *If you could create an imaginary kingdom, what would it be like?  
If you could do one amazing thing to impress your classmates and become the “hot shot” in your school, what would you do? Why?*

2. In groups of three or four, students move around to each question. The groups answer each question, recording all pertinent information. After approximately two minutes, groups move to the next question. Continue this process until each group has answered all questions.
3. Assign each group the question they began with as well as one or two other questions. (*The number of questions each group is assigned will depend on how many groups/questions are selected for the activity.*)
4. In their groups, students should read the answers collected on the charts and summarize the information. Allow approximately 10–15 minutes for this step. Guide groups with the following directions:

*First, look over your charts and cross out any answers your group feels are not appropriate. Then, put a star by the statements your group feels give the very best answers for the question. Finally, summarize the best information into a brief report to share with the class.*

5. Give each group time to share its report. Display the charts and summaries for students to refer to while reading the novel.

## Closure

*Based on the reports we’ve heard today, what do you think our next novel is about?*

Make a chart of class predictions. Refer to them as reading progresses.

# COMPREHENSION MENUS

**Objective:** Students will demonstrate understanding of the novel through written and/or verbal responses to sectional comprehension questions.

## Purpose

Checking the students' comprehension of a novel is more than simply asking them to reiterate what they've just read. It involves asking them to think about what they've read, looking for meaning "between the lines of text." Students should be able to respond to the novel's meaning by inferring answers that aren't in black and white print. They should be able to apply the meaning to their own lives and to formulate answers using their own background. Students should also be able to create meaning based on the information in the book.

## Methods for Using the Menus

*Following are methods for using the comprehension menus. Vary the methods you use to keep students enthusiastic and motivated.*

1. Assign a portion\* or all of the comprehension menu for a given section. Students respond to each assigned question by writing a complete sentence/paragraph answer in a reading notebook. Class discussion follows completion of the reading and writing. Questions should be evaluated for completeness and accuracy.
2. Assign half\* of the questions for individual written responses and the other half for small group or partnered responses in a verbal format. Written work will be read and discussed within the group while members evaluate one another's answers, offering positive and constructive remarks. The small groups will then discuss the other half of the questions while recording their answers. Class discussion on all assigned questions follows.
3. Students should be paired. Each partner will be responsible for answering the same number of questions off the menu. Partner A reads a question and Partner B answers. Partner A evaluates and discusses the answer with Partner B. Then Partner B reads a question. The process continues until all questions have been discussed.
4. Review the questions as a class or in small groups BEFORE reading the section. Discuss and record students' predictions for each question based on what they already know about the novel. Students then read the section, aloud or individually, and again answer questions using any of the above methods. Compare their predictions with their answers after they have read the section.

\* **Students should select the questions they feel most comfortable answering. Teacher selections defeat the purpose of the learning-style approach.**

## Literary Techniques

Knowledge of literary techniques will enhance students' reading skills. Have students respond to questions in this section using any of the approaches above. In some cases, activities require a new approach. Test students' knowledge of literary techniques using page 29.

## Vocabulary Words

The vocabulary words and activities in this section will help students gain a basic understanding of difficult passages in the novel and will enhance the students' use of words in context. It is not necessary to assign vocabulary with each section; however, activities are included for your convenience.

# COMPREHENSION MENU

## CHAPTER 1

<p>1. Write one sentence that describes Jess' relationship with each of his family members: Brenda, Ellie, May Belle, Joyce Ann, his mom, and his dad.</p>	<p>3. What do YOU think of Jess' family? Which things about his family remind you of your family? Which things are different? Do you think Jess is happy with his family? Why or why not?</p>
<p>2. Make a story map for this chapter. Your map should include a road with stopping points along the four or five most important events in the chapter. Be sure to sequence your events carefully.</p>	<p>4. If you were given the chance to rewrite the scene at the breakfast table (pages 5–7), what would your version be like? Include an illustration for your rewrite.</p>

## Literary Techniques

**simile**—a figure of speech which compares two different things using the words “like” or “as”

**onomatopoeia**—a word that imitates a sound or is spelled like the sound

**personification**—speaking of an animal or thing as if it has human qualities

**foreshadowing**—giving a clue of something that will come later in the story

**hyperbole**—an exaggeration used for effect but not meant literally

1. “Momma would be mad as flies in a fruit jar” is a simile on page 1. What does the comparison tell you? Why does this simile help you understand, or visualize, how angry Momma was?
2. There are at least six other similes in this chapter. Write three of them and tell what the comparisons mean.
3. On page 4, you will find the word “slooching.” This is an example of onomatopoeia. It is not a real word, but imitates a sound. What is “slooching”?
4. Find at least two more examples of onomatopoeia in this chapter and write the words. What information do each of these words give you?
5. The author uses personification on page 2 when describing Jess' strategy for sneaking out of the house to run. Write the sentence and tell why it is personification.
6. You can find another example of personification on page 6. What is it? What does it mean?
7. There is foreshadowing on page 8. What do you predict will happen in the story based on this clue?
8. “Miss Bessie's bag is probably dragging ground by now” (page 8) is an example of a hyperbole. What does this sentence mean? Why is it a hyperbole? Make up your own hyperbole about something at school or at home.