

The Year of Miss Agnes

Book by Kirkpatrick Hill

Unit study prepared by Janee' Lowrance

Chapter 1

SCIENCE

Zoology: Muskrats

This chapter mentions a muskrat. Muskrats are large, aquatic rodents native to North America. Research the muskrat and learn more about this animal.

Health: Eating Fish

The Alaskan people eat fish made a lot of different ways. Is fish healthy? The fish left behind an oil. Discuss good oils vs. bad oils. Look on the herb aisle and see the different oils they sell: fish oil, omega 3 oil, flax seed oil. Learn more about these oils and write down the qualities of each.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Point of View

This book was written in first person from a 10 year old point of view. Discuss first person with your student (I, me, my). Discuss how the author makes it obvious that it is written from the perspective of a 10 year-old. Ask your student to write an account from two different points of view (you can use anything to try this).

Possible topic: a trip to the ice cream store (from the child's point of view (maybe a 3 or 4 year-old) then from the mother's point of view. You could also write it from the ice cream store worker's point of view.

Genre

Is this book fiction or nonfiction? Discuss.

Chapter 2

SOCIAL STUDIES

Geography: Alaska

Find Alaska on your map or globe. Locate the city of Allakaket.

Allakaket is in Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area, Alaska, United States. Allakaket is part of the Unorganized Borough. As of the 2000 census, the population of the city is 97. Allakaket is on the south bank of the Koyukuk River, southwest of its junction with the Alatna River, approximately 190 air miles northwest of Fairbanks and 57 miles upriver from Hughes. The village of Alatna is located directly across the river.

The area experiences a cold, continental climate with extreme temperature differences. The average high temperature during July is 70 degrees Fahrenheit. The average low temperature during January is well below zero and extended periods of -40 degrees Fahrenheit are common. The highest temperature ever recorded was 94 degrees Fahrenheit and the lowest was -75 degrees Fahrenheit. Average precipitation is 13 inches and annual snowfall is 72 inches. The Koyukuk River is ice-free from June through October.

Geography: England

Miss Agnes was from England. Locate England on a map. Estimate how many miles Miss Agnes had to travel in order to get to Alaska.

Tea Time!

Miss Agnes shared tea with the girls. Sit down and have tea with your children. Try milk in your tea.

Chapter 3

SOCIAL STUDIES

Character Building: Resourcefulness

If you have a hole in your sock do you mend it or throw it away? Why? (We usually do not mend socks anymore because they are so inexpensive and easy to get. But, what would you do if things were precious to you because they were not easy to get?) Find ways to be resourceful around your home (make a list and implement it).

Geography

Fredricka likes the big map and can locate England and Alaska. Take out your map and see how many places your student can identify. If you have a Geography Songs CD, pull it out and learn about more places. (Also take this opportunity to review England and Alaska.)

LANGUAGE ARTS

Research and Communication

Bokko was deaf. What does that mean exactly? How do deaf people communicate? What if, like Bokko, they don't know sign language? Find out what it means to be deaf. Write a short report on a person who cannot hear. It could be someone you know (or a famous person).

Chapter 4

SCIENCE

Disease: Tuberculosis

Fredricka's dad died of an infectious disease known as tuberculosis (TB). What are the symptoms? causes? is there a treatment now?

Symptoms

prolonged cough of more than three weeks duration, chest pain and coughing up blood, fever, chills, night sweats, appetite loss, weight loss and paling, and those afflicted are often easily fatigued.

Causes

The cause of tuberculosis, is a slow-growing aerobic bacterium that divides every 16 to 20 hours; this is extremely slow compared to other bacteria, which have division times measured in minutes. It is spread by aerosol droplets expelled by people with the active disease of the lungs when they cough, sneeze, speak, kiss, spit or use the dirty eating utensils of the infected person. A person with untreated, active tuberculosis can infect 10-15 other people per year.

Treatment

Treatment for TB uses antibiotics to kill the bacteria.

