

Sample Pages from
Objective Tests
with Answer Keys

for

A Taste of Blackberries

By Doris Buchanan Smith

1973 Josette Frank Award Winner



A Teaching Pack

by Margaret Whisnant

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Chapter 1 Pages 1-13

Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank before each question.

- _____ 1. The boys discovered that the blackberries were (A) not quite ripe, (B) over-ripe, (C) the best they had been for several years.
- _____ 2. The boys overheard someone say that Jamie (A) told lies, (B) thought he knew everything, (C) was weird.
- _____ 3. Jamie couldn't laugh without (A) holding his sides, (B) slapping his knees, (C) falling down in exaggeration.
- _____ 4. Sometimes Jamie's behavior was aggravating because he (A) played awful jokes, (B) didn't know when to quit, (C) could be loud and obnoxious.
- _____ 5. Jamie could beat his best friend at most things except (A) racing, (B) climbing, (C) swimming.
- _____ 6. Jamie's friend had seen him fight with bigger boys and (A) win easily, (B) walk away laughing, (C) refuse to give up even when he was losing.
- _____ 7. Wading in the creek was a challenge for the boys because (A) the current was strong, (B) the water was cold, (C) the creek bed was covered with sharp rocks.
- _____ 8. The farm where the apples grew was said to be guarded by (A) a vicious dog, (B) electric fences, (C) a farmer with a shotgun.



A Taste of Blackberries

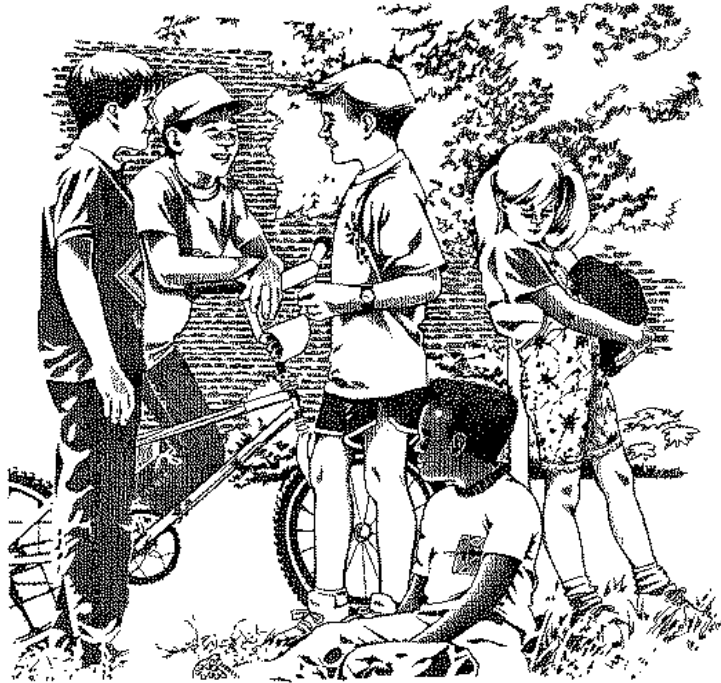
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Chapter 2

Pages 14-22

Write either **True** or **False** in the blank before each statement.

- _____ 1. Jamie thought it was a good idea to do something nice for Mrs. Houser.
- _____ 2. Jamie had a baby brother and a four-year-old sister.
- _____ 3. Jamie was the oldest child in his family, but his friend was the youngest child in his family.
- _____ 4. Jamie agreed to help Mrs. Houser when he found out he would be paid, and he thought it might be fun to put his feet all over her grass.



- _____ 5. Jamie didn't think of his sister Martha as a pest.
- _____ 6. Next to each other, Heather was the boys' best friend.
- _____ 7. The kids in the neighborhood stepped on Mrs. Houser's lawn on purpose because they liked to upset her.
- _____ 8. Once, Mrs. Houser threw a ball and hit Heather.
- _____ 9. The boys' friends were interested in helping scrape Japanese beetles off Mrs. Houser's grapevines.
- _____ 10. Even though he didn't have permission, Jamie decided to take Martha two blocks farther to his school.

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Chapter 3
Pages 23-35

Write either **Yes** or **No** in the blank before each question.

