



# Riding Freedom

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

## Teacher's Guide

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## Synopsis

**In the Beginning** Charlotte Parkhurst, born in the mid-1800s, is orphaned as a baby when her parents are killed in a horse-and- buggy accident. Charlotte is sent to an orphanage.

**Chapter 1** Ten years later, Charlotte has fulfilled her early promise as a survivor. She wears a leather strip around her wrist, a piece of the rein that she was clutching the night of the accident when the horses protected her from further harm. Charlotte loves to work with Vern, the old black stable hand, taking care of the horses, but the owner of the orphanage, Mr. Millshark, has sent her to the kitchen to work with the mean cook Mrs. Boyle. Charlotte wins a big neighborhood race riding her favorite horse, Freedom. Charlotte's best friend is Hayward, a slightly younger child mocked for his jug ears. When they grow up, Charlotte and Hayward plan to live together on their own ranch and make a home for themselves.

**Chapter 2** Mrs. Boyle hides Charlotte so she can't be adopted. When Freedom the horse dies and Hayward is adopted, Charlotte realizes that she must leave the orphanage. Otherwise, she is doomed to become the cook when Mrs. Boyle dies.

**Chapter 3** Charlotte cuts her leather wrist thong in half and gives the piece to Hayward so they can be bound together forever. With Vern's help, Charlotte escapes. She disguises herself as a boy by cutting off her long hair and dressing in Hayward's clothes. As a boy, she will have the freedom she lacks as a girl. She tries to make it look as though she has drowned.

**Chapter 4** Using Vern's money, Charlotte buys a ticket to Manchester on the stagecoach. When she sleeps through her stop, Charlotte hides in the hayloft for the night. She cleans the stalls to pay for her lodging.

**Chapter 5** The next day, Ebenezer Balch, the stable owner, hires her as a stable hand. Soon after, he tells Charlotte that the authorities are looking for a missing orphan girl. Realizing that she is the missing girl, Ebenezer trains Charlotte as a stage-coach driver and sends her to Rhode Island. Charlotte is very happy and grateful.

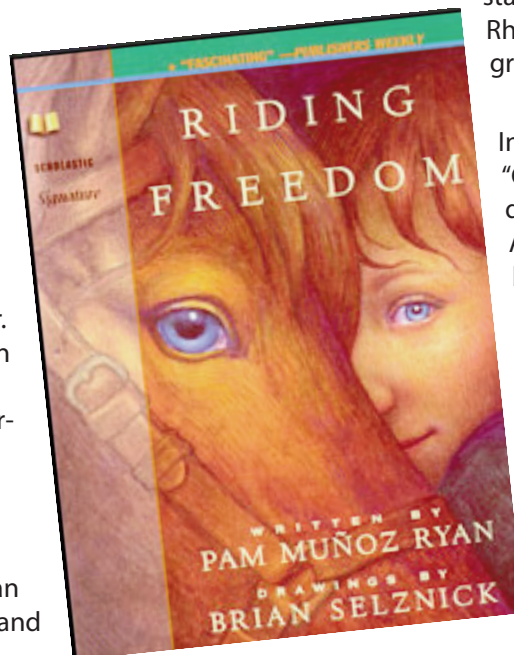
In the Middle Charlotte, now known as "Charley," becomes an exceptionally fine driver. She is now eighteen years old. Although she is no longer in danger of being sent back to the orphanage, she would lose her job in an instant if anyone found out that she is a girl.

**Chapter 6** To her horror, Charlotte discovers that one of her passengers is Mr. Millshark! She gets revenge on his cruelty by deliberately miring the coach in the mud. She has Millshark push it out and steals his fine new boots.

**Chapter 7** Over Ebenezer's objections, Charlotte moves to California to drive coaches for the gold rush. When she lands in Sacramento, Charlotte comes upon some women demonstrating for suffrage. Charlotte works for James and Frank.

**Chapter 8** Charlotte loses the vision in one eye when she is kicked in the face by a wild horse. Frank and James no longer let her drive the coaches, but Charlotte practices in secret, determined to earn the money she needs to buy her ranch and make her own home. She proves her skill when she drives a coach over a bridge in the blinding rain.

