



The Bridge to Terabithia

by Katherine Paterson

Teacher's Guide

Written By Mary Ellen Snodgrass

PERMA-BOUND
THE STRONGEST BOOKS YOU CAN BUY

CLASSROOM
FAVORITES

A Perma-Bound Production

Note: This guide was written using the HarperEntertainment edition, ©2007. Other editions may vary.

Synopsis

Chapter One: Jesse Oliver Aarons, Jr.

It is August. Jesse Oliver Aarons Jr., a creative, athletic ten-year-old, is the only boy among four sisters—Brenda, Ellie, May Belle, and Joyce Ann. He completes farm chores quickly to leave time for running the cow pasture. He anticipates the start of fifth grade and a chance to win an annual championship race involving Lark Creek Elementary School's fourth and fifth graders. He won the race the previous year on April 22. He regrets that his father drives from rural Millburg, Virginia, to Washington, D.C., each work day to dig and haul. While washing up for breakfast, Jess notices new neighbors, who park a U-Haul next door at the former Perkins place.

Chapter Two: Leslie Burke

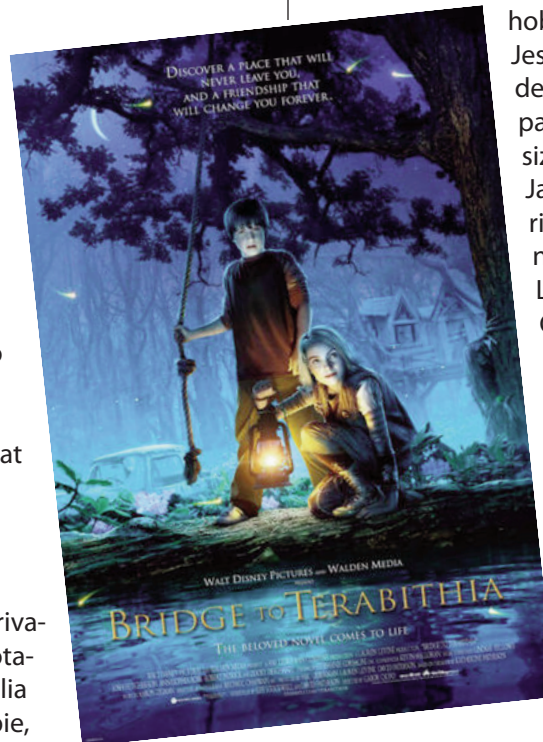
Quiet and studious, Jesse sketches animals. Away from sisters in the privacy of his room, he draws a hippopotamus cartoon. The music teacher, Julia Edmunds, a post-Vietnam War hippie, encourages his artistry by asking about his summer projects. While milking Bessie, he longs for art paper and marking pens. He feels hemmed in by a family of girls. At the fence, he encounters Leslie Burke, a short-haired tomboy dressed in cut-off jeans and blue shirt.

Chapter Three: The Fastest Kid in the Fifth Grade

After Labor Day on the first day of school, Jess sees Leslie, who amazes classmates by dressing in a blue undershirt and sockless sneakers. Gary Fulcher smirks at Jess's running practice and snatches at his cartoon. At lunch, students ridicule Leslie's yogurt. At recess, students race. Jesse's intention to win the championship dims when Leslie outruns him in the third and fourth heats. On the bus ride home, he avoids her by sitting with his little sister.

Chapter Four: Rulers of Terabithia

Jess likes the competitive neighbor, even though she continues winning the lunchtime races. Miss Edmunds is the first teacher to smile at Leslie. On Friday, Leslie sits with Jess on the bus home. She tells him about school in Arlington, Virginia, and about her family's decision to re-evaluate their lives. For a paper on hobbies, she writes about scuba diving. Jess feels like a coward for fearing a deep-sea dive. Mrs. Myers assigns a paper on Jacques Cousteau. An oversized seventh-grade bully named Janice Avery causes trouble on the bus ride home. Leslie bribes May Belle with new paper dolls. At the Aarons' home, Leslie watches a program on Jacques Cousteau on television because the Burkes have no TV.



Jess and Leslie swing over a gully on a rope. At her suggestion, he chooses a secluded woodsy spot for Terabithia, their secret castle stronghold drawn from C.S. Lewis's Narnia series. The two become king and queen of the realm, which they visit each day after school. In class, Mrs. "Monster-Mouth" Myers favors Leslie, a model student. A

few days later, Janice trips Jess on the bus; Mrs. Prentice, the driver, orders him off. He walks three miles home. Leslie urges Jess to fight back against bullies like Janice. In October, Gary Fulcher derides the boy-girl friendship, but Jess maintains the new hideout, which requires sleeping bags for warmth in November. Bill Burke, Leslie's father who writes political books, demands the return of the sleeping bags in December. Jess and Leslie feel like outsiders at each other's home, but keep Terabithia as a private sacred refuge.

Chapter Five: The Giant Killers

Janice steals seven-year-old May Belle's Twinkies, which her father brought her. May Belle demands revenge. In retaliation, Leslie dictates a love note to Jess inviting Janice to a meeting at the bus stop. Leslie signs the note "Willard Hughes" and concludes with X's for kisses.

While Leslie diverts Mrs. Pierce, Jess plants the note in Janice's desk. The prank humiliates Janice. The next day, May Belle is impressed when Janice stomps angrily on the bus.

Chapter Six: The Coming of Prince Terrien

By November 25, the Aarons girls are eager for Christmas. Jess longs to give Leslie a Japanese TV. Jess gives Leslie a puppy named Prince Terrien, nicknamed P.T. Mr. Aarons buys small gifts for his children. Jess receives an electric race car on a track that refuses to work properly. Mr. Aarons is disappointed. Leslie gives Jess water colors, a brush, and art paper.

Chapter Seven: The Golden Room

After Christmas, Jess plays in the pasture with P.T. In February, Leslie accuses him of avoiding her father. Bill, a political writer, befriends Jesse. His wife Judy writes novels under the name Judith Hancock. Jess assists with carpentry projects and admires Bill's renovation of the old residence. Leslie and Jess return to Terabithia after a mid-winter absence.

Leslie finds Janice Avery crying and smoking in the girls' restroom and makes friends. Leslie learns that Bobby Sue and Wilma spread rumors about Mr. Avery, an abusive father who beats Janice. The gossip violates a code of silence that students maintain about difficult home situations. May Belle reports that she followed Jess and Leslie into the woods.

Chapter Eight: Easter

Rain swells the creek in March. Jess's dad is laid off his job. Leslie admits she has never been to church. She attends with the Aarons family, who ceased regular attendance three years past. She wears a proper Easter dress to services. She knows little about Christian ritual and is curious about Jesus's biography. The story seems beautiful, but she remains aloof from religious faith. May Belle informs her that non-believers go to hell. She taunts Leslie with reminders that Leslie may die.

Chapter Nine: The Evil Spell

On Easter Monday, rain intensifies. Jess and Leslie take P.T. to Terabithia. That night, Jess fears returning to the woods over the swollen creek.

Chapter Ten: The Perfect Day

On Thursday morning, Mr. Aarons hunts for a job. While Jess milks Bessie, he worries about being cowardly. On a last minute invitation, he tours the Smithsonian art galleries in Washington, D.C., with Miss Edmunds. In his

absence, Leslie drowns in the rain-swollen creek. His mother feared he was dead, too.

Chapter Eleven: No!

Jess discovers that Leslie tried to cross into Terabithia alone that morning, fell from the broken rope swing, and hit her head on a rock. He races down the road until his father gathers him up and puts him in the pickup. Jess forgets to milk Bessie until the next morning. His father proposes a condolence visit to the Burkes.

Chapter Twelve: Stranded

Bill welcomes Jess, who cradles P.T. He assures Jess that he was Leslie's good friend. Jess can't fathom the loss and is angry with his friend for deserting him. Grief-stricken and angry, he smacks May Belle when she asks what Leslie looked like dead, then runs to the creek to toss his art supplies into the water. Mr. Aarons offers man-to-man comfort and rejects May Belle's belief that God sends little girls to hell. Bill leaves P.T. with Jess and drives to Pennsylvania in the dusty Italian car to bury Leslie's ashes.

Chapter Thirteen: Building the Bridge

On Saturday morning, the rest of the Aarons family comforts the boy and allows P.T. to sleep on Jess's bed. He presents a wreath to Queen Leslie at Terabithia. He rescues May Belle from the middle of the tree bridge over the creek and calms her fears.

