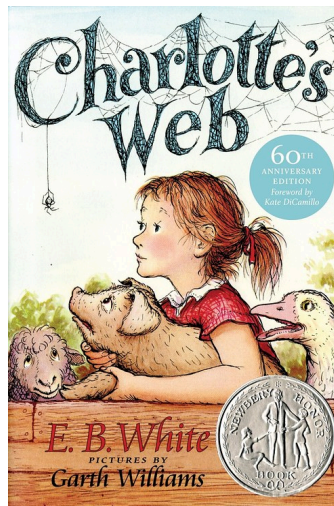


Sentient Sanctuary

Book Study — Charlotte's Web by E.B. White



The following guide is for use alongside the classic children's novel *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White. It is ideally intended for children in grades 3-5. Aside from measuring general comprehension, the goal of these activities is to inspire respect for all beings, and to convey that all creatures, human or not, have the capacity to respect and love one another as well.

In light of the increase in children's use of AI, a variety of questions are included that require the child's own experience and perspective, in addition to facts and inferences about the story itself.

This book study was created by Carissa Latona, MS Ed., with feedback from Peter Morville of Sentient Sanctuary. At Sentient Sanctuary, our mission is more happiness and less suffering for all sentient beings, including humans. We also offer lesson plans: sentientsanctuary.org/how

All illustrations included are from clipart-library.com, a royalty-free image website.

Name _____

Charlotte's Web Comprehension Guide

Chapter 1: Before Breakfast

1. How does Fern feel when she hears that the runt of a litter is usually "done away with"?

2. How would you feel if you learned that this was about to happen outside of your house?

3. What does Fern say to her father that convinces him to save the runt? _____

4. When he changes his mind, is Mr. Arable being kind to Wilbur, to Fern, or both? Explain your answer. _____

5. Which of these things does Fern **NOT** do after Wilbur is saved. (*circle one*)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. She takes him to school with her. | b. She feeds him. |
| c. She shows him affection. | d. She keeps him in the house. |



Chapter 2: Wilbur

1. Why can't Wilbur stay with the Arable family forever? _____

2. Where does Wilbur go instead? (*circle one*)
- a. He escapes and lives on his own
 - b. He goes to live with people the Arables trust
 - c. Change of plans: He stays on the Arable farm

3. Do you think pigs should be kept as pets? Why or why not? _____

4. Make a prediction: What do you think will happen to Wilbur at the Zuckerman farm?

Chapter 3: Escape

1. Circle the animals that live on the Zuckerman farm, according to the story so far.

Sheep Donkey Goose Cat Cow Llama

2. Why did Wilbur want to escape? _____

3. How was Wilbur able to escape? _____

4. If you were Wilbur, would you try to escape? Why or why not? _____

5. When Wilbur was outside of his pen, which word best describes how he felt? (*circle one*)

a. Panicked b. Serene c. Educated d. Furious

6. When Wilbur returned to his pen, which word best describes how he felt? (*circle one*)

a. Jealous b. Exhausted c. Silly d. Athletic

Chapter 4: Loneliness

1. What does the author mean by, “Wilbur didn’t want food, he wanted love”? _____

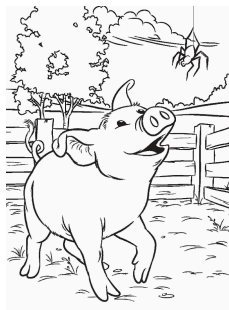
2. How would it make you feel if you asked others to play and they said “No”? _____

Chapter 5: Charlotte

1. Why could Wilbur hear his new friend, but not see her? _____

2. How does Wilbur’s opinion of Charlotte (and spiders in general) change throughout the chapter? _____

3. What distressing news does Charlotte discover about her new friend at the end of this chapter? _____



Chapter 6: Summer Days

1. Why did the geese give the eighth egg to Templeton? What will he do (or *not* do) for them in return? _____

2. Do you think the eighth egg will ever break? What will happen if it does? _____

Chapter 7: Bad News

1. How would you feel if the sheep told you what they told Wilbur? _____

2. Describe Wilbur's reaction to this news, based on what he says and does, and how he says and does it. _____

Chapter 8: A Talk at Home

1. If Fern told you she could understand what animals were saying, would you react more like Mr. Arable, or Mrs. Arable? Why? _____



Chapter 9: Wilbur's Boast

1. Compare and contrast Wilbur to a human child based on his thoughts and actions.

Wilbur	Both	Human Child

2. Brainstorm: If you were Charlotte, how would *you* plan to save Wilbur's life? _____

Chapter 10: An Explosion

1. How is Fern bringing Wilbur into the house different from Avery bringing the frog into the house? _____

2. Why was it ultimately good that the animals saved the eighth egg, which didn't hatch? _____

3. How does Wilbur thank Templeton for his part in saving Charlotte's life? _____

Chapter 11: The Miracle

1. What did Charlotte do to communicate with the humans on the farm? *(circle one)*

- a. She told Fern her message and then Fern told the others
- b. She crawled into their ears and started speaking
- c. She wove a message into her web

2. At the beginning of the chapter, how are the characters proving Charlotte's point, that humans are gullible? _____

3. Is Charlotte's plan of saving Wilbur's life working so far? Explain.

Chapter 12: A Meeting

1. Why does Charlotte call a meeting with the animals? _____

2. What does Charlotte mean when she says, "People believe almost anything they see in print"? Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer. _____

3. How does Charlotte get Templeton on board with her plan? _____

Chapter 13: Good Progress

1. What is the new message Charlotte puts in her web?

2. Share your opinion: Why might people believe that Charlotte is communicating with the farmers, but not believe that animals are communicating with Fern? _____

3. How does Templeton show he can be a team player during this chapter? _____

Chapter 14: Dr. Dorian

1. Why does Mrs. Arable want Charlotte to find some (human) friends and to spend less time in the barn? _____

2. Which of these is NOT a part of Dr. Dorian's advice about Fern's behavior? (*circle one*)

- a. Fern is a healthy, responsible, and caring person.
- b. Fern is a child who loves animals, and she will make other friends soon.
- c. It would be nice if we could all try to understand animals like Fern does.
- d. Fern should pursue her gift of animal communication as a career.