**Chapter 9** As a result of her skill and bravery, Charlotte



becomes legendary. People throw coins under her coach for good luck. Charlotte finally buys her ranch. She hires the widow next door, Margaret, to cook and gather eggs, saving her from destitution and homelessness. One night, she returns home to find that Hayward has come for a visit. Their bond is as strong as ever. Charlotte explains that she plans to make her ranch a way station for coaches.

**Chapter 10** Hayward stays a month and then returns to his family. Still in disguise as Charley, Charlotte votes in the presidential election.

**In the End** Ebenezer arrives to manage the ranch. Charlotte's mare gives birth to twin foals, whom she names Vern's Thunder and Freedom.

**From the Author** The author explains which aspects of the story are fact and which are fiction.

## Timeline

<b>1812</b>	Charlotte Parkhurst is born.
<b>1812-1815</b>	United States is at war with Britain.
<b>1836</b>	Texas wins its independence from Mexico.
<b>1844</b>	Samuel Morse invents the telegraph.
<b>1846-1848</b>	United States is at war with Mexico.
<b>1848</b>	Seneca Falls Convention calls for giving women the vote.
	California Gold Rush begins.
<b>1849</b>	Charlotte goes to California.
<b>ca. 1850</b>	After being kicked in the face by a horse, Charlotte loses sight in one eye.
<b>1853</b>	United States signs trade pact with Japan.
<b>1859-1861</b>	Pony Express is in operation.
<b>1861-1865</b>	Civil War
<b>1863-1867</b>	French troops occupy Mexico.
<b>1865</b>	April 15 Abraham Lincoln is assassinated.
<b>1867</b>	July 1 Dominion of Canada is established.
<b>1868</b>	Nov. 3 Charlotte votes in the presidential election.
<b>1869-1877</b>	Ulysses S. Grant is president.
<b>1869</b>	Transcontinental railroad is completed.
<b>1871</b>	Great Chicago Fire
<b>1879</b>	Charlotte Parkhurst dies.

## Author Sketch

Pam Munoz Ryan, born and raised in California's San Joaquin Valley, considers herself truly American because her cultural background is an ethnic smorgasbord. She is Spanish, Mexican, Basque, and Italian.



During many long, hot valley summers, Ryan spent most of her time riding her bike to the library. It became her favorite hangout because her family did not have a swimming pool and the library was air-conditioned. That is how she got hooked on reading and books. After college, she knew that she wanted to work in a profession that had something to do with books, and she thought that would be teaching. She became a teacher, an administrator and then, at the encouragement of a friend who thought she could write, began her first book.

Today, she is a full-time writer, having published books for adults, picture books for young children, and recently completed her first novel for older students. Ryan explains her writing process this way: "When I actually start writing, I sit at my computer and I just type a first draft. My first draft isn't very well written, but it gives me a jumping off place. By the time one of my stories becomes a book, I have usually rewritten it somewhere between 20-30 times."

Ryan lives north of San Diego, California, with her husband and four children.

## Critic's Corner

Hazel Rochman, writing in *Booklist*, said "Middle-schoolers will love the horse adventures and the stories of her trickery (she even used her male disguise to vote, more than 50 years before women were allowed to do that). Brian Selznick's full-page shaded pencil illustrations show the quiet, daring young woman in man's stiff clothing; they express her yearning and loneliness as well as her deadpan mischief and her bond with the horses she loved. *Publishers Weekly* noted that *Riding Freedom* is "A skillful execution of a fascinating historical tale."

*Riding Freedom* is the recipient of *Parenting Magazine's*

Reading Magic Award for 1998's Most Outstanding Children's

Books as well as *The San Francisco Chronicle*'s Best Books of 1998. It was also a finalist for the 1999-2000 California Young

Reader Medal and the North Dakota Flicker Tale Award.