Zoology

Various animals are mentioned throughout this chapter. Choose one and do a short report.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Geography: Juneau, Alaska

Fredricka's dad died in Juneau. Locate it on the map. Juneau is the capital of Alaska and located on the Gastineau Channel on the Alexander Archipelago of Alaska. The area of Juneau is larger than that of Rhode Island, Delaware, or Connecticut, and almost as large as Connecticut and Rhode Island combined. Juneau is nestled at the base of Mount Juneau and across the channel from Douglas Island. As of the 2000 census, the City and Borough had a population of 30,711. Juneau was named after gold prospector, Joe Juneau.

Mail Order Catalogs and Sears Roebuck

She gets her parkas from Sears Roebuck. Does that name sound familiar? Research the history of Sears? Did you know that in the 30's they sold house kits? You ordered the kit and it came with plans, wood, nails, windows, doors, everything you need to build a house. A picture book that tells all about this is called A House in the Mail

Some brief history (from wikipedia): Sears, Roebuck and Company is an American mid-range chain of international department stores, founded by Richard Sears and Alvah Roebuck in the late 19th century. It operates in Canada under Sears Canada and Mexico under Sears Mexico. From its mail order beginnings, the company grew to become the largest retailer in the United States by the mid-20th century, and its catalogs became famous. Competition and changes in the demographics of its customer base challenged the company after World War II as its rural and inner city strongholds shrank and the suburban markets grew. Eventually its catalog program was largely discontinued.

Culture Connection

Trapping and fishing are a big part of their lives. Why?

Read to learn more about Alaskan culture. Check your library for other books on Alaskan culture.

Library List

Big Alaska: Journey Across America's Most Amazing State by Debbie Miller
(mentioned above)

Children of the Midnight Sun: Young Native Voices of Alaska by Tricia Brown

A Child's Alaska by Claire Rudolf Murphy

This Place Is Cold by Vicki Cobb

The Igloo by Charlotte Yue

The Inuit by Suzanne M. Williams

BIBLE

Industry and Idleness

Mamma thinks working hard is what everyone is supposed to do. What does the Bible say about work? What does the Bible say about idleness? Read and discuss II Thessalonians 3:10.

JUST FOR FUN

Knitting

Try knitting a pair of mittens and making a string to connect them and big pom-poms too!

Chapter 5

SCIENCE

How do Things Fly?

Roger drew an airplane. Airplanes are the villages lifelines to the outside world. Learn how things fly! Check out a book from your library to learn more about kites, hot air balloons, gliders, birds, jet engines, and other things that fly.

Anatomy: Sense of Smell

Miss Agnes could not smell. The nose is the primary organ for smelling. Smell, like taste, is a chemical sense. The sense of smell is activated when molecules (odors)

are inhaled as they travel through the air. These molecules swirl around in the nasal cavities and hit the olfactory epithelium. At the very top of each nasal cavity, there are about five million “smell cells.” Because the nose and mouth are joined, smells can also be detected through the mouth by breathing through your mouth, chewing, or burping. Smells are transmitted to the brain and identified when molecules touch the hairs of the olfactory epithelium.

About two million people in the United States have NO sense of smell. This disorder is called anosmia. The most common cause of anosmia is inflammation of the nasal membranes. If no air gets to the olfactory nerves, smell will not happen. A head injury or certain viral infections can damage or destroy the olfactory nerves. It is also possible that damage of the frontal lobes caused by a tumor or surgery can cause anosmia. Elderly people often have a reduced sense of smell.

Smelling Activity

Most people can experience a wide variety of smells. Some smells can stir up memories. To demonstrate the sense of smell (olfaction), collect several items that have distinctive smells (choose from the list below):

orange peel (or any citrus peel such as lemon, lime, grapefruit)

perfume soaked cotton ball

fabric softener soaked cotton ball

vanilla

garlic

onion

pine needles

banana

pencil shavings (from the sharpener)

ginger

cinnamon

peppermint

Keep the items separated and enclosed in plastic containers so that the odors do not mix. Put a blindfold on your student and ask your student to identify the item, rate the odor (how strong are the chemicals dissolved in the air?), does the smell trigger any memories for your student?

