



Novel Guide for Gifted and Advanced Readers



This guide is appropriate for use with gifted and advanced readers. It addresses their affective and cognitive needs through questions that can be used for discussion. Depending on the length of the book, students should read the entire book before conducting the bibliotherapy lesson, the **Group Discussion** using the higher order questions and the **After Discussion** activities. Students should be given the **Before Discussion** activities to complete during their time while reading the book. If the book is exceptionally long, you may need to modify this lesson plan. See **Novel Guide: Notes for Implementing** for additional procedures and recommendations.

Book Title: *Alabama Moon*

Author: Watt Key

Interest Level: 10-14 year old males

Lexile: 720L

Length: 304 pages

Guide developed by: Shelia Mostafavi

Summary

Ten year old Moon has never known another life except the one his survivalist father has taught him. They have lived alone, in the woods of central Alabama, his entire life. Moon's life changes forever, when he has to bury his father, next to his long deceased mother. Now, Moon is forced into a society he has never known, entrapped by the very government he has been warned of his whole life. Trust and dependence were not concepts he learned. How will he survive the wilderness of society and its rules?

Conceptual Connections

Conceptual Lens: Belonging

Other Key Concepts: change; family; individualism; acceptance

Essential Understanding:

- Individuals have a need to belong.
- All families experience change.
- We are all unique with individualistic needs.
- Acceptance of extreme differences is difficult for society.

Essential Questions:

- What does it mean to belong in a society?
- How is belonging and fitting in different? The same?
- How does change impact families? Way of life? Society?
- What is the difference between unique and individualistic? How does each affect individuals? Society?
- Why is acceptance difficult?

Affective Focus (Bibliotherapy)

Introductory Activity/Hook

All students have faced adversity at some point in their lives. Tough times sometimes determine a facet of our attributes. Write a short story, complete with illustrations, about a time in your life when you faced troubled times. The story can be fictitious but must be authentic.

Menu of Bibliotherapy Questions

Identification:

- What are Moon's talents? How does he use these talents in the book?
- What happens when he is sent to the boys' home with Mr. Gene?
- How is Moon's individualistic ideas changed when he makes friends with Kit and Hal?
- How does Moon react to structure and rules, in particular, how does he react to the constable?
- When does Moon begin to decide his old way of life with his father may not have been the best choice?
- What are other stories you have read or heard of that this book made you think of?

Catharsis:

- How is Moon unique? Identify thoughts and actions.
- Describe Moon's feelings about his mother?
- How did his feels for his father change?
- Why didn't his feels of his mother change?
- How did Moon's feelings change throughout the book?
- How was Moon different in the end of the book?

Insight:

- What makes you unique? Identify thoughts, actions, attributes?
- How does it feel, when you feel you don't belong?
- How can you help others feel the acceptance of their own uniqueness?

Universalization/Follow-up Activity

In teams of three, write a short dialogue where one in the group is struggling for acceptance due to an unusual difference. Write the scenario using either a positive or negative response. Include "feelings" statements in your dialogue. The short play should be between 5-10 minutes and may include props for effectiveness. Perform the play for the class. Be prepared for an outcome discussion regarding your team's performance.

Reading Comprehension: Independent Work and Group Discussion

To foster strong reading comprehension, literacy skills, and love of literature, students need to read critically, respond to what they read with text-based evidence, develop a robust vocabulary, and engage in high level discussion with peers. The following activities address these components.

Before Group Discussion: Activities for students to complete independently

A. Knowledge and Comprehension Questions related to the novel. Students use sticky notes to locate answers in the text as they read. Teacher may use student's answers for a grade.

Knowledge Questions

- Who were the main characters?
- List all the setting changes, in order.
- What hobbies did Moon have?
- Who were Moon's two best friends?
- Who was the central antagonist in this book?
- Who did Moon question to help him discover more about his dad?
- What crime was Moon accused of?
- Who did Mr. Blake hate?

Comprehension Questions

- Why did Moon need to go back to the shelter?
- Why was his wheelbarrow so important to him?
- How does Mr. Wellington prove Moon is innocent?
- What consequences did Hal face for coming to the shooting range? Why did he come?
- Why did Mr. Blake choose to live a survivalist lifestyle with his family?

B. Vocabulary Study: Students will complete the following activities with vocabulary from the novel. The activities may be used for a grade, but should also be included in the discussion.

