



**4<sup>TH</sup>**  
**GRADE**  
**VOLUME 4.4**

# **Book Club Teacher's Guide**

*The Year of Miss Agnes*

*Riding Freedom*

*The Sign of the Beaver*

For pairing with *C. I. A. Unit of Study—Narrative Non-Fiction,  
Children of the Gold Rush 4.4*

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***The Year of Miss Agnes*, by Kirkpatrick Hill – Lexile 790, 113 pages**

I love using this beautifully written, simple text with upper elementary students because the story is written for their age group. While there are many characters to keep track of, the story itself is simple and straightforward. I recommend placing your students who are reading below grade level in this text.

***The Year of Miss Agnes* Text Complexity**

QUALITATIVE MEASURES	QUANTITATIVE MEASURES
<p><b>Levels of Meaning</b> The text offers multiple levels of meaning and nuances of abstract concepts related to family, overcoming hardships, and the pioneering spirit.</p> <p><b>Structure</b> This narrative is told in chronological order. However, the main character in the story recounts events that happened in the past that have impacted the present time. Students will need to understand these past events and how they are connected to the main plot of the story.</p> <p><b>Language Conventinality and Clarity</b> The genre of this story adds some complexity to the language. Dialogue that incorporates historical and regional language makes this text qualitatively challenging.</p> <p><b>Knowledge Demands</b> This text requires knowledge of the genre historical fiction. Students may need additional support while visualizing the setting of the story.</p>	<p>The Lexile level for <i>The Year of Miss Agnes</i> is 790, based on word frequency and sentence length. This is in the lower range of the complexity band for 4th–5th grade according to the Common Core State Standards.</p> <p><b>READER TASK CONSIDERATIONS</b></p> <p>These should be determined locally with reference to motivation, knowledge, and experiences as well as to purpose and the complexity of the tasks assigned and the questions posed.</p>

***Riding Freedom*, by Pam Muñoz Ryan – Lexile 720, 134 pages**

This fictional story, based on the true life of Charlotte Darkey Parkhurst, is a story your students won't forget! While the Lexile level is lower than that of *The Year of Miss Agnes*, the progression of the story through time and across places adds a qualitative depth to this text that makes it a perfect fit for on-grade-level readers. Students reading this book will be challenged by historical language and dialect.

***Riding Freedom* Text Complexity**

QUALITATIVE MEASURES	QUANTITATIVE MEASURES
<p><b>Levels of Meaning</b> The text offers multiple levels of meaning and nuances of abstract concepts related to freedom, overcoming hardships, and the pioneering spirit.</p> <p><b>Structure</b> This narrative is told in chronological order. However, <b>gaps in time make this story more challenging for the reader.</b></p> <p><b>Language Conventionality and Clarity</b> The genre of this story adds some complexity to the language. Dialogue that incorporates historical and regional language makes this text qualitatively challenging.</p> <p><b>Knowledge Demands</b> This text requires knowledge of the genre historical fiction. Students may need additional support while visualizing the setting of the story.</p>	<p>The Lexile level for <i>Riding Freedom</i> is 720, based on word frequency and sentence length. This is in the upper range of the complexity band for 2nd–3rd grade according to the Common Core State Standards.</p> <p><b>READER TASK CONSIDERATIONS</b></p> <p>These should be determined locally with reference to motivation, knowledge, and experiences as well as to purpose and the complexity of the tasks assigned and the questions posed.</p>

***The Sign of the Beaver*, by Elizabeth George Speare – Lexile 770, 135 pages**

I recommend placing students who are on or above grade level in this engaging text. Students will be challenged by multiple themes introduced across this text, as well as by historical language and dialect.

