



Mississippi History on Loan

MY DOG SKIP

Written by one of Mississippi's best known authors, Willie Morris, *My Dog Skip* revolves around the friendship between a boy, Willie, and his dog, Skip, as they experience life in 1940s Yazoo City, Mississippi. Skip helps Willie make friends and watches him grow from a boy into an adult. This online activity is targeted for elementary and middle school students and adaptable for grades 4-12.

The lesson plan includes the following:

- **Educational Frameworks**
- **Introduction**
 - Willie Morris Biography; World War II: On the Home Front; Identifying Elements of a Story; Scavenger Hunt
- **Elements of a Story: Characters**
 - Characterization; Understanding Characters
- **Elements of a Story: Setting**
 - Time and Place; Describing Home; Sensory Details; War, Then and Now
- **Elements of a Story: Plot**
 - Plotting the Plot; Rising and Falling Action; The Plot Thickens...
- **Elements of a Story: Conflict**
 - Characters in Conflict
- **Elements of a Story: Theme**
 - Determining the Author's Theme
- **Being a Writer**
 - Biography and Autobiography; Personal Analogy; Keeping a Journal
- **Extension Activity: Read *My Dog Skip***
- **Vocabulary**
- **Evaluation**

The Mississippi Department of Archives and History established the Mississippi History on Loan video program to enhance classroom instruction on Mississippi history, literature, art, personalities, and places. The program has over 200 titles available year-round for grades 4-12. The videos are offered in VHS and DVD format.

For more information please contact:

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Mississippi History on Loan MY DOG SKIP

Educational Frameworks

MDAH lessons and activities are designed to complement the updated Mississippi Department of Education frameworks and Common Core State Standards. Each lesson and activity has been matched to the grade levels, subjects, competencies, and objectives.

Mississippi Department of Education Curricular Connections		
Language Arts Common Core	4th Grade	RL 2, 3, 5; W 2, 3, 4, 7
	5th Grade	RL 2, 3, 5, 6; W 2, 3, 4, 7
	6th Grade	RL 2, 3, 6; W 2, 3, 4, 7
	7th Grade	RL 2, 3, 6; W 2, 3, 4, 7
	8th Grade	RL 2, 3, 6; W 2, 3, 4, 7
	Grades 9-10	RL 2, 3, 5; W 2, 3, 4
	Grades 11-12	RL 2, 3, 5; W 2, 3, 4
Social Studies	Mississippi Studies 4th Grade	6b
	Mississippi Studies, 9th Grade	6a
	U.S. History from Post-Reconstruction to Present	7a
	Local Culture	3c, 3d



Mississippi History on Loan **MY DOG SKIP**

Introduction

Introduction

Willie Morris Biography

World War II: On the Home Front

Identifying Elements of a Story

Scavenger Hunt



Mississippi History on Loan MY DOG SKIP

Willie Morris Biography

Who is Willie Morris?

Willie Morris (1934-1999) is one of Mississippi's best-known contemporary authors. Morris was a sixth generation Mississippian who was born in Jackson, Mississippi. As a young child, he moved with his parents to Yazoo City where many of his childhood memories were made. In high school, he edited the school's newspaper, and played football, basketball, and baseball. After graduation, Morris enrolled at the University of Texas in Austin; there he wrote for the *Daily Texan* and earned his bachelor's degree. He then traveled to England to study modern history at Oxford University. Eventually he moved to New York City and became the youngest editor of *Harper's Magazine*. In the 1980s Morris began writing about his personal experiences of growing up and living in the South. His works often reflect Mississippi's heritage, his childhood, and southern culture. Although born and raised in the South, Morris was also known to make the statement "I am an American writer who happens to have come from the South." Throughout his life he received national recognition as a journalist, nonfiction writer, novelist, essayist, autobiographer, and news commentator.

Morris' works include *Good Old Boy: A Delta Boyhood*, *The Last of the Southern Girls*, *My Dog Skip*, *Good Old Boy and the Witch of Yazoo*, *North Toward Home*, *James Jones: A Friendship*, *The Ghosts of Medgar Evers: A Tale of Race*, *Murder, Mississippi*, and *Hollywood*, and *My Cat Spit McGee*.



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MY DOG SKIP

World War II: On the Home Front

World War II: On the Home Front

World War II (1939-1945) was a conflict that spanned the entire globe. In Europe, Germany and Italy (led by Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini) joined forces to invade Austria, Poland, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, and other countries, before spreading the fighting to North Africa.