On Monday morning, Jess realizes that, without Leslie, he is the fastest runner at school. Recalling early widowhood, Mrs. Myers encourages him to cry. On Wednesday, the Burkes decide to move away and leave with Jess all of Leslie's books, paints, and paper. With spare lumber from the Burkes's back porch, on Thursday afternoon, Jess builds a bridge over the creek and introduces May Belle to the secret realm that Leslie once shared with him. Decked in flowers, May Belle becomes the new queen of Terabithia.

Timeline of the Action

First Grade	Jesse Aarons tells his father he wants to be an artist.
winter, Fourth Grade	Julia Edmunds, the music teacher, praises Jess's artistic talent.
April 22, Fourth Grade	Jess wins an annual race between fourth and fifth graders.
August	He practices running on the day that

neighbors from Pennsylvania move in at the former Perkins place.
later He draws a hippopotamus cartoon.
Tuesday after Labor Day On the opening day at Lark Creek Elementary School, Jess sees Leslie Burke.
at lunch Students ridicule Leslie's yogurt.
at recess Leslie outruns him.
after school On the bus ride home, he avoids her.
Friday Leslie sits with Jess on the bus home.
later At the Aarons' home, Leslie watches a TV program about deep-sea explorer Jacques Cousteau.
daily Leslie and Jess visit a wooded spot they name Terabithia.
few days later Janice trips Jess on the bus.
October Gary Fulcher derides the boy-girl friendship
November Terabithia requires sleeping bags for warmth.
November 25 The Aarons girls are eager for Christmas.
December Bill Burke demands the return of the sleeping bags.
later Leslie's prank love note from Willard humiliates Janice.
next day May Belle is impressed with the results.
before Christmas Jess gives Leslie a puppy.
Christmas Leslie gives him water colors, brush, and art paper.
after Christmas Jess plays in the pasture with P.T.
February Leslie accuses him of avoiding her father.
March Rain swells the creek.
before Easter Jess's dad is laid off his job.
Easter Sunday Leslie attends her first church service with the Aarons family.
after church May Belle informs Leslie that non-believers in the Bible go to hell.
Easter Monday Rain intensifies.
Thursday morning Jess tours the Smithsonian and National Gallery with Miss Edmunds.
that morning Leslie falls from a broken rope and drowns in the rain-swollen creek.
late that afternoon Jess races down the road until his father retrieves him.
Friday morning The Aarons make a condolence visit to the Burkes and meet Leslie's grandmother.

later Jess tosses his art supplies into the creek and talks with his father about hell.
same day Bill leaves P.T. with Jess and drives to Pennsylvania to bury Leslie's ashes.
Saturday morning Jess presents a memorial wreath to Queen Leslie at Terabithia.
shortly He rescues May Belle from the tree bridge.
Monday morning Mrs. Myers misses Leslie and encourages Jesse to cry.
Wednesday Before returning to Pennsylvania, the Burkes give Jesse Leslie's books, paints, and paper.
Thursday afternoon Jess builds a bridge over the creek and names May Belle the new queen.

Author Sketch

Katherine Wolmendorf Paterson holds an honored place among young adult and picture book writers. Born on October 31, 1932, the middle of five children in Qing Jiang, China, to Presbyterian missionary George Raymond and Mary Goetchius Womeldorf, the author lived in Asia, where her father preached and headed Sutton 690, a boys' school. She learned Chinese and respect for Eastern traditions and civilization. In 1937 at the bombing of Nanking and the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, her family fled to Richmond, Virginia. A second evacuation from China forced the family out in 1940, when her brother, George Raymond Womeldorf, Jr., served the Navy as a fighter pilot. The family settled with relatives in Lynchburg, Virginia.

While learning to read and write English on a par with her Chinese in the grade school she attended in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Paterson, like other refugees, acclimated to Americans. Her out-of-fashion clothes and British accent set her apart from Southerners. Of her craft, she explained, "I have a rejected child, a jealous and jilted adolescent inside who demands, if not revenge, a certain degree of satisfaction. I am sure it is she, or should I say they, who keep demanding that I write for them." During some eighteen moves, to compensate for missing Asia and for being an outsider, she retreated to the library and wrote stories and plays. Of her love of books, she later asserted, "A great novel is a kind of conversion experience. We come away from it changed." She advised her students to read to learn how language functions and to trust great writ-

ers for teaching values.

While her family lived in Winchester, Virginia, Paterson graduated summa cum laude with a degree in American and British literature from King College in Bristol, Tennessee, in 1954 and taught for a year at Lovettsville Elementary School in Lovettsville, Virginia. In 1956, she received a master's degree in Bible and English from the Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond. Although she feared the Japanese as "the enemy," at age 24, she began a six-year stint teaching at a missionary school in Japan in lieu of a return to communist China. In 1959, she attended Naganuma School of Japanese in Kobe, Japan. On a fellowship, she studied Christian education at Union Theological Seminary in New York, a nondenominational graduate school to prepare men and women for the ministry.



On July 14, 1962, the author married a fellow student, the Reverend John Barstow Paterson. The couple settled in Takoma Park, Maryland, and then Norfolk, Virginia, to rear sons John Barstow and David Lord and adopted daughters Elizabeth Po Lin and Mary Katherine. While working as a Christian education assistant, she aided eleven pastors in rural Japan and taught sacred studies and English in Lovettsville, Virginia, and in Pennington, New Jersey. In 1966, she became a full-time writer of church school curriculum for fifth and sixth graders in parochial schools. At first, she published only one short story in seven years. After taking a creative writing course, she progressed to picture books and young adult fiction, beginning with a Japanese fairy tale, *The Sign of the Chrysanthemum*.

Paterson draws on Asian and Southern American experiences as well as Old Testament characters and the activities of their children and friends. She created the characters in *Bridge to Terabithia* from her son David and his friend Lisa Hill. From second grade, the two played in Sligo Creek in Lovettsville until Lisa was killed by lightning. While the author struggled with cancer, she determined by pull David out of his sorrow by writing about the unfairness of death. Of the editing assistance and support her family offers, she says, "It means a lot to me that my family care about my work and share my pleasure in each new book." To touch young readers at the core, she publishes work on a range of subjects—Japanese puppet theaters in *The Master Puppeteer* and textile mill girls and union organizers in Lowell, Massachusetts, in *Lyddie*. She also translated *The Crane*

Wife and coauthored *Consider the Lilies* with her husband. Her lectures have taken her to Colombia, Cuba, Indonesia, and Venezuela. The family lives in Barre, Vermont, where the author's husband retired from the Presbyterian pastorate. She enjoys drawing in pastels, singing, sailing, tennis, and playing the piano.

Critic's Corner

Katherine Paterson has earned respect for her compassion and faith. She explained, "I am a Christian, so that conviction will pervade the book even when I make no conscious effort to teach or preach. Grace and hope will inform everything I write." Of her love for children, she remarked, "When I write a story, it is not an attempt to make children good or wise—nobody but God can do that. I am trying in a book simply to give children a place where they may find rest for their weary souls."

Paterson's books have garnered an outpouring of critical acclaim, particularly the controversial *Bridge to Terabithia* and *Jacob Have I Loved*, winners of the 1978 and 1981 Newbery Medals. Paterson used the increased income to send her children to college. In 1977 and 1978, she won National Book Awards for *The Master Puppeteer* and *The Great Gilly Hopkins*. In 1985, *Come Sing, Jimmy Jo* received a Best Book of the year from the *New York Times* and *School Library Journal*. In 1978, King College conferred an honorary doctorate on Paterson. The next year, she won best book commendations from *School Library Journal*.

Recent honors spotlight Paterson as a top author for young adults. In addition to praise, she holds position nine on the American Library Association list of 100 most frequently censored books of 2000. Nonetheless, she asserted, "I know beyond any doubt that I am the most fortunate person in the world to have been given such a work to do." She accepted a Lewis Carroll Shelf Award, Michigan Young Reader's citation, Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction, Hans Christian Andersen Medal, and New York Public Library Award. She has also won the Janusz Korczak Medall, Colorado Blue Spruce Award, and Le Grand Prix des Jeunes Lecteurs. On May 1, 2006, she traveled to Stockholm, Sweden, to accept the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award. Her collected works reside at the University of Minnesota. Her son, actor and screenwriter David Paterson, produced the 2007 partially animated film version of *Bridge to Terabithia* for Disney Productions.