Chapter 15: The Crickets

1. Charlotte's plan to save Wilbur is still working. Name something that might go wrong between now and when the farmers need to make a final decision to save him or not.

2. If you were Charlotte, would you go to the county fair or stay at the farm? What makes you say that? _____

Chapter 16: Off to the Fair

1. Why does Charlotte decide to go to the fair? _____

2. How is Templeton convinced to go to the fair? _____

3. What caused Wilbur to faint in his crate? _____

Chapter 17: Uncle

1. Why is Uncle's presence at the fair a problem for Wilbur? (*circle one*)

- a. Uncle might win first prize instead of Wilbur
- b. Uncle's keeper wants to steal Wilbur from the Zuckerman family
- c. Wilbur is nervous that Charlotte will become best friends with Uncle

2. Who do you think will win first prize: Wilbur or Uncle? Explain your answer. _____

Chapter 18: The Cool of the Evening

1. How is Templeton helpful to Charlotte in this chapter? _____

2. List at least three ways Charlotte shows Templeton and Wilbur that she is not feeling well.

- 1. _____

- 2. _____

- 3. _____

3. What do you think Charlotte is making for herself during the night? _____

Chapter 19: The Egg Sac

1. What is Charlotte's *magnum opus*? Why does she use that term for her creation?

2. What adjective did Charlotte weave into her web this morning? _____

3. Why *isn't* Mr. Zuckerman discouraged after learning that Uncle won First Prize?

Chapter 20: The Hour of Triumph

1. What do Mr. Zuckerman and Wilbur win at the fair, and why? _____

2. Finish the sentence: If I were Wilbur, and I just woke up from fainting again, I would feel

_____ because _____
_____.

Chapter 21: Last Day

1. Explain how you know Charlotte's plan to save Wilbur's life was successful. _____

2. Why doesn't Charlotte return to the farm with Wilbur? _____

3. Do you think Templeton is only motivated by food, or is there more to his character than that? Provide at least one piece of evidence to support your opinion. _____

4. Wilbur couldn't save Charlotte's life like she saved his. What did he do instead, to show her he was a true friend? (*circle one*)

- a. Wilbur stayed with Charlotte instead of returning to the farm.
- b. Wilbur helped Charlotte weave more messages into her webs.
- c. Wilbur brought the egg sac back to the farm and guarded it until the babies hatched.

Chapter 22: A Warm Wind

1. List two ways in which the farm is different now than it was when Wilbur first arrived.

Difference 1: _____

Difference 2: _____

2. Wilbur was confused when the newly hatched spiders left the barn. What does this tell us about the difference between spiders and pigs? _____

3. What will happen in the barn, now and in the future, to ensure that Wilbur is never without friends? _____

4. What is the last thing you did to be kind to a friend? _____

5. What is the last thing a friend did to be kind to you? _____

Closing Thoughts:

Everybody leaves behind a **legacy**. Your legacy is the way you're remembered by others. This is based on the things you did, said, and how you made them feel. How would you describe Charlotte's legacy? _____

Name _____

Charlotte's Web — Character Traits with Text Evidence

Character Name	Trait(s)	Text Evidence
<i>Example:</i> Fern	Caring	In Chapter 2, Fern feeds Wilbur, holds him, plays with him, and makes sure he has shelter.

Name _____

Date _____

Understanding Themes in Literature

If someone asked you, “What is the book *Charlotte’s Web* about?” and your answer could only include a few words, how would you respond? Hint: Your answer cannot list any character names. A **Theme** is a recurring concept that is shown throughout a story.

For example: Charlotte’s web is a book about **love**. (There is not just one part of the book that supports this, there are many parts.)

1. Write your ideas below.

Charlotte’s Web is a book about _____.

Charlotte’s Web is a book about _____.

Charlotte’s Web is a book about _____.

2. Choose your strongest answer and draw a scene from the story where this theme fits.

Name _____

Date _____

In fictional stories like Charlotte's Web, as well as the real world, we see that **words are powerful**. Describe how words in these situations had an impact on each character.

Cause	Effect(s)
Fern begging her father to save the runt of the litter of pigs	
Charlotte's messages to the farmers	

Describe a time when someone's words had an impact on you.

Their words:	Their impact:
---------------------	----------------------

Describe a time when your words had an impact on someone else.

Your words:	Your impact:
--------------------	---------------------

Name _____

Date _____

Compassion in Charlotte's Web

Compassion involves caring about others, treating them with kindness, and feeling a strong desire to help someone in need. (*definition from pbs.org*)

How do characters show compassion to one another in this story?

1. _____ shows compassion to _____
by _____
_____.

2. _____ shows compassion to _____
by _____
_____.

In Charlotte's Web, we see that animals can show compassion towards each other, humans can show compassion towards each other, and humans can show compassion to animals.

3. How can you show compassion to other people (in real life)? _____

4. How can you show compassion to animals (in real life)? _____

