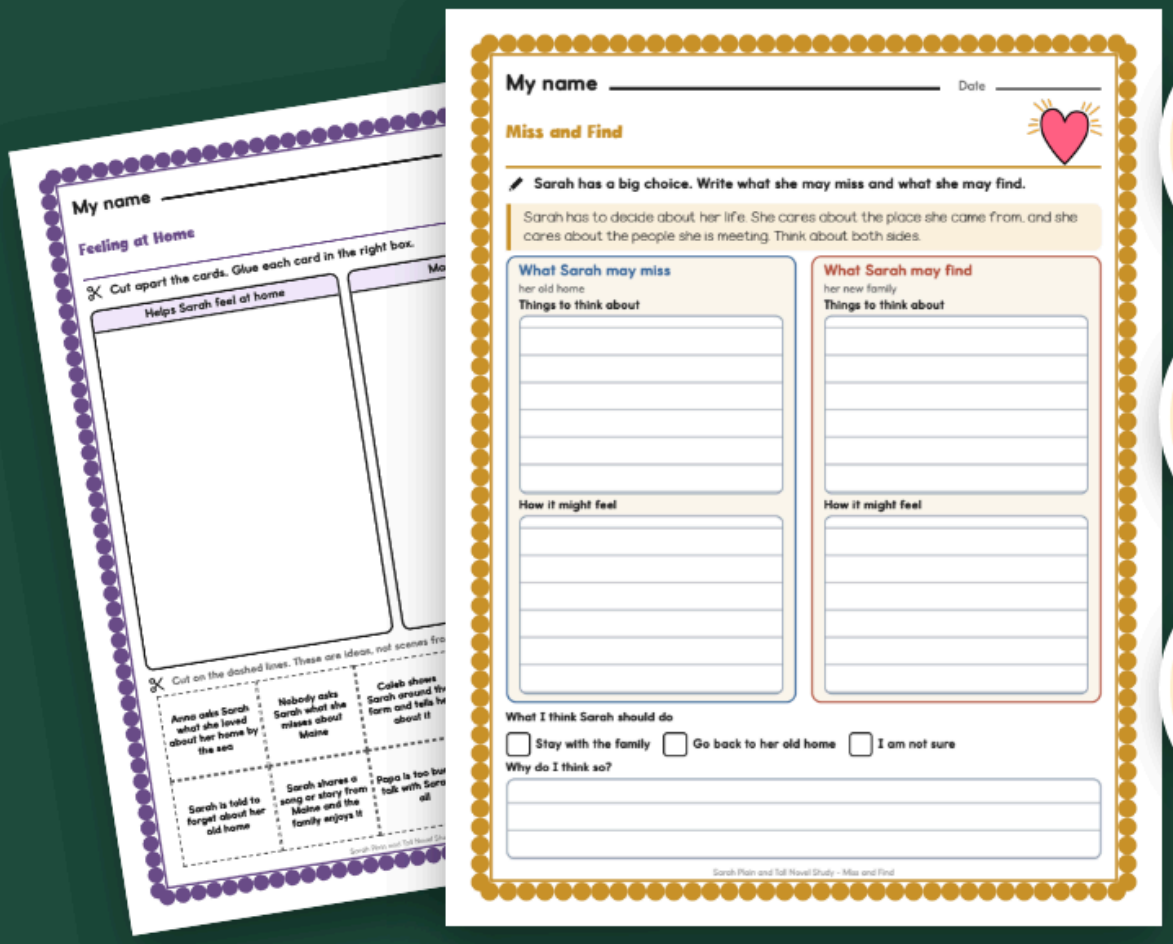
SARAH PLAIN AND TALL

NOVEL STUDY



GRADES 3-5

31 STUDENT PAGES

ANSWER KEY INCLUDED



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Print at 100 percent

Turn off fit to page and shrink to fit so the ruled lines stay 0.34 inch apart. Every student page is black and white inside a colored border, so it prints well on any printer.

About the book

You need your own copy of Sarah, Plain and Tall. All questions, words and pages here are original and contain no text from the book. This resource is not affiliated with or endorsed by Patricia MacLachlan, the publisher, or the owners of the book Sarah, Plain and Tall.

Student work

A filled-in page carries a real student's name. Keep it in your records folder, and use a first name only on any page that leaves your hands.

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PREVIEW

How to Run the Novel Study

One plan for the whole book in 6 parts, a question page for each, and pages on the characters, sea and prairie, missing a home and feeling at home.