## Other Books by Pam Munoz Ryan

*Amelia and Eleanor Go for a Ride* (1999)  
*Armadillos Sleep in Dugouts: And Other Places Animals Live* (1997)  
*California Here We Come!* (1999)  
*The Crayon Counting Book* (1999)  
*Doug's Treasure Hunt* (1999)  
*Enchiladas, Mice, and Beans* (2001)  
*Esperanza Rising* (2000)  
*The Flag We Love* (2000)  
*Funnie Family Vacation* (1999)  
*Hello Ocean* (2001)  
*One Hundred Is a Family* (1998)  
*A Pinky Is a Baby Mouse: And Other Baby Animal Names* (1997)

## Bibliography

"Lucky,"  
<[teacher.scholastic.com/authorsandbooks/authors/ryan/bio.htm](http://teacher.scholastic.com/authorsandbooks/authors/ryan/bio.htm)>  
"Pam Muñoz Ryan," <[www.pammunozryan.com](http://www.pammunozryan.com)>

## General Objectives

1. To appreciate the author's style
2. To understand the novel's title
3. To recognize the importance of setting
4. To assess each character's personality
5. To recognize the novel's theme
6. To appreciate the difficulties women experienced in the mid-1800s
7. To explore the ways kindness can be shown
8. To find examples of bravery and courage
9. To sympathize with the main character's plight
10. To describe the novel's mood or atmosphere

## Specific Objectives

1. To analyze the importance of horses in Charlotte's life

2. To see how Charlotte deals with being orphaned
3. To understand how Charlotte loses her eye and her reaction to her injuries
4. To probe Charlotte's strong desire for a home
5. To probe the relationship between Charlotte and Ebenezer
6. To see the effect of setting on a person's life
7. To understand the plot structure
8. To grasp the importance of voting
9. To understand why Charlotte disguised herself as a man
10. To visualize the story's action

## Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of Pam Muñoz Ryan's style, present the following terms and applications to the novel:

**Figures of speech words and expressions not** meant to be taken literally. Figurative language uses words in fresh, new ways to appeal to the imagination. Figures of speech include *similes*, *metaphors*, *extended metaphors*, *hyperbole*, and *personification*. Ryan uses many similes and metaphors to enrich her style in *Riding Freedom*. For example, on page 7 she says the hay and horses "comforted [Charlotte] like an old quilt on a cold day." Later on the same page, readers learn that Vern is tall and thin, "with leathery skin the color of coffee with no milk." On page 32, Charlotte is described as "nervous as a cat." Mr. Millshark is described as a "plump new potato." These comparisons create a more poetic style.

### **Theme main idea of a literary work, a general statement about**

life. The theme can be stated outright in the work, or readers will have to infer it from details about plot, characters, and setting. The theme of *Riding Freedom* concerns the importance of individuality and the difficulty women experienced obtaining equal rights in 19th century America.

### **setting time and place where the events of a literary work**

take place. The setting may be stated outright, or readers may have to infer it from details in the story. The setting of *Riding Freedom* is directly stated: New England and California in the 1800s. The setting is tremendously important to the novel, because it determines Charlotte's parameters. For example, the setting determines if Charlotte can work as a stage coach driver or if she is allowed to vote.

## Cross-Curricular Sources

### Novels

Susan Bonners, *The Silver Balloon*  
Cynthia C. DeFelice, *The Ghost of Fossil Glen*  
Ralph Fletcher, *Flying Solo*  
Sheila Solomon Klass, *Shooting Star*  
Peter Lourie, *Rio Grande*  
Amy MacDonald, *No More Nice*  
Joan Lowry Nixon, *A Family Apart*  
Anna Sewell, *Black Beauty*  
Zilpha Keatley Snyder, *Gib Rides Home*  
Sarah Weeks, *Regular Guy*  
Rosemary Wells, *Mary on Horseback: Three Mountain Stories*  
Nonfiction  
Dorling Kindersly Editors, *Visual Dictionary of the Horse*  
Suzanne Jermain, *Once Upon a Horse: A History of Horses and How They Shaped Our History*  
Liza Ketchum, *Into a New Country: Eight Remarkable Women of the West*  
Richard A. Mansir, *Stagecoach: The Ride of a Century*  
Ann McGovern, *Secret Soldier: The Story of Deborah Sampson*

### Videos/DVDs

*All Things Horses*  
*Black Beauty*  
*The Black Stallion*  
*The Black Stallion Returns*  
*The Horse Whisperer*  
*Horses. . . Close Up & Very Personal*  
*Misty*  
*Monty Roberts: A Real Horse Whisperer*  
*My Friend Flicka*  
*National Geographic 's Ballad of the Irish Horse*  
*National Velvet*

## Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Pam Muñoz Ryan's *Riding Freedom* should include these aspects:

### Themes

- abandonment
- death
- fear

- hardship
- horses
- hunger
- loneliness
- self-realization
- voting
- women's rights

### Motifs

- acting bravely in terrifying situations
- being denied basic human rights
- coping with death and despair
- dealing with powerlessness
- dealing with events out of human control
- experiencing growth and change
- finding and keeping friends
- having injuries and setbacks
- hiding your identity
- working toward your goals

## Meaning Study

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have particular meaning in the novel. Explain the meaning of each. Chapter and page numbers indicate the context from which the item is taken.