***The Sign of the Beaver* Text Complexity**

QUALITATIVE MEASURES	QUANTITATIVE MEASURES
<p><b>Levels of Meaning</b> The text offers multiple levels of meaning and nuances of abstract concepts related to freedom, overcoming hardships, and the pioneering spirit. In addition, students will have to consider the cause and effect relationships related to westward expansion.</p> <p><b>Structure</b> This narrative is told in chronological order. A parallel story (<i>Robinson Crusoe</i>) is interspersed throughout the text.</p> <p><b>Language Conventinality and Clarity</b> The genre of this story adds some complexity to the language. Dialogue that incorporates historical and regional language makes this text qualitatively challenging.</p> <p><b>Knowledge Demands</b> This text requires knowledge of the genre historical fiction. Students may need additional support while visualizing the setting of the story.</p>	<p>The Lexile level for <i>The Sign of the Beaver</i> is 770, based on word frequency and sentence length. This is in the lower range of the complexity band for 4th–5th grade according to the Common Core State Standards.</p> <p><b>READER TASK CONSIDERATIONS</b></p> <p>These should be determined locally with reference to motivation, knowledge, and experiences as well as to purpose and the complexity of the tasks assigned and the questions posed.</p>

## DAY 4, SETTING—LIST AND MAP

**In this lesson...** you will remind students how good readers focus on the setting—often in terms of either the location in which the story takes place, which may be shown on a map, or the characters’ circumstances—when reading quadrant 1. The characters’ circumstances are an important element of the setting. Students will keep track of setting clues as they read, and then use those details to draw conclusions.

To prepare for this lesson, photocopy the map “The Gold Rush in the North” found on page 11 of *Children of the Gold Rush*. Have the students who are reading *The Year of Miss Agnes* glue or tape this map to page 10 of the book club notebook.

Photocopy the map titled “U.S. Territorial Acquisitions.” Have the students who are reading *Riding Freedom* glue or tape this map to page 10 of the book club notebook. This map can be retrieved from the following URL: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:U.S.\\_Territorial\\_Acquisitions.png](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:U.S._Territorial_Acquisitions.png).

Photocopy the map titled “European Claims in North America.” Have the students who are reading *The Sign of the Beaver* glue or tape this map to page 10 of the book club notebook. This map can be retrieved from the following URL: <https://humanities7.wordpress.com/2013/01/22/some-maps-from-the-french-and-indian/>.

Students will need to have a colored pencil or highlighter for marking their maps as they read.

### Learning Targets:

Read closely to monitor comprehension (RL 1)

- Infer setting clues
- Visualize

Show understanding of story elements (RL 3)

- Setting

Use what you know about genre to help you understand the story better (RL 5)

Integrate content presented in diverse media formats (RL 7)

- Maps

Gather and categorize information through note taking (W 8)

### Connect:

*We have been learning...*

...that good readers keep track of important characters as they read. They create a character list while reading quadrant 1.

## Teach:

*Today I am going to remind you...*

...that good readers pay attention to the setting of the story. Today you will focus on understanding the setting of your story better. You will be using a map to help you better understand the setting as you read. You will also pay attention to details about the setting as you read.

You each referred to a setting map when we read the book *Children of the Gold Rush*. Please turn to the map titled “The Gold Rush in the North.” Notice how you used this map to help you visualize the setting of the book.

You also kept track of details about the setting when we read the book *Children of the Gold Rush*. Please turn to the chart titled “The Children of the Gold Rush’s Lives Were Unique.” Notice how you kept track of details in the text that helped you understand the circumstances of the characters living in that place and time.

Now please open up to page 10 of your book club notebook where you inserted the map that goes with your book club book.

If you are reading *The Year of Miss Agnes*, you will be using a map of Alaska to help you visualize the setting of your book. Please highlight the Koyukuk River on your map. Frederika’s village is located somewhere along the Koyukuk River. As you read the assigned chapters for today, please highlight on the map the other locations mentioned in your book. As you read details about the setting of the story, record these details near the map on page 10.

If you are reading *Riding Freedom*, you will be using a map of U.S. territories to help you visualize the setting of your book. Please highlight the state of Massachusetts on your map. The orphanage where Charlotte lives is near Concord, Massachusetts. As you read the assigned chapters for today, please think about where the story takes place and record details about the setting of the story next to the map on page 10.