A plan for the whole book

Read	Part	My chapters	Page	Talk about it
Part 1	A Family Waits		6	Why might a family want someone new to join them?
Part 2	Meeting Sarah		7	How do you feel when you meet someone new? What helps?
Part 3	Learning the Prairie		8	How is where you live different from a place far away?
Part 4	Missing Home		9	What helps someone who misses home?
Part 5	Will She Stay?		10	How do people act when they are hoping for something?
Part 6	A Place to Belong		11	What makes a place feel like home?

The routine

- **Read a part** aloud, in small groups, or on their own. Split your copy into 6 parts of about the same length and write your chapters in the table. The part names are ours, not the book's chapter titles, so the key says what to look for.
- **Students answer** that part's question page (pages 6 to 11). Each page has a recall, a think and a your-view question, and says it is okay to pass.
- **Keep the organizers going**: the plot path (page 12), character map (page 13), problem chart (page 14), cause and effect (page 19) and how the family changes (page 20).
- **Talk about home and belonging** with the sea-and-prairie compare (page 15), the miss-and-find page (page 16), the new-places page (page 17), the feeling-at-home cut-and-sort (page 18) and the guide (page 36).
- **Teach the vocabulary** with the four word pages (pages 23 to 26) and the match (page 27).
- **Finish** with the final review (page 30), the essay (pages 31 to 33) and the final project (page 34).

Before you teach it

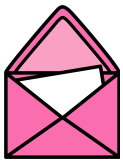
- Read the book yourself first. Some students have moved, have a family that has changed, or miss someone or somewhere. Questions are for talking, and any student may pass.
- Use the names and the order of events your own copy uses: this file has no book text in it.

Spoilers and your answer key

The answer key (pages 37 to 41) gives away how the story goes. Keep it from students until the book is finished. Most questions ask for an opinion or a detail from the student's own copy, so the key says Varies and tells you what to look for.

PREVIEW

My name _____ Date _____



Before You Read

Think about the book. Then write your ideas.

It is okay to pass on a question.

1. Look at the title, Sarah, Plain and Tall. What do you think this book is about?

2. Have you ever met someone new who came to live near you or with you? How did it feel?

3. Have you ever missed a place? What did you miss about it?

4. Agree or disagree: a place can feel like home even if it is new.

☐ I agree ☐ I disagree

Why do I think so?

5. What do you want to find out as you read?

PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Path Shed

My name _____ Date _____

Part 2: Meeting Sarah



Read this part of the book. Then answer each question.

Questions about the book, Part 2. It is okay to pass on a question.

1. Recall: Where does Sarah come from? How is that place different from where Anna and Caleb live?

2. Think: What do Anna and Caleb hope Sarah will be like when she arrives from the sea? Copy a short phrase (under eight words) that shows it.

3. Your view: Would you feel nervous, excited or both about meeting someone who might join your family? Why?

Starters: The book says ____. This shows ____. I think ____ because ____.

PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Path Sped

My name _____ Date _____



Part 5: Will She Stay?

Read this part of the book. Then answer each question.

Questions about the book, Part 5. It is okay to pass on a question.

1. Recall: What worries Anna and Caleb about whether Sarah will stay? Find one detail.

2. Think: A storm comes in the story. How do Anna and Caleb act when they are worried? What does that show about them?

3. Your view: If you were Sarah, what would help you decide whether to stay? Give a reason from the story and a reason of your own.

Starters: The book says ____. This shows ____. I think ____ because ____.

PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Path Sped

My name _____ Date _____

Plot Path



Write what happens at each step of the story.

Use: Somebody ____ wanted ____ but ____ so ____ then ____

Beginning
Who is in the story, and where?

Part _____

A problem starts
What goes wrong or what does the main character want?

Part _____

Things get harder
What makes the problem bigger?

Part _____

The hardest moment
What is the biggest choice?

Part _____

How it ends
How is the problem solved?

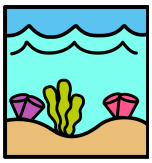
Part _____

PREVIEW

Preview - Not for Sale

My name _____ Date _____

Sea and Prairie



Write what each place is like. Then compare them.

Sarah comes from Maine, a place by the sea. Anna and Caleb live on the prairie. Use the book and your own ideas to compare the two places.

By the sea

where Sarah is from

What you might see

What you might hear

What people do there

On the prairie

where Anna and Caleb live

What you might see

What you might hear

What people do there

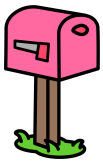
One way the two places are alike

One way they are different

PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Path Sped

My name _____ Date _____



New Places and People

Read each one. Check how you would feel and tell why.

These situations are invented. They are not from the book. Talk with a partner before you write.

