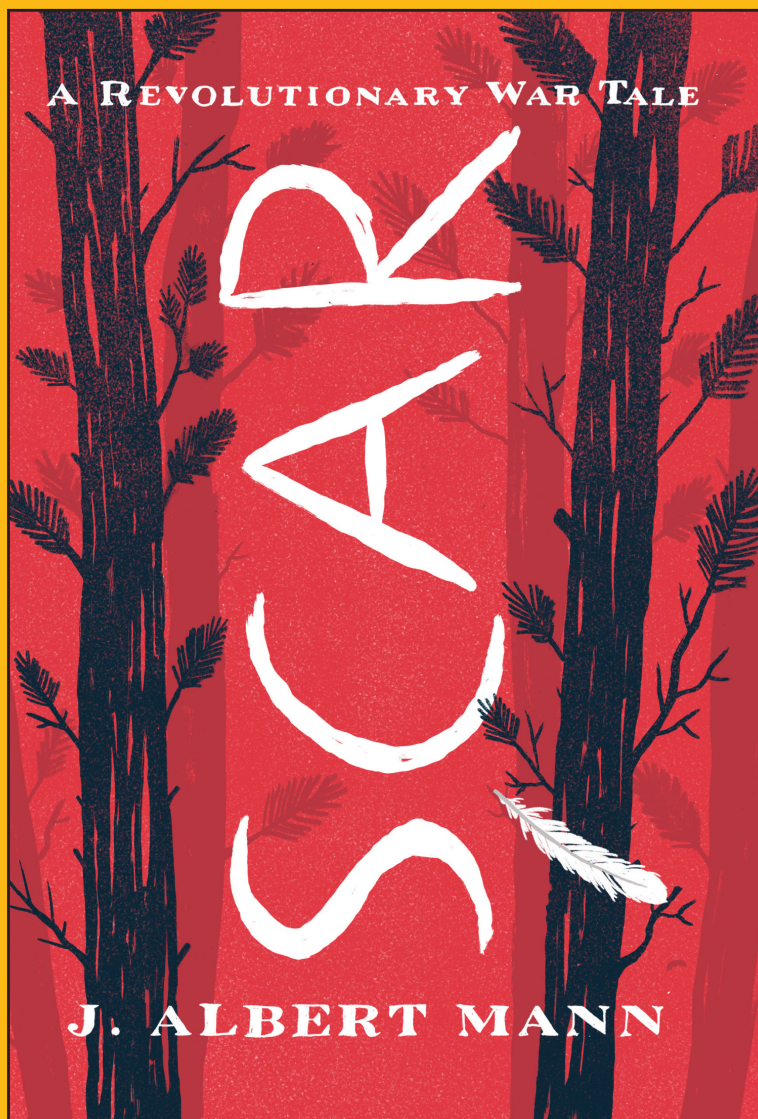


Educator's Guide



CALKINS CREEK



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Highlights

INTRODUCTION

Mixing actual events and historical figures from the American Revolution with imagined incidents and characters, J. Albert Mann takes readers to four eventful days in late July 1779 when the Revolutionary War came to a small farming settlement in upstate New York. The events of that brief period may not be very well known, but the richly detailed storytelling will allow your students to experience them vividly and come to see the bigger picture in ways they have not before. Told in first person by sixteen-year-old Noah Daniels, the novel brings readers close enough to understand the realities of war and the questions it raises about loyalty and courage, ethics and moral decision-making, and loss and the inevitability of change.

The novel focuses on two related stories in Noah's life, told in alternating chapters linked by cause and effect. This provides your students with a way of considering the earlier events and their result on the two unlikely friends at the center of the story: Noah and a Mohawk Indian boy he calls Scar.

This classroom guide offers activities and discussion questions that extend *Scar: A Revolutionary War Tale* into a range of curriculum areas: history, ethics, language arts (writing, literature, reading for details, speaking and listening, and vocabulary), cooperative learning, art, and critical thinking.

The activities and discussion questions also link the book to fifth grade Common Core State Standards. These are noted in bold after each activity.