Bibliography

Abramson, Ilene. "The Kids' Reading Room," Los Angeles

Times (5 February 2007): E.18.
 Aspan, Maria. "A Tale of Fantasy Rendered Different, At Least in the Trailers," *New York Times* (19 February 2007): C.4.
 Bostrom, Kathleen Long. *Winning Authors: Profiles of the Newbery Medalists*. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2003.
 "Bridge to Terabithia: David Paterson's Mother Wrote the Book for Him. Now He's Made the Movie," *Washington Post* (15 February 2007): C-14.
 Fisher, Bonnie. *Social Influences on the Writing of Marion Dane Bauer and Katherine Paterson*. Lampeter, Dyfed: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001.
 Hornaday, Ann. "Bridge: Crossing into the Heart of Childhood," *Washington Post* (16 February 2007): C.1.
 Johnson, Miriam J. *Building a Child's Library: Inside 25 Classic Children's Stories*. Mahwah, N. J.: Paulist Press, 2004.
 Maglaty, Jeanne. "Helping Burgeoning Bookworms," *Washington Post* (12 March 1998): M.1.
 McGinty, Alice B. *Katherine Paterson*. New York: Rosen, 2005.
 "Meet David Paterson," *Washington Post* (15 February 2007): C.14.
 Polette, Nancy. *Books Every Child Should Know*. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2005.
 "Premonition," *Washington Post* (16 March 2007): T.39.
 Silvey, Anita. *100 Best Books for Children*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2004.
 Smedman, M. Sarah. *Bridges for the Young: The Fiction of Katherine Paterson*. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow, 2003.

Other Works by Katherine Paterson

Who Am I?, 1966
Justice for All People, 1973
To Make Men Free, 1973
The Sign of the Chrysanthemum, 1973
Of Nightingales That Weep, 1974
A Midnight Clear, 1974
The Master Puppeteer, 1976
Bridge to Terabithia, 1977
The Great Gilly Hopkins, 1978
Angels and Other Strangers, 1979
Star of the Night, 1980
Jacob Have I Loved, 1980
The Crane Wife, 1981
Gates of Excellence, 1981
Rebels of the Heavenly Kingdom, 1983
Come Sing, Jimmy Jo, 1985
Consider the Lilies, 1986

Once Upon a Time, 1986
The Tongue-Cut Sparrow, 1987
Park's Quest, 1988
The Spying Heart, 1990
The Tale of the Mandarin Ducks, 1990
Lyddie, 1991
The Smallest Cow in the World, 1991
The King's Equal, 1992
The Flip-Flop Girl, 1994
A Sense of Wonder, 1995
The Angel and the Donkey, 1996
The King's Equal, 1996
Celia and the Sweet, Sweet Water, 1998
Margin's Best Christmas Present Ever, 1997
Parzival, 1998
Preacher's Boy, 1999
The Wide-Awake Princess, 2000
The Field of the Dogs, 2001
Marvin One Too Many, 2001
The Invisible Child, 2001
The Same Stuff as Stars, 2002
Blueberries for the Queen, 2004
Bread and Roses, Too, 2006

Audiobooks

Bridge to Terabithia, 2001, read by Robert Sean Leonard (cassette)
Bridge to Terabithia, 2004, read by Robert Sean Leonard (CD)

Film

Bridge to Terabithia, PBS 1985
Bridge to Terabithia, Disney, 2007

Website

Bridge to Terabithia, <http://disney.go.com/disneyvideos/liveaction/bridgetoterabithia/>

General Objectives

1. To discuss the formation of community and family
2. To characterize deviation from expected behaviors
3. To discuss the expression of individual talents
4. To outline the relationship between parent and child
5. To contrast types of parental understanding
6. To note the value of fantasy
7. To read aloud examples of advice, superstition, tradition, vernacular speech, and humor
8. To study the literary convention of foreshadowing
9. To enumerate examples of exclusion and bullying
10. To explain the universality of death in literature

Specific Objectives

- 1.To describe the merging of neighboring families through honoring Leslie's life
- 2.To recount how and why Jesse becomes Leslie's friend and defender
- 3.To discuss public opinion of child abuse in the Avery household
- 4.To explain how Jesse adapts to May Belle's childish demands
- 5.To account for Jesse's mute grief
- 6.To characterize teacher-student relationships at Lark Creek Elementary School
- 7.To list incidents illustrating creativity, hope, regret, poverty, shyness, and longing
- 8.To evaluate changes in Jesse
9. To account for P.T.'s value to Bill Burke
10. To assess the roles of Mrs. Myers, Mrs. Prentice, and Miss Edmunds
- 11.To analyze the symbolism of rain, the broken rope, Easter, and the bridge
- 12.To contrast Jesse as son, student, friend, brother, farm worker, art appreciator, and mourner

Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of Katherine Paterson's style, present the following terms and applications to *Bridge to Terabithia*:

Foreshadowing: a series of hints at themes and events yet to develop in the story. Paterson builds intensity through continued spring rains, which swell the creek and limit the children's play outdoors. May Belle's warning that people who doubt the Bible go to hell seems unimportant until Leslie drowns. After a perfect day of exploring Washington, D.C., which includes viewing the slaughter of buffalo on an Indian drawing, Jess returns to the tragedy and weighs the import of May Belle's belief in eternal punishment. The thought inflates his sorrow with concerns for Leslie's soul.

Symbolic names: a name derived from an allusion or a concrete object that stands for a complex or abstract idea or relationship. Paterson uses symbolism in the title, which pictures the bridge as a connection to fantasy and fun. The built-in fear factor appears with the naming of Lark Creek Elementary, which suggests both the joy of nature and the terrors of the rain-swollen creek.

Universality: a quality or theme that applies to all people at all times. The cyclical humanistic motifs of growing up, getting an education, selecting a friend, and developing artistic talents precede the greater theme, which is the value of individualism over conformity to a

rigid rural standard for boys and girls. The universality of Jesse's grief for Leslie and the recurrent human situation of introducing May Belle to imagination suggests that Jesse will recover from sorrow by sharing what he learned from Leslie with May Belle and the rest of his backward country family.

Related Reading

Natalie Babbitt, *Tuck Everlasting*
William Faulkner, "Two Soldiers"
Robert Frost, "Out, Out—" and "Birches"
Jean Craighead George, *My Side of the Mountain*
Kaye Gibbons, *Ellen Foster*
Judith Guest, *Ordinary People*
Virginia Hamilton, *The House of Dies Drear*
James Hurst, "The Scarlet Ibis"
Joyce Moyer Hostetter, *Blue*
Lois Lowry, *The Messenger*
Carson McCullers, "Sucker"
Walter Dean Myers, *Fast Sam, Cool Clyde and Stuff*
Scott O'Dell, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*
Gary Paulsen, *Hatchet*
Richard Peck, *A Long Way from Chicago*
Robert Newton Peck, *A Day No Pigs Would Die*
Cynthia Rylant, *Missing May*
Jane Wagner, *J.T.*
Yoko Kawashima Watkins, *So Far from the Bamboo Grove*
Ruth White, *Belle Prater's Boy*
Ron Woods, *The Hero*

Cross-Curricular Sources

For related reading and more information about *Bridge to Terabithia*, fantasy, death of a child, family struggles, scuba diving, Jacques Cousteau, shifts in economy and social status, censorship, hippies, Easter ritual, heaven and hell, and Arlington and Washington, D.C., landmarks consult these sources:

Articles

"Banned Books Week: Saving *Waldo* and *Terabithia* from the Radical Right,"

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-schaub/banned-books-saving_b_7899.html.

"Jacques Cousteau,"

<http://www.incwell.com/Biographies/Cousteau.html>

"The 100 Most Frequently Challenged Books of 1990-2000," <http://www.ala.org>.

<http://www.ala.org/oif/bannedbooksweek/bbwlinks/100mostfrequently.htm>.

"The Scuba Guide," <http://www.thescubaguide.com/>

Audiocassette

Montana 1948
Ordinary People

Multimedia

We're a Family, Sunburst

Novels

Robert Newton Peck, *A Day No Pigs Would Die*
Kaye Gibbons, *Ellen Foster*
Richard Peck, *A Long Way from Chicago*
Cynthia Rylant, *Missing May*
Judith Guest, *Ordinary People*
Yoko Kawashima Watkins, *So Far from the Bamboo Grove*

Plays

J.T.
Mama's Bank Account

Poems

"Birches"
"Out, Out—"

Reference

Frommer's Washington D. C. with Kids
Heaven for Kids
Hippies from A to Z
Jacques Cousteau: Conserving Underwater Worlds
Stories Behind the Traditions and Songs of Easter
The Unofficial Guide to Washington, D.C.

