

The Bronze Bow

Reading Guide

by David Kohl

For the book by Elizabeth George Speare



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About the Author

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Suggestions for Use

This guide is intended to help students demonstrate their reading comprehension, their skill at finding the main ideas, and provide practice writing complete sentences and good paragraphs. While most students will read many books during their school year, it is a good idea to require students to always be reading one book slowly and thoughtfully. Five required books would be a reasonable goal for a school semester but a lot depends on how much time you spend on projects, how much time daily you devote to reading, and what else you do in your reading program. For best results, parents may read and discuss the books and the questions with their students.

Questions in this guide fall into three basic levels: literal, inferential, and evaluative; or, as someone put it, “on the lines”, “between the lines”, and “beyond the lines”. Some literal level questions have one right answer, but most questions have more possibilities.

A typical reading period should be about an hour long. In a classroom setting, someone first reads aloud to the class for 15 minutes from a book not on the literature list. It could be related to something we are studying in history, or it could be just for fun. For the remaining 45 minutes students read silently and answer the comprehension questions. If they finish early, they read a book of their choice. A typical weekly cycle includes four days of new assignments; the fifth day is a catch-up day for students who need the extra time, or a free reading day for those who don't.

You should require thorough, accurate answers in complete sentences, and grade on content - which should include style - and mechanics. The questions should be thought of as more short essay than short answer.

Four Step Vocabulary Comprehension Exercise

In order to comprehend what you are reading, you have to understand the vocabulary words the author uses. Complete the following four step exercise for the vocabulary words that may be unfamiliar to you:

Step 1: Find the word in the chapter and write it out in context. This may be done by writing the complete sentence where the word is found or, if the sentence is too lengthy, by writing a few of the words on either side of the vocabulary word.

Step 2: Guess the meaning from the original context and write it down.

Step 3: Look the word up in the dictionary and write the appropriate definition.

Step 4: Use the word in a sentence of your own.

Chapter 1 & Chapter 2

1. Describe Daniel bar Jamin.

2. Describe the Galilean "race."

3. What are the different views of Rosh?

4. What does Joel want to do with Rosh?

5. What does Samson do when freed?

Chapter 3 & Chapter 4

1. What's good and bad about having Samson around?

2. What news from home does Simon the Zealot bring?

3. What do we learn about Leah in Chapter 3?

4. What impressions did Jesus make upon Daniel?

5. At the end of Chapter 4, what does Daniel want to happen in life?

Answer Key

Page numbers taken from the Houghton Mifflin paperback version (pub. Sept. 1997).

Chapter 1 & Chapter 2

1. "He was a tall boy, with little trace of youth in his lean, hard body." He was eighteen, with bold features, sun-browned skin and brilliant dark eyes. (1)
2. They were proud, violent, and restless; refusing to acknowledge that Palestine was conquered or that Emperor Tiberius was their lord. (1)
3. He's a hero to every boy at school. He's nothing but a bandit who robs even his fellow Jews. He takes money from the rich and gives to the poor. "He's the bravest man in the world!" (13)
4. "I wanted to see you," he said, "because they say that someday you will drive the Romans out of Israel. When you do, I want to be with you." (21)
5. "He reared over Daniel . . . went down on his knees, and before Daniel could move he had seized the boy's foot in his huge hands and bent to lay his forehead against it." (28)

Chapter 3 & Chapter 4

1. Work was easier with Samson around: he hauled water and firewood, kept steady heat in the furnace, moved a boulder, etc. The men made fun of Samson (and Daniel); Samson stayed so close Daniel felt chained to a huge rock. (29-30)
2. "Amalek died a fortnight ago, Daniel. You could come back to the village if you like." No one would hold Daniel to his bond, either. (33-4)
3. We learn her name (Leah) and that she has long golden hair, is almost a woman, and has fearful blue eyes. She looks fragile. (38-9)
4. He was not regal or commanding, but he had a "vital, radiant face, lighted from within by a burning intensity of spirit." Daniel thinks Jesus is a fighter, "one of us." (46-7)
5. He wants the Romans to be defeated. Then he will come back, build a good house for his grandmother and Leah, and have plenty to eat, a good life, and freedom. (51-2)

Chapter 5 & Chapter 6

1. He thinks they are foolhardy. Rows of crosses, burning villages, and heavier taxes have resulted. They are reckless; "bugging mosquitoes to be silenced and forgotten." (67)
2. The Law, given to Moses and our fathers, is Israel's one great strength. (68)
3. A Roman soldier ordered Daniel to give water to his horse and then to himself. When the Roman was rude to him, Daniel threw water into the man's face. The Roman struck Daniel with his spear, but he escaped. He made it to Joel's house, where he was cared for by Malthace and Joel in a storage room and then a passage between two walls. (Ch. 6)
4. Answers may vary.