COMMON CORE ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS GUIDE:

RI—READING: INFORMATIONAL TEXT

RL—READING: LITERATURE

SL—SPEAKING AND LISTENING

W—WRITING

BEFORE READING

LANGUAGE ARTS: READING, SPEAKING AND LISTENING; SOCIAL STUDIES: HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY

The events depicted in *Scar* are based on the American Revolutionary Battle at Minisink Ford that took place on July 22, 1779. With your class, go to the Minisink Valley Historial Society's website:

<http://minisink.org/minisinkbattle.html>

Have the students take turns reading aloud from the beginning through the section "Last Stand on the Rocky Hill." This will provide them with historical background for understanding the novel.

[RI 5.1, 5.5, 5.5; SL 5.1, 5.2]

CHECKING IN

LANGUAGE ARTS: READING (SEQUENCING, READING FOR DETAILS, EVALUATING IMPORTANCE), SPEAKING AND LISTENING; WRITING; CRITICAL THINKING

1. To be sure your students are tracking the events of the novel, following them in proper sequence, and understanding their relationships to each other, have them keep a timetable of what happens on each of the four days. They can use a simple chart like the one below. We've already filled in one event for each day.

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
July 20, 1779	July 21, 1779	July 22, 1779	July 23, 1779
The Daniels' house is burnt to the ground.	Noah returns to Van Auken's Fort.	Noah stumbles over a half buried Indian.	Scar dies.

When they've completed their timetables, students should identify what they think the most important event of each day is. Discuss with the class a variety of ways to evaluate importance, considering importance to the plot, to the development of a character, or to history. Each student should write a paragraph explaining why he or she thinks their chosen event is the most important.

[RL 5.1, 5.3, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7; W 5.1, 5.4; SL 5.1, 5.4, 5.5]

LANGUAGE ARTS: READING, SPEAKING AND LISTENING

2. These questions will help you assess your students' understanding, memory, and ability to draw connections between some of the details in *Scar*:

- What is the frock? Why is it so important to Noah?
- How did the Daniels family prepare for an Indian raid?
- Why did the Littles move to Noah's settlement?
- How does Noah react when he first sees Eliza?
- What actions does Noah take to attend to Scar's wounds?
- What was the militia's strategy to defeat Joseph Brant?

[RL 5.1, 5.2, 5.3]

VOCABULARY

LANGUAGE ARTS: READING VOCABULARY; ART

In *Scar: A Revolutionary War Tale*, your students will encounter many new words and terms. To help them to learn these new terms, they should write each new word and its definition on an index card, to create a *Scar* glossary of words and terms. In addition to the definition, your students can add their own illustrations to help explain the word or term. For example, "privy", as used in the story, could be drawn as an outhouse or a toilet. The illustrations can then be placed around the classroom, and the cards can be kept in an alphabetical file for future reference. Below are a few words to get them started:

Muslin	Reverend
Musket	Mimic
Privy	Oppressive
Scour	Palisade
Hardscrabble	

[RL 5.4]

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

LANGUAGE ARTS: LITERATURE, READING (CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT), SPEAKING AND LISTENING

1. When we first meet Noah Daniels, he tells us:

“An ache sprouts in my chest like a twisting black vine, wrapping its dark branches around my heart. It is hate, coiling, choking hate”
(page 8).

Why is he so filled with hate and anger? On whom does he take it out? What brings him to his senses? This is your students’ introduction to Noah—what kind of young man do they think he is? How does the experience of the raid and the following battle change Noah?

[[IRL 5.1](#), [5.2](#), [5.3](#), [5.6](#); [SL 5.2](#), [5.3](#)]

LANGUAGE ARTS: LITERATURE, READING (CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT), SPEAKING AND LISTENING; SOCIAL STUDIES; CRITICAL THINKING

2. Find examples of how the following people perceive Noah, based on his disability:

- Noah himself
- Noah’s mother
- Eliza Little
- The militiamen

Discuss how Noah’s disability shapes his character and his actions. How would he be perceived today?