If you are reading *The Sign of the Beaver*, you will be using a map comparing European claims before and after the French and Indian War. Please place a star on the territory of Massachusetts (now the state of Maine) on your map. This is where Matt and his father built the cabin. Notice that surrounding this territory is land that was newly acquired by the English from France. As you read the assigned chapters for today, please think about where the story takes place and record details about the setting of the story next to the map on page 10.

## **Guided Practice—Work Time:**

You will each be reading and completing your setting map and list independently. If you need help, first go to your assigned partner to get help. If you are still stuck, sign up for a conference and I will come and coach you and your partner in order to quickly help you get back on track.

You will have 35 minutes to work. Then you will meet your partners in the meeting area to review your work, make additions or changes, and then participate in a whole-class share-out.

(Assign each group their pages to read and dismiss students for independent work. Conduct conferences with partnerships as necessary.)

*The Year of Miss Agnes*—Chapters 3–4 (pp. 13–25)

*Riding Freedom*—“In the Beginning” and chapter 1 (pp. 1–17)

*The Sign of the Beaver*—Chapters 1–3 (pp. 1–18)

## **Share-out:**

(At the beginning of the share-out time, give students 5 minutes to compare notes and receive help from their partners. Then move into a quick, whole-class discussion.)

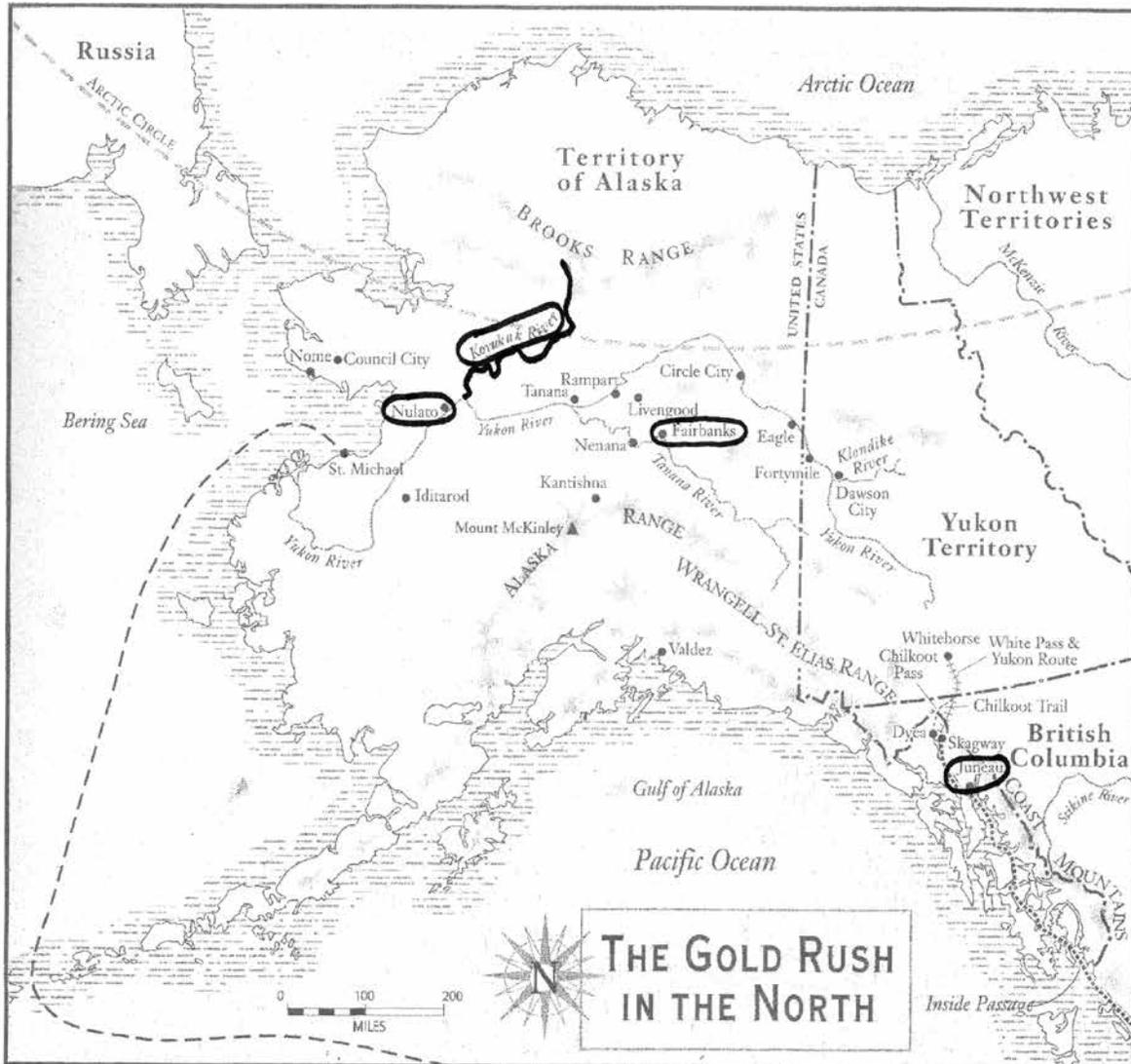
Discuss: Why do good readers keep track of the setting as they read? How did doing this help you or challenge you as a reader today?