On the other side of the world, decades of disagreements between the United States and Japan were coming to a head due in part to Japan's desire to expand its territory into China and take over China's imports. On December 7, 1941, hundreds of Japanese aircraft attacked the American naval base at Pearl Harbor near Honolulu, Hawaii. Twenty-three hundred American troops died as a result of this devastating attack. The day after the assault, President Franklin Roosevelt asked Congress to declare war on Japan. Congress approved and days later, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States.

Suddenly the U.S. was plunged into an international conflict. Great Britain and Russia, who had been fighting the Germans and Italians for months, had a powerful new ally, and the people of German-occupied countries like France and Holland had new hope for liberation.

Although Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor occurred on U.S. soil and places like Hawaii, Japan, and Europe seemed very far away, World War II made a significant impact on the everyday lives of people on the American home front. Patriotism ran high. Homes and businesses displayed the American flag, and citizens pitched in to support the war effort. As men entered military service, women were given new opportunities to leave their traditional roles within the home to enter the work force. Many went to work in factories and shipyards where they produced goods that would help their fighting men overseas. Other women joined the military to work in administrative or instructor positions, freeing a man for combat.

Rationing was put in place, to limit the sale of products including gas, sugar, butter, silk, and other products that were needed by the military. One way that children helped support the war effort was to work in Victory Gardens, growing food in their own backyards to help supplement their rations of fruits and vegetables. They also collected tin foil, scrap metal, and rubber that could be turned into supplies for the military.

By the time World War II ended on August 10, 1945, there wasn't a single American household that hadn't been touched by the war. Ultimately, it took the lives of more than 35 million people, including six million Jews who were killed on the orders of Hitler. Millions more were injured and displaced or suffered the loss of personal property.

Read about Willie's experience growing up on the Home Front in Yazoo City in *My Dog Skip*, Chapter 4: War Days (pages 35 to 43).



Mississippi History on Loan MY DOG SKIP

Identifying Elements of a Story

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Answer these questions during or after watching *My Dog Skip*.

Vocabulary

Character: a person in a film or novel.

Character Trait: a distinctive feature of a character.

Climax: a decisive moment that is of maximum intensity or is a major turning point in the plot.

Event: an occurrence, something that is happening or something that will happen.

Main Character: the most important person in a film or novel.

Narrator: a person who tells the story of events in a film or novel.

Setting: the location or time period in which the action of a film or novel takes place.

1. Who is the **narrator** of the story?

2. Name the **characters** in the story. Which character is the **main character**?

3. Identify two **character traits** for each of the characters you listed above.

4. Describe the **setting** of the film *My Dog Skip*.

The Time: _____

The Place: _____



Mississippi History on Loan MY DOG SKIP

Identifying Elements of a Story Continued

5. There are several different **events** in the story. Identify three of them and explain how each event contributes to the change in Willie.

6. Each event leads to the person Willie becomes at the end of the story. What does Willie learn as he goes through everyday life with Skip?

7. What is the **climax** of the story?



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MY DOG SKIP

Identifying Elements of a Story **ANSWER KEY**

1. Willie Morris

2 and 3. Multiple Responses

Willie - Main Character; shy, reserved, non-athletic, awkward , bookworm

Skip - determined, loving, loyal, independent

Daddy - strict, embittered, reserved

Mama - fun-loving, understanding, out-going

The Bullies - mean, loyal

Rivers - friendly, understanding, loyal

Dink - understanding, conflicted (between actions of war and acceptable human conduct), overcomes personal weakness to defend a friend

4. Time: 1940s during World War II; Place: Yazoo City, Mississippi

5. Multiple Responses

Getting the Puppy - Getting the puppy gave Willie someone that he can confide in and who helps Willie meet and befriend other people, both adults and children his own age.

The Football Game - This helps Willie start to earn the respect of the Bullies and the affection of Rivers.

Overnight in the Graveyard - Although it is accidental (because it is done out of fear of the moonshiners), Willie staying in the graveyard all night gives him the reputation and status of being a person worth the friendship of the other three boys, who eventually become his friends.

Climax in the Graveyard - Dink proves that his friendship to Willie is unchanged by the events that took place on the battlefield. It also shows Willie that despite Dink's actions while in the service and the rumors going around about him, he is willing to put himself in harm's way to help a friend. You can't always believe what people say about others.

Hitting Skip at the Baseball Game - When Willie hits Skip he immediately regrets it. It becomes the worst day of his life because he has hurt his best friend and it seems Skip has abandoned him. He feels real loss.

Skip Getting Hit with the Shovel - Willie learns what deep grief and loss is when he is faced with the possibility of losing his best friend forever. He learns what it is to face the possibility of death head on.



Mississippi History on Loan MY DOG SKIP

Identifying Elements of a Story **ANSWER KEY CONTINUED**

6. Multiple Responses

He learns how to deal with bullying.