1. "She might as well have something to hold on to," he said. "She hasn't got much else. There's no other family to speak of." ("In the Beginning," p. 4)  
*(When Charlotte's parents are killed, the horses mysteriously take care of her during the night. Charlotte grabs onto one of their reins. Feeling compassion and pity for the orphaned toddler the doctor cuts the leather well above her grip so she can hold onto it. Charlotte, suddenly thrust out into the world on her own, has no family, no friends—no one to care for her at all. The doctor's comment sets off the motif of loneliness and isolation: Charlotte must make her way alone if she is to survive.)*
2. "No, I cut it in two, long ways. See?" (Chap. 3, p. 33)  
*(Hayward is Charlotte's best friend. When he is suddenly selected for adoption, Charlotte cuts her precious leather rein in half and gives him a part. Realizing the meaning of her gift, Hayward cries. Their friendship does endure, as they keep in touch over the years. When Charlotte buys her ranch, Hayward comes to visit and they explore the possibility of Hayward settling on the ranch with Charlotte.)*



3. What did Vern always say? That the easy way ain't always going to get you anywhere. (Chap. 3, p. 34) *(Vern, the black stable hand at the orphanage, functions as a surrogate father figure during Charlotte's early years. He treats her with great kindness and teaches her to take care of horses and love them. His most important lesson, however is determination: he teaches Charlotte to persevere to get what she wants.)*

4. "Charley," Charlotte said. "My name's Charley." (Chap. 4, p. 46) *(As she is riding the coach away from the orphanage, her seat companions ask her name. At first Charlotte is flustered. When she recovers, Charlotte quickly renames herself "Charley." This is a turning point in her life; from now on, Charlotte will act, dress, and be treated as a man. This disguise enables her to work with horses, buy her ranch, and vote.)*

5. Vern used to say that plants can't breathe and grow in a box that's too tight. Now she knew what he meant. (Chap. 4, p. 47) *(Charlotte realizes that she must escape from the orphanage if she is ever to be happy. She is suffocated in the orphanage, relegated to "women's work" in the kitchen, with no hope of achieving anything else.)*

6. "Charley, or whoever you are, I need this team and this wagon driven to my new stables and I'm figurin' you can drive them." (Chap. 5, p. 65) *(Ebenezer, the stable owner is well aware that Charlotte is a girl pretending to be a boy. He is also aware that she has run away from the orphanage. Nonetheless, Ebenezer decides to protect her by first teaching her to drive a coach and then sending her to his new stables in Rhode Island. The skill of driving a coach opens up Charlotte's life, becomes her career and enables her to earn the money to buy the land she so badly desires.)*

7. "The only way to get my ranch is to keep riding and driving horses," she whispered to herself. "And that's what I aim to do." (Chap. 8, p. 99) *(Blinded in one eye when she was kicked by a wild horse, Charlotte is told that she will never again drive horses and coaches. She refuses to accept this judgment, however and vows to teach herself to ride again. And so she does, becoming the finest stage-coach driver in California.)*

8. She heard the splintering and cracking of weathered wood that meant the bridge was coming apart. (Chap. 8, p. 106) *(As the bridge is breaking apart, Charlotte has her only true memory of her parents: she suddenly flashes back to the night of the terrible accident in which they were killed. She remembers her mother screaming to her father to keep the horses straight—and so Charlotte does here. As a result, Charlotte brings the coach in safely and is once again allowed to drive regular routes.)*

9. Charlotte's heart filled at the sight of it. I did it, she thought. I did it. (Chap. 9, p. 114) *(After many years of back-breaking effort, Charlotte earns the money to buy herself a ranch, the home she has always longed to regain. She is justly proud of her extraordinary accomplishment. This passage reveals what marvels people can accomplish with determination and hard work.)*

10. This was something she could do for that woman who stood up in front of all those laughing men and passed out hand-bills on the saloon steps. (Chap. 10, p. 129) *(Charlotte votes for all the people who are denied the vote: women, African-Americans, and orphans. She votes for the poor, the disenfranchised, the ignored, the shunned. The novel thus ends on a swelling note, emphasizing the enormous power and responsibility that voting carries.)*

## Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the book.