- Students look up the word in the dictionary or online, noting the definition that best fits how the word is used in the passage. Also, determine possible synonyms and evaluate the author's use of the word in the passage.
- Students will complete a graphic organizer provided by the teacher.

Vocabulary Words

palmetto 5	militia 56
encased 5	white trash 56
tannic 7	poached 56
slipup 8	jittery 84
fidgeted 15	property of the state
constable 24	turkey scratch 86
homestead 26	provoked
joggled 36	kudzu 115

Group Discussion: Teacher facilitated small group discussion. Teacher may choose to provide students with a set of questions prior to the discussion. Students should also be encouraged to create their own questions.

Higher-Level Questions (Using Bloom's Taxonomy or Depth of Knowledge Categories)

1. Application:

- Belonging. Did Moon "select" his new friends? If he picked these two guys to be friends with, why do you think he would have picked these particular people?

2. Analysis:

- Change. Why is Moon having second thoughts about going to Alaska? Do you think he would make it? Why/why not?
- Change. Let's talk about Sanders. What does the judge think of him? How did his opinion change? What happens to Sanders?
- Belonging. Why is Mr. Wellington helping Moon?
- Belonging. How are Mr. Wellington and Moon alike?
- Acceptance. On page 13, Pap warns Moon to stay away from the lawyer. How is this foreshadowing for future events?

3. Evaluation:

- Family. Do you think Moon is different from his father? How?
- Individualism. Do you think Moon is gifted?
- Change. When you read the first sentence of this book, what were your thoughts, how did you feel?

4. Synthesis:

- Acceptance. What kind of student do you think Moon will be once he is enrolled in public education?
- Change. How would the book have been different if Moon's pap had not died?
- Belonging. How would Moon's life been different if he hadn't found his uncle?

After Group Discussion: Activities for students to complete with a partner, in a small group, or individually. Activities may be used for a grade.

Connections to the Curriculum: Students will make connections to a curriculum area (math, science, social studies, language arts, art, or careers) using concepts from the story. The product should reflect creativity as well as critical thinking.

Language Arts – Create a Venn diagram or another graphic organizer to compare/contrast another book about a young person's survival skills, fitting into society etc. Consider books like *Hatchet*, *Island of the Blue Dolphin*, *Hunger Games* etc.

Moon's different upbringing makes him "stand-out" in society. Apply this same difference of culture to explain how you would feel if suddenly you were subjected to fit into another, very different, culture. Prepare a short essay.

Create a quote for this book or one of its characters. Describe how the quote is appropriate.

Give this book an award. Create a fitting literary award for this novel. Write the award speech and design the award logo. Research a few existing book awards to get a “feel” for this assignment. A few examples are: Pulitzer, Caldecott, Newbery, and Coretta Scott King.

Mr. Watt Key is an Alabama native. Write a letter to this author describing your feelings about the book, its characters or the setting. His postal address is:

Watt Key, 216-C Saint Michael Street, Mobile, AL 36602

This author often does school visits; whereas, he comes to discuss his books with interested students. Write a persuasive email to request him to come to our school for a “book talk”. He has a few other novels so be sure to familiarize yourself with those titles. Also, inquire if there is a cost for his visit. His email address is: info@wattkey.com

Math – Numbers help explain relations to certain situations, such as, how money affects social status. Review *Alabama Moon* and create word problems from the text to help us better understand the book’s plot. Consider travel distances, costs of goods, trades etc.

Social Studies – Location, location, location. This book is set in Alabama; but, where exactly? Draw an Alabama Locations Map detailing each location and defining its significance in the book. Plot the path of Moon’s movement. Include a map key and compass rose.

Some believe Mr. Blake was socially isolating himself because of his involvement in the Vietnam War. Research this war and prepare a war support or protest poster.

There is a National Forest mentioned in this book. Research this national acquisition and prepare a PowerPoint presentation describing at least 5 key elements such as cost of the national purchase, land mass, physical or topographic maps, history of the area, resources in this area, indigenous plants, water supplies etc.

Science/Health – Moon is very knowledgeable of Alabama flora. Research trees native to Alabama and prepare a leaf report/project. Detail which produce usable products which would help sustain life.

Kit suffers from an unnamed disease. Speculate which disease you think he has and provide supporting evidence. List his symptoms and treatments as they are discussed in the book to formulate and support your speculation.