He learns the value of loyalty and friendship.

He learns that rumors and gossip are things that can hurt. You must be sympathetic to and understand the feelings of others.

Willie discovers what it feels like to suffer deep loss both when he thinks Skip has abandoned him and when Dink doesn't respond the same as he did before he left for war.

He is introduced to feelings related to death.

All through this he knows that he always has a friend in Skip, someone who won't judge or belittle him.

7. The climax occurs when Skip is hit by the moonshiners and Willie, filled with regret because of how he treated his best friend, must face the possibility of losing him forever.



Mississippi History on Loan MY DOG SKIP

Scavenger Hunt

Name _____ Date _____

During the opening credits of *My Dog Skip* the camera pans the bookshelves of Willie Morris' bedroom. Look at the list of objects that appear on the shelves. As you watch the film, watch for these objects and notate which event or situation the objects appear in.

Object	Event or Situation
slingshot	
marbles	
<i>Huckleberry Finn</i>	
football	
stuffed toy	
helmet	
Little League photograph	
binoculars	
animal skull	
flag	
Teddy Roosevelt statue	
Willie's baby photograph	
Skip's photograph	

Do all the objects on Willie's shelf appear in the film? If no, explain why the objects that do appear are special.



Mississippi History on Loan MY DOG SKIP

Scavenger Hunt Continued

After you have seen the film, use the list of objects seen at the beginning of the film and their corresponding events to decide why they are important to the plot.

1. Why would Willie keep these objects as souvenirs of his childhood? What was their special meaning? Why would he want to remember the particular events they were connected with?
2. Each object represents something that Willie learned during the course of the film. What were these lessons and how did that moment in his life change things for him?
3. Discuss your findings as a class. Did everyone come to the same or different conclusions?

Mississippi History on Loan MY DOG SKIP

Scavenger Hunt ANSWER KEY

Name _____ Date _____

During the opening credits of *My Dog Skip* the camera pans the bookshelves of Willie Morris' bedroom. Look at the list of objects that appear on the shelves. As you watch the film, watch for these objects and notate which event or situation the objects appear in.

Object	Event or Situation
slingshot	
marbles	
<i>Huckleberry Finn</i>	birthday gift from Grandpa
football	signed by Dink before he goes to war; football game with the Bullies
stuffed toy	birthday gift from Daddy
helmet	mailed to Willie from Dink in Europe; brought to Graveyard
Little League photograph	
binoculars	
animal skull	
flag	US flags appear on homes throughout the film
Teddy Roosevelt statue	
Willie's baby photograph	
Skip's photograph	

Do all the objects on Willie's shelf appear in the film? If they do not, are there clues in the film that tell you why they are special?



Mississippi History on Loan **MY DOG SKIP**

Elements of a Story: Characters

Elements of a Story: Characters

Characterization

Understanding Characters



Mississippi History on Loan MY DOG SKIP

Characterization

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Read the excerpt from *My Dog Skip* to discover how Willie **characterizes** Rivers Applewhite. Then characterize each additional character in a minimum of 2–3 sentences.

Vocabulary

Characterize: to describe a character.

...Rivers Applewhite. I had known her since we were two years old. We were in the fifth grade now, and she was the prettiest girl in our class, but she was not a demure kind of beauty. She wore her dark brown hair short, sometimes the way the models did in the library's copies of *Harper's Bazaar*, to offset her willowy grace. She had deep green eyes, and in spring and summer she was always brown as a berry from all the time she spent in the sun. She smelled of trees and clover and sunshine and grass... (p.45)

Willie

Mama

Daddy

Dink

The Bullies

Skip

The Moonshiners



Mississippi History on Loan MY DOG SKIP

Understanding Characters

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Understand and interpret the characters in *My Dog Skip*.

Vocabulary

Motivation: a reason to act a certain way.

1. Choose one character from the film. How does he or she treat others? What is the **motivation** for doing the things they do? If they were your mother, father, pet or friend how would you feel about them?

2. Remembering the events in the film, choose the character you like best. Write a paragraph telling why you like your favorite character. Include specific examples from the film.

3. Now think about the film again and choose the character you like the least. Write a second paragraph telling why you don't like this character. Include specific examples from the film.



Mississippi History on Loan **MY DOG SKIP**

Elements of a Story: Setting

Elements of a Story: Setting

Time and Place

Describing Home

Sensory Details

War, Then and Now



Mississippi History on Loan

MY DOG SKIP

Time and Place

Name _____ Date _____

Vocabulary

Scene: a division within a play or film showing what passes between certain of the actors in one place.