[[IRL 5.1](#), [5.2](#), [5.3](#), [5.4](#), [5.6](#); [SL 5.1](#), [5.3](#)]

LANGUAGE ARTS: READING, SPEAKING AND LISTENING, WRITING; CRITICAL THINKING; COOPERATIVE LEARNING

3. Divide your class into three groups. Assign one of the statements below to each group. Have each group engage in close reading of the passages that include their quote, beginning immediately before and ending just after. Then each group should discuss the meaning—both within the situation and beyond it—of the quotes from Noah, Dr. Tusten, and Joseph Brant. Then each group should prepare a short presentation of their conclusions and reasoning about the meaning of their quote and deliver it to the class.

- The leaders of the militiamen motivate them with stirring speeches, including the speech given by Major Meeker on page 96.
 “‘We shall engage [the enemy] . . . and we shall run him down.’ . . . And with those words, the roar of the men assaults [Noah’s] ears. . . . But why is it that when our hearts fill with emotion, our heads empty of good thought?”
- Later, on page 104, Dr. Tusten says:
 “The British fight with their pride . . . We fight with our hearts.”
- After the battle, Joseph Brant talks with Noah for a while. When Noah states that the militia lost, Brant tells Noah (page 128):
 “Boy, I fight a battle every day of my life that I know I will lose. . . . It’s not that the fight is worth your life, it’s that your life is worthless if you do not fight.”

[RL 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6; W 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5; SL 5.1, 5.4]

LANGUAGE ARTS: SPEAKING AND LISTENING; ETHICS; CRITICAL THINKING

4. Raise the questions: What is courage and who is a hero? In *Scar*, when it is clear that the militia has lost the battle and Colonel Hathorn urges Dr. Tusten to leave and take Noah with him, the doctor refuses. On page 123, Noah tells us:

“I know what the doctor is doing right now is surely heroic. I only stay because I fear losing him. I’ve lost my father, and Josh. I can’t lose him.”

Have the class discuss Dr. Tusten’s decision. What about his actions as the militia is being defeated makes him a hero in Noah’s eyes? Are there other characters that act heroically? Discuss Noah’s father, Josh, Colonel Hathorn, Joseph Brant, and Scar. Does Noah act like a hero? And on the other side of the coin, how does Noah define cowardice? What does Noah do that makes him feel like a coward? Have your students identify contemporary heroes. What actions or traits do these people and the people in the book have in common?

[RL 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.6; SL 5.1, 5.2]

ACTIVITIES

LANGUAGE ARTS: VOCABULARY, WRITING, LITERATURE, READING (DETAILS, CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT)

1. As your students read the novel, have them collect words and phrases that describe Noah’s mother, his father, Eliza Little, and Noah himself. They should fill in a chart like the one below and cite the page where they found the description. Students should also add their own adjectives or descriptive phrases. We’ve filled in some to get your students started.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

Character	Descriptions	Page
Noah	16-year-old disabled farm boy	15
Noah’s mother	Never stops moving	17
Noah’s father	Excellent storyteller	36
Eliza Little	Thinks everything is funny	50

[RL 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7; W 5.2, 5.4]

LANGUAGE ARTS: WRITING, SPEAKING AND LISTENING; CRITICAL THINKING

2. “My father always said that a good story was nature’s painkiller . . .”
(page 36)

To distract Scar from his pain, Noah tells him the story of meeting Eliza. Each student should write his or her own best story—the story they would tell Scar if they were in Noah’s place. They should then practice telling their stories out loud in the most entertaining way possible. Set aside an afternoon for students to tell their stories and for the class to react and suggest ways that their fellow students can improve their stories and storytelling.

[RL 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.6; W 5.3, 5.4, 5.5; SL 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4]

LANGUAGE ARTS: WRITING; ART; COOPERATIVE LEARNING

3. There are a number of visual scenes in *Scar: A Revolutionary War Tale*. Here are six:
- The Mohawk raid on the settlement
 - Noah meeting Eliza Little for the first time
 - Noah at Van Auken’s Fort
 - The militia being defeated by the Tories and Mohawk
 - Noah tending to Scar’s injuries
 - Noah and Scar being discovered by Joseph Brant

Group your students into teams of six writers/illustrators. Each member of the team should pick one of the scenes mentioned and illustrate it in a four to six panel comic strip. Besides the art, the panels should include description, narration, dialogue, and thought balloons. Each group should mount their comic strips in a display in the order they appear in the book to create a graphic novel of *Scar*. If a team decides to, they can also add panels of other events that occur in the story.