## **Link:**

*Today and every day when you read...*

...I want you to think about what you know about important setting clues in order to understand the story better.

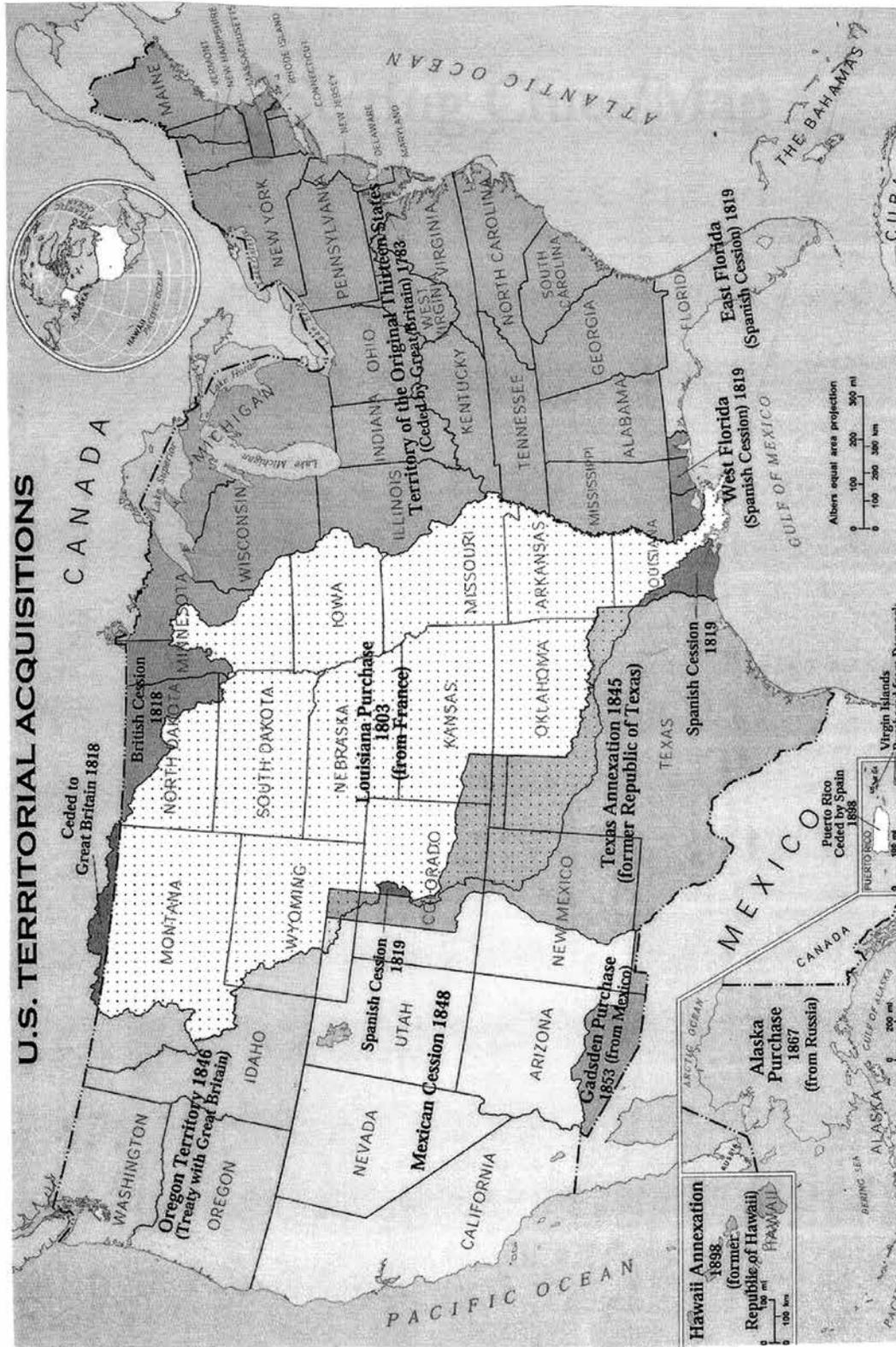
## Setting Clues/Map



A remote Alaska village downriver from Dolbi.  
Early October, 1948

