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Literature
Teaching Unit
Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



Johnny Tremain

by Esther Forbes

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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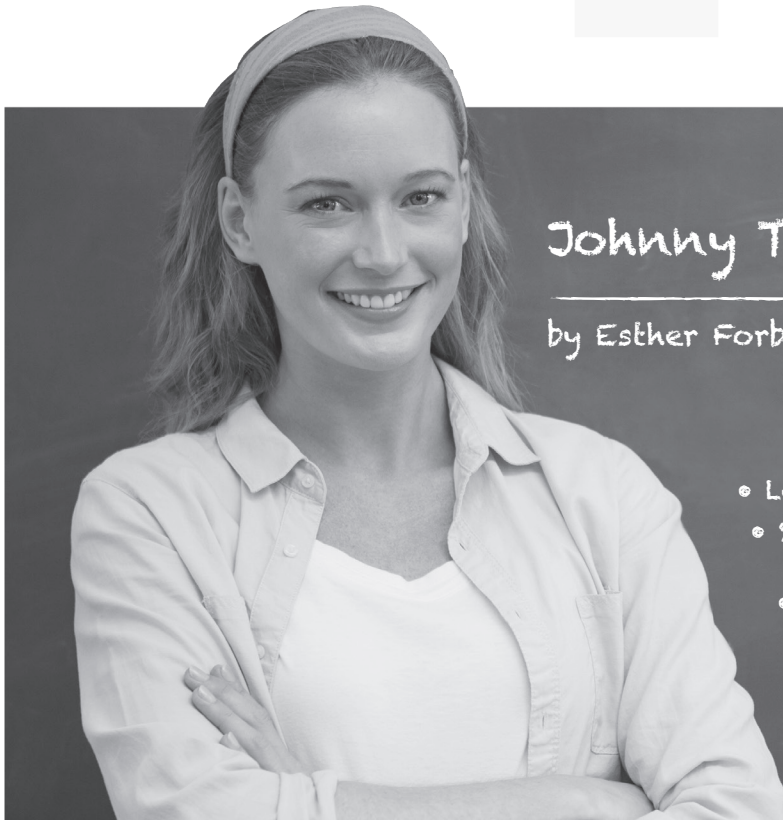
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Johnny Tremain

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. relate the major incidents in Boston that led up to the start of the American Revolution.
2. discuss how the author weaves actual people and real events into a historical novel.
3. compare and contrast flat and round characters.
4. point out how the setting of this novel influences the plot.
5. define and identify literary terms such as simile, metaphor, and foreshadowing.
6. define the term “trite” and explain why a trite image should be avoided in writing.
7. trace throughout the novel Johnny’s growing political consciousness.
8. list and discuss those elements of the novel which indicates it is a ‘coming of age’ theme.
9. write a character sketch of Johnny Tremain.
10. identify and discuss the symbols found in this novel.
11. discuss the following themes that appear in this novel:
 - the sin of pride and virtue of humility
 - tolerance for other’s faults
 - acceptance of ourselves with our imperfections and handicaps.
12. explain why the British insisted on collecting a very small tax, and why the colonists refused to pay such a negligible tax on tea.
13. point out why this novel could be said to have a patriotic theme and why such a theme was so important in 1942, the year the novel was published.

Johnny Tremain

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. A historical novel is one in which actual events and people interweave with imagined occurrences, conversations, and characters. Johnny Tremain was not an actual person who lived during the Revolutionary War. He was invented by the author. By having a fictional character who faces the challenges of war, is the reader more or less able to understand its historical importance? Explain your answer in a three paragraph essay.
2. The author includes real people from American history in *Johnny Tremain*. For example, she portrays Paul Revere as an uplifting, intelligent, brave person, while Lieutenant Gage is shown as bumbling, indecisive, and fearful. James Otis is depicted as both insane and brilliant. Using any three personality traits, these or others, write a two page essay describing similarities and differences between any two of the historical characters of Johnny Tremain. Use passages from the novel to support your essay.
3. Johnny Tremain is the main character. As such, he is the one person who is involved in most of the action of the novel. We know more about him and his personality than any other character. In an essay of one to two pages, describe Johnny's personality, using any of the following traits: immaturity, self-confidence, bravery, confusion, love, fear, cleverness, admiration, and hopelessness.
4. Johnny's desires, hopes, and beliefs change throughout the book. The novel begins with a boy who thinks too highly of himself and of his talents and who insults and is cruel to those around him. The novel ends with Johnny as a young man, less sure of his fate and future in the upcoming war, but more mature and more knowledgeable about other people. The metamorphosis Johnny undergoes makes this a coming of age novel. In a one-paragraph essay, list and explain some specific incidents that enable Johnny to grow and to progress toward adulthood.
5. Some novels are plot-driven, novels whose plot progresses through actions that occur. Other novels progress through character development. *Johnny Tremain* does both. Write an essay that explains how events in the novel change Johnny, and how Johnny influences events.
6. Rab is a person who does not change much throughout the novel; neither does Isannah. They are known as static characters. However, Johnny, Cilla, even Mrs. Lapham, as a minor character, do change. They are characters who evolve, grow, and adapt to their environment. Write a short essay comparing these two types of characters, static and dynamic, by focusing on two specific characters from the novel.

1. With whom does Johnny live and why?

2. What is special about Isannah?

3. Which verse of the Bible is used to apply to Johnny?

4. What does the biblical verse mean, and why may it be important in the novel?

5. What historical figure and character in the novel asks Mr. Lapham to make a creamer? Based on information in the novel, the reader learns that this particular character is also wealthy. He is also well known for his role as an American Revolutionary leader. What else do you know about him?

6. In the novel, there is an allusion to a wealthy family to whom Johnny might be related. Why is this fact mentioned?

8. In court, who testifies and saves Johnny? What is the testimony?

Chapter Five

VOCABULARY

abet – encourage
anon – later
ardent – strong enthusiasm
atrophying – withering or deteriorating
catechism – fundamental beliefs
cavort – to bound or prance about
dawdle – take more time than necessary
enigmatic – puzzling
enmity – intense hatred
equitation – the art of riding a horse
fagots – twigs
fatuous – foolish
discomfiture – frustration or disappointment
hippogriffs – monsters
imperturbable – calm and collected
orgy – uncontrolled indulgence
reveled – took great pleasure or delight
seditions – inciting rebellion
sorrel – brownish red color
suave – smoothly agreeable and courteous
syllabub – a drink made of milk and wine

1. Johnny knows that his cup is worth four pounds on the open market but figures he can get twenty pounds for it from Mr. Lyte. What happens when Johnny goes to Lyte's office? What is revealed about Mr. Lyte's character?

9. When Johnny tells those of the Observers' Club that they owe eight shillings for the newspaper, what message is he really relaying?

10. As Johnny is delivering his message to members of the Observers' Club, with what does he become preoccupied?

11. Why is Mr. Lyte excluded from those who get the message about the meeting, and why is this unusual?

12. Before Johnny makes his last stop, he runs into Cilla and Isannah. What does he notice about them?

13. Who are the Torries?

14. What do the Torries say about Sam Adams and his influence over John Hancock?
