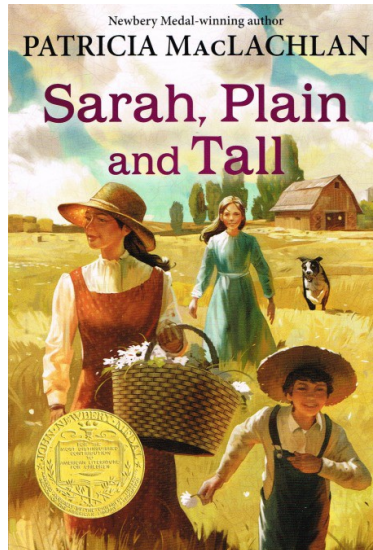


# Sarah, Plain and Tall



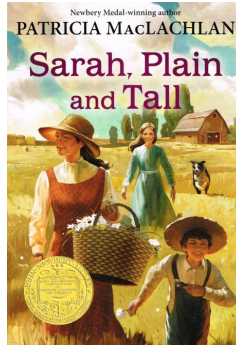
By

Patricia MacLachlan

A Novel Study  
by Joel Michel Reed

# Sarah, Plain and Tall

By Patricia MacLachlan



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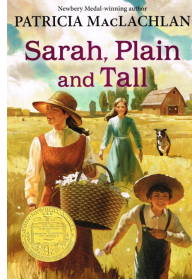
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**About the author:** Joel Michel Reed has over 50 published novel studies and is the co-author of three novels. For more information on his work and literature, you can check out his website by visiting the following link: [www.novel-studies.org](http://www.novel-studies.org).

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# Sarah, Plain and Tall

By Patricia MacLachlan



## Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on one or two chapters of **Sarah, Plain and Tall** and is comprised of five of the following different activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language Activities
- Extension Activities

### Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities in this unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters . . . respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking. Students will also be expected to provide clear answers to questions and well-constructed explanations. It is critical as well that students be able to relate events and the feelings of characters to their own lives and experiences and describe their own interpretation of a particular passage.

A strength of the unit is that students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A **portfolio cover** is included (p.7) so that students may organize their work and keep it all in one place. A **Student Checklist** is also included (p.6) so that a record of completed work may be recorded.

# Sarah, Plain and Tall

By Patricia MacLachlan

## List of Skills

### Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words / phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homonyms
3. Identifying / creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identify *foreshadowing*.
6. Identify *personification*
7. Use of singular / plural nouns
8. Listing compound words
9. Identifying parts of speech
10. Identifying syllables
11. Identify/create *similes*
12. Identify anagrams

### Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

### Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Identify *cliffhangers*
4. Identify the climax of the novel.

### Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Compare two characters

### Creative and Critical Thinking

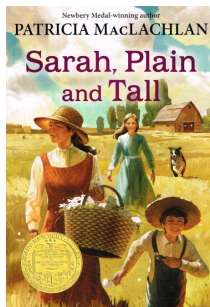
1. Research
2. Write a book review
3. Write a description of personal feelings
4. Participate in a talk show
5. Complete an Observation Sheet
6. Complete a KWS Chart

### Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
4. Design a cover for the novel
5. Create a comic strip

# Sarah, Plain and Tall

By Patricia MacLachlan



## Synopsis

Their mother died the day after Caleb was born. Their house on the prairie is quiet now, and Papa doesn't sing anymore. Then Papa puts an ad in the paper, asking for a wife, and he receives a letter from one Sarah Elisabeth Wheaton, of Maine. Papa, Anna, and Caleb write back. Caleb asks if she sings.

Sarah decides to come for a month. She writes Papa: I will come by train. I will wear a yellow bonnet. I am plain and tall, and tell them I sing. Anna and Caleb wait and wonder. Will Sarah be nice? Will she like them? Will she stay? (Publisher – Harper Collins)

A complete synopsis and other helpful reviews can be found on the following website:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarah,\\_Plain\\_and\\_Tall](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarah,_Plain_and_Tall)

## Author Biography

Patricia MacLachlan

**Patricia MacLachlan** (born March 3, 1938) is an American children's writer. She is best known for the 1986 Newbery Medal-winning novel ***Sarah, Plain and Tall***.

She is a board member of the **National Children's Book and Literacy Alliance**, a national not-for-profit that actively advocates for literacy, literature, and libraries.