Setting: the location or time period in which the action of a film or novel takes place.

1. What are some of the clues that the **setting** of *My Dog Skip* takes place during a time period in the past?

2. What is the main setting of the film?

3. Name three locations within the setting where different **scenes** take place.

4. Find someone at school or at home who has lived in or visited Yazoo City. What can they tell you about it and how did their experience there compare with Willie's?



Mississippi History on Loan

MY DOG SKIP

Describing Home

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Read how Willie describes his home town of Yazoo City. Write a paragraph describing your home town, the street where you live, or your favorite place.

...The town where Old Skip and I grew up together was an unhurried and isolated place then. About ten thousand people lived there, of all races and origins, and it sat there crazily, half on steep hills and half on the flat Delta. Some of the streets were not paved, and the main street, stretching its several blocks from the Dixie Theater down to the bend in the river, was narrow and plain, but down along the quiet, shady streets, with their magnolia and pecan and elm and locust trees, were the stately old houses that had been built long before the Civil War, slightly dark and decaying until the descendants became prosperous enough to have them "restored," which usually meant one coat of white enamel... (p.6-7)



Mississippi History on Loan MY DOG SKIP

Sensory Details

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Read the excerpt from *My Dog Skip* below where Willie describes Christmas Day using sensory details. Then choose your favorite scene from the film. Create a sensory chart that includes details about the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures in that particular scene.

...And the smells from the kitchen! The fat turkey and giblet gravy and cornbread stuffing and sweet potatoes with melted marshmallows and the orange nectar and ambrosia and roasted pecans and mincemeat pies! Skip hovered around the oven while nibbling on a roasted pecan and my two great-aunts, who could not see very well, bumped into each other every now and again and wished each other Merry Christmas, while the rest of us sank into the chairs by the fire in the parlor and awaited what my grandmother was making for us. Christmas songs wafted from the chimes of the church down the way, and the crackle of firecrackers would dart out of the kitchen with Skip at her heels and say, "Almost done now!" (p.86)

Scene	
Sights	
Sounds	
Smells	
Tastes	
Textures	



Mississippi History on Loan **MY DOG SKIP**

Elements of a Story: Plot

Elements of a Story: Plot

Plotting the Plot

Rising and Falling Action

The Plot Thickens...



Mississippi History on Loan

MY DOG SKIP

Plotting the Plot

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Put these **events** in the order in which they occurred.

Vocabulary

Event: an occurrence, something that is happening or something that will happen.

Plot: also called a **storyline**; the plan, scheme, or main story of a film or novel.

_____ The Football Game

_____ Dink Comes Home

_____ Overnight in the Graveyard

_____ Skip Gets Hit with a Shovel

_____ Skip Tries to Enlist

_____ Willie Gets a Dog for his Birthday

_____ Willie and Skip at the Baseball Game

_____ Skip Gets Locked in the Mausoleum

_____ Death of the Deer

_____ Dink Sends Willie a Package

_____ Willie Grows Up



Mississippi History on Loan MY DOG SKIP

Plotting the Plot **ANSWER KEY**

Vocabulary

Event: an occurrence, something that is happening or something that will happen.

Plot: also called a **storyline**; the plan, scheme, or main story of a film or novel.

Directions: Put these **events** in the order in which they occurred.

- 3 The Football Game
- 6 Dink Comes Home
- 4 Overnight in the Graveyard
- 10 Skip Gets Hit with a Shovel
- 5 Skip Tries to Enlist
- 1 Willie Gets a Dog for his Birthday
- 8 Willie and Skip at the Baseball Game
- 9 Skip Gets Locked in the Mausoleum
- 7 Death of the Deer
- 2 Dink Sends Willie a Package
- 11 Willie Grows Up

Mississippi History on Loan MY DOG SKIP

Rising and Falling Action

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Place the events from the film on the chart to show where the **rising action**, **climax**, and **falling action** occurred.