The villagers hunt martin and trap beaver in the winter. They hunt muskrats in the spring and fish in the summer.

*Riding Freedom* Setting Map and Setting List Sample



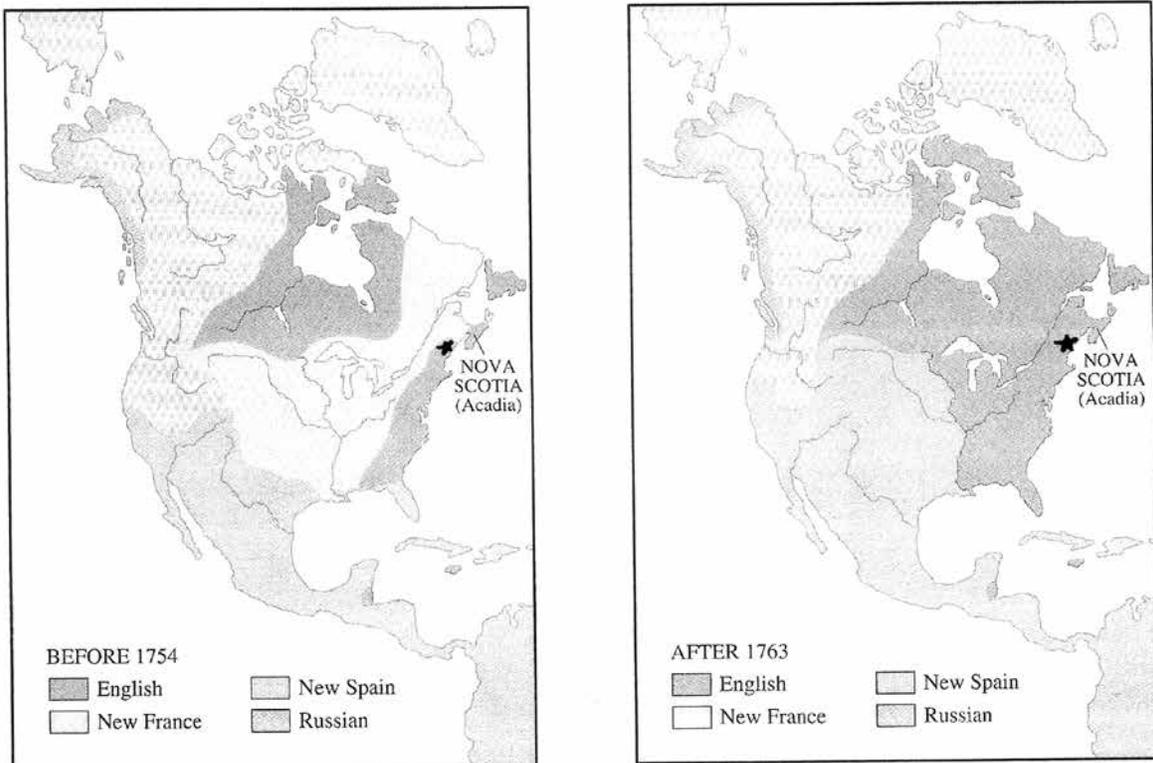
Mid-1800s = when the East was young and the West was yet to be settled." P.2

