

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Sample Lesson Plan	4
Before the Book (<i>Pre-reading Activities</i>)	5
About the Author	6
Book Summary: <i>Sarah, Plain and Tall</i>	7
Vocabulary Lists	8
Vocabulary Activity Ideas	9
SECTION 1 (Chapters 1 to 5: <i>Sarah, Plain and Tall</i>)	10
❖ Quiz	
❖ Hands-on Project— <i>Relief Maps</i>	
❖ Co-operative Learning Activity— <i>Compare and Contrast Residences</i>	
❖ Curriculum Connections— <i>Social Studies: Getting from Here to There</i>	
❖ Into Your Life— <i>Making Dried Flowers</i>	
SECTION 2 (Chapters 6 to 9: <i>Sarah, Plain and Tall</i>)	15
❖ Quiz	
❖ Hands-on Project— <i>A Stitch in Time</i>	
❖ Co-operative Learning Activity— <i>Time to Barter</i>	
❖ Curriculum Connections— <i>Art: Pictures Worth a Thousand Words</i>	
❖ Into Your Life— <i>Sarah's Diary</i>	
After the Book (<i>Post-reading Activities</i>)	20
Any Questions?	
Book Report Ideas	
Research Ideas	
Culminating Activity	23
Unit Test Options	26
Bibliography	29
Answer Key	30
Blackline Masters For Any Literature Unit	31 - 48

Introduction

A good book can touch our lives like a good friend. Within its pages are words and characters that can inspire us to achieve our highest ideals. We can turn to it for companionship, recreation, comfort, knowledge, and guidance. It can make us laugh out loud, or cry at its tenderness. It can also give us a cherished story to hold in our hearts forever.

In *Literature Units*, great care has been taken to select books that are sure to become good friends!

Teachers who use this literature unit will discover the following features to supplement their own valuable ideas.

- Sample Lesson Plans
- Pre-reading Activities
- Biographical Sketch and Picture of the Author
- Book Summaries
- Vocabulary Lists and Suggested Vocabulary Ideas
- Chapters grouped for study with each section including
 - *quizzes*
 - *hands-on projects*
 - *co-operative learning activities*
 - *cross-curricular connections*
 - *extensions into the reader's life*
- Post-reading Activities
- Book Report Ideas
- Research Ideas
- A Culminating Activity
- Three Options for Unit Tests
- A Bibliography
- An Answer Key

We are confident that this unit will be a valuable addition to your planning, and we hope that as you use our ideas, your students will increase the circle of “friends” they have in books!

Sarah, Plain and Tall

by Patricia MacLachlan

(Harper & Row, 1987)

(Available in Australia from Harper Collins)

The day Caleb Witting is born, he is handed to his sister, Anna, in a yellow blanket. His mama thinks he is beautiful, but Anna considers him troublesome. She thinks he is homely and plain, and he has a terrible holler and a horrid smell. But the worst is yet to come—mama dies the next morning. Anna is left to be both mother and sister. Her resentment doesn't last more than three days. Caleb's smile warms and captivates her.

Everyday Caleb asks Anna about his mother. He is especially interested in the songs she used to sing. He knows his father used to sing, too. But Papa doesn't sing anymore. Anna doesn't remember the songs. Caleb thinks that if Anna could remember the songs, then he might remember his mama. When Caleb questions his father about the old songs, he replies: "I've forgotten the old songs, but maybe there's a way to remember them." He goes on to tell them that he has placed an advertisement in a newspaper for a wife, like their neighbor Matthew did when Maggie came to be his wife and a mother to his children.

Sarah Elizabeth Wheaton, from Maine, answers the ad. She and the Wittings get to know each other through letters. The day comes when Sarah announces that she will visit the Wittings to "see how it is." In a short letter Sarah writes, "I will come by train. I will wear a yellow bonnet. I am plain and tall." And at the bottom of the letter she adds, "Tell them I sing." Caleb can hardly wait. He wants so much for Sarah to like them all, even before he sees what she is like. It doesn't matter to him whether she is mild-mannered or not.

Sarah arrives with treasures from the sea, and her pet cat, Seal. So many things are different for Sarah that Anna and Caleb worry that perhaps she will soon long for the sea and the family she has left behind. Sarah is introduced to life on a farm on the prairie, so far from town that it is a day's journey there and back. Sarah pitches in to help however she can. Even when nature strikes a blow in the form of a squall, the pioneer family bounces back. Sarah's songs, and Sarah herself, endear the Witting family into wanting her to stay forever. Sarah discovers that even though she will always miss the sea, she would miss the family more. So she decides to stay.