Short stories

"The Scarlet Ibis"
"Sucker"
"Two Soldiers"

Videos

Babe
Because of Winn-Dixie
Charlotte's Web
Cross Creek
Ellen Foster
Except for Me and Thee
Huckleberry Finn
The Friendly Persuasion
Leaving Neverland
Little Women
The Member of the Wedding
Ordinary People
To Kill a Mockingbird

Watership Down

Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Katherine Paterson's *Bridge to Terabithia* should include these aspects:

Themes

- family
- striving
- change
- ridicule
- loss
- outsiders
- love
- memories
- social status
- denial
- regret
- siblings
- inclusion

Motifs

- rural family values
- honoring a dead friend
- family reintegration
- differentiating gender roles
- gaining father love
- respecting views on the afterlife

Meaning Study

Below are significant words, phrases, or sentences from *Bridge to Terabithia*. Explain each in context. Chapter and page numbers pinpoint each entry so you can re-read the passage in which it appears.

1. Lark Creek Elementary was short on everything, especially athletic equipment, so all the balls went to the upper grades at recess time after lunch. (Chapter 1, p. 4)
The county had been promising Lark Creek a lunchroom for twenty years, but there never seemed to be enough money. (Chapter 3, p. 29) (*Katherine Paterson describes the educational inequities common to rural schools, especially in economically deprived districts. Leslie expands on the offerings of city schools by reminiscing about her experiences in Arlington, Virginia.*)
2. Which left Jess to do the work as usual. (Chapter 1, p. 9) (*The novel describes an unfair allotment of home and farm chores to the only male sibling out of five children. The inequality causes Jess mental unrest*)

- and encourages grousing and sibling rivalry.)*
3. Of course, her temper had been terrible, and she had screamed at Jess all afternoon and was now too tired to fix any supper. (Chapter 2, p. 11)
(Paterson depicts Mrs. Aarons as sour-tempered and generally out of sorts with her family. Mention of the cracked vinyl purse and the hot kitchen during August bean canning suggests that the mother is confined to home, overworked, and reduced to poverty.)
4. "Bunch of old ladies turning my only son into some kind of a—." (Chapter 2, p. 14) His father had seen Leslie only a few times and had nodded to show that he had noticed her, but his mother said that she was sure he was fretting that his only son did nothing but play with girls, and they both were worried about what would become of it. (Chapter 4, p. 59)
(The strict gender expectations of Jess's father exclude the arts as careers for a son, especially his only boy. Having to conceal his drawing turns Jess into a recluse.)
5. She's eating clabber. (Chapter 3, p. 29)
(Clabber is raw milk that has been allowed to spoil—to some country children, an item so useless it was added to pig slops. Wanda Kay Moore is the only student who recognizes Leslie's lunch as yogurt.)
6. A few of the younger boys drifted off to play King of the Mountain on the slope between the upper and lower fields. (Chapter 3, p. 31)
By Friday a number of the fourth- and fifth-grade boys had already drifted away to play King of the Mountain on the slope between the two fields. (Chapter 4, p. 37)
(Games of King of the Mountain or King of the Hill involve claiming the high ground and holding it amid shoving, kicking, and undermining. It illustrates the importance of competition to children at Lark Creek Elementary School.)
7. "You never know ahead of time what something's really going to be like." (Chapter 4, p. 41)
(Paterson quietly introduces a central theme, the uncertainty of life after a move and, by extension, of life after death. After Leslie drowns in the creek, Jesse protects her memory and fears that she has entered unexplored territory alone.)
8. Jess had written about football, which he really hated, but he had enough brains to know that if he said drawing, everyone would laugh at him. (Chapter 4, p. 42)
(Paterson illustrates the power of group mentality over the individualist or divergent thinker, especially the lone creative male. Jess conceals artistic leanings

- from convergent thinkers who expect all males to love watching the Redskins on television.)*
9. "Tonight on Channel 7 at 8 P. M. there is going to be a special about a famous underwater explorer—Jacques Cousteau." (Chapter 4, p. 43)
(In Leslie's honor, Mrs. Myers assigns the class to watch a special on Jacques-Yves Cousteau (1910-1997), a French researcher and photographer who studied undersea life and warned the world about pollution of the oceans.)
10. Indeed, Janice Avery, who among all the seventh graders was the one person who devoted her entire life to scaring the wits out of anyone smaller than she, was right behind him. (Chapter 4, p. 46)
(Long before educators made an issue of bullying, Paterson spotlighted victimizing at school, especially by larger kids who terrorized those who were artistic, small, or vulnerable.)

Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important. Be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the novel.

Structure

1. Why does the action end at Terabithia?
(The crowning of Queen May Belle Aarons concludes several strands of storytelling with an act of inclusion and a perpetuation of fun and fantasy. The formal event passes the tradition of make-believe to a new generation while honoring Leslie Burke, the original queen of Terabithia. Returning to their stronghold allows Jess to reflect and grieve in private and to gain strength from Leslie's wisdom and citified example. The rescue of May Belle from the log bridge also exonerates Jess for hitting a little girl.)

Exposition

2. How does the friendship begin?
(Jess sees the U-Haul arrive and learns about the newcomers to the Perkins place from May Belle, who wants a playmate her own age. He doesn't give the family much thought until he meets Leslie at the fence. Symbolically, the fence implies differences between the Aarons and Burkes in sophistication, wealth, and outlook. Leslie, dressed casually, presents an androgynous appearance because of her short haircut and unfeminine clothes. Jess, lacking the courage and experience to introduce himself, hurries about his farm chores. Paterson brings them together as friends at the fifth-grade classroom at Lark Creek Elementary School, a more democratic setting.)

Humor

3. What bits of humor lighten the mood?

(Paterson interjects moments of comic relief, such as Jess's delight in identifying the puppy's gender, which Leslie can't recognize. The haughty sisters display insensitivity and shallowness in wanting new clothes for Easter Sunday, even though their father is out of work. When Jess anticipates entering the church late, he knows that Ellie and Brenda will flounce down the aisle to draw attention to themselves. Paterson also creates a gentle humor in picturing Brenda showing off her panty hose and Jess changing Barbie clothes for May Belle on Christmas morning. The scenario endears Jess for his kindness to a little sister.)

Characterization

4. Why is Mr. Aarons a distant father?

(Paterson captures an authentic strand in rural Southerners. Mr. Aarons differentiates between daughters and son by stopping his truck to let the girls ride and by hugging and interacting with them. He encourages Jess to do chores, an introduction to agrarian manhood that compensates for the father's early departures and late arrivals to and from digging and hauling jobs in Washington, D.C. When Jess truly needs affection and solace, Mr. Aarons breaks the tradition of manly love by carrying Jess to the truck and by allowing his son to sleep late and recover from Leslie's death. When the two discuss in private the possibilities of life after death, Mr. Aarons acknowledges his son's manhood by remarking in an adult voice, "Hell, ain't it.")

Action

5. How does Mrs. Myers interject an adult view?

(The monster-mouth teacher who never smiles takes Jess aside to speak an adult's sorrow at losing Leslie. Fumbling for the right words, Mrs. Myers reveals her own difficulties mourning her deceased husband. She confides to Jess that Leslie was one of the most memorable students of her teaching career. The brief conversation indicates to Jess that an adult perceives and shares his hurt and intends to support him as he grieves for his best friend.)

Interpretation

6. Why does Paterson use "bridge" as a visual image in the title?

(The bridging of childhood and fears is Leslie's gift to Jess, a shy rural boy who lacks self-confidence. Because the two friends swing across to the creek

and enter Terabithia in secret, they maintain a note of adventure and daring in their after-school escapades. Because of Leslie's death from a fall caused by a broken rope and drowning in the creek, Jess begins building a solid crossing, a symbol of his advancing manhood. After rescuing May Belle from the makeshift branch, Jess builds a permanent bridge, an assurance that crossing the creek will be safe for all. It is significant to his action that he uses leftover lumber from the Burke back porch. The lumber is a legacy from Leslie, whose friendship lives on in his perpetuation of the fantasy of Terabithia.)

Vernacular

7. How does language establish barriers between the Burkes and Aarons?

(Paterson avoids clownish rural language, but indicates through slang and nonstandard English that the Aarons family is socially backward and poorly educated. When Leslie arrives, teachers admire her for the quality of her classroom performance, but students make her an outsider. Her parents, both professional writers, treat her like an adult and address her casually. In contrast, at Jess's house, parent-to-child instructions are curt and unloving rather than conversational. When Mr. Aarons proposes a condolence visit, the difference in the two families appears largely in language rather than behavior or customs. Jess's mother introduces herself in country style as "Miz Aarons. ... From up the hill—." Bill expresses his love and appreciation by hugging Jess and remarking, "Thank you for being such a wonderful friend to her.")

