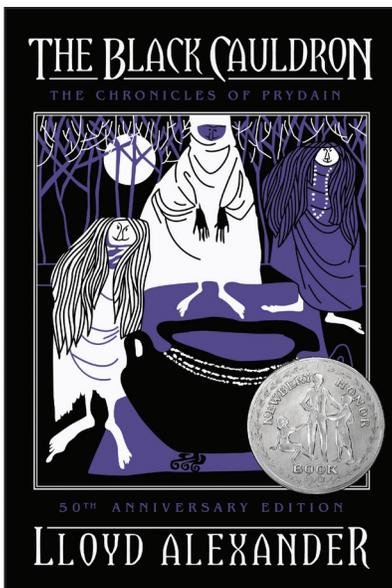


THE BLACK CAULDRON

TEACHER'S GUIDE

FOR
USE WITH
COMMON CORE
STATE
STANDARDS

THIS ANNIVERSARY EDITION IS FILLED WITH BONUS MATERIAL INCLUDING A PRONUNCIATION GUIDE AND A NEW INTRODUCTION BY NEWBERY HONOR WINNER REBECCA STEAD!



AGES 8–12

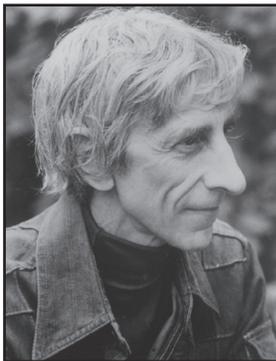
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ABOUT THE BOOK

In the second volume of the Chronicles of Prydain, Lord Gwydion gathers a group at Caer Dallben to set out on a dangerous mission, to destroy the magic cauldron used by Arawn, Lord of the Land of Death, to create the dreaded deathless warriors, the Cauldron-Born. Taran's adventures with his companions continue as they join the quest, along with the wise, gentle bard Adaon; two battle-scarred kings; and an insolent prince, Ellidyr, who constantly picks fights with Taran. The companions learn on this journey that sometimes heroism demands great sacrifice as well as great restraint.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

LOYD ALEXANDER (1924–2007) was the author of more than forty books for children and adults, including the beloved children's fantasy series the Chronicles of Prydain, one of the most widely read series in the history of fantasy and the inspiration for the animated Disney film *The Black Cauldron*. His books have won numerous awards, including the Newbery Medal, the Newbery Honor, and the National Book Award for Juvenile Literature.



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Common core anchors listed in this guide correlate to specific grade levels but activities can be adapted to apply to standards for grades 5–8. To attain specific common core grade-level standards for their classrooms and students, teachers are encouraged to adapt the activities listed in this guide to their classes' needs. You know your kids best!

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Look up information about the Fates in mythology. What role did ancient people believe that the Fates played in the affairs of men and women? Write a paragraph on what you learn about the concept of Fates in mythology and keep these ideas in mind as you read *The Black Cauldron*.

CCSS.RL.6.9 Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.

CCSS.W.6.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.

CHARACTERS INTRODUCED IN *THE BLACK CAULDRON*

↵ ADAON	ah-DAY-on
↵ ELLIDYR	ELLI-deer
↵ GWYSTYL	GWISS-til
↵ ISLIMACH	iss-LIM-ak
↵ LLUAGOR	lew-AH-gore
↵ MORGANT	MOR-gant
↵ ORDDU	OR-doo
↵ ORGOCH	OR-gahk
↵ ORWEN	OR-wen
↵ SMOIT	smoyt
↵ TALEISIN	tally-ESS-in



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The Black Cauldron
Lloyd Alexander

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Key Ideas and Details

1. Compare the characters of Taran and Ellidyr. How are they different? In what ways are their personalities similar? What is the motivation for each of them to join the quest to Annvin? What does Dallben mean when he tells Taran, “Prince he may be, yet perhaps not so fortunate as you”? (p. 22)
2. What does Taran learn from Adaon as they travel together? Discuss Adaon’s comment that “there is greater honor in a field well plowed than in a field steeped in blood” (p. 27).
3. Why do Orddu, Orgoch, and Orwen have interchangeable personalities? What does Orddu mean when she says, “We’re neither good nor evil. We’re simply interested in things as they are”? (p. 120)
4. Why does Taran exchange Adaon’s brooch for the cauldron? Discuss his feelings about the brooch and what it represents to him. Why is it important to Orddu, Orgoch, and Orwen?
5. Morgant offers Taran great power and the glory he has always dreamed of if he will pledge his loyalty to Morgant. Why does Taran refuse?
6. What did Adaon mean when he said he saw a “black beast” on Ellidyr’s back? How does Taran develop a better understanding of Ellidyr? Why does Ellidyr sacrifice himself to destroy the cauldron?

Craft and Structure

7. Discuss the importance of using Welsh names and words, such as *cantrev*, *caer*, and *crochan* in this story. How does this language create a tone and background for the story? Use the pronunciation guide at the back of the book to help you with the sound of these words, and look up information about their meaning.
8. Why does Gwydion honor both Ellidyr and Morgant by building barrows to them after they die? How does this scene contribute to the central theme of the book? Discuss Gwydion’s comment, “It is easy to judge evil unmixed . . . [but] greater wisdom than mine is needed for the judging” (p. 174).
9. Discuss the personality traits of the various characters in *The Black Cauldron*. How does the author develop distinct personalities for each character?



Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

10. Compare the experience of reading the novel to reading the short story “The Foundling” that is included in the bonus material at the end of the book. How does the story enhance your understanding of the novel? Are there similar themes in the novel and the story?

CCSS.RL.6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.RL.6.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

CCSS.RL.6.3 Describe how a particular story’s or drama’s plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

CCSS.RL.6.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

CCSS.RL.6.5 Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.

CCSS.RL.6.6 Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.

CCSS.RL.6.9 Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.

POST-READING ACTIVITY

↩ Write about the role that Fate plays in this story. What do you think Orddu, Orgoch, and Orwen represent? How do they compare to the Fates that you researched in the Pre-Reading activity? Write a paragraph discussing whether the events that happen in this story are set up by Fate or whether they happen because of decisions made by each character.

CCSS.RL.6.9 Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.

CCSS.W.6.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

↩ The 50th anniversary year of *The Black Cauldron* coincides with the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. Read a factual account of that war. Compare your knowledge of that historic period with the events in *The Black Cauldron*. Which of the adult characters in Prydain can you compare to actual historic figures in the early 1940s? What themes from this book reflect the issues the world was facing during that period?

CCSS.RL.6.9 Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.