Extend this lesson-- research the seven primary odors; camphoric, musky, floral, peppermint, ethereal, pungent, putrid and teach your student how to identify each.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Geography: Italy

Find the peninsula of Italy (in the Mediterranean Sea) on your map; it is a boot-shaped country located Europe. Italy is bordered by Monaco, France, Switzerland, Austria, and Slovenia.

Inventors: Wright Brothers

Research the Wright Brothers; they designed the first working airplane.

FINE ARTS

Art

Make a picture for your wall just as Miss Agnes had the children do. Make a margin and fill all the inside with color.

Music

Listen to an opera (whatever you can get at your library) while painting.

Chapter 6

LANGUAGE ARTS

Writing Project: Autobiography

have your child write his name, the day he was born, and a paragraph about himself; you can have him extend this into several paragraphs if you choose.

Ideas for paragraphs

1. Birth facts
2. Family Life
3. Friends
4. Christian development/growth (what God has taught him, church activities, date of baptism, etc.)

5. Hobbies/Sports/What I do in my free time
6. What I want to be when I grow up

Chapter Book Read Aloud

Has your family read Robin Hood ? Now may be a good time. You could use passages for narration and copywork.

Art of Storytelling

Miss Agnes read the story with different voices, emphasis, and excitement. Have your student read aloud with emphasis. Compare to reading with a monotone voice. Select a poem or passage or Bible memory work for your student to memorize and recite for your family.

Chapter 7

SCIENCE

Biomes

This is a good time to go over the various biomes of the world. Find the equator; discuss the type of weather they have there (warmer than anywhere else). Discuss how the weather gets colder the further you move north or south of the equator. Talk about how the both poles - north and south- are cold all the time. Also mention the equator is the dividing line for the seasons- when it is summer north of the equator it is winter south and so on.

Consider giving your student a biome research project. Here are the names of some types of biomes to get her started:

Desert

Tundra

Chaparral

Taiga or Coniferous Forest

Temperate Deciduous Forest

Grassland

Temperate Rain Forest

Tropical Rain Forest

Land Caves

Wetlands

Freshwater Marsh
Temperate ponds
Marine (ocean or sea)

You don't have to make this an essay/report project. Other options:

Biome Chart (comparing/contrasting the different biomes)

Vacation Flyer (after your student researches various biomes, have her choose one and make a persuasive pamphlet trying to convince people to vacation in this biome)

For a simple discussion, learn a little about each biome and try to think of a story you've read that has that type of setting. Assign a biome setting and let your student write a fictional short story that happens within that biome after she has researched the biome so she can include the proper flora/fauna, weather, etc.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Geography: Seven Continents

Review the seven continents.

Geography: Rivers of Alaska

Look at a map of Alaska if available and locate the Koyukuk river, the Yukon river, and review Juneau. (If you have used an outline map during the course of your student, be sure to have your student add the rivers to the map of Alaska.)

Discussion: Completing a Difficult Task

Fred says she didn't like math so she just wrote down any old numbers and would cry if they tried to make her do it right. Has your student ever cried to get out of doing something they don't want? Did Miss Agnes yell at her? What does your student think should happen to her?

History: WWII

Miss Agnes said she did not want to go home while the war was going on. Do you remember what year we decided this story takes place in? So what war was going on in England (where she was from) during that year? (WWII) Use this time to discuss and do further research on WWII. Who were the Axis powers? (Japan, Germany) Who were the allied powers? (U.S. England, France) A wonderful

nonfiction book on WWII for this age is The Good Fight- How World War II was Won.

We also enjoyed this fiction books to learn more about WWII:

The Butterfly by Patricia Polacco

Children we Remember by Chana Byers Abells

Number the Stars by Lois Lowry

Winged Watchman by Hilda Van Stockum

Twenty and Ten by Claire Huchet Bishop

MATH

Discussion

What was the point of Miss Agnes story of Sam Dubin? (to motivate and show usefulness of math) Did it work?