[RL 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.6, 5.7; W 5.3, 5.4, 5.5]

RESEARCH

1. In a work of historical fiction, there are always questions that arise about what is real and what the author created. In addition, the places and people who have a role in both the book and history arouse the readers' curiosity. The following research topics will enable your students to answer some of those questions and satisfy their curiosity. Divide your students into four teams and assign one of the following research topics to each team.

Each team should put together a presentation of their findings. The format can be reports, PowerPoint, video, posters, shadow boxes, plays, newspapers, etc. The teams should be certain to include a comparison between the facts they have discovered and the way the places or people they have researched are depicted by J. Albert Mann in *Scar*.

RESEARCH TOPICS:

- THE GEOGRAPHY AND THE EVENTS OF THE BATTLE. Students should start with the map of the Minisink Valley, 1650–1883 and compare it to a current map of the area. They can then pursue histories of the counties, the towns, and the rivers.

Here are some websites to get the research going:

<http://minisink.org/patent.html>

http://home.earthlink.net/~americanlinks/the_battle_of_minisink_new_york_july_1779/index.html.

- DR. BENJAMIN TUSTEN.

Here are a couple of starting points, including a primary source document:

<http://www.pikecountycourier.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20120719/NEWS01/120719935/-1/NEWS/Tusten:-Minisink%27s-hero-doctor-->

http://home.earthlink.net/~godbless_america/_american_heroes/.

- JOSEPH BRANT. There's a wealth of material about Joseph Brant at: <http://www.josephbrant.com/>.

Students can also read a biography and see what's on exhibit at the Joseph Brant Museum in Burlington, Ontario Canada at: <https://museumsofburlington.com/joseph-brant/exhibits/5-joseph-brant-hallway#>.

- JOHN HATHORN. A good place to begin research on Hathorn is: <http://guides.rcls.org/hathornj>. Here, students will find a thorough timeline and many side stories to explore. The site will also lead them to other resources.

To see letters and other primary source documents, go to: <http://www.albertwisnerlibrary.org/Factsandhistory/History/Hathorndocs.htm>.

[RL 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.6, 5.7; RI 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9; W 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.7; SL 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6]

2. The Mohawk Indians were part of the Five Nation Confederacy that dated back to 1200 A.D. (A sixth nation, the Tuscarora tribe, was added later but had no voting privileges.) Have your students research the nature of this unification. Questions to answer should include (but are not limited to):

- What was the purpose of the Five Nation Confederacy?
- Who were its members?
- What did each tribe contribute to this association?
- How did the Confederacy influence the U.S. Constitution?
- Why did the Confederacy side with the British against the American Colonists during the Revolution?

Some useful websites are:

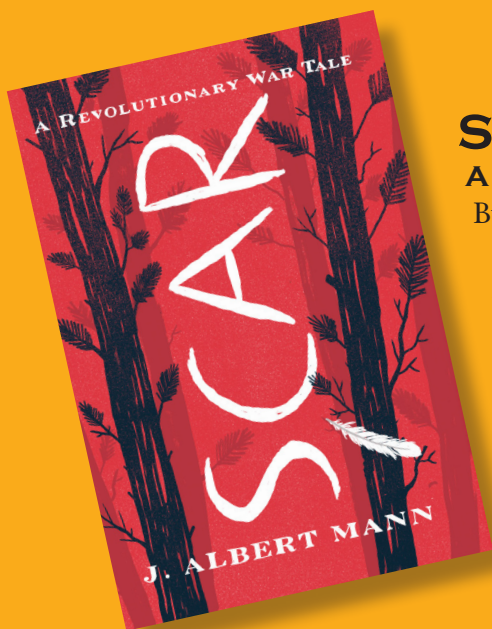
<http://www.haudenosauneeconfederacy.com/>

http://www.ratical.org/many_worlds/6Nations/

<http://www.nps.gov/fost/learn/historyculture/the-six-nations-confederacy-during-the-american-revolution.htm>.

[RI 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9; SL 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5]





SCAR

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By J. Albert Mann

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Highlights