The orphanage is a work farm where all the children work hard.

## Setting Clues/Map

**Map 5.2 European Claims in North America**

The dramatic results of the British victory in the Seven Years (French and Indian) War are vividly demonstrated in these maps, which depict the abandonment of French claims to the mainland after the Treaty of Paris in 1763.



- Miles of wilderness, many days from the settlement
- log house
- 1768 - summer
- the towns are spreading out into the wilderness

## **Book Club Meeting 1**

**In this book club meeting...**students will be responding to questions about the characters, setting, problems, and main events revealed in quadrant 1 of their book club books. Students will use the charts in their book club notebooks to aid their discussion. Students will also share their predictions about what they think will happen next in the story. Throughout the discussion, students should each share and respond to thinking.

To prepare for this lesson (optional) print pictures from the Susan R. Bernardi photograph collection found at the University of Washington Digital Library. These photos can be retrieved from the following URL: <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/search/collection/alaskawcanada/searchterm/PH%20Coll%2049/field/all/mode/exact/conn/and/cosuppress/>.

### **Learning Targets:**

Summarize the text (RL 2)

Show understanding of story elements (RL 3)

- Character
- Setting
- Plot

Prepare for collaboration with others (SL 1)

Express ideas and respond to others' ideas clearly and persuasively (SL 1)

Acquire and use key vocabulary (L 6)

### **Connect:**

*We have been learning...*

...that good readers read slowly at the beginning of a book in order to make sure they understand all the story elements, including character, setting, and plot. At the end of quadrant 1 they stop and write a retell summary as a way of monitoring their comprehension.

## **Teach:**

*Today I am going to remind you...*

...that good readers discuss their thinking about a book with others in order to synthesize their thinking and evaluate the thinking of others.

When we meet together in book clubs, the expectations will be that you each

1. Bring your book and book club notebook to the meeting, with all assignments completed;
2. Come prepared to respond to questions and to share your thinking about the book with the group;
3. Participate by both sharing with and listening to group members;
4. Respond to another student's thinking before sharing your own; and
5. Use polite language and mannerisms with everyone in the group.

When you respond to another person's thinking, please use one of our response stems:

- I agree with you because...
- I disagree with you because...

## Opening discussion questions:

(Have 2–3 students share their responses to each of these questions. Ask a student to respond to another student before sharing his or her own thinking. As you move through the series of questions, make sure each student gets a turn to talk.)



### *The Year of Miss Agnes*

*Open up to the character list on page 8 of your book club notebooks.*

Discuss: Good readers visualize the characters while reading. What details in the story helped you visualize the characters?

Optional: Show pictures from the Susan R. Bernardi photograph collection found in the University of Washington Library Digital Library. Discuss how the pictures help the reader visualize the characters in *The Year of Miss Agnes*.