### Questions 1-5 (Literal Level)

1. When and where does the story take place? *(The story is set in New England and California in the mid-1800s. At that time, women were denied many rights that we take for granted today, such as the right to hold jobs traditionally reserved for men, the right to travel alone, and the right to vote.)*

2. Why isn't Charlotte ever adopted? *(The cook at the orphanage, Mrs. Boyle, hides her when people come to look for children to adopt. Mrs. Boyle does not want to lose Charlotte's help in the*

kitchen.)

3. Who is Freedom? What happens to him?  
*(Freedom is Charlotte's favorite horse at the orphanage. He dies after Charlotte rides him in a race. She is disconsolate at his death.)*
4. Why does Charlotte pretend to be a boy?  
*(At first, she pretends to be a boy to escape from the orphanage. She knows that as a girl, she will not be allowed to travel alone. Later she continues with her disguise to allow her to work in the male-only horse business, as a stable hand, groom, and stagecoach driver)*
5. By the end of her life, why is Charlotte famous?  
*(She is famous as Charley Parkhurst, the best stagecoach driver on the west coast. Other than Ebenezer and Hayward, no one knows that she is really a woman.)*

### Questions 6-8 (Interpretative Level)

6. What does Charlotte mean when she feels "as nervous as she was about running away, she was more afraid to stay. Something bigger than peeling potatoes was nagging at her on the inside"? (p. 35)  
*(She means that she knows that she must leave the orphanage to be free. She cannot spend her life peeling potatoes and working all alone in a kitchen. Instead, she must fulfill her destiny and allow her soul to soar as she rides with horses.)*
7. What does Freedom the horse represent to Charlotte?  
*(The horse represents freedom to fulfill her destiny, freedom to make a home for herself, freedom to find her place in the world. The horse also offers her kindness, affection, and warmth, the emotions that all humans need to survive.)*
8. What is Charlotte's relationship to Vern? To Ebenezer?  
*(Both Vern and Ebenezer function as surrogate fathers to Charlotte. They both offer her guidance, teach her skills, and help her to seek her destiny. Vern gives her money to escape from the orphanage; Ebenezer gives her jobs, first as a stable hand and then as a stagecoach driver, and spirits her away when Mr. Millshark comes after her.)*

### Questions 9 and 10 (Critical Level)

9. Why is voting so important to Charlotte?  
*(Charlotte recognizes that only voting can give a real voice to everyone, especially those people traditionally disenfranchised: women, minorities, and the handicapped. She votes to give a voice to everyone who cannot speak for themselves.)*
10. Why do you think the scrap of horse's rein is so important to Charlotte?  
*(The scrap of horse's rein ties Charlotte to her family and the only home she had ever known. Later it ties her to her closest friend, Hayward. It also ties her to horses, the creatures that offer her not only love but also a way to make her living and achieve her dream of creating a new home for herself.)*

### Questions 11 and 12 (Creative Level)

11. Explain what motivated Charlotte to defy the gender stereotypes of her day. What would you have done in her place? Explain your answer.
12. Working with a small group of classmates, discuss some ways that Charlotte is a hero to men as well as women.

## Across the Curriculum

### Art/Music

1. Create a three-dimensional diorama of the orphanage. Label each part of the display with an appropriate quote from the novel.
2. Create a collage of newspaper headlines for the time period covered in the novel. Be sure the headlines cover key events in the world as well as in America during that time.
3. Draw a picture of one of the horses that Charlotte most admired, such as Freedom.
4. Make the leather bracelet such as the one that Charlotte always wore. Then split it in half and give half to your closest friend or a relative.
5. Make a poster that Mr. Millshark might have posted to bring Charlotte back to the orphanage.

**History and Social Studies**

1. The author dedicates this novel to “women of substance.” Nominate six more women to this list and explain in a paragraph why each one is worthy of inclusion.
2. Charlotte believes that the orphanage is nothing more than a work farm. Find out if her assessment is accurate by learning more about orphanages in the mid-1800s. Compare and contrast this to the foster care/orphanage system today.
3. Vern cannot read. Explain how you would teach him the basics of reading. If you wish, volunteer for a literacy program in your community and share your skills by helping someone to learn to read.
4. Make a map of New England or California as described in the novel. Be sure to establish a scale so your map is accurate.
5. Write a newspaper article on the California gold rush. Include words and pictures that describe the hysteria of the time.