A. The new student

Maya moves to a new town in the middle of the school year. She does not know anyone in her class.

☐ excited ☐ nervous ☐ both

What I would do or say

B. The summer visitor

A cousin from a faraway place comes to stay at your house for the whole summer.

☐ excited ☐ nervous ☐ both

What I would do or say

C. The new neighbor

A family moves in next door. They speak a different language and do not know your town.

☐ excited ☐ nervous ☐ both

What I would do or say

PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Path Sped

My name _____ Date _____



How the Family Changes

Write how Anna and her family change from the start to the end.

When	How the family feels	What the family does
Start of the book		
In the middle		
At the end		

What helps Anna and Caleb keep hoping? Name a moment.

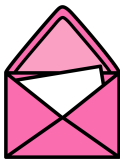
One word for how the family is the same at the end, and one word for how it has changed

Which part shows the change the most? Why?

PREVIEW

My name _____ Date _____

Write a Letter



Write a letter to Sarah.

From (me) _____ To Sarah _____

Dear Sarah,

My letter: tell what you notice about her and how you feel

What I want her to know, and why

Signed _____

PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Eyes Shed

My name _____ Date _____

Words: Feelings

Read each word. Write a sentence. Add a word that means the same.

homesick (adjective)
sad because you miss your home.
My sentence

Same meaning _____

lonely (adjective)
sad because you are alone or have no one to talk to.
My sentence

Same meaning _____

nervous (adjective)
worried about what might happen.
My sentence

Same meaning _____

hopeful (adjective)
believing that something good might happen.
My sentence

Same meaning _____

worried (adjective)
thinking that something bad might happen.
My sentence

Same meaning _____

content (adjective)
happy and peaceful with what you have.
My sentence

Same meaning _____

PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Ever After

My name _____ Date _____

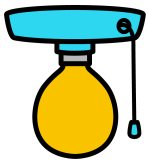
Match the Meaning

Write the letter of each meaning.

1	**prairie**	☐	**A**	sad because you miss your home
2	**plow**	☐	**B**	a long time with very little rain
3	**harvest**	☐	**C**	to feel that you are a part of a group or a place
4	**drought**	☐	**D**	a large, flat area of grassland with few trees
5	**advertisement**	☐	**E**	a person you do not know yet
6	**stranger**	☐	**F**	believing that something good might happen
7	**hesitate**	☐	**G**	the time when a crop is gathered; also the crop itself
8	**homesick**	☐	**H**	something you remember from the past
9	**lonely**	☐	**I**	a notice that asks for or offers something
10	**hopeful**	☐	**J**	sad because you are alone or have no one to talk to
11	**belong**	☐	**K**	to turn over the soil so seeds can be planted
12	**memory**	☐	**L**	to wait before doing something because you are not sure

PREVIEW

My name _____ Date _____



Prove It With the Text

Make a claim. Back it up with evidence.

The question I am answering

My claim: my answer

Evidence 1. Part _____

The book says (a short phrase)

This shows

Evidence 2. Part _____

The book says (a short phrase)

This shows

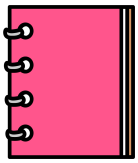
My reasoning: how the evidence proves my claim

Starters: The book says ____. This shows ____. I think ____ because ____.

PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Path Sped

My name _____ Date _____



My Essay: Plan

Plan each part of your essay.

Opening and claim
Start with a hook. State your claim.

Reason 1
Evidence and part

Reason 2
Evidence and part

Reason 3
Evidence and part

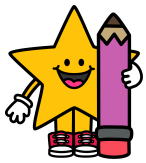
Closing
Say why it matters.

PREVIEW

My check before I write

- [ ] My claim is clear
- [ ] Each reason has evidence
- [ ] I named the parts
- [ ] I used a vocabulary word

My name _____ Date _____



Final Project

Check one project. Plan it, then make it.

☐ **Project A**

Make a sea and prairie poster

Fold a big paper in half. Draw and write what the sea is like on one side and what the prairie is like on the other. Add five words from this study.

☐ **Project B**

Write a letter

Write a short letter from Anna or Caleb to Sarah, or from Sarah to the family. Use at least two vocabulary words.

☐ **Project C**

Make a book review

Give the book a rating from 1 to 5. Give three reasons and tell who you think should read it.

My project: write here

My plan: what I need and what I will do first

My checklist

☐ I used the book to check my facts ☐ I used a vocabulary word ☐ I checked my spelling

PREVIEW

Answer Key

Spoiler warning: this key gives away how the story goes. A sample answer is one acceptable answer, not the only one; where a question asks for an opinion or a detail from the student's copy, it says Varies and tells you what to look for. The six parts are a suggested split; write your own chapters on the how-to page.