*Open up to the setting list and map on page 10 of your book club notebooks.*

Discuss: What details in the story help you understand what it was like to live in a remote Alaska village?

*Open up to the problems list on page 11 of your book club notebooks.*

Discuss: Why do you think some of the teachers that came to Frederika's village left before the school year was over?



### *Riding Freedom*

*Open up to the character list on page 8 of your book club notebooks.*

Discuss: Good readers visualize the characters while reading. What details in the story helped you visualize the characters?

*Open up to the setting list and map on page 10 of your book club notebooks.*

Discuss: We know that the story *Riding Freedom* begins in the mid-eighteen hundreds. Look at the setting map. What U.S. territories were newly acquired by the United States in the mid-eighteen hundreds?

*Open up to the problems list on page 11 of your book club notebooks.*

Discuss: How was life different for a girl living in the U.S. in the 1800s, compared to today?

## Opening discussion questions (continued):

(Have 2–3 students share their responses to each of these questions. Ask a student to respond to another student before sharing his or her own thinking. As you move through the series of questions, make sure each student gets a turn to talk.)



### *The Sign of the Beaver*

*Open up to the character list on page 8 of your book club notebooks.*

Discuss: Good readers visualize the characters while reading. What details in the story helped you visualize the characters?

*Open up to the setting list and map on page 10 of your book club notebooks.*

Discuss: We know that the story *The Sign of the Beaver* begins in the summer of 1768. The story begins just five years after Great Britain, France, and Spain signed the Treaty of Paris in 1763. The signing of the treaty marked the formal end of the French and Indian War and gave Britain control of the area from the Mississippi River to the Appalachian Mountains. Look at the setting map. What land was newly acquired by Britain in 1763? Why do you think the land Matt's family claimed is described as "wild"?

*Open up to the problems list on page 11 of your book club notebooks.*

Discuss: Why do you think Saknis offers to help Matt?

## Time for questions:

Do any of you have any questions at this point in the story that you would like the group to answer or help you with?

(Allow time for students to ask their questions, if any. Encourage group members to respond to the questions. Step in to answer questions only when group members are unable to.)

## Share-out:

Now you are each going to have an opportunity to share the prediction you prepared on page 19 of your book club notebook. Please turn to your prediction now.

(Allow each student a chance to share his or her prediction-writing stem. Ask a student to respond to another student before sharing his or her own thinking.)



# Book Club Meeting 1

Be prepared to talk about:

- Character
- Setting
- Problem
- Main Events

Be prepared to share a prediction about what will happen in the book.

Be ready to listen and respond to the members of your group!

When the book said that Miss Agnes said she  
couldn't smell the fish.

I made a prediction. I think Miss Agnes will stay

because she doesn't seem to mind living  
in a rustic fishing village.



# Book Club Meeting 1

Be prepared to talk about:

- Character
- Setting
- Problem
- Main Events

Be prepared to share a prediction about what will happen in the book.

Be ready to listen and respond to the members of your group!

*When the book said* if anyone came looking,  
they'd see her apron and think she had drowned,  
*I made a prediction. I think* Charlotte will escape  
without being caught  
*because* they will think she drowned.  
\_\_\_\_\_.



# Book Club Meeting 1

Be prepared to talk about:

- Character
- Setting
- Problem
- Main Events

Be prepared to share a prediction about what will happen in the book.

Be ready to listen and respond to the members of your group!

When the book said it would take more than  
a month to teach Attean to read.

I made a prediction. I think Attean and Matt  
will become friends

because they will be spending a lot of  
time together.

**Vocabulary Words Learned While Reading**  
*Children of the Gold Rush*

stampede	memorabilia	misfortune
pioneers	indomitable	native vs. immigrant
expeditions	positive	uniqueness
influx	adapted	roots
developed	treacherous	grueling
optimism	entrepreneur	

**Vocabulary Words Learned While Reading**  
*Children of the Gold Rush*

stampede	memorabilia	misfortune
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