**Language Arts**

1. Vern tells Charlotte “wonderful stories, most of them true.” Tell one of Vern’s stories about his time as a slave, his escape from slavery, or his work on the farm.
2. Riding Freedom is based on the true story of Charlotte “Charley” Parkhurst. Find out at least three more facts about Charlotte’s life. Make a chart listing facts and opinions about her life, drawing information from the novel and your research.
3. Explain the symbolism of Mr. Millshark’s name.
4. Naming horses is very important to Charlotte because she realizes the power of words. Rename the two horses who are born in the end of the novel. Explain how your new names fit the horses and Charlotte’s dreams for them.
5. Compare and contrast Vern and Charlotte to show how they are the same and different from each

other.

**Mathematics**

1. How much gold was found in California during the gold rush? What would be its value today? Make a chart or spreadsheet to show your findings.
2. According to the novel, people wanted to adopt boys so they could help around the farm. How much does it cost to raise a child from birth to age 18 today? Find out and display your findings on a poster.
3. Charlotte has a choice of voting for Ulysses S. Grant or Horatio Seymour. Find out by how many votes Grant won, both in the popular vote and in the Electoral College.
4. Make a chart showing how often twins are born.

**Science**

1. Vern says that plants can’t grow if their box is too tight. Select any three common plants, such as beans, zinnias, and carrots, and explain how to plant them. Then plant any one variety and bring it in to school to chart its growth.
2. Charlotte loses the sight in one eye when she is kicked by a horse. Find out how to approach and ride a horse safely to avoid injuries.
3. Charlotte’s horse has twins. Report on the difference between identical and fraternal twins.

**Speech/Drama**

1. Charlotte finds out a little about the Seneca Falls convention in which women called for their rights. Find out more about this historical gathering. Then work with a group of classmates to reenact the convention for the class.
2. Role-play the scene in which Charlotte gets her revenge on Mr. Millshark for his cruelty to her.
3. Create a scene in which Hayward comes back to live with Charlotte and work on the ranch with her.

**Student Involvement Activities**

1. Create a monument to Charlotte and all that she accomplished in her life.

2. In your own words, state the novel's theme or message.
3. Imagine that you could interview Charlotte about her fascinating life. Write 10 questions that you would ask her. Then work with a partner to enact the interview. Answer the questions as you think Charlotte would, based on what you learned about her from this novel.
4. Explain why Charlotte felt compelled to pass herself off as "Charley" her entire life.
5. Using scenes from the novel, create a mural that shows its main events.

### **Alternate Assessment**

1. List examples of difficulties that Charlotte faced. Then rank these hardships on a scale from most to least difficult. Be ready to justify your rankings.
2. Compile a list of actions that demonstrate how Charlotte is brave and determined.
3. Make a web page for this book. Post plot summaries, information about the author, profiles of the characters, and your own original art work.
4. Make a character list and describe each character.



## Vocabulary Test

Match each word to its meaning. Write the letter of your choice in the space provided.

- |                      |                              |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| _____ 1 . coddle     | a. spoiled                   |
| _____ 2. precarious  | b. tightly                   |
| _____ 3. portly      | c. shaky, wobbly             |
| _____ 4. babbling    | d. tenacious, not giving up  |
| _____ 5. rickety     | e. lotion                    |
| _____ 6. satchel     | f. dress                     |
| _____ 7. frantic     | g. uncertain                 |
| _____ 8. ruffian     | h. very skinny               |
| _____ 9. petticoat   | i. wild                      |
| _____ 10. persistent | j. chattering                |
| _____ 11 . snugly    | k. suitcase                  |
| _____ 12. frock      | l. heavy                     |
| _____ 13. rein       | m. bridle                    |
| _____ 14. cocky      | n. pamper                    |
| _____ 15. ointment   | o. hoodlum                   |
| _____ 16. feral      | p. ridges                    |
| _____ 17. rancid     | q. frenzied, wild with anger |
| _____ 18. scrawny    | r. slip                      |
| _____ 19. varnish    | s. wood finishing            |
| _____ 20. furrows    | t. impudent, bold            |

## Comprehension Test A

### Part I: Matching (20 points)

Complete each of the following descriptions with a name from the list that follows. Place the letter of your answer in the blanks provided at left.