Counting Change

How many cents are in a dollar? If your item cost \$.76 and you pay a dollar how much change would you get? Use different amounts to ask that same question- \$.33, \$.45, \$.80, \$.22, \$.38, etc... Try adding in dollars too -an item cost \$1.22, you pay \$2, (or \$5) what is your change? A hint for making 100 cents is you need 10 ones and 9 tens to make 100. So if you have \$15 to make 10 ones you'd need 5 more, and to make 9 tens you'd need 8 more so the answer would be \$.85.

Chapter 8

SCIENCE

Anatomy: Ears

Continue with your discussion on deafness. Learn about the human ear. You may wish to introduce (or review with) your student the parts of the ear that help sound travel. There is the outer ear, the middle ear, and the inner ear. The outer ear is the part of the ear that we can see and is called the pinna. It collects the sounds and directs them toward the middle ear. Between the outer ear and the middle ear is the ear drum. It begins to move as sound hits it. This then causes three little bones inside the middle ear to also vibrate. These three bones are the tiniest in our body and they are called the hammer, the anvil, and the stirrup.

These vibrations then move on to the cochlea, which is shaped like a snail's shell. The cochlea contains tiny hairs called cilia, which start the nerve signals that go to the brain. The brain then processes the sound.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Communication

Learn the sign language alphabet. Maybe take this time to start a sign language program. Continue learning sign language for the remainder of this book.

Chapter 9-10

SCIENCE

Disease: Measles

What are measles? Measles is a disease caused by a virus. Measles is spread through respiration (contact with fluids from an infected person's nose and mouth, either directly or through aerosol transmission), and is highly contagious—90% of people without immunity sharing a house with an infected person will catch it. Airborne precautions should be taken for all suspected cases of measles. The incubation period usually lasts for 4–12 days (during which there are no symptoms). Infected people remain contagious from the appearance of the first symptoms (cough, runny nose, and red eyes) until 3–5 days after the rash appears.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Sled Dogs

Roger's family used a sled dog to leave town.

Sled dogs are a group of dogs that are used to pull a wheel-less vehicle on runners (a sled or sleigh) over snow or ice, by means of harnesses and lines.

They are expected to demonstrate two major qualities in their work-- endurance and speed. Endurance is needed to travel the distances demanded in dogsled travel, which may be anything from five to eighty miles (8 to 130 km) or more a day. Speed is needed to travel the distance in a reasonable length of time. Racing sled dogs will travel up to an average twenty miles per hour (32.2 km/h) over distances up to 25 miles (40 km). Over longer distances, average traveling speed declines to 10 to 14 miles per hour (16 to 22 km/h). Sled dogs have been known to

travel over 100 miles in a 24-hour period.

Research Topics

Four different kinds of sled dogs-- Alaskan malamute, Alaskan husky, Inuit/Eskimo Dog, and Siberian husky.

Sled dog Racing (types: long-distance, mid-distance, sprints, stage races)

Balto (see book suggestion below)

Sled dog team (different "positions" -- what does each dog do?)

Library List

Balto and the Great Race by Elizabeth Cody Kimmel

A Sled Dog Morning by

Aunt Lulu by Daniel M. Pinkwater

Born to Pull by Bob Cary and Gail de Marcken

Great Serum Race: Blazing the Iditarod Trail by Debbie S. Miller

Iditarod Dream by Ted Wood

Puppies, Dogs, and Blue Northers: Reflections on Being Raised by a Pack of Sled Dogs by Gary Paulsen

Discussion

Marie had lots of life skills- sewing, cooking, cleaning, taking care of children, - but she knew very little academics. Which is more important? Why?

Just for Fun

Listen to some Hank Williams music if you'd like.

Chapter 11

SOCIAL STUDIES

Timeline

Miss Agnes made them a timeline. Do you have a timeline yet? Make one. Mark the things on your timeline that Miss Agnes marked on hers. Mark family birthdays- any other important events (mark things you have studied throughout the course of this unit-- when the Wright Brothers invented the first plane, WWII, when Alaska became a state, Alaska State Gold Rush, etc.).

History: Alaska State Gold Rush

Everyone has heard about the California Gold Rush, but have you heard of Alaska State Gold rush?

