

Introduction

Eric Wilson novels excite the imagination of young readers in grades 4-6. Appealing to children's inherent keen interest in mystery, Eric Wilson has skilfully woven accurate Canadian geographic and historic information into his writing. He also touches on current Canadian social and political issues in many of his novels. As such, these novels lend themselves to the integrated study of the mystery genre with Canadian geography topics in social studies and investigation units in science.

Murder on the Canadian provides rich material for the study of setting, characterization and plot development. It can be used independently or as an introduction to the other novels in the series, thereby providing a national setting within which the regional stories come together to make a whole. The varying levels of difficulty in the novels provide opportunity to accommodate individual student ability, experience and interests.

Students can supplement the package with meaningful research which will strengthen the impact of their work. They will take great delight in finding information on the Internet that directly links to the places or events in the novels. Every province, territory, and most cities have up-to-date information available on an Internet website.

Teachers can trace the route of VIA Rail's *Canadian* on a laminated map of Canada and later mark the locations or settings of other novels used for classroom study. VIA Rail may also provide supplementary resource materials upon request. Check your telephone directory for their closest office.

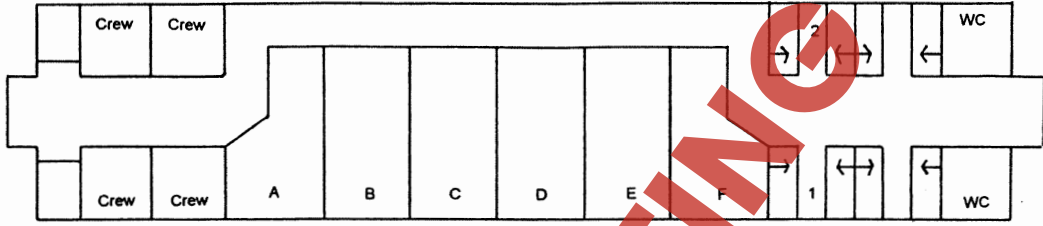
An excellent audio-visual resource to accompany *Murder on The Canadian* is the video "**Canada**" from the series "**World's Greatest Train Ride Videos**" available from Publishers Choice Video.

Through the internet, students can be introduced to the author, Eric Wilson. His website address is www.ericwilson.com.

Murder on The Canadian
Eric Wilson

Setting

As you read the story identify the occupants of the various bedrooms and sections in the sleeping car.