Theme

8. What does Paterson reveal about schoolchildren?

(The competition and rowdiness of classmates at Lark Creek Elementary School becomes a child's underground of terrorism. Paterson depicts a swirl of jealousy, gossip, and exclusion, particularly of Jess, the artistic boy, and of Leslie Burke, an outsider from Arlington, Virginia. Older children victimize younger, more vulnerable students like May Belle, who can't stop Janice Avery from swiping her Twinkies. The bus ride home involves favoritism, jostling, tripping, and swearing as well as mockery and veiled threats. At play during recess, children work off aggressions in races and games of King of the Mountain, both competitive endeavors. Leslie's enrollment at Lark Creek introduces Jess to another side of childhood, the use of fantasy aggression and hardihood as an outlet for fears and self-doubt.)

Tone

9. What is the tone of the Janice Avery incidents?
(Paterson layers vengeance with compassion. Janice, an oversized seventh grader, deserves ridicule for the prank love letter as a comeuppance for victimizing six-year-old May Belle and stealing her Twinkies. Leslie admits that beating Janice to pieces would be more soul-satisfying than a trick, but connivance is safer than confrontation with Janice. That afternoon, May Belle exults in Janice's anger.)

After Leslie finds Janice weeping and smoking in the girls' restroom, the tone shifts to the underlying cause of child aggression. Paterson implies that battered children like Janice take out their frustrations on smaller, weaker children, just as her father acts out his anger on his daughter. Leslie's savvy reveals another aspect of her understanding of needy spirits.)

Propriety

10. Why is this novel targeted for censorship?
(Paterson's introduction of Leslie to the Easter service illustrates the newness of Christ's biography to an unchurched city girl from Pennsylvania. By contrasting a fresh take on Christ's sacrifice with May Belle's gullability in a narrow-minded backwoods community, the author contrasts religious points of view—the original and the dogmatic. Instead of valuing the contrast, shallow-minded censors miss the point and castigate the work for a list of sins—satanism, new age philosophy, sorcery, secular humanism, and sexual content. Some focus on Jess's repetitions of "lord," a common Southern expression.)

How Language Works

Katherine Paterson expresses her attitude toward characters and themes through astute remarks:

1. While paying respects at the Burkes' house, Jess thinks, "Look at me. ... I'm not crying," a suggestion of the pent-up anguish he conceals.
2. Six-year-old May Belle, who has no recourse against a big brother, warns, "Boy, you're mean. I oughta tell Momma on you."
3. Leslie Burke, the outsider at Lark Creek Elementary, jokes to Jess, "Thanks to you, I think I now have one and one-half friends."
4. While Jess recovers from sorrow, at breakfast, Brenda sneers at his appetite for pancakes: "If Jimmy Dicks died, I wouldn't be able to eat a bite."
5. With savvy at girls' tendency to share romantic details,

Leslie explains to Jess her instruction that Janice keep the love letter a secret, "So she'll be sure to tell somebody, stupid."

6. Jess's father words advice clearly and effectively: "Lord, boy, don't be a fool. God ain't gonna send any little girls to hell."

Across the Curriculum

Journalism

1. Propose news coverage of the drowning on the creek and the search for Jesse. Include radio spots with breaking news throughout the late afternoon and next morning, newspaper interviews with parents and rescue team members, television coverage of the scene and investigation, and Internet maps of the dangerous creek currents.
2. Review film versions of *Bridge to Terabithia* for a school newspaper. Determine which actors follow the original characters and which add new dimensions to the cast.

Religion

1. Plan scripture to read at Leslie's funeral and burial. Choose verses as well as hymns that stress goodness, acceptance, forgiveness, friendship, and appreciation of nature, such as "For the Beauty of the Earth." Compose additional verses and phrases to adorn commemorative plaques at Terabithia and at Lake Creek Elementary School.
2. Discuss the Easter ritual and its effect on Leslie. Suggest parts of Advent and Christmas services she would like, such as the Advent wreath, Chrismon trees, reading scripture from Matthew and Luke, and Christmas Eve carol singing.
3. Outline a lesson for May Belle that would increase her understanding of the afterlife and reduce her need to commit people to hell. Include advice on respecting other people's views.

Research

1. Create a bulletin board listing places mentioned in the novel. Include the location of Pennsylvania, Arlington, Virginia, and the landmarks of Washington, D.C.
2. Divide the class into small groups to sample the Narnia fantasies of C.S. Lewis. Listen to works on tape, on CD, and video. Discuss scenes that would appeal to Leslie, such as reviving animals turned into statues and meeting the queen.

Gender Studies

1. Summarize gender relationships in the novel, particularly husband/wife, younger sister/older brother, father/daughter, mother/son, male and female students, female bully/male victim, male and female runners, female teacher/male student, male and female bus riders, and boyfriend/girlfriend. Determine why Mr. Aarons has more rigid expectations of his son than Mrs. Myers or Bill Burke.
2. Compose a short outline for an oral report on these female roles: Mrs. Myers, Julia Edmunds, Wanda Kay Moore, Mary Lou Peoples, Judy Burke, Mrs. Pierce, Brenda, Ellie, May Belle, Joyce Ann, Mrs. Aarons, Leslie's grandmother, Bobby Sue Henshaw, Wilma Dean, Billy Jean Edwards, and Mrs. Prentice. Determine which characters Jesse is most comfortable with and which approve of his friendship with Leslie.

Reading

1. Read aloud other literary descriptions of siblings, neighbors, country life, or outsiders. Include Conrad Richter's *The Light in the Forest*, Joyce Moyer Hostetter's *Blue*, Ron Woods's *The Hero*, Cynthia Rylant's *Missing May*, Robert Newton Peck's *A Day No Pigs Would Die*, Yoko Kawashima Watkins's *So Far from the Bamboo Grove*, Ruth White's *Belle Prater's Boy*, Walter Dean Myers's *Fast Sam*, *Cool Clyde*, and *Stuff*, William Faulkner's "Two Soldiers," Natalie Babbitt's *Tuck Everlasting*, Gary Paulsen's *Hatchet*, Lois Lowry's *The Messenger*, Scott O'Dell's *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, Virginia Hamilton's *The House of Dies Drear*, Richard Peck's *A Long Way from Chicago*, and Jean Craighead George's *My Side of the Mountain* and *Julie of the Wolves*. Discuss examples of cooperation and shared values; for example, unsettling family problems in *A Day No Pigs Would Die* and *Belle Prater's Boy*, sibling relationships in "Two Soldiers" and *A Long Way from Chicago*, and surviving loss in *Blue*, *Tuck Everlasting*, *Missing May*, and *So Far from the Bamboo Grove*.

Literature

1. With a group, list and explain significant details. Include these: udder, Lee Mansion, buffalo hunt, brood sow, regicide, Narnia, save the whales, laid off, Jacques Cousteau, pervert, Smithsonian, post-Vietnam War hippies, "Free to Be You and Me," King of the Mountain, value structure, string quartets, scuba diving, National Gallery, conceited, castle

stronghold, consolidated school, crab apple tree, animal predator, bullying, Judith Hancock, siege, bongo drum, "Blowing in the Wind," peacenik, cremated, Mona Lisa, Easter Monday, pay respects, backwash of fashion, hypocritical, clabber and yogurt, conspicuous, liberated woman, tyrants and dictators, Moby Dick, Twinkies, Prince Terrien, sacred grove, litterbug, Aslan, Socrates, fat farm, foundling, hell, court jester, Walter Cronkite, canker sore, knighted, contempt, and Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. Categorize items under key headings; for example, objects, literature, music, attitudes, organizations and movements, fantasy, and historical events.

