4th grade Unit 2nd Semester

This unit is designed around the book The Keeping Room by Anna Myers as its extended text.

F & P level V

Lexile Level 740

This story is an historical fiction story that takes place during the American Revolutionary War. Colonel Joseph Kershaw leaves to Camden, South Carolina, to lead the American army in their fight against the British. While he is gone, Young Joseph is left to be the man of the house at the age of thirteen. General Cornwallis and his troops come into town and make the Kershaw residence their headquarters. Young Joseph is determined to protect his family and take revenge in order to honor his father.

The information in this text can be presented to your students in many ways. If your students are not yet able to read level V, you could read it aloud. Students who are able to read level V can read it on their own without support working in groups to discuss key questions and then adding to whole class discussion. Students who are at a level S or T could read the book in pairs for support. At this time there isn’t a recorded version of the story, however, you could create one if necessary for your lower level readers.

**Vocabulary Words**

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| **Chapter 1** | **Chapter 2** | **Chapter 3** | **Chapter 4** | **Chapter 5** | **Chapter 6** |
| murmuring | henchmen | gristmill | speculation | pianoforte | banished |
| veranda | musing | backcountry | under petticoat | quartered | plucky |
| enterprises |  | prosperous | hearth | stockade | desist |
| scoffs |  | breeches | realm | downtrodden | regiment |
| pudding |  | tory | mesmerized |  | gallows |
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| **Chapter 7** | **Chapter 8** | **Chapter 9** | **Chapter 10** | **Chapter 11** | **Chapter 12** |
| outbuilding | smallpox |  | merriment | damask | fortnight |
|  | scrapper |  | endeavor |  | distress |
|  |  |  | billeted |  |  |
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When reading an **extended text** with students you may want to **read aloud** the first chapter of the book and **discuss** it with the class or small group of students. Often times in this chapter the characters are introduced, the problem of the story may be revealed, and the setting is established. When you read it aloud it allows the students to become familiar with the voice of the text. You can use this opportunity to establish expectation for the rest of the chapters.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Chapter 1

In the first chapter (pg. 2) Joseph says to his **son “Stand Tall my boy. Remember all I have taught you. Be brave and strong. There will be ways you can help the men of the town fight should it fall out that my men and I do not stop the bloody British.”**

What does it mean “stand tall” **(4LA\_A20124/ELACC4RL4)**

On page 4 Joseph tells himself “My father has told me the army will be stopped before they reach our town of Camden. I tell myself my father is always right.”

On page 5 Joseph imagines himself writing a letter to his father. “Dear Father, I am afraid. Have you ever been afraid? Tell me how to make my heart stop pounding.”

**Using the thoughts and words from Joseph’s father and from young Joseph, how do you describe young Joseph’s problem/conflict? (4:A\_A2012-1/ELACC4RL)**

Chapter 2

During young Joseph’s studies he is reading a Greek play called *Antigone.* In the play the girl is determined to bury her brother even though it may be dangerous for her. The girls says (pg. 13) “It is the dead, not the living, who make the longest demands.”

**Explain what that means and the relevance it plays in this book?**

**Why does this disturb young Joseph? As a reader, how does it help build upon the character traits of young Joseph? (4:A\_A2012-1/ELACC4RL)**

 **(4LA\_A2012-3/ELACC4RL3)**

Chapter 3

In this chapter young Joseph is remember a time when he accompanied his father to all of his businesses in town. They were having a conversation about the troubles with England. His father says to him “They’d have us in chains, son, making laws for us without giving us any say.” His father threw his fist into the air and said “I did not come to this country to become a slave.” (pg. 18) Then later in the day Father’s words came to Joseph again about being a slave as Cato ran from the keeping room’s front doors to lift to his small shoulders the large bag his father had carried. Joseph says to his father, “Father, do you suppose Cato and the others wanted to leave Africa and become slaves?” (pg. 19)

**Reread pages 18 & 19 to the students. Discuss the conflict that Joseph is feeling between the statement his father made about coming to this country to be a slave and then realizing they were enslaving Africans on their plantation. Ask the students to infer what Joseph was thinking? How does this interfere with his loyalty to his father? (4LA\_A2012-3/ELACC4RL3) (4:A\_A2012-1/ELACC4RL) (4LA\_A2012-6/ELACC4RL6)**

Chapter 4

Mother tells Joseph on page 33 “It is sometimes just as brave to know when not to fight as it is to fight.” **Ask the students to explain what this means. How do these wise words cause conflict with young Joseph? (4LA\_A20124/ELACC4RL4)**

**Why does Joseph struggle with the Quaker beliefs of this mother and teacher? How do they interfere with his image of himself and his father? How do they cause conflict for him? (4LA\_A20124/ELACC4RL4)** (**4LA\_A2012-3/ELACC4RL3)**

