

# Caleb's Story Lesson Plan | Scholastic.com

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**Subject Area:** Language Arts

**Reading Level:** 3.5

## Book Summary

Picking up where *Sarah, Plain and Tall* and *Skylark* leave off, this lovely story is written from Caleb's point of view. Sister Anna has moved to town to attend high school, leaving Caleb to — reluctantly — take over her journal writing. We meet Jacob and Sarah's daughter, Cassie, and then Jacob's long-estranged father. The warmth and love of Wittig family life come through in this heartwarming tale from the prairie.

## Objective

Students will gain an understanding of the use of prediction as a reading strategy.

Standard: *Students will practice making, confirming, and revising simple predictions about what will be found in a text (e.g. use prior knowledge and ideas presented in text, illustrations, titles, topic sentences, key words, and foreshadowing clues).*

## Before Reading

### The Wittig Family Saga

Familiarize your students with the stories of Sarah, Jacob, Caleb, and Anna.

1. If you have not read *Sarah, Plain and Tall* and/or *Skylark* as a class, take time to explain the stories to your students. If you have read the previous books together, simply remind your class of their events.
2. *Sarah* and *Skylark* were written from Anna's point of view. *Caleb's Story* is, obviously, told from Caleb's unique vantage point. What different perspective might he bring? How might a boy's life on the prairie differ from that of a girl's?
3. Show your students the cover of *Caleb's Story*. Can they predict who is pictured? Where might the family be going? Who is the older man in the back? Who might the little girl be?

## Teaching Plan

### Activities

#### The Best Guess

Help your students flex their prediction muscles!

1. Stop reading halfway through the book. (After finishing Chapter 6, it might be a good place to stop.)
2. Caleb has discovered that Grandfather is sick, but he doesn't know why Grandfather won't read Anna's journals. He doesn't fully understand why Papa is so angry. Ask your students to predict possible explanations for Grandfather's actions. Have them draw a line down the middle of a lined sheet of paper. On one side they should write "Reasons for Grandfather's Actions" and on the other they should write "Story Clues." The first column is self-explanatory, but in the second column, they should list clues from the book that support their predicted reasons.

3. Have each student share his or her predictions with the rest of the class. Talk about the predictions and the supporting clues. Are many the same? Why or why not?
4. As you continue reading, compare the actual events and revelations with students' predictions.

### **What Comes Next?**

Will there be more from the Wittigs?

1. Talk about the three installments of the prairie saga presented in *Sarah, Plain and Tall*; *Skylark*; and *Caleb's Story*.
2. Ask each student to choose his or her favorite character. Try to ensure that not all students choose the same one.
3. Have students write a paragraph about what might happen to his or her chosen character over the next five years. Depending on the abilities of your class, you may also ask them to make predictions about the next ten years and beyond.
4. Ask students to provide support from *Caleb's Story* for their predictions. For instance, Anna may go on to college because she is a good student; Caleb may become a writer because he's enjoying his journal writing.
5. Share these predictions with your class. Post the paragraphs on a classroom bulletin board.

### **More Books About Life on the Prairie**

The Little House book series

by *Laura Ingalls Wilder*

The classic and beloved series follows young Laura and her family as they struggle to survive and prosper on the frontier.

Prairie Songs

by *Pam Conrad*

A harsh and unrelenting look at the realities of prairie life. When a doctor and his young wife move from New York City to Nebraska, they are tested in ways they couldn't have imagined.

### **Other Books by Patricia MacLachlan**

*Sarah, Plain and Tall*

*Skylark*

*Arthur, for the Very First Time*

*Through Grandpa's Eyes*

*Cassie Binegar*

*Mama One, Mama Two*

*Seven Kisses in a Row*

*Unclaimed Treasures*

*The Facts and Fictions of Minna Pratt*

*All the Places to Love*

*What You Know First*

*Three Names*

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- Subjects:

Confronting and Resolving Fears, Family Life, Guided Reading, Literature, Reading

Comprehension, Reading Response, Literature Appreciation, Literary Response

- Skills:

Point of View, Writing