2. Explain to a small group why the family situation after a death causes younger people to be nervous and ill at ease among older mourners. Suggest ways that the Burkes can help Jess express sorrow; for example, caring for P.T., getting to know Leslie's grandmother, drawing and painting images of Terabithia, building a memorial from native stones, and displaying photos of Leslie and the family.
3. Contrast minor characters in terms of action, commentary, and significance. Include Wayne Pettis, Mrs. Prentice, Mrs. Myers, Mr. Turner, Julia Edmunds, Ellie, Brenda, Gary, bus riders, Willard Hughes, Wanda Kay, Gary Fulcher, Judy Burke, Joyce Ann, Leslie's grandmother, Mr. Avery, Mrs. Pierce, and Mrs. Aarons. Which characters are stereotypes? Which seem like characterizations of real people? Which have the most influence on the story? on Jess? on Leslie?
4. Write a paragraph in which you explain the purpose of a minor incident in the story. Choose from these: May Belle follows Jess to the woods, Mr. Aarons milks Bessie, Janice Avery's father beats her, Mrs. Myers grieves for her dead husband, Jess draws a hippopotamus, Leslie shows Mrs. Pierce a bird's nest, Jess buys a Barbie doll, Leslie asks the puppy's gender, Leslie watches television at the Aarons house, Bill leaves wood on the porch, Jess's race cars fall off the tracks, the Aarons are late to Easter services, Leslie returns the sleeping bags to Mr. Burke, Jess walks three miles home, Ellie envies Brenda's panty hose, Judy becomes unstuck, and Mrs. Aarons offers ham sandwiches.
5. Compile and discuss a list of images from the story that appeal to the five senses; for instance, the sound of the rain-swollen creek or of boys cheering on the foot race at recess, the taste of crackers and dried fruit or of yogurt, the smell of Miss

Bessie's stall and a bucket of fresh milk, the colors in the 24 tubes of paint or the outfit Leslie wears to Easter services, and the feel of the new bridge underfoot or of May Belle's hand as Jess leads her from the bus.

6. Suggest ways this novel could be written as a play. Flesh out action scenes for stage; for example, facing up to Janice Avery, running races at recess, opening a Barbie doll at Christmas, building a bridge from scrap lumber, listening to a reading of Leslie's essay on scuba diving, discussing the beating of Janice Avery, training P.T., and visiting with Leslie's grandmother and other mourners at the Burke house. Create more realism in the text by displaying sympathy for an abused daughter, snobbery toward Pennsylvania residents, Mr. Aarons's search for digging and hauling jobs, trips to the National Gallery and the Smithsonian, affection for P.T., and the Burkes' return of Leslie's ashes to Pennsylvania.

Math and Computer Art

1. Use internal data to make a timeline of events in the novel. Emphasize the period of time that Jesse and Leslie are acquainted and the brief relationship between the Aarons and Burke families. Insert specific dates, such as building a bridge, Easter Monday events, Janice Avery's recovery from a beating, the condolence call at the Burke house, racing against a girl at recess, hitting May Belle in the face, winning a race the previous April, visiting art galleries in Washington, D.C., and the recovery of Terabithia from siege.
2. Draw an animated television or Internet advertisement for *Bridge to Terabithia* emphasizing the crucial roles of Mrs. Myers and Julia Edmunds. Indicate the importance of compassion in teachers toward vulnerable children like Jesse, Janice Avery, and Leslie.

Social Studies

1. Compose a short speech in which you describe the function of each family member. Comment on help and advice that fathers and mothers give their children. Note the family response to Leslie's untimely death. List behaviors that cause harsh words, quarrels, worries, or scolding, such as a smelly shirt, not cutting wood, complaints about Easter clothes, a race car falling off the track, requesting \$6 for a shopping trip to Millburg mall, buying a see-through blouse, being the only brother among four girls, not having a television,

or fear of snobbery from the Burkes. Summarize the role of Leslie's grandmother.

2. Explain in a theme how the author portrays community concerns. Why does Jesse need permission from Mrs. Prentice to get off the bus before his stop? What do parents question about having a hippie music teacher? Why do people withdraw from church?
3. Draw a web representing the parallel lifestyles and activities of the Burke and the Aarons families. Note the aspects they share; for example, residence in the country, homebody mothers, children in school, and sorrow for Leslie. List their differences, particularly professions, styles of discipline, size of families, husband/wife relationships, style of parenting, church beliefs, and income.
4. Define regicide. Give examples from history, particularly Charles I, Mary I, Mary Queen of Scots, Anne Boleyn, Edward II, or Richard III of England or Nicholas II and Alexandra of Russia.

Psychology

1. Lead a debate about Jesse's concern that his father is unloving and dismissive. Why does Jesse conclude that his father favors the four girls over his only son? When does Jesse notice that his father treats him like an adult male rather than like a boy? How does the job loss change Mr. Aarons? Why does he carry Jesse to the truck?
2. Analyze character interaction by simplifying the events and meaning of a single positive scene. For example, give a detailed sketch of Leslie's concern for Janice Avery, the gift of a puppy, crowning May Belle the new queen, Jesse following Leslie to the girls' restroom, pancakes for breakfast, Mrs. Myers's private grief for her husband and Leslie, and Miss Edmunds's invitation to see art in Washington, D.C.
3. Describe in a short speech the effects of loneliness, anticipation, alienation, loss, failed ambitions, religious dogma, grief, and family squabbles on characters in the novel. How do other characters comfort people who suffer? Why does Katherine Paterson suggest that Leslie is with God rather than in hell?
4. Discuss with a group the theme of family love. Why do the characters omit mention of love, yet show affection, such as pancakes for breakfast? How does the singing of "Free to Be You and Me" help Leslie feel welcome at Lark Creek Elementary School? How does Jesse display his affection for Leslie and for May Belle? How does Leslie's father

help Jesse overcome anger and sorrow?

Cinema

1. Draw settings for a film, puppet show, or outdoor drama of *Bridge to Terabithia*. Diagram the placement of actors, music, costumes, props, sound effects, and lighting. Include classroom discussions of how to stage scenes in Terabithia, on the school bus, in Washington museums, at the school playground during recess, at the fence, in the barn, along the creek, and in church on Easter morning.
2. Describe aspects of the novel that are more suited to radio, film, tableau, illustration, cartoon, and pageant than to a novel; for example, singing in Miss Edmunds's Friday classes, recovering from a siege at Terabithia, teasing Leslie about boyfriends in Arlington, and throwing Christmas gifts into the creek.
3. View various films featuring village and community life; e.g., *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Charlotte's Web*, *Ordinary People*, *Except for Me and Thee*, *Little Women*, *Ellen Foster*, *The Friendly Persuasion*, *Because of Winn-Dixie*, *The Secret Garden*, *The Member of the Wedding*, *Watership Down*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Cross Creek*, and *Babe*. Discuss why filmmakers focus on the meaning of challenge, injustice, loneliness, loss, and death on ordinary people.

Science and Health

1. Discuss how a blow to the head might free Leslie of pain and the fear of drowning in the creek.
2. Diagram methods of slowing the creek current; for example, with stone baffles or diversions.

Language

1. Form a team of readers to tape expanded, imaginative episodes of *Bridge to Terabithia* that capture country manners, family life, and vernacular, such as "How come you still awake?," "S'OK," and "I ain't gonna hurt nothing." Create scenes in which Jesse writes a thank-you note to Miss Edmunds for the Washington trip, the Burke family welcomes the Aarons, Janice Avery and Jesse become friends, Mr. Aarons gets a job close to home, May Belle introduces Joyce Ann to Terabithia, Jesse visits Leslie's grave in Pennsylvania, students request information about Leslie's death, Mr. Turner accuses Janice of smoking, and Jesse wins the annual fourth and fifth grade race.
2. Define the novel as a form of storytelling. Discuss why some adults try to remove *Bridge to Terabithia*

from library shelves and classroom reading lists. Express what you learn from the novel about sibilings, friendship, dialect, school, religion, tolerance, individual differences, and courage.

Art, Costume Design, and Music

1. Using desktop publishing or other media, design a mural of the Aarons farm, a layout for the Pennsylvania cemetery or for Terabithia, a banner announcing the race or warning of creek flooding, a business card for a novelist or political writer, a lesson in church manners or in writing thank-you notes, words and music for "Free to Be You and Me" or for "Blowing in the Wind," first aid for head wounds or for drowning, an epitaph for Mr. Myers or Leslie, a list of items needed during a siege or for the first day of school, a chart of landmarks in Arlington and Washington, an extended definition of child abuse or values clarification, an advertisement for scuba diving or cartooning lessons, and a chart of puppy training exercises or school bus routes.
2. Create a bulletin board illustrating visual scenes from the story. Include the shaping of Leslie's grave, arrival at the Smithsonian or at the National Gallery, teasing male runners on the playground after they lose to a girl racer, questioning the bus driver about Willard Hughes's bus, canning beans in a hot kitchen, building a bridge, reporting on spring flooding at the creek, watching Jacques Cousteau on television, welcoming a new neighbor to the Perkins place, rescuing May Belle from the branch, remodeling the Perkins place with carpentry, and attending Easter services with family and a guest.
3. Use desktop publishing, plaster of paris, masks, puppets, collage, fabric banners, mural, or sculptor's clay to create a gallery dramatizing the significance of a woods project that involves collecting found objects and using them to build a fantasy stronghold.

