

Charlotte's Web by E. B. White – Teacher's Guide(age group: 13-14; 7th grade)

“E. B. White (Elwyn Brooks White) was born on July 11, 1899 in Mount Vernon, N.Y., U.S. and died on October 1, 1985 in North Brooklin, Maine.

He was an American essayist and literary stylist.

White graduated from Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., in 1921 and was a reporter and freelance writer before joining *The New Yorker* magazine as a writer and contributing editor in 1927. He married Katherine Sergeant Angell, *The New Yorker's* first fiction editor, in 1929, and he remained with the weekly magazine for the rest of his career. White collaborated with James Thurber on *Is Sex Necessary?* (1929), a spoof of the then-current sex manuals. He also contributed a monthly column to *Harper's* (1938–43) magazine.

In 1941 White edited with his wife *A Subtreasury of American Humor*. His three books for children—*Stuart Little* (1945), *Charlotte's Web* (1952), and *The Trumpet of the Swan* (1970)—are considered classics. In 1959 he revised and published a book by the late William Strunk, Jr., *The Elements of Style*, which became a standard style manual for writing in English. Among White's other works is *Points of My Compass* (1962). *Letters of E.B. White*, edited by D.L. Guth, appeared in 1976, his collected essays in 1977, and *Poems and Sketches of E.B. White* in 1981. He was awarded a Pulitzer Prize special citation in 1978.” (information provided by *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*)

“*Charlotte's Web* is an award-winning children's novel by acclaimed American author E. B. White, about a pig named Wilbur who is saved from being slaughtered by an intelligent spider named Charlotte. The book was first published in 1952, with illustrations by Garth Williams.

Written in White's dry, low-key manner, *Charlotte's Web* is considered a classic of children's literature, enjoyable to adults as well as children. *Publishers Weekly* listed the book as the best-selling children's paperback of all time as of 2000.”

(information provided by *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*)

KEY TO FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

A. Understanding the story:

2.

- a) Fern loved Wilbur.
- b) Wilbur loved to drink milk.
- c) Wilbur lived in a box near the stove, in the kitchen.
- d) Wilbur moved to a bigger box in the woodshed.
- e) When he was two weeks of age.
- f) Wilbur's yard was under an apple tree.
- g) He would grunt and walk sleepily into his box.
- h) Fern was worried that Wilbur would be cold at night.

3. Wilbur is a **pig**.

4. The chronological order of the sentences is: **f); d); e); a); g); h); b); c).**

5. a) (F); b) (F); c) (F); d) (T); e) (T); f) (F); g) (F); h) (T).

B. Word study:

1. a) places: to bed, in front of her house, out, to the kitchen, in school, in a box, near the stove, in the kitchen, to a box, in the woodshed, outdoors, yard, under an apple tree, wooden box, in, down, under the apple tree, inside the yard, in the straw.

b) time: every morning, as soon as, every afternoon, at suppertime, before, around noontime, each day, when, never, for the first few days, then, at two weeks, apple-blossom time, at night, while, in a short time.

c) verbs: loved, stroke, feed, put, got up, warmed, tied, held, stopped, jumped, ran, fix, fed, gave, was, was happier, was warming up, would stand, gaze up, was allowed, to live, complained, moved, were getting warmer, fixed, could walk, pleased, won't be cold, asked, said, watch, see, does, sat, held, sucked, had finished, grunted, walked, peered, was poking, had dug, crawled, disappeared, was enchanted, relieved, to know, would sleep, would stay.

2.

a) Fern loved Wilbur more than anything.

b) Fern peered through the door.

c) Wilbur was allowed to live in a box.

d) The days were getting warmer.

e) She fed him again at suppertime.

f) Fern sat down under the apple tree.

g) Wilbur was poking the straw with his snout.

h) He crawled into the tunnel.

3.

a) stroke, feed, to.

b) complained, moved, woodshed.

c) gave, feeding, was.

d) got, warmed, tied, bib.

e) stopped, jumped, ran.

f) poking, snout, dug.

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