Art – Create a picture book for this book. Digital applications such as storyboard can be used or you can draw the presentation. Remember, no words.

Create a word collage using the title of this book in the center or much larger than other words. Think of this assignment as a physical wordle using magazines, books, or any print media. Cut out words or letters and arrange them in an aesthetically pleasing manner.

Visual Arts - Design a motion picture art poster or a movie billing for the novel. Watch the movie and track the differences, Book vs. Movie.

Use a technology application, such as Animoto, Photostory or Moviemaker to create a movie/book trailer for this book.

Create a Wordle for this book. Be sure to include the title in larger print. Design the Wordle so it will entice other readers. The web link for creating Wordle is: <http://www.wordle.net/create>

Careers – Contemplate Moon’s vast knowledge of all things nature, his involvement with the police and the custody proceedings. What career path do you think would best suit him and his interests? Research this job and create an employment flyer for the position.

Technology – Create a Fakebook® page entry for the characters of this book. The web link for Fakebook is: <http://www.classtools.net/FB/home-page>

Create a text message dialogue between the characters of this book discussing one or more events of the book. I think it would be interesting to “hear” a conversation when everyone was at the shooting range. Text message discussion between characters: role assumption. You take on the role of the character. You will need a team to play out all the parts.

Record a voicemail message for all the characters. What would their voicemail box message be? Submit this as an audio recording embedded in our Edmodo® classroom or embedded in a PowerPoint® slide. Dually, submit a text copy, either on a PowerPoint® slide or upload to Edmodo®, of the conversation.

Create a mock Twitter® or Instagram® account for each of the characters. Write the posts for each of the participants. You may want to do this as a team and each team member assume the role of one of the book characters. The dialogue can be typed on a word document. I am most interested in your # (hashtag) inclusions and picture choices.

Create a QR code linking a mock author interview. Submit the URL and code so it can be affixed to the cover of book. Future readers of this book will be able to scan your QR to link to your presentation.

Create a weblog review of the book. Research and read a few reviews of young adult books to better understand a review writing style. Rely on notable resources such as the *New York Times*. Submit the URL so it can be affixed to the cover of the book. Future readers of this book will be able to link to your presentation.

B. Creative Reading: Using the following list of creative products, students will complete a project reflecting their personal connection with the novel. Students may determine their own creative product with the approval of the teacher.

1. Create a puppet play based on a favorite scene in the story.
2. Create a poem based on the novel, a character, or favorite scene.
3. Illustrate a favorite scene(s) from the story.
4. Create a story board of the plot of the story.
5. Write a screen play based on the story.
6. Create a new ending for the story.

7. Create a map of the location(s) of the story.
8. Create a mural representative of the story and characters.
9. Extend the story into a sequel.
10. Rewrite a portion of the story from another character's perspective.
11. Rewrite the story in another time or culture.
12. Create an online product: infographic, video, character blog, Fakebook, Padlet, PowerPoint, etc.
13. Write a song that one or more of the characters might sing.
14. Create an interpretative dance for the story.
15. Write and design an ABC book about the novel.
16. Create a lapbook for the novel.
17. Build a dodecahedron for the novel.
18. Make a scrapbook page for someone in the novel.
19. Create a character bottle/can.
20. Create a book fair project board.
21. Title acrostic each word used must describe something about the book or is significant for the book
22. Write a book review
23. Create a diorama of some aspect of the novel.
24. Paper bag report. Design the exterior of the bag to induce interest in the book. Inside the bag place mementos note cards etc. of book.
25. Design a plot chart using whatever visual best describes this plot such as a mountain with the base being the exposition, the mountain side as the rising/falling action the summit as the climax
26. Develop a family tree of the characters in the book and how they relate. This means, they do not have to be blood relatives, but how are they connected. Design a diagram to explain their relation.
27. Develop a character web.
28. Cereal box or paper plate report
29. Paper man report. Connect each page to form a shape of a person. Design the face to resemble one of the characters
30. Create the test for others in this book group.
31. Write questions for discussion.
32. What could you make, if you were stranded in a forest? pencils, shelter, food? Be specific make a replica to share with the class.
33. Alabama authors' study. Read another book by an Alabama author and make the suggestion for the rest of the class.
34. Student idea for a creative product related to the story. Seek approval from the classroom teacher before you begin this independent thought project.

Find an error in this book for bonus points!