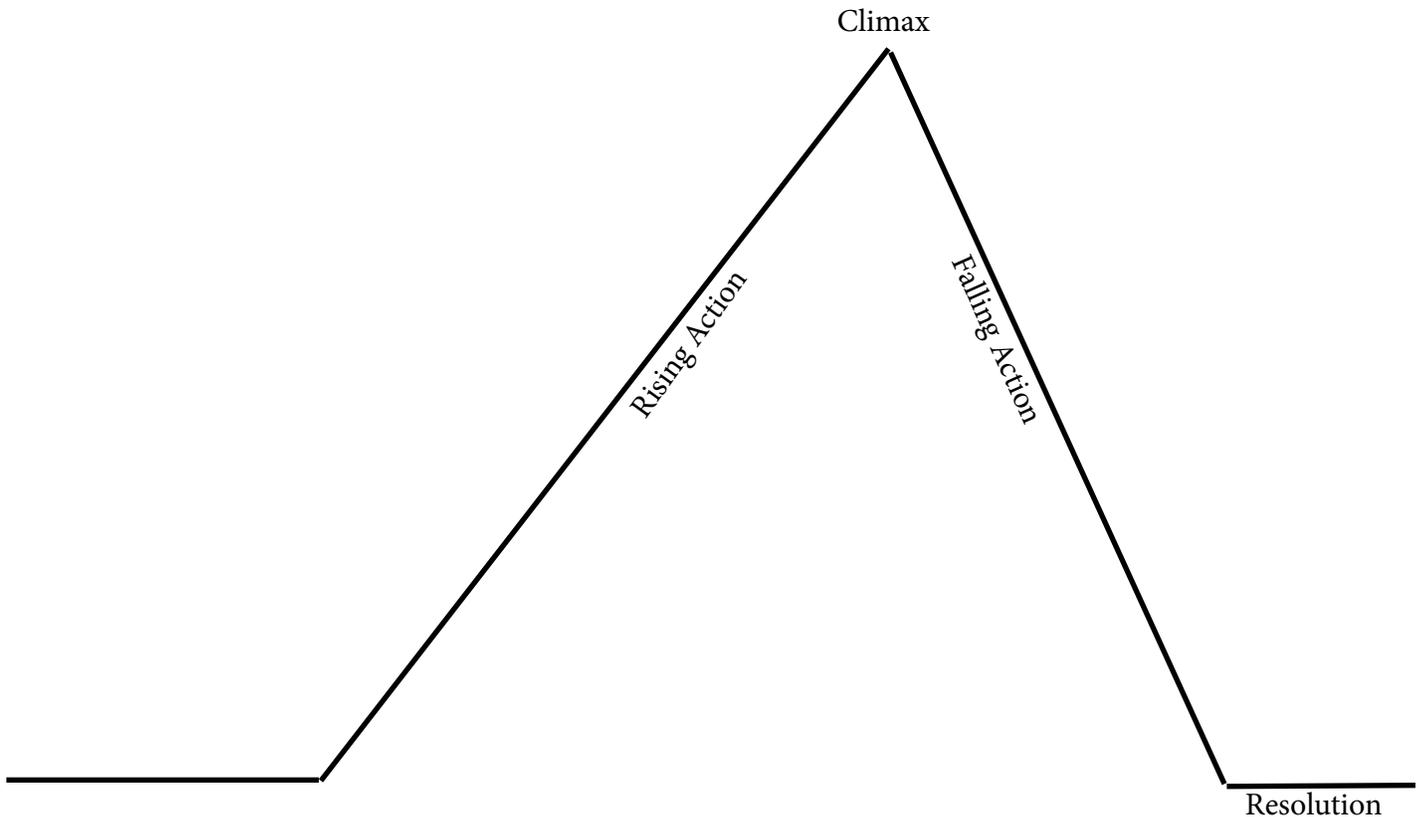
Vocabulary

Climax: a decisive moment that is of maximum intensity or is a major turning point in the plot.

Falling Action: the portion of the plot reached after the climax where the resolution occurs.

Resolution: to come to a determination; the conclusion.

Rising Action: a related series of incidents in a literary plot that build towards point of greatest interest.