Drama and Speech

1. Write several conversations that are only implied, such as exchanges among the students concerning the outsider from Pennsylvania, Jesse's immersion in competitive running, the grandmother's grief at Leslie's death, looking for jobs in Washington, D.C., Mrs. Myers's comments about Leslie to other teachers at Lark Creek Elementary School, May Belle's enjoyment of paper dolls, and comments on heavy rains. Pantomime or act out your dia-

- logue for an audio or video taping.
2. Role-play the part of the undertaker helping the Burkes decide on an appropriate funeral, memorial, burial site, cremation urn, monument, and epitaph for Leslie. Contrast honor to Leslie with her welcome to Lark Creek Elementary School.
 3. Discuss your reaction to the Aarons family. What role would you play in the community; for example, relative, neighbor, family friend, physician, mail carrier, teacher, principal, farmer, or minister? Would you choose farm life over town life? keeping a cow over buying milk? being a male or female character? being a respected individual or outsider? Which characters would you choose for friendship? What advice would you give Jess on gaining his father's love and attention? on getting along with two bossy teenaged sisters?

Composition

1. Make an oral report on the theme of appreciation. Summarize lines that urge the viewer to enjoy cartooning, painting, viewing art and architecture, songs, musical instruments, nature, running, and fantasy. Explain the attraction of the woods to Jess and Leslie and the urge to make up stories about Terabithia.
2. Compose a first person account of Leslie's arrival at the Perkins place. Make a list of questions for her family to ask, such as the location of the bus stop, sources of lumber, hours of the local library, phone number for the newspaper office, and children Leslie's age living near by.
3. Compose an extended definition of regret in which you compare Jesse to the focal character in Robert Frost's "Out, Out—," Yoko Kawashima Watkins's *So Far from the Bamboo Grove*, Robert Newton Peck's *A Day No Pigs Would Die*, Kaye Gibbons's *Ellen Foster*, James Hurst's "The Scarlet Ibis," and Cynthia Rylant's *Missing May*.
4. Compose an informal essay on writing drama. List situations you would like to describe in a teleplay, scenario, tableau, stage musical, blog, or outdoor drama. Explain to a small group how your cast of characters would make friends, share a hobby, and talk about school, teachers, recess, romances, and bullying.

Education

1. Compose an introduction to *Bridge to Terabithia* for new readers. Explain how the story develops sympathy for Jesse, May Belle, Mr. Aarons, Bill Burke, Mrs. Myers, Janice Avery, and Leslie.

2. Describe aloud the multiple purposes of reading essays aloud. What does the reading add to a classroom study of hobbies? Why does the teacher delight in Leslie's work? Why does Jesse lie about enjoying football on television?

The Importance of Setting

The placement of *Bridge to Terabithia* among country people explains the need for farm chores—canning beans, chopping wood, milking a cow, chilling fresh milk, pasturing animals, and cooking for a large family. Jesse, a ten-year-old charged with regular responsibilities, must leave his bed early in the morning to finish work before riding the school bus to Lark Creek Elementary School. The bus and classrooms form a significant part of his daily interaction with authority figures like Mr. Turner, Mrs. Prentice, and Mrs. Myers and with classmates. On the playground at recess, he vies willingly with other boys who compete in running and observes that some children prefer to play hopscotch or King of the Mountain at a distance from the race track.

At home, Jesse feels hemmed in by four sisters, two older and two younger. To escape noisy siblings, the carping of his overworked mother, and the emotionlessness of his largely absent father, Jesse prefers drawing in his room or running in the meadow, a source of freedom that allows him to develop his ambition of winning the annual fourth- and fifth-grade race. Julia Edmunds enlarges his world further by squiring him about Washington, D.C., and introducing him to the Smithsonian Institution, National Gallery, monuments, and the Lee Mansion in Arlington Cemetery. Jesse rates the experience as a "perfect day."

When Leslie Burke's family moves into the Perkins place next door, Jesse expands his range to the creek and parts of the woods that allow him privacy for an unusual friendship. By envisioning the isolated setting as Terabithia, his imagination can turn it into a medieval stronghold under siege. At the Burke home, he is uneasy around such educated people. Carpentry gives him a chance to impress Bill Burke with down-home skills learned by necessity. The introduction of Leslie to Easter services raises questions about hell, a concept that worries Jesse when he ponders the abrupt passing of his dear friend.

Alternate Assessment

1. List in chronological order and describe significant events from the story. Mention heavy rain; con-

demning to hell; giving a puppy as a gift; remodeling the Perkins place; smoking in the restroom; bribing with paper dolls; buying a hair clip; losing a job; running in the third heat; viewing a bird's nest; putting flowers in hair; removing a desk; writing about Jacques Cousteau; eating pancakes, crackers, and dried fruit; collecting scrap wood from the porch; forgetting Bessie; drawing a hippopotamus; throwing paints away; examining a broken rope; reading an essay aloud; making a pine wreath; moving to Pennsylvania; eating yogurt; making a condolence call; crying over a beating; sustaining a head wound; playing King of the Mountain; imitating Narnia; giving out math books; adding a desk; chopping wood; saving a sister; hiding a love note; following Jess and Leslie to the woods; remodeling the Perkins place; interest in Christ's sacrifice; striking a small girl; and filling Pepsi bottles.

2. List events from the novel that express the uniqueness of Leslie, Jess, Julia Edmunds, Mr. Aarons, May Belle, Mrs. Myers, Janice Avery, P.T., Judy, the Smithsonian, and Terabithia.
3. Compose brief definitions of foreshadowing, humor, and symbol as they apply to *Bridge to Terabithia*. What changes in the plot would ease Jess's suffering? Why does Paterson state that "you just have to stand up to your fear and not let it squeeze you white"?
4. Summarize scenes that depict conflict, particularly gossip about child abuse, guilt at not inviting Leslie to Washington, confusion about hell, avoiding Bill, wanting to buy a Japanese TV, stolen Twinkies, removing a smelly shirt, ceasing church attendance, weeping in the girls' restroom, fear that Jess is dead in the creek, complaints about wood chopping, smoking, opinions about artistic boys, wearing a boyish haircut, sibling squabbles, a lost job, rage at a friend for dying, returning sleeping bags, spreading rumors about Mr. Avery, and questions about Leslie's former boyfriends.

Vocabulary

Choose words from the list below that complete each list of synonyms below.

allegiance

commend

distracted

flankfrounce

jester

lode

prescribed

regicide

speculation

surplus

underdog

cagey

consolidated

dodo

foundling

kinship

miniature

proverbial

siege

sporadically

swerved

vile

Capitol

cremated

dregs

gunnysack

leaden

obsessed

pudgy

sodden

squabbling

thrumming

cleats

dictators

fared

insufficiencies

liberated

politics

reassessing

solemn

stronghold

tyrants

- _____ 1. encirclement, blockade, invasion, incursion, foray, raid
- _____ 2. side, edge, border, perimeter, periphery, rim
- _____ 3. sludge, waste, scraps, leftovers, slag, rubble
- _____ 4. comic, wit, joker, wag, cutup, prankster, trickster
- _____ 5. commit, assign, consign, remand, entrust, relegate
- _____ 6. source, vein, supply, supply, reserve, hoard, plenty
- _____ 7. survived, managed, endured, lasted, remained
- _____ 8. savvy, cunning, sly, crafty, artful, wily, shrewd
- _____ 9. veered, shifted, angled, strayed, dodged, ducked
- _____ 10. saunter, parade, promenade, strut, sashay, prance
- _____ 11. waif, orphan, castaway, reject, discard, refugee
- _____ 12. bewitched, possessed, bewitched, haunted, rapt
- _____ 13. soaked, drenched, soppy, saturated, sloshed
- _____ 14. loyalty, faith, constancy, devotion, steadfastness
- _____ 15. shortcomings, needs, lacks, inadequacies, shortages
- _____ 16. chubby, plump, stout, fleshy, porky, rotund, chunky
- _____ 17. intermittently, occasionally, irregularly, periodically
- _____ 18. supposition, guess, surmise, conjecture, conclusion
- _____ 19. inert, passive, torpid, languid, apathetic, slack
- _____ 20. unmindful, heedless, scatterbrained, unprepared

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Multiple Choice (30 points)

Identify the following characters.

