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*Across Five Aprils*  
BY IRENE HUNT

  
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Pre-Reading****Set a Purpose****Objective:** Determining individual and group opinions regarding war**Activity**

*Across Five Aprils* is a novel about the Civil War. Unlike many books on wars, this one deals with the people at home more than the actual war. While most realize the toll that war takes on the soldiers, many fail to appreciate the sacrifices, sufferings, and fears that the families left at home experience. As a war progresses, people will often begin to question their support for the fighting.

Individually answer the following questions in note form. After you have answered them all, get into groups and compare and contrast your individual ideas. Create a chart or Venn diagram to share with the whole class showing where you agreed and disagreed.

Is it possible to come to a group consensus for each or some of the questions?

1. Why do wars happen?

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2. What reasons do people give for fighting in wars?

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3. For what reasons would you be willing to go to war?

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4. Is war necessary sometimes, or is there always another way to solve problems? If so, give some examples of when war is the only option.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter 4****Dialect****Objective:** Translating dialect and understanding its role in character and setting development**Activity**

Throughout the novel, Irene Hunt uses dialect to depict her setting in southern Illinois, her characters, and their level of education. Dialect refers to the way a person talks, including pronunciation and grammar. The author employs a variety of dialects through several characters to show the isolation of the farmers of the West and the differences in the education of the characters in her book. Dialect can also add reality to a piece of writing. Chapter 4 exposes the reader to several different dialects through letters and direct speech. Being able to read and understand different dialects is important for your understanding of the book, as well as for developing a feel for the era and geographical specifics of a story.

In pairs or small groups of three to four, read the following pieces of dialogue for Chapter 4. Below each example, write your interpretation of the text in Standard English. You may want to refer to the chapter to help you understand the context better.

1. "Sir: yours of this date proposing Armistice, and appointment of commissioners to settle terms of Capitulation is just received..."

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2. "I take pence in hand to let you no that Eb and me is alright."

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3. "Mebby I oughtnt say we took it becus it was the ironclads that done it."

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4. "...we throwed away hevey cotes and things to make our lodes a littel liter."

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5. "Yore ma's no comp'ny fer you this afternoon, Son."

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6. "That's no matter, Ma."

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 5

### Character Comparison and Contrast

**Objective:** Using critical thinking and comparison/contrast skills, identify similarities and differences between the protagonist and yourself

#### Activity

Comparing and contrasting yourself to the main character in any novel will help you better understand the character, his or her motives, and the themes of the story. *Across Five Aprils* tells the story of a young boy and his relationships to his family, community, and country. Within the novel, he is faced with numerous conflicts, and his personality grows and develops as a result of them.

As you compare yourself to Jethro, consider how you would respond to the challenges he faces daily. Would you take on the responsibilities of the family, if needed, without question? How are your relationships to family members like his? How are your relationships different? As you complete this assignment, examine personality traits rather than physical or time issues. Compare and contrast yourself to Jethro using the following table.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter 9****Vocabulary**

**Objective:** Identifying vocabulary prior to reading the chapter

**Activity**

Each of the following vocabulary words has a correct and an incorrect definition provided. Try to guess which one is correct. Keep track of the number of correct answers you have.

1. droves
  - A. the deep rows used for planting
  - B. large groups or herds
2. forays
  - A. sudden raids
  - B. special parties or celebrations
3. gangrenous
  - A. decayed or rotted due to loss of blood flow
  - B. happy feelings of a large group of people
4. desperado
  - A. a serious student
  - B. a bold, dangerous outlaw
5. deserter
  - A. one who serves sweets and confections
  - B. one who flees from a responsibility
6. antagonize
  - A. to incur dislike or hostility from something or someone
  - B. to dramatize an event to make it seem to have greater significance
7. credence
  - A. acceptance as true or valid
  - B. an oath
8. defiantly
  - A. acting with great support
  - B. in a resistant way



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 11

### Visual Interpretation

**Objective:** Creating visuals to extend the meaning of the text

#### Activity

The Civil War battles have been recreated and played out over the years in many forms from drawings, to scale models, to actual live drama productions. Americans are fascinated with the war fought on our own soil. The author, Irene Hunt, goes to great detail to depict the fierceness of the battle of Chickamauga. In Chapter 11, we learn that Jethro carefully copies John's letter so that Shadrach and Jenny in Washington can read his description of the battle. Then Jethro "...made mountains of chips and stones out in the wood lot and showed John's little boys how their father...had scaled Missionary Ridge and had so broken the center of the Confederate line..."

Review Chapter 11 carefully, paying close attention to the descriptions of the battle and the strategies involved. The following are a few passages that deserve special attention:

"...the map of Chattanooga down on the Tennessee River, with Lookout Mountain to the southwest, Missionary Ridge facing on the east, and beyond the Ridge, the line of water labeled 'Chickamauga Creek.'"

"John wrote of how near the army had been to starvation after Chickamauga; how the snipers located all along the slopes of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge made it impossible for a wagonload of food or provender to get through to either men or animals."

"... Hooker would strike at one end of the Confederate line on Lookout Mountain; Sherman would hit the other end on Missionary Ridge. The Army of the Cumberland would attack the center..."

"...Missionary Ridge, which towered like a steep wall opposite Lookout."

Using these quotes and other images you have collected from the chapter, design a visual depiction of the battle. You can create a drawing, painting, comic strip style progression of events, or even a diorama to reconstruct the battle.