Mississippi History on Loan MY DOG SKIP

Rising and Falling Action **ANSWER KEY**

Vocabulary

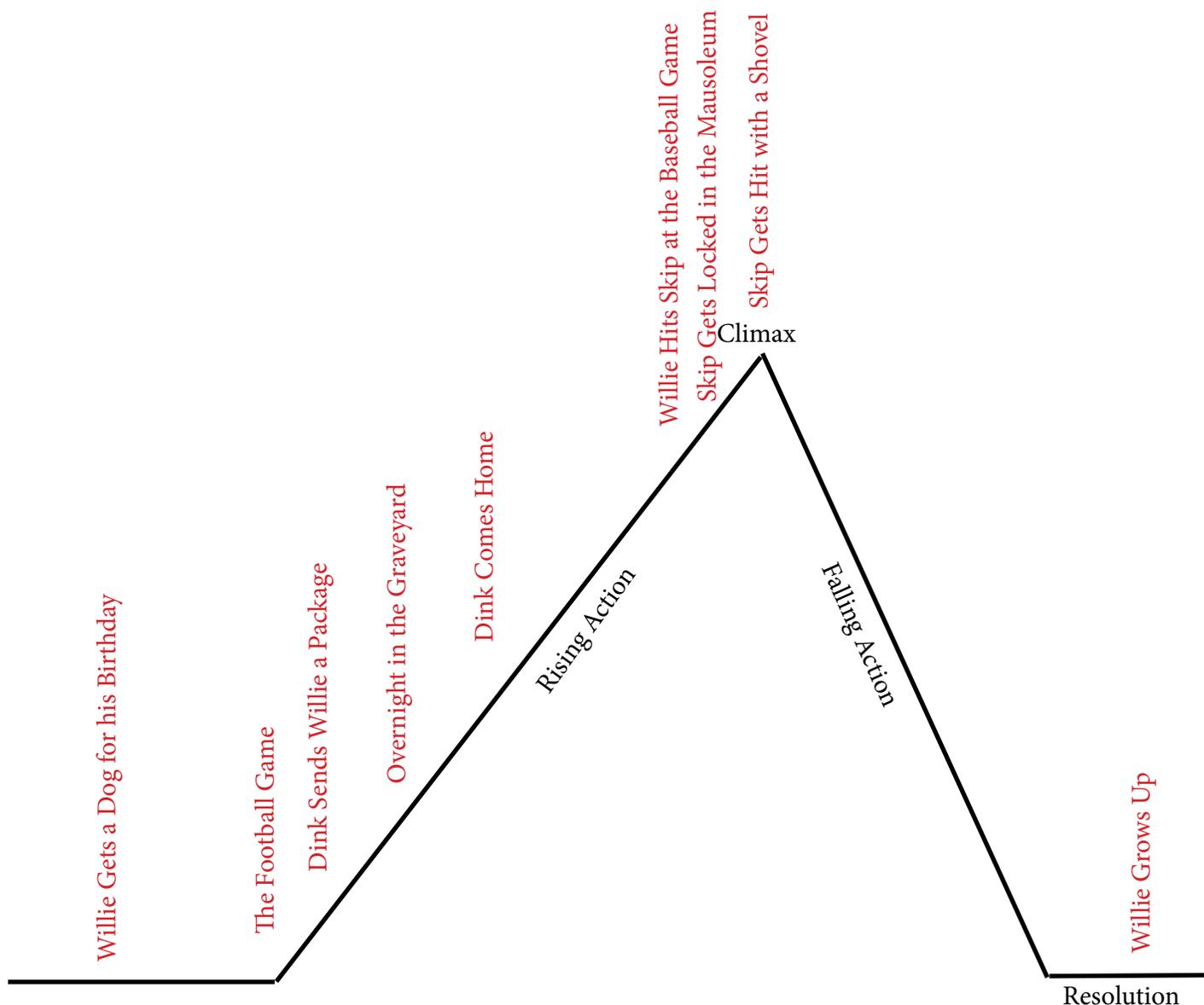
Climax: a decisive moment that is of maximum intensity or is a major turning point in the plot.

Falling Action: the portion of the plot reached after the climax where the resolution occurs.

Resolution: to come to a determination; the conclusion.

Rising Action: a related series of incidents in a literary plot that build towards point of greatest interest.

Directions: Place the events from the film on the chart to show where the **rising action**, **climax**, and **falling action** occurred.





Mississippi History on Loan

MY DOG SKIP

The Plot Thickens...

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Sometimes when a book is made into a film, the characters, settings, and plots are changed, as with *My Dog Skip*. Think back to the climatic moment of the film, when Skip gets locked in the mausoleum and hit with a shovel. Then read the below excerpt from the book, the basis for the film plot.

One evening of high summer when I was in the eleventh grade Skip did not come home. I had not seen him since morning. In all our years together this had never happened...

I telephoned Rivers, Henjie, Peewee, Muttonhead, Bubba, and Big Boy, but he was not with them. After supper I went out looking for him on my bicycle. I rode all over town, calling and whistling for him everywhere. I could hear my own sad echo off the facades of the accustomed old houses and buildings: "Skip, where are you?"...

In a desolate stretch of this vicinity something suddenly caught the corner of my eye: an old, rusty, abandoned refrigerator at the edge of a vacant field. I had noticed this derelict refrigerator three or four times in our recent journeyings around the locality, but the sagging door to it, I recalled, had always been ajar. I was drawn toward it compulsively now, as to a magnet. I got off the bicycle and approached it. I was not sure, but I thought I heard something inside, some strange rustling movement – or was it my imagination? I could hear the pounding of my own desperate heart. I reached out and yanked open the door.