Ask the students to explain what Cato means when he **says “Yo’ might got the master’s gun, boy, but ol Cato knows who yo’ is. Does yo’? Before yo’ puint that gun at a living thing make sure it’s something yo’ want dead, cause that’s what guns does, boy” (pg. 39)**

**Ask the students why do they think Cato did not tell Joseph’s mother that Joseph had the gun?**

**Why did young Joseph decide to surrender? Does this mean that he did not “stand tall” as his father asked him?**

Chapter 5

In chapter 5, the town of Camden, SC surrenders to the British. Lord Cornwallis decided to make the Kershaw house the British army’s headquarters**. How is does this affect the family? Which family member do you think is the most affected? What are your predictions now that the town of Camden has surrendered to the British?**

**Joseph’s mother said to Joseph “Maybe they are not all bad? (pg. 61) What are your thoughts about soldiers? Is the side of the enemy all bad?**

Chapter 6

In this chapter the family discovers their dad/husband is alive but is now a prisoner of war. Mrs. Kershaw wants to visit her husband in the jail but they will not allow her to, however, young Joseph is allowed to visit his father in the Camden jail. **Using evidence it this chapter describe the conversation between young Joseph and his father. Why does young Joseph think he has let his father down?**

**Why do you think Captain Harkins feels the need to protect young Joseph? Why is young Joseph so angry with Captain Harkins?**

Chapter 7

**Why do young Joseph and his sister Mary decide to write for the Redcoats?**

**Young Joseph’s sister is a secondary character in the book. Using evidence from the first seven chapters, explain the character traits for Mary? How is she different from young Joseph?**

**On pages 100-101 young Joseph and Mother have a conversation about Biddy. Young Joseph tells his mother that Biddy is so lucky to have found so kind a mistress. Mother says to Joseph “No, Joey, I can’t say a human being who is bought and sold is lucky.” Using this information and the information from chapter 3, do you think young joseph is more like his mother than his father? Explain.**

Chapter 8

In this chapter, Lord Cornwallis moved out of the Camden house and Lard Rawdon has moved in. **How does this change the life for the Kershaw family? We are now seeing the charter traits of young Joseph evolving. How is he becoming his own individual and not the same as his father? Use evidence from the chapter to support your thinking?**

Chapter 9

In every chapter young Joseph is imagining writing his father. We are privileged to get an insight into what Joseph is thinking. **Read the letter on pg. 113, infer and discuss what this means?**

Chapter 10

**This chapter is the turning point to the story. Discuss what transpires in this chapter. How is this going to change Joseph? What are his feelings for Captain Harkins now? What does Joseph learn? Think back to the words of Cato on pg. 39 and mother’s words on pg. 61. How does this information play into this chapter? What do you think the theme of the story might be?**

Chapter 11

In this chapter, the British leave the Camden house. Why do you think the British left the way they did? Do you think if Lord Cornwallis was still there instead of Captain Rawdon, do you think it would be different? **Use evidence from the book to support your answer.**

Chapter 12

**In the letter that Joseph writes to his father, explain how young Joseph has changed from the beginning of the book to now? Why does he now have the courage to “stand tall” to his father?**

**Read the book Katie’s Trunk by Ann Turner to the students or if you have enough copies of the book, allow students to read the book in small groups. Have the students create a Venn-diagram comparing the book to The Keeping Room.**

**In chapter 11 Joseph does not write a letter to his father, what do you think he would have said to his father if he did? Write a letter to Joseph Sr. from Joseph Jr.**

**Have the students research the American Revolution. Ask them to choose and area of interest; i.e. events leading up to the war, one of the battles, an important person, and create a newspaper on the American Revolution.**

**Use the following sentences from the story to introduce metaphors to the students. Have the students search in other books for metaphors. Ask them to write some of their own.**

**On pg.30 “My entire body is shaking as if it were but a tree branch in a violent windstorm.**

**On pg. 36 “When at last Mother’ is still, I slip from bed, stepping carefully upon the rays of moonlight dancing across the shiny oak floor.”**

**Thematically connected short text**

Katie’s Trunkby Ann Turner and Robert Himler

F & P level: R

Lexile: 660

If You Lived at the Time of the American Revolution by Kay Moore

F & P level: Q

Lexile 860

My America: When Freedom Comes: Hope’s Revolutionary War Diary Book #3

By Kristiana Gregory

F & P Level P

Lexile: 610

Patrick Henry’s speech “Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death”

<http://www.historyplace.com/speeches/henry.html>

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zk6eqO5RuXc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zk6eqO5RuXc%20%20)