The Sherwood Manor Sleeping Car

WC

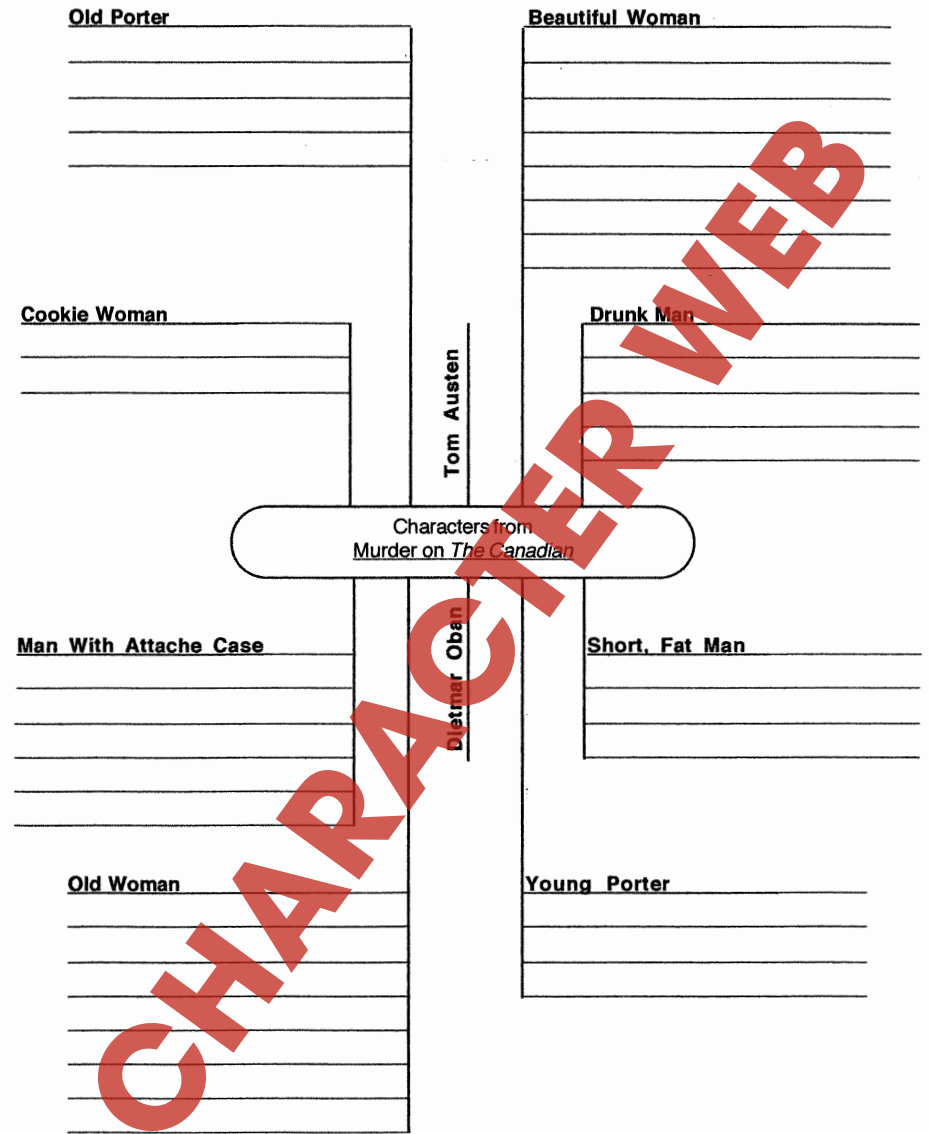
Washroom



Berths

- Berth Section 1 _____
- Berth Section 2 _____
- Bedroom A _____
- Bedroom B _____
- Bedroom C _____
- Bedroom D _____
- Bedroom E _____
- Bedroom F _____

As you read the story, add information about the characters identified in the character web.



Chapter Questions

Answer in full sentences.



Chapter 1

1. What is *The Canadian* ?

2. Why was Tom on *The Canadian* ?

3. Why do you think the attaché case was chained to the man's wrist?

Character Summary of Tom Austen

APPEARANCE

ACTIONS, FEELINGS, THOUGHTS AND WORDS	CHARACTER TRAITS

Chapter 9



1. Name 2 of Mrs. Ruggles' previous jobs.

Four horizontal lines for writing the answer to question 1.

2. What was the motive for the murder?

Five horizontal lines for writing the answer to question 2.

3. What was the murder weapon?

Four horizontal lines for writing the answer to question 3.

4. How did Tom manage to hit the killer with a rock in the dark tunnel?

Five horizontal lines for writing the answer to question 4.

Final Projects

1. Characterization

Use the items you have recorded on your character summary to write a one paragraph character sketch of Tom Austen. Your paragraph should include the following:

- a) a brief description of the character's appearance
b) five (5) character traits, supported with information from the story
c) a topic and concluding sentence

2. Summary

Pretend that you are Tom Austen; write a letter home to your parents telling them about your train trip out to Vancouver.

3. Connection

Readers identify with the characters in a story by connecting their own life experiences to the world of fiction. At first glance, Tom Austen appears removed from the lifestyle of the typical Canadian youth. His inquisitive mind leads him into some unusual predicaments. Tom was embarrassed when he mistakenly opened the curtains to the cookie woman's berth. (page 13) Tell about one of your most embarrassing moments.

Five horizontal lines for writing the answer to question 3.

NOTE: Page numbers are from the 1996 edition of this novel.

4. Descriptive Writing

Eric Wilson writes with a descriptive flair. His vivid imagery allows the reader to form a detailed mental picture as if present at the scene. Reread the following descriptions from Murder on The Canadian:

- a) Page 3, paragraph 9
b) Page 11, paragraph 7-12

Now rewrite your response to question #3. Use paragraph format, embellishing with descriptive language where appropriate.