- _____ 1. Jess and Leslie prepare for the siege
- by stringing up a rope swing.
 - with Pepsi bottles filled with water.
 - by piling up sleeping bags.
 - with prayers to the spirits.
- _____ 2. Leslie's grandmother
- hugs Jess before she leaves for Pennsylvania.
 - sends paper dolls.
 - offers ham sandwiches to guests.
 - cuddles P. T.
- _____ 3. Students ridicule Leslie for
- scuba diving
 - playing hopscotch.
 - having no television.
 - not knowing the puppy's gender.
- _____ 4. Willard
- is unaware of the love letter.
 - deliberately takes bus 304.
 - claims a win in the fourth heat.
 - prefers to play King of the Mountain.
- _____ 5. The invitation to visit the Smithsonian
- is part of the school curriculum.
 - was Mrs. Myers's idea.
 - causes Mr. Aarons to call Julia a hippie.
 - comes as a surprise.
- _____ 6. Bill feels
- regret for leaving Arlington.
 - blocked.
 - sorry for a boy who knows nothing about carpentry.
 - special affection for P. T.
- _____ 7. Leslie surprises
- Mrs. Pierce with a bird's nest.
 - Mrs. Prentice by bringing a puppy on the bus.
 - Gary Fulcher by beating him.
 - Janice by scolding Willard.
- _____ 8. Brenda describes Leslie as
- a stick.
 - snotty.
 - a queen.
 - faster than Jess.
- _____ 9. The U-Haul
- carries Leslie's ashes to Pennsylvania.
 - brings a small dog named Prince Terrien.
 - starts the Aarons family arguing about outsiders.
 - takes the Burkes away from the Perkins place.
- _____ 10. May Belle fears
- a bridge made of used lumber.

- a broken rope swing.
 - a branch over the creek.
 - going to Easter services in old clothes.
- _____ 11. Jess spends a perfect day with
- Julia.
 - Bessie.
 - Leslie.
 - May Belle.
- _____ 12. Mr. Aarons is angry at
- the minister.
 - the cheap race car.
 - Jess for forgetting to milk the cow.
 - the girls for buying a see-through blouse.
- _____ 13. Leslie's clothes
- suit an Arlington school.
 - look expensive.
 - are a gift to the Aarons girls from the Burkes.
 - concern Mrs. Aarons.
- _____ 14. Jess avoids talking to
- Judy.
 - Ellie after church.
 - Leslie after the race.
 - the hippie teacher.
- _____ 15. Jess takes out his anger on
- Bessie.
 - May Belle.
 - Mr. Aarons.
 - Janice.

Part II: Identification (20 points)

Which character makes the following statements:

- _____ 1. What if you don't have a television set?
- _____ 2. Hell, ain't it?
- _____ 3. You can run on up to the hopscotch now.
- _____ 4. What little girl?
- _____ 5. Let's try to help each other, shall we?
- _____ 6. I used to like to walk in the rain.
- _____ 7. O Spirits of the Grove.
- _____ 8. Father, into Thy hands I commend her spirit.
- _____ 9. Whatcha mean lying there in the middle of the floor doing nothing anyway?
- _____ 10. How would you like to keep me company?

Part III: Identification (10 points)

Explain the significance of each term below:

- crackers
- panty hose
- nest

The Bridge to Terabithia Katherine Paterson

4. hippopotamus
5. ham sandwiches

Part IV: Essay Questions (40 points)

1. Account for the departure of neighbors.
2. Defend Jess's need for solitude.
3. Compare Leslie to other girls at Lark Creek Elementary School.
4. Express the author's attitude toward bullying.
5. Describe the circumstances that precede Leslie's death.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: True/False (30 points)

Mark each statement either T for true or F if any part is false:

- _____ 1. Jess wants to buy a Japanese TV.
- _____ 2. Mrs. Myers is a widow.
- _____ 3. Julia asks about Jess's art projects done during the summer.
- _____ 4. Bill prefers novels to political writing.
- _____ 5. Brenda and Ellie wheedle \$6 for a trip to Millburg mall.
- _____ 6. Jess helps May Belle dress her Barbie doll.
- _____ 7. Mr. Aarons carries Jess across the creek to the truck.
- _____ 8. May Belle insists that unbelievers go to hell.
- _____ 9. Without help, Jess builds a bridge.
- _____ 10. May Belle asks to be queen of Terabithia.
- _____ 11. Jess lies about liking football.
- _____ 12. Someone removes the extra desk before school opens.
- _____ 13. Leslie's grandmother carries the ashes to the dusty Italian car.
- _____ 14. The school in Pennsylvania had no gym.
- _____ 15. Mr. Aarons likes the possibilities of an art career for Jess.

Part II: Identification (30 points)

Identify the characters indicated below.

- _____ 1. sends paper dolls
- _____ 2. does Jess's chores
- _____ 3. complains about getting bobby socks
- _____ 4. prefers specific paper dolls
- _____ 5. plays the guitar
- _____ 6. pays for lunch
- _____ 7. puts flowers in a child's hair
- _____ 8. wears a jumper and loafers
- _____ 9. comes unblocked
- _____ 10. makes pancakes
- _____ 11. thinks the truck needs oil
- _____ 12. reads an essay aloud
- _____ 13. leaves P. T. with Jess
- _____ 14. departs on 304
- _____ 15. becomes the second queen

Part III: Essay Questions (40 points)

- 1. Explain why Jess can't grieve.
- 2. Compare Janice, Gary, Brenda, and Mrs. Myers as minor characters.
- 3. Give reasons for Jess and Leslie's friendship.
- 4. Explain why Jess welcomes May Belle to Terabithia.

- 5. Predict how Jess will survive sorrow and loneliness.

Answer Key

VOCABULARY

- | | | | |
|------------|-------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. siege | 6. lode | 11. foundling | 16. pudgy |
| 2. flank | 7. fared | 12. obsessed | 17. sporadically |
| 3. dregs | 8. cagey | 13. sodden | 18. speculation |
| 4. jester | 9. swerved | 14. allegiance | 19. leaden |
| 5. commend | 10. flounce | 15. insufficiencies | 20. distracted |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Multiple Choice (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. B | 6. D | 11. A |
| 2. B | 7. C | 12. B |
| 3. C | 8. A | 13. D |
| 4. A | 9. D | 14. C |
| 5. D | 10. C | 15. B |

Part II: Quotations (20 points)

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Leslie | 6. Judy |
| 2. Mr. Aarons | 7. Leslie |
| 3. Gary Fulcher | 8. Jess |
| 4. Jess | 9. Mrs. Aarons |
| 5. Mrs. Myers | 10. Julia Edmunds |

Part III: Identification (10 points)

1. food for a siege at Terabithia
2. Brenda's Christmas present
3. Leslie's decoy for Mrs. Pierce
4. Jess's cartoon
5. Mrs. Aarons's gift to the Burkes

Part IV: Essay

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: True/False (30 points)

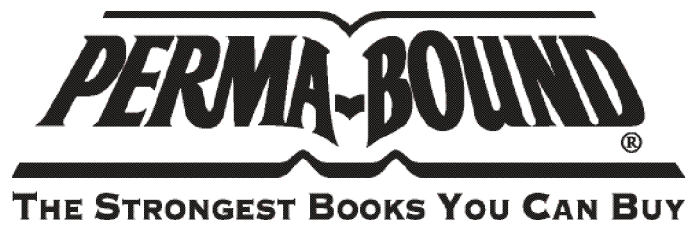
- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. T | 11. T |
| 2. T | 7. F | 12. T |
| 3. T | 8. T | 13. F |
| 4. F | 9. T | 14. F |
| 5. F | 10. F | 15. F |

Part II: Identification (30 points)

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Leslie's grandmother | 9. Judy |
| 2. Mr. Aarons | 10. Mrs. Aarons |
| 3. Ellie | 11. Mr. Aarons |
| 4. May Belle | 12. Mrs. Myers |
| 5. Julia Edmunds | 13. Bill |
| 6. Julia Edmunds | 14. Willard |
| 7. Jess | 15. May Belle |
| 8. Leslie` | |

Part III: Essay

Answers will vary.



Perma-Bound

617 East Vandalia Road • Jacksonville, Illinois 62650
Toll Free 1-800-637-6581 • Fax 1-800-551-1169
E-Mail: books@perma-bound.com

Perma-Bound Canada

Box 868, Station Main • Peterborough, Ontario K9J 7A2
Toll Free 1-800-461-1999 • Fax 1-888-250-3811
E-Mail: perma-bound.ca@sympatico.ca

Visit us online at www.perma-bound.com