Who should leap out of that refrigerator but Old Skip! He was a little limp and weak, and when he saw it was me he crawled slowly toward me and lay at my feet. I got on my knees and rubbed him around the lungs, the way we had been instructed in first aid in the Scouts. He gulped in the fresh air and began wagging his tail. He was all right! We remained there a long time, until the whistle from the sawmill across town blew. I shivered at the thought of what had happened. In his normal investigative spirit he must have crawled into the refrigerator, his movements causing the door to close behind him. He had been trapped all the time in that awful refrigerator – he could have been dead in a few hours. What must he have been thinking in his insidious entrapment? Was he just waiting there for me to come?

"Skip," I said to him, "please never leave me again." (p.114-117)

Directions: Answer the following questions comparing the climatic moments of the film and the book.

1. What are some of the main differences between the climatic moments of the film and the book?

2. Why do you suppose the filmmakers made these changes?

3. What version do you think makes for a better or more interesting story? Why?



Mississippi History on Loan **MY DOG SKIP**

Elements of a Story: Conflict

Elements of a Story: Conflict

Characters in Conflict



Mississippi History on Loan MY DOG SKIP

Characters in Conflict

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Write the name of the name of the character and the **type of conflict** next to the **conflict** in the chart.

Vocabulary

Conflict: a problem that occurs within the story.

Types of Conflict: Person vs. Person; Person vs. Self; Person vs. Nature; Person vs. Society; Person vs. Circumstance

Character	Type of Conflict	Conflict
		Bullies make fun of him.
		Lost his leg in the Spanish Civil War.
		Has been branded a coward.
		Gets locked in the mausoleum.
		Intimidated by Moonshiners.
		Tries to drink his troubles away.



Mississippi History on Loan MY DOG SKIP

Characters in Conflict **ANSWER KEY**

Vocabulary

Conflict: a problem that occurs within the story.

Types of Conflict: Person vs. Person; Person vs. Self; Person vs. Nature; Person vs. Society; Person vs. Circumstance

Directions: Write the name of the name of the character and the **type of conflict** next to the **conflict** in the chart.

Character	Type of Conflict	Conflict
Willie	Person vs. Person	Bullies make fun of him.
Daddy	Person vs. Circumstance	Lost his leg in the Spanish Civil War.
Dink	Person vs. Society	Has been branded a coward.
Skip	Person vs. Circumstance	Gets locked in the mausoleum.
Willie	Person vs. Person	Intimidated by Moonshiners.
Dink	Person vs. Self	Tries to drink his troubles away.



Mississippi History on Loan **MY DOG SKIP**

Elements of a Story: Theme

Elements of a Story: Theme

Determining the Author's Theme



Mississippi History on Loan MY DOG SKIP

Determining the Author's Theme

Name _____ Date _____

Vocabulary

Theme: a unifying or dominant idea developed throughout a literary or dramatic work.

Pre-Viewing Directions: Read *Who is Willie Morris*. Note that he is one of Mississippi's most noted authors, and that the film *My Dog Skip* is adapted from a book he wrote describing events that took place in his early years growing up in Yazoo City, Mississippi.

Post-Viewing Directions: Break into groups and discuss the events in the film, looking at how Willie Morris portrayed them. Analyze the importance of the events, what Willie learned, and what he might have carried with him from those lessons. Other areas of discussion may include, but not be limited to: why he chose those events, the importance of the people he wrote about, and the culture of the era. Many of these answers may be found with the assistance of the worksheets included in this lesson. You can also research the author to determine the main influences in his life and how these may have affected the values and ideas that he includes in his writings.

You will then (as a group) generate a paper describing what you have determined was the author's theme within this autobiographical story and how you came to this conclusion. You will need to analyze the information and use specific details to support your observations and statements.



Mississippi History on Loan **MY DOG SKIP**

Being a Writer

Being a Writer

Biography and Autobiography

Personal Analogy

Keeping a Journal



Mississippi History on Loan MY DOG SKIP

Biography and Autobiography

Name _____ Date _____

Vocabulary

Autobiography: a history of someone's life written by that person; a **memoir**.

Biography: a written account of another person's life.

Memory: a recollection or remembrance.

1. Is the book *My Dog Skip* a biography or an autobiography? What about the film version? How do you know?

2. Willie Morris was 61 years old when the book *My Dog Skip* was published. Why do you think he waited over 50 years to write a story about his 9-year-old self? How do you think age affects **memory**?

3. Although all the people in the film are real, some, such as the Witch of Yazoo, are more well-known than others. Research the Witch of Yazoo and write a biography about her life; be sure to include the 5 Ws - who, what, where, when, and why.



Mississippi History on Loan MY DOG SKIP

Personal Analogy

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Think about the various things that happened to Willie in the film, some of which are listed below. Have you had a similar experience? Write a personal **analogy** comparing something that happened to Willie to something that has happened to you.