Five horizontal lines for writing the answer to question 4.

NOTE: Page numbers are from the 1996 edition of this novel.

5. Creativity

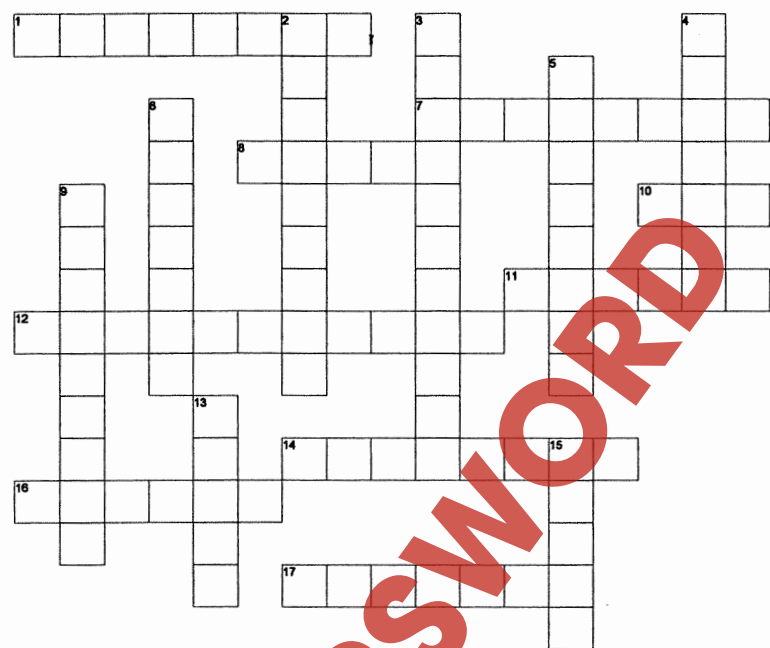
a) As a class, make a model of The Canadian. Be sure to include these cars in your train.

- 2 engines
1 baggage car
1 dining car
2 coaches
1 skyline dome car
6 sleepers
1 observation car

b) On the front cover, illustrate your favourite scene from the story.

6. Vocabulary

Complete the following crossword.



ACROSS

- 1. Mrs. Ruggles used this weapon on Tom (p.78)
7. The #1 train from Toronto to Vancouver (p.3)
8. Seats by day, beds by night (p.13)
10. Part of Mrs. Ruggles' disguise (p.81)
11. The train employee who makes up the beds (p.10)
12. Was chained to Mr. Faith's wrist (p.7)
14. Stain on the cigarette butt (p.55)
16. The murder bedroom smelled of _____ (p.51)
17. Signal to hurry up and board the train (p.72)

DOWN

- 2. Money stolen by an employee (p.65-66)
3. Murder suspect (p.42)
4. Murder weapon (p.91)
5. Where Tom and Dietmar went to talk privately (p.57)
6. Tom's rival (p.2)
9. Area between the train cars (p.83)
13. Game played in the dome car (p.30)
15. Evidence left at the scene of a crime (p.53)

What happened at each of the following locations in the book? Use the page numbers for reference.

Winnipeg (p.3)	_____
Brandon (p. 16-17)	_____
Small Town (p. 37-44)	_____
Station Cafe (p. 67-72)	_____
Tunnel (p. 83-87)	_____
Green Lake (p. 89)	_____

What happened at each of the following locations in the book? Use the page numbers for reference.

Winnipeg (p.3)	Tom boarded the train and left on his vacation
Brandon (p. 16-17)	An old lady with a cane boarded the train, along with other passengers
Small Town (p. 37-44)	When the train stopped, the Mountie boarded the train. The passengers were interviewed & Richard Saks was arrested.
Station Cafe (p. 67-72)	Tom and Mr. Faith went to a local cafe for a drink. Mr. Faith went to the washroom and disappeared.
Tunnel (p. 83-87)	Tom and Mrs. Ruggles had an altercation. Tom broke free and Mrs. Ruggles was eventually captured.
Green Lake (p. 89)	The Canadian was stopped here, waiting for Tom to return after Mrs. Ruggles was arrested.

ANSWER KEY