Part 1: A Family Waits (page 6)

1. **Recall: The narrator.** Anna tells it in her own voice (first person). Her family is her younger brother, Caleb, and her father, Papa. Accept any accurate extra detail from the student's copy.

2. **Think: Why wait for someone new?.** Varies. Look for a reason tied to the story and a feeling (hope, worry, curiosity) with a detail from the student's copy.

3. **Your view: A question to ask.** Varies. Look for a real question with a reason.

Part 2: Meeting Sarah (page 7)

1. **Recall: Where Sarah is from.** Sarah comes from Maine, a place by the sea. Anna and Caleb live on the prairie. Accept an accurate difference from the student's copy.

2. **Think: First hopes.** Varies. The phrase is short and copied exactly, and the explanation links it to a hope such as kindness, fun or staying.

3. **Your view: Nervous or excited.** Varies. Look for a feeling with a reason. Both feelings are fine.

Part 3: Learning the Prairie (page 8)

1. **Recall: Something new.** Varies for the student's copy. Accept any accurate job or skill with the person named.

2. **Think: Sea and prairie.** Varies. One example for each place, from the student's copy. Sarah's home in Maine is by the sea; the family lives on the prairie.

3. **Your view: A place you would miss.** Varies. Any honest answer with a reason. Any student may pass.

My notes on parts 1 to 3 (your wording)

PREVIEW

Answer Key

The final review and the cut-and-sort.

Final Review (page 30)

1. **Recall: The whole story.** Varies. Look for three accurate sentences in order: Anna, Caleb and Papa are a family on the prairie; Sarah comes from Maine, a place by the sea, to live with them; Sarah stays with the family.
2. **Recall: Who is who.** Varies. Caleb is Anna's brother, Papa is her father, and Sarah is the woman who comes to live with them. Accept any accurate extra from the student's copy.
3. **Think: A hard time.** Varies. A part, a reason and a detail.
4. **Think: Sea and prairie.** Varies. Two details named by part, one for each feeling.
5. **Prove it: A word for Sarah.** Varies. Two details named by part.
6. **Your view: Home.** Varies. Opinion with a reason and a detail from the book.

Feeling at Home (page 18)

Helps Sarah feel at home: Anna asks Sarah what she loved about her home by the sea; Caleb shows Sarah around the farm and tells her about it; Papa listens when Sarah says she misses the sea; Sarah shares a song or story from Maine and the family enjoys it; Anna and Caleb tell Sarah they hope she will stay.

Makes it harder: Nobody asks Sarah what she misses about Maine; Anna and Caleb say the prairie is better than Maine; Sarah is told to forget about her old home; Papa is too busy to talk with Sarah at all; Anna hides how she feels, so Sarah cannot tell if she is welcome.

My notes on the final review and the sort (your wording)

PREVIEW

Essay Rubric

For the essay on pages 31 to 33. Five criteria, three descriptions each; add your own notes.

Student _____ Prompt (A, B or C) _____ Date _____

Criterion	Strong	Getting there	Not yet	My notes
Opinion	A clear opinion that answers the prompt	An opinion, but it is vague or partly off the prompt	No clear opinion	
Evidence	Three or more details from the book, named by part	One or two details, or details with no part named	No details from the book	
Explaining	Each detail is explained and tied back to the opinion	Some explaining; some details stand alone	Details are listed but not explained	
Organization	Opening, three reasons, closing; clear order	Most parts are there; order is hard to follow	Parts are missing or mixed up	
Language	Vocabulary words used correctly; few spelling errors	A vocabulary word or two; some errors	No vocabulary words; errors get in the way	

How to use it

Circle or highlight one box in each row. There is no total: your notes and the student's next step matter more. The student's checklist is on page 32.

PREVIEW

Sarah, Plain and Tall at Home

Dear family, our class is reading Sarah, Plain and Tall, a novel about a family, a newcomer and what it means to feel at home. Questions are for talking, not for a grade, and any student may pass.

Student _____ Part we are reading _____

Three things to talk about

- Ask your student: what is the story about so far, in three sentences?
- Ask: how is life on the prairie different from life by the sea?
- Ask: what makes a place feel like home? Share an example from your family, only if you want to.

My words from home

One thing I learned _____

One feeling I noticed _____

A question I have _____

Words that may come up

Prairie: a large, flat area of grassland with few trees. **Homesick:** sad because you miss your home. **Belong:** to feel that you are a part of a group or a place. **Hopeful:** believing that something good might happen.

Note from the teacher

Note from home

PREVIEW