- |  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| ___ 1. the most famous stagecoach driver in California                       | A. Margaret            |
| ___ 2. the owner of the orphanage, a cruel man                               | B. Charlotte Parkhurst |
| ___ 3. the bully who is adopted, and then returned to the orphanage          | C. Charley Parkhurst   |
| ___ 4. the stable owner who gives Charlotte a job and keeps her secret       | D. Ebenezer Balch      |
| ___ 5. the orphanage cook  | E. Mrs. Mapes          |
| ___ 6. a woman Charlotte meets on the first stagecoach                       | F. Mr. Millshark       |
| ___ 7. the widow whose small piece of land Charlotte buys                    | G. Mrs. Boyle          |
| ___ 8. Charlotte's best friend   | H. Vern                |
| ___ 9. the girl orphaned as a baby and determined to make herself a new home | I. William             |
| ___ 10. the African-American stable man who helps Charlotte                  | J. Hayward             |

### Part II: Sentence Completion (20 points)

Supply a term to complete each of the following statements. Place your answers in the blanks provided in the sentences.

1. Charlotte grows up in a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ rather than in a home with parents.
2. Around her wrist, Charlotte always wears a(n) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Charlotte wins a big neighborhood race riding her favorite horse, named \_\_\_\_\_
4. When he rides in her stagecoach, Charlotte steals Mr. Millshark's new \_\_\_\_\_
5. Charlotte is not allowed to drive a stagecoach any more after she loses a(n) \_\_\_\_\_
6. People throw \_\_\_\_\_ under Charlotte's coach for good luck
7. Hayward puts a \_\_\_\_\_ on Charlotte's ranch, which pleases her very much.
8. Still disguised as Charley, Charlotte \_\_\_\_\_, which women were not allowed to do then.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ arrives to manage the ranch for Charlotte.
10. Charlotte's mare gives birth to twin foals, whom she names Vern's Thunder and \_\_\_\_\_.

### Part III: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F if any part is false.

- \_\_\_ 1. Charlotte Parkhurst lived in the 19th century.
- \_\_\_ 2. When they grow up, Charlotte and Hayward plan to get married and have many children.
- \_\_\_ 3. Ebenezer trains Charlotte as a stagecoach driver and sends her to California to work.
- \_\_\_ 4. Charlotte is badly injured when she is kicked in the face by a wild horse.
- \_\_\_ 5. She proves that she can once again drive stagecoaches when she drives a coach over a bridge in the blinding rain.
- \_\_\_ 6. Near the end of her life, Charlotte finally buys her ranch but she cannot earn enough money to keep it.
- \_\_\_ 7. Charlotte does not vote because she is not interested in politics.
- \_\_\_ 8. Charlotte is not well liked because she is arrogant and overly proud.
- \_\_\_ 9. People did not discover that Charlotte was a woman until after her death.
- \_\_\_ 10. Charlotte's story is a mixture of fact and fiction.

### Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain the double meaning in the novel's title, Riding Freedom.

2. Analyze how Vern and Ebenezer help Charlotte.
3. Describe the hardships Charlotte faces and how she deals with them.
4. Explain what horses mean to Charlotte.

## Comprehension Test B

### Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Underline a word or phrase in each of the following statements to complete them correctly.

1. Charlotte becomes an orphan when her parents are (murdered by bandits, killed in an accident).
2. Her best friend at the orphanage is (William, Hayward).
3. Charlotte's favorite horse at the orphanage is named (Freedom, Charlotte's Pride).
4. She is never adopted because she is (too independent, hidden in the kitchen).
5. After she escapes from the orphanage, Charlotte uses Vern's money to buy a ticket to (California, Manchester) on the stagecoach.
6. When she sleeps through her stop, Charlotte hides in the (hayloft, woods) for the night.
7. Realizing that she is the missing girl, Ebenezer trains Charlotte as a stagecoach driver and sends her to (Florida, Rhode Island).
8. When she lands in Sacramento, Charlotte comes upon some women demonstrating for the right to (vote, ride horses).
9. Charlotte loses the vision in one eye when she is kicked in the face by a (wild horse, irate passenger)
10. People throw (coins, leather thongs) under her coach for good luck.