Vocabulary

Analogy: a comparison to show similarity.

Topics could include:

- Bullying
- Death
- Hurtful Gossip
- Having a Best Friend
- Having a Pet
- Being Mean to Someone and then Regretting It
- Having a Crush on Someone for the First Time
- Making New Friends
- Doing Something Scary



Mississippi History on Loan MY DOG SKIP

Keeping a Journal

Name _____ Date _____

“If there is anything that makes southerners distinctive from the main body of Americans, it is a certain burden of memory and a burden of history...I think sensitive southerners have this in their bones, this profound awareness of the past.” *Willie Morris*

Directions: Keep a journal over a specific period of time (i.e. a month, quarter, or semester). Add entries on a daily basis or several times each week. At the end of the specified time period select a minimum of three events in your journal and compose a story recalling the specific details that occurred at the time and what makes those particular events stand out as an important event in your past.



Mississippi History on Loan **MY DOG SKIP**

Extension Activity: Read *My Dog Skip*

Now that you've seen the film *My Dog Skip*, it's time to head to your local library, check-out, and read the book! While you read, think about the following questions:

- What are the similarities and differences between the film and the book?
- Do your favorite characters and parts remain the same? Why or why not?
- Do you enjoy the film or the book more - why?



Mississippi History on Loan MY DOG SKIP

Vocabulary

Analogy: a comparison used to show similarity.

Autobiography: a history of someone's life written by that person; a memoir.

Biography: a written account of another person's life.

Character Trait: a distinctive feature of a character.

Character: a person in a film or novel.

Characterize: to describe a character.

Climax: a decisive moment that is of maximum intensity or is a major turning point in the plot.

Conflict: a problem that occurs within the story.

Event: an occurrence, something that is happening or something that will happen.

Falling Action: the portion of the plot reached after the climax where the resolution occurs.

Main Character: the most important person in a film or novel.

Memory: a recollection or remembrance.

Motivation: a reason to act a certain way.

Narrator: a person who tells the story of events in a film or novel.

Plot: also called a storyline; the plan, scheme, or main story of a film or novel.

Resolution: to come to a determination; the conclusion.

Rising Action: a related series of incidents in a literary plot that build towards point of greatest interest.

Scene: a division within a play or film showing what passes between certain of the actors in one place.

Setting: the location or time period in which the action of a film or novel takes place.

Theme: a unifying or dominant idea developed throughout a literary or dramatic work.



Mississippi History on Loan MY DOG SKIP

Teacher Evaluation

MDAH LESSON PLANS

COMPLETE BOTH SIDES AND PLEASE MAIL OR FAX TO THE ADDRESS ON THE NEXT PAGE. THANK YOU!

TEACHER NAME _____

SCHOOL NAME & ADDRESS _____

EMAIL (OPTIONAL) _____

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS _____ GRADE LEVEL _____

1. In your opinion, did this unit elicit better than average student response; if so, how?

2. Which segments of the unit exceeded your students' attention span?

3. Will this unit be of assistance to you in developing future classroom activities; if so, how?

4. How did this unit add to your earlier teaching on the same subject?

5. Would this teaching unit be handier to use as a:

___single-day unit ___multi-day unit ___multi-week unit ___other

6. Were the activities and lessons appropriate for your students? How?

Mississippi History on Loan MY DOG SKIP

Teacher Evaluation Continued

Please rate the following lesson materials and activities by circling the appropriate number.

4=excellent, 3=good, 2=average, 1=inadequate

Directions and notes	4	3	2	1		
Curricular Connections	4	3	2	1		
References and resources	4	3	2	1		
Student worksheets			4	3	2	1
Introduction			4	3	2	1
Willie Morris Biography; World War II: On the Home Front; Identifying Elements of a Story; Scavenger Hunt						
Elements of a Story: Characters			4	3	2	1
Characterization; Understanding Characters						
Elements of a Story: Setting			4	3	2	1
Time and Place; Sensory Details; War, Then and Now						
Elements of a Story: Plot			4	3	2	1
Plotting the Plot; Rising and Falling Action						
Elements of a Story: Conflict			4	3	2	1
Characters in Conflict						
Elements of a Story: Theme			4	3	2	1
Determining the Author's Theme						
Being a Writer			4	3	2	1
Biography and Autobiography; Personal Analogy; Keeping a Journal						
Extension Activity: Read <i>My Dog Skip</i>			4	3	2	1
Vocabulary			4	3	2	1
Overall unit			4	3	2	1

We would appreciate any additional comments on this teaching unit and any suggestions for improvement. Comments may be entered in the space below.

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