Several gold rushes took place throughout the 19th century in Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United States. Gold rushes helped start permanent non-indigenous settlement of new regions and define the culture of the North American and Australian frontiers. The Yukon Territory in Canada and Alaska itself were the site of a gold rush in the 1890s, and they remained a significant source of mining even after gold reserves diminished.

Just for Fun

Play the time machine game.

SCIENCE

Microscopes

Miss Agnes brought out a microscope. If you have the opportunity, use a microscope to look at things (a local university may let you come for a field trip if you don't own a microscope yourself or if you don't know anyone who has one you could borrow).

A microscope is an instrument for viewing objects that are too small to be seen by the naked or unaided eye. The science of investigating small objects using such an instrument is called microscopy, and the term microscopic means minute or very small, not easily visible with the unaided eye. In other words, requiring a microscope to examine. Microscopes give us a large image of a tiny object. The microscopes we use in school and at home trace their history back almost 400 years.

We really like the story, *Greg's Microscope* by Millicent E. Selsam; it gives a lot of ideas on things to look at under the microscope.

Library List

Complete Book of the Microscope (Complete Books) by Kirsteen Rogers

World of the Microscope (Usborne Science & Experiments Series) by Chris Oxlade

Chapter 12

SCIENCE

Echoes

Discuss echoes. An echo is what happens when sound waves reflect off a surface. If you say "boo" in a large, empty room (like a gymnasium) and listen carefully, you will probably hear a quieter version of your voice a second later, saying the same thing.

Good places to hear echoes are large, empty rooms, like gyms, concert halls, train stations, and big buildings. Sound reflects best off a hard surface, so buildings with lots of stone and concrete work well. Canyons and caves also produce good echoes, since they also have lots of stone.

Echoes have many uses. Some animals, such as dolphins and bats, use echoes to find their way around. Submarines make use of echoes from underwater objects in SONAR. Echoes also have medical uses - an example of this is the echocardiogram which uses reflections of very high-pitched sound (ultrasound) to construct a picture of the heart.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Genre: Fairy Tales

A fairy tale is a fanciful tale of legendary deeds and creatures, usually intended for children. Read aloud some fairy tales. What are the characteristics of a fairy tale? Discuss common characters, settings, and plots found within fairy tales.

Characters

Read various fairy tales. Discuss the different characters you encounter in each tale. Some common characters found in fairy tales include: prince, princess, king, queen, villain, witch, giant, simpleton, dwarf, elf, step mother, sister, peasant, talking animal, and fairy.

Note the characters found in the stories you read together. Which ones are found the most? Least?

Settings

What settings have you encountered in the stories? (castles, cottages, mountains, (enchanted) forests, river/pond/body of water, etc.). For extended learning, make a bar graph of the various settings. Which setting was used most frequently in the stories you read?

Plots

Fairy tales often include common plot elements (rising/falling action, conflicts, resolutions, etc.) Discuss the following with your student. Which fairy tales include the following?

Hero (or heroine) heroine has bad luck

Hero (or heroine) must perform impossible tasks

Hero (or heroine) must fight a villain

Hero (or heroine) meets magical helpers

Hero (or heroine) is treated badly

Hero (or heroine) is in danger

Villain is punished

Hero (or heroine) is rewarded with wealth

Hero (or heroine) is rewarded with a happy marriage

Things happen in threes (three battles, three tasks)

Greek Mythology

Miss Agnes read to them about Greek Myths. You may want to read and discuss Greek mythology with your student. She also read the *Story of Ulysses*. This is also referred to as the *Odyssey*, and it is one of the two major ancient Greek epic poems attributed to the poet Homer. The poem is, in part, a sequel to Homer's *Iliad* and mainly centers on the Greek hero Odysseus (or Ulysses in Latin) and his long journey home to Ithaca, following the fall of Troy.

Library List

Greek Myths and Legends (Usborne Illustrated Guide to) by C. Evans and A. Millard
D'Aulaires Book of Greek Myths by Ingri D'Aulaire
The Children's Homer: The Adventures of Odysseus and the Tale of Troy by Padraic Colum and Willy Pogany

FINE ARTS

Music

See if you can find a recording of King's Choir to listen to.