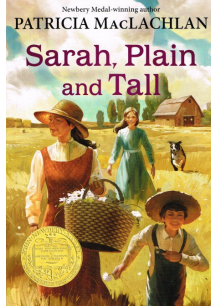
Her novels for young readers include ***Arthur, For the Very First Time; The Facts and Fictions of Minna Pratt; Skylark; Caleb's Story; More Perfect Than the Moon; Grandfather's Dance; Word After Word After Word;*** and ***Kindred Souls***. She is also the author of many much-loved picture books, including ***Three Names, All the Places to Love, What You Know First, Painting the Wind, Bittle, Who Loves Me?, Once I Ate a Pie, I Didn't Do It, Before You Came,*** and ***Cat Talk*** - several of which she co-wrote with her daughter, Emily. She lives with her husband and two border terriers in Williamsburg, Massachusetts.



Biography courtesy of Wikipedia and Harper Collins: [www.harpercollins.com](http://www.harpercollins.com)

# Sarah, Plain and Tall

By Patricia MacLachlan

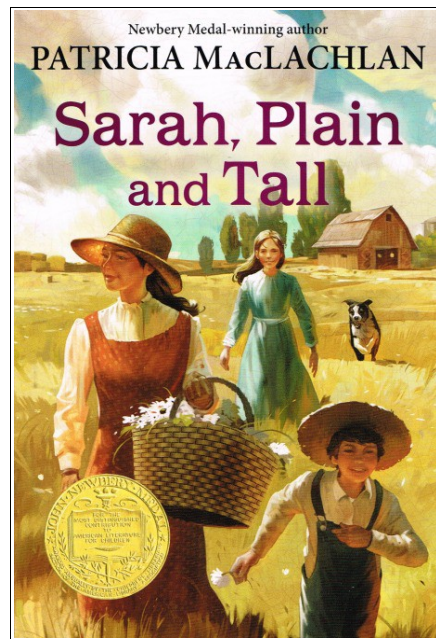


## Student Checklist

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment	Grade/Level	Comments

# Sarah, Plain and Tall

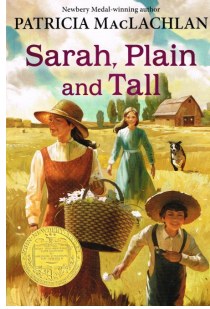


*By Patricia MacLachlan*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Sarah, Plain and Tall

By Patricia MacLachlan



## Chapter 1



### Before you read the chapter:

Briefly predict what you think *Sarah, Plain and Tall* will be about.




### Vocabulary:

Draw a straight line to connect the vocabulary word to its definition. Remember to use a straight edge (like a ruler).

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 1. Hearthstone   | A. A notice or announcement in a public medium.  |
| 2. Homely        | B. A man whose wife has passed away.   |
| 3. Prairie       | C. A large open area of grassland.   |
| 4. Advertisement | D. Struggle mentally; show or feel great confusion.                                      |
| 5. Colt          | E. A softly spoken or almost inaudible utterance.  |
| 6. Murmured      | F. To cause difficulty or annoyance.   |
| 7. Flounder      | G. A male horse, typically less than four years old.                                     |
| 8. Marble        | H. To be unattractive in appearance.   |
| 9. Troublesome   | I. A stone that makes up part of a fireplace.  |
| 10. Widower      | J. A large stone, typically white with colored streaks, frequently used in architecture. |



# Questions

1. Describe the setting of the story as Chapter One begins.


2. Circle the correct narrative that the novel follows, and the reason for your choice.

First Person      Second Person      Third Person


3. What did Papa say was the worst thing about Caleb's birth?


4. What kind of advertisement did Papa place in the newspaper?


5. Briefly describe the letter that Papa received from Sarah.




## Language Activity

**A.** Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here's an example of an alliteration: “. . . screaming, shrieking, shouting, screeching about something scary.”

Using your imagination, create your own examples of **alliteration** from the following topics. Each example must contain a minimum of three words.

The sounds of a rainstorm.	
The sounds of children playing.	
One from your own imagination.	

**B.** A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. The following is an example from chapter one: *“Hilly, our housekeeper. She was round and slow and shuffling. She snored in a high whistle at night, like a teakettle, and let the fire go out.”*

What two things are being compared in this example?

--	--

Invent two of your own **similes** comparing two different things using your own imagination:

a)

b)

**C. Foreshadowing** is a literary device used by authors to provide clues for the reader so they are able to predict what might occur *later* in the story. How might the following statement be considered an example of this literary device: *"Papa leaned back in the chair. I've placed an advertisement in the newspapers. For help."*


**D.** Find at least two examples of each of the eight parts of speech from Chapter One, and list them in the appropriate section of the chart below.

<b>Interjections</b>	
<b>Nouns</b>	
<b>Pronouns</b>	
<b>Conjunctions</b>	
<b>Prepositions</b>	
<b>Adjectives</b>	
<b>Adverbs</b>	
<b>Verbs</b>	

## Extension Activity

### Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A storyboard can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel.

Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in Chapter One of ***Sarah, Plain and Tall***. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.



1	2
3	4
5	6