- _____ 1. Did Mrs. Houser stay outside the whole time the children were scraping beetles off her grapevines?
- _____ 2. Did Jamie do his share of the work?
- _____ 3. Did anyone warn Jamie not to poke around at a bee hole?



- _____ 4. Did the bees come out of the hole several at a time and several minutes apart?
- _____ 5. As the other children ran for home, did Jamie scream, gasp, and fall on the ground?
- _____ 6. Was Jamie's friend concerned about him?
- _____ 7. Had Jamie's friend been told before by his mother not to bang the screen door?
- _____ 8. Did Jamie's friend eat his Popsicle on the back steps because he didn't want to give Jamie an audience for his show?
- _____ 9. Was Mrs. Mullins' backyard like a secret garden?
- _____ 10. Were all the kids in the neighborhood allowed to visit Mrs. Mullins' garden whenever they wished?
- _____ 11. When he finished his Popsicle and started to go back to work on the beetles, did Jamie's friend hear a siren in the distance?
- _____ 12. Was it Heather who first told Jamie's friend that something was wrong with Jamie?

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Chapter 4

Pages 36-44

Mrs. Houser
Martha

the mother of Jamie's friend
cans and a string

Jamie's friend
Morse code

Jamie
rose trellis

From the list above, choose the name or phrase that fits each of the clues below and write it in the blank. All answers will be **used at least once**. Some answers will be **used more than once**.

_____ 1. She could color pretty good for a four-year-old

_____ 2. She took Jamie's baby brother and Martha to her house.



_____ 3. He guessed he was the only kid in the neighborhood who wasn't impressed with the ambulance.

_____ 4. No one knew he was allergic to bee stings.

_____ 5. He wasn't stung when the bees attacked.

_____ 6. Jamie's friend climbed up one of these trying to rig up a communication system between his room and Jamie's room.

_____ 7. He was a show-off and a clown, who could do crazy, comic falls.

_____ 8. He was stung just once or twice.

_____ 9. Jamie and his friend used this system to communicate with flashlights.

_____ 10. He felt he should have helped Jamie instead of leaving.

_____ 11. Jamie and his friend laughed at the mistakes they made trying to build this type of communication system.

_____ 12. She said "Jamie is dead, darling."

_____ 13. He colored a picture for Martha.

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WHOLE BOOK TEST

Jamie
Mrs. Houser
a bee hole
running
haeben
cans and string

Japanese beetles
the mother of Jamie's friend
the father of Jamie's friend
Morse Code
doors

blackberries
Heather
Martha
a Popsicle
hitchhiking

Jamie's friend
Mrs. Mullins
Jamie's mother
the funeral
butterflies

From the list above, choose the name, word, or phrase that fits each of the clues below and write it in the blank. **All** answers will be **used at least once**. **Some** answers will be **used more than once**.

- _____ 1. Mrs. Houser asked the neighborhood children to scrape these from her grapevines.
- _____ 2. He was a clown who didn't know when to quit.



- _____ 3. He thought Jamie was faking when he fell down after the bee attack.
- _____ 4. He held his son on his lap while he cried over the death of his best friend.
- _____ 5. Jamie and his friend slammed these.
- _____ 6. Her back yard was like a secret garden.
- _____ 7. She yelled at children if they stepped into her yard.

About Your Novel Teaching Pack

The primary goal in creating the teaching packs for children's novels is to provide a **classroom-ready**, non-threatening method for checking student comprehension and stretching thinking skills. **When used as a basic guide for teaching a novel, the materials offer many and varied opportunities for learning.**

Use your teaching pack as a guide and lead your students into discovering new ideas about

THE PLOT

Each test page is actually an outline of the plot. In your teaching pack, the chain of related events that tell the story has been pulled from the novel and reformatted into a series of questions. Whether they are aware of their ability or not, all good readers sense the **rhythm** of the **connected** events that compose the plot; and consequently **comprehend** the story. This "plot rhythm" is the basic structure of the tests.

To further your students' understanding of plot, try the following activities:

Summarizing the Story: Using only the chapter questions as a guide, have your students write a summary of the chapter. For a set of ten questions, limit the number of sentences they may write to seven. For twenty questions, allow no more than twelve sentences.