### Part II: Identification (20 points)

Briefly describe each and explain why it is important in the story.

1. the leather rein
2. the scrap of Vern's shirt
3. horses
4. Charlotte's ranch
5. voting

### Part III: Motivation (20 points)

Complete each phrase below with a reason or justification.

1. Charlotte is sent to an orphanage because
2. At the orphanage, Charlotte is forced to work with Mrs. Boyle in the kitchen because
3. William does not want Charlotte to race horses because
4. Charlotte and Hayward are friends because



5. Mrs. Boyle hides Charlotte when people come so
  
6. Charlotte realizes that she must leave the orphanage because
  
7. She disguises herself as a boy because
  
8. Ebenezer trains Charlotte as a stagecoach driver and hides her from Mr. Millshark because
  
9. Charlotte moves to California because
  
10. Charlotte buys a ranch because

**Part IV: Essay (40 points)**

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain why Charlotte disguises herself as a male for her entire life.
  
2. Why does Charlotte want to work with horses so much?
  
3. Describe the novel's setting and explain why it is important to the plot.
  
4. Trace the novel's plot. Include at least six major events.

## Answer Key

### VOCABULARY TEST

- |      |       |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. n | 6. k  | 11. b | 16. i |
| 2. g | 7. q  | 12. f | 17. a |
| 3. l | 8. o  | 13. m | 18. h |
| 4. j | 9. r  | 14. t | 19. s |
| 5. c | 10. d | 15. e | 20. p |

### COMPREHENSION TEST A

#### Part I: Matching (20 points)

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. E  |
| 2. F | 7. A  |
| 3. I | 8. J  |
| 4. D | 9. B  |
| 5. G | 10. H |

#### Part II: Sentence Completion (20 points)

- |                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| 1. orphanage     | 6. coins    |
| 2. leather strip | 7. sign     |
| 3. Freedom       | 8. votes    |
| 4. boots         | 9. Ebenezer |
| 5. eye           | 10. Freedom |

#### Part III: True/False (20 points)

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. F  |
| 2. F | 7. F  |
| 3. F | 8. F  |
| 4. T | 9. T  |
| 5. T | 10. T |

#### Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.

## Comprehension Test B

### Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- |                          |                 |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. killed in an accident | 6. hayloft      |
| 2. Hayward               | 7. Rhode Island |
| 3. Freedom               | 8. vote         |
| 4. hidden in the kitchen | 9. wild horse   |
| 5. Manchester            | 10. coins       |

### Part II: Identification (20 points)

1. The leather rein represents Charlotte's tie to her parents, to horses, and to her best friend Hayward. As such, it binds her to all she holds dear.
2. The scrap of Vern's shirt links her to Vern, and by

extension, to his escape from slavery. She gains strength from his courageous example.

3. Horses are Charlotte's passion and skill. She has an uncanny ability to work with them, almost speak to them.
4. Charlotte's ranch represents her home, the only real home she has had since infancy.
5. Voting gives voice to those who were denied the right to vote at that time: women, African-Americans, the handicapped.

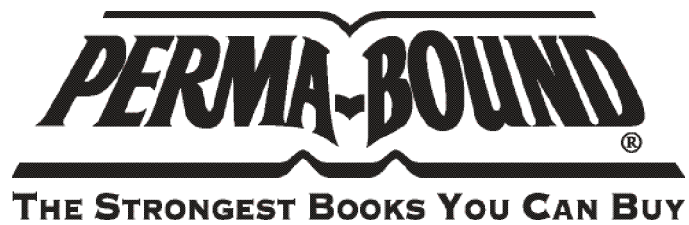
### Part III: Motivation (20 points)

1. both her parents have been killed and no one will take her
2. Mr. Millshark wants Charlotte to take Mrs. Boyle's place eventually
3. he is jealous of her skill and determination to win
4. they are both outsiders, Charlotte for her skill with horses and Hayward for his appearance
5. she can't be adopted
6. otherwise she will not have any hope for the future
7. so she will have the freedom she lacks as a girl
8. he likes her and she reminds him of his daughter, who died of a fever
9. to drive coaches in the California gold rush
10. so she can make a home for herself at last

### Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.





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