Chapter 13

LANGUAGE ARTS

"A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens

Is your student familiar with the story "The Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens? It was published in 1843. Dickens described it as his "little Christmas Book" and was instantly successful, selling over six thousand copies in one week and, although originally written to enable Dickens to pay off a debt, the tale has become one of the most popular and enduring Christmas stories of all time.

If the season's right (or if you feel like adding a little Christmas to your study), find a copy to read or a video to watch. You may even be able to find a theater close to you that is performing this in December.

You may want to purchase this Dover coloring book -- *A Christmas Carol Coloring Book* by Charles Dickens (Author), Marty Noble (Illustrator)

You may want to check out more than one version of *A Christmas Carol* from the library so your students can compare and contrast the two. Which one was preferred? Why? Which one was closest to the author's story? How?

SOCIAL STUDIES

Traditions: Christmas Around the World

Miss Agnes' class looked at Christmas trees all around the world. Have you ever looked at how other countries and cultures celebrate Christmas around the world?

Note: We have several studies for this at Homeschool Share (including The Philippines, Mexico, France, Sweden, and Australia).

Chapter 14

LANGUAGE ARTS

Author Study: Mark Twain

Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn are American classics written by Mark Twain (pen name for Samuel Clemmens) in 1884. You may want to listen to one of these stories on CD with your student. If you prefer a short story, you may want to try "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calveras County."

You could also simply study Mark Twain's famous sayings; use them for copywork if you like.

1. A person who won't read has no advantage over the man who can't read.
2. Don't go around saying the world owes you a living. The world owes you nothing, it was here first.
3. I have never let schooling interfere with my education.

Writing Project

Encourage your student to write and illustrate a reader for a younger sibling (or another young child).

Spelling

Give your students a small notebook for words they need help spelling. I used the small size composition books found at the dollar store. Help them create a fun front cover page and title it My Spelling Dictionary. As you notice misspelled words in your student's writing, have him add them to his spelling dictionary where he can simply look up the word next time he wants to use it in his written work.

Creative Writing

Often times (and sometimes too often!), our student's writing projects are directed by us. Let your student write a poem or a short story without any guidelines from you. Encourage this kind of writing frequently.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Speech

This chapter makes a good introduction to proper grammar in speech. Play the speech game. We used this to bring attention to the deep southern drawl we have around here.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Hudson Stuck

There is a story about him in Trial and Triumph. It is a great story if you can find it. Also 10,000 Miles with a Dog Sled. is another telling of this story.

The boy in the story was on a boat that hit an iceberg. Do you know what that boat was called? *The Titanic*. Talk about *The Titanic*. What happened? Were there survivors?

There are several good books about it. Titanic Lost and Found is a good one for early readers. The Magic tree house book Tonight on the Titanic was a decent book, and it has a nonfiction guide to go with it.

Chapter 16-17

SCIENCE

Sound Waves

Why did everything get louder when the snow melted? Sounds were bouncing instead of being absorbed by the snow.

Sound is a form of energy produced when an object vibrates (moves back and forth quickly), causing the air around it to also move back and forth. Vibrations are all around us but we cannot see them. These vibrations are called *sound waves*.

Activity -- Watch Sound Travel: We cannot see sound waves as they move through the air. We're going to do an experiment that will show how sound waves move through the air. Cut off the base of a one or two-liter bottle. Stretch a piece of plastic (a balloon or Saran Wrap) tightly over the end you cut off and secure with a

rubber band. Now light a candle (a tea light works fine). Place the smaller end of the bottle near the flame of the candle (about an inch away). Give the piece of plastic a quick tap. The flame of the candle should go out. By tapping the plastic, you are making tiny particles in the air vibrate. The vibrations travel through the bottle it pushes the air toward the flame, which then goes out.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Communication: Sign Language

Learn more about sign language (who invented it? etc.) and keep practicing it!

Writing: Story Ending

Discuss the ending of the story with your student. Was this a good ending to the story? Can your student rewrite it another way?

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