Reporting the News: Have students write a newspaper article, based on the events from a set of questions, and add the *who, what, when, where, why* format. Some needed information may be located in previous chapters.

Twisting the Plot: Choose one or two questions from each chapter and change its answer—true to false, no to yes, or a different answer—and explain how changing a single (or several) events would change the story. To further illustrate the rhythm of a good story, try changing the answers to one complete set of questions. Your students will see how difficult, if not impossible, it is to tell a sensible story from a tangled set of events.

THE CHARACTERS

Questions that illustrate character motivation and personality are purposely included. Too often, when they are asked to tell what kind of person a story character is, the only answer many of our students can muster is "nice."

In your efforts to remove "nice" from your students' literary vocabulary, try this idea:

Character Charts: Display individual charts for the main characters. As the chapters are read, record **facts, behaviors, or events** that relate to the each character. Then connect the items with several appropriate words such as **empathetic, brave, calloused, bold, untrustworthy**, etc. The teacher can take the lead by contributing the first few words and then assigning the task of identifying more terms to students. Record the word collections on the charts with the story facts.

This information is a valuable student resource when displayed in the room for all to see and use during a writing assignment. In creating and using character charts, students will soon begin writing more fluently and insightfully about story personalities.

Use the charts to encourage your students to try some "predicting" or "detective" writing about what the character(s) might do next or what might have happened after the story ended. Let the charts help your students recognize **CHARACTER CHANGE (dynamics)**.

Another fun activity with the charts is to match a book personality with a zodiac sign. Students must justify their reason for thinking a character is a particular sign by citing his/her behaviors, words, reactions to situations, etc. that prove the match.

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

(Implied Meaning)

Because the primary goal for the objective questions is **basic comprehension**, items requiring a student to **interpret** an event or a character's behavior are not included. Always included, however, are questions that *establish the existence of a story component carrying an implied meaning.*

MAKING PREDICTIONS

(Recognizing Story Clues)

Authors subtly place clues in the story line giving the reader hints as to what is about to happen. Like the implied meaning, these clues are brought to the reader's attention in the form of a question. Once a student learns to spot the gems, his/her ability to comprehend and enjoy a story tends to leap forward.

Use "thinking-out-loud" class discussions to list all the possible meanings of the clue questions. Have your student write their individual predictions (no sharing or telling), store the papers until the novel is finished, and then retrieve them for reading. Sometimes, a wrong prediction makes a story as good as the original.

OTHER FUNCTIONS

The objective test pages are excellent discussion guides for both whole groups and small groups. They work well as homework reading guides and as conferencing tools. They are also useful management tools for teachers who wish to use multiple titles in one classroom.

IMPROVING/DEVELOPING LISTENING SKILLS

Rather than always requiring your students to answer test questions on a printed page, surprise them (and save paper!!) by occasionally doing the test orally.

Try this technique:

Student Rules for an Oral Test:

The teacher will read each question *two times*. No comments or questions that interrupt this initial phase of the test are allowed.

When all questions have been read, individual students may ask for repeats of any question he/she wishes to hear again.

No interruptions/comments during the re-reading part of the test.

Teacher Rules for an Oral Test:

The teacher will read each question *two times*. Except to remind students that a re-reading phase will follow after the last question, he/she will not respond to comment/question during this period.

The teacher will repeat **any** and **all** questions (even if it results in reading the same question multiple times).

(The second teacher rule is a *vital* part of the exercise. Asking for multiple repeats of a question does not mean students aren't paying attention. It does indicate their desire to *understand* and *answer* the question correctly.)

As students become more comfortable and experienced with oral test-taking, the number of requests for repeated questions will diminish. An added bonus to this technique is that skills learned in these testing periods tend to translate into other situations where teacher-talking and student-listening are required components of learning.

Final Note

The Novel Teaching Packs are designed for use as supplementary material that supports a total reading program. It is my goal to provide busy teachers with a classroom-ready, practical resource loaded with motivational and learning opportunities for their students. It is my hope that your purchase will prove to be a hard-working instructional component for years to come. Thanks for choosing one of my products for your classroom.



Margaret Whisnant, Author

