

True Brit

Beatrice ~1940



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Illustrated by George Lawrence

Discussion and Activity Guide

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I. Introduction for Teachers

True Brit is fiction, but it is based on real-life historical accounts - personal interviews and books - by and about real children who came to Santa Fe, New Mexico from England to escape the dangers of World War II (1939-1945).

This guide poses questions and activities for students' reflection, research and discussion. It is aimed at developing:

1. Historical and cultural awareness: This novel presents a first-person narrative of an English girl's experiences when she is evacuated to New Mexico during World War II;
2. Language/literacy skills: Students' awareness of the author's plot and language choices and their effect on the impact of the story;
3. Research skills: Observation, analysis, exploration of research tools and synthesis skills.
4. Understanding the themes of identity, cultural and class influence, cultural change, and the perception of stereotypes;
5. Analysis and commitment to values: Students' self-reflection and application of the themes of this story to their own lives; the development of tolerance, compassion and "social activism" – taking steps to make the world a better place for everyone.

Themes:

1. Facing the unknown (**UNCERTAINTY**), adapting to a different place and culture (**CHANGE** and **CULTURE**), and growing more self-confident and mature (**IDENTITY**);
2. Writing techniques: Development of plot, characters, setting, style and theme (**WRITING/MEDIA LITERACY**);
3. Determining fact versus opinion (**CRITICAL THINKING**);
4. Developing research skills (**RESEARCH**);
5. Determining one's own values (**VALUES**) such as tolerance, courage, compassion and self-sufficiency.

This guide contains discussion questions and research activities that range from those focusing on the reader's emotions to questions about history or about the writer's intention. From among these, choose those which fit your students' interests and abilities. In some cases, the teacher may choose to allow students to create illustrations (drawings, collages, paintings, etc.) instead of reading/writing assignments.

Questions marked "Research" direct students to investigate history in greater depth. Similarly, "Project" suggests writing or drawing activities.

The Appendices contain the vocabulary to be defined in answer to the questions for each chapter. Words and phrases that are likely to be new to students appear in italics throughout the Questions.

II. Questions and Research Activities for Students

Chapter 1

1. **Directions:** As you read the book, “True Brit,” notice words or phrases that you don’t know. Also, some words and phrases in this guide are in italics. They may be new to you. Make an ongoing list of unknown words and phrases and of the italicized words and phrases. Bring the list to your class to research and discuss.

2. Who is telling this story? How old is she?

3. As Beatrice’s story opens, she is living with her family. Where are they living? What is the time period?

4. This story portrays Beatrice’s experiences in going to live in a different culture. Culture can consist of foods, clothing, housing, arts, games, pets, language, customs and roles, celebrations, beliefs, rules, attitudes, manners, and many other objects, practices or ideas. In this story, what do we learn about Beatrice’s family’s culture?

5. People are also sometimes divided by “class,” which refers to their economic status. In general, wealthy people are considered “upper class,” poor people are considered “lower class” and the people in between are “middle class.” In the United States, most people are middle-class. In England and some other countries, classes are very divided. These class divisions are changing today. What clues tell you which class Beatrice’s family belongs to? Does her family’s class affect how Beatrice thinks? Give an example.

6. *True Brit* is set at the beginning of World War II.

Research: When did World War II happen? Who were the Nazis, where did they live and what did they want? Why were they bombing England? Why was this conflict called a World War? The author helps us “see” the war through Beatrice’s eyes. Give examples.

7. How does the war affect Beatrice and her family? Thirteen thousand British children traveled away from Great Britain at the outset of World War II. They traveled to Canada, Australia and the United States. Why did their families want them to take this huge journey?

Research: On a map or atlas of the world, locate London, England and then find Santa Fe, New Mexico. How many miles apart are these two capital cities?

Research: What modes of travel were available at this time and place? Is intercontinental transportation different today? What are Beatrice's feelings about leaving England and her family? If you were asked to make such a trip, how would you feel about it?

8. Beatrice talks with her father about the trip. He tells her about two brave Englishwomen - Gertrude Bell and Mary Kingsley - and he gives her a little red notebook to take notes.

Research: Who were Gertrude Bell and Mary Kingsley?

9. Do you have a hero or heroine who inspires you? Have you ever read a book that changed your viewpoint? What does Beatrice's Great-Aunt Agatha tell her? Her father's farewell words to her are: "Beatrice, you will undoubtedly *encounter* many things you have never encountered before....But that's a good thing." Do you agree with him? Why or why not? How might this be a *foreshadowing* of Beatrice's story?

Chapter 2

1. Beatrice is booked into a “first-class stateroom” on the ship, but she finds three boys already in the room. Who are they and why are they in her room? Why are they leaving Europe?
2. What is Beatrice’s reaction when she finds the boys? Do her feelings change? Why?
3. In this chapter, Beatrice speaks a few French phrases. Why does Beatrice know French? Do you speak or understand any languages other than English? Please describe.
4. At the end of her ocean voyage, Beatrice lands in Norfolk, Virginia. Captain Wingate offers her an “*Eskimo Pie*.” She’s never had one before. Eating this new food seems like her introduction to the United States. Have you ever traveled somewhere new and eaten a different food?
5. In Norfolk, Virginia, Beatrice meets a cab driver. Although he is speaking English, she can barely understand him. He speaks an American *dialect* of English.

Research: American English and British English sometimes differ in meaning and/or in pronunciation. For example, in American English, we call the police “cops.” In British English, they are “bobbies.” Find other words that differ in British English and in American English. Do you know words from your family’s language or culture that are different from standard English?

Chapter 3

1. Beatrice spends almost four days on the train, mostly in an upper-class “*compartment*.”

Research: In 1940, most people in the United States traveled by train. How do most people travel today? How do you think the experience is different or the same?

2. Hamilton, the train porter, helps Beatrice during her train ride. Does he seem like a helpful, friendly person? She’s never even met a black person before. How do you think her experience with Hamilton shapes her impressions of black people in the U.S.?
3. When Beatrice ventures to the dining car, she learns about some American attitudes toward the War. What were the reasons some people had for not wanting the United States to enter the war? Why does Beatrice disagree? Why does she want the United States to participate in the war?
4. Describe Lamy, New Mexico as Beatrice sees it. How would you feel if you landed in a place like Lamy after a long trip?

Chapter 4

1. When she is left at the Lamy station, Beatrice sees someone whom she immediately labels as a “cowboy.” How does Beatrice know what a cowboy looks and acts like? We call this pre-conceived notion a “*stereotype*.” Look up the meaning of this word.
2. What other stereotypes do you know of? Describe an example.
3. Do you think movies and television programs (“the *media*”) depict people and their cultures accurately? Or do they often resort to stereotypes?
4. Is there a stereotype of your culture? Do you think it’s an accurate portrayal of the people in your family or culture?
5. Beatrice has started writing some of her observations and feelings down in her red notebook. Why is she doing this? With whom does she plan to share it?

Project: Keep a diary or journal for a few days. What sort of experiences do you write about?

6. Clem comes to pick up Beatrice in her old truck named “Maude.” How does Beatrice see her from the way she talks, her clothes and her manner? Do you think there’s a cultural and/or class difference between the two? Why or why not?
7. What’s your opinion of Clem? Do you think she might be a good influence on Beatrice? Explain.
8. Clem makes a joke about Beatrice’s trunk. She compares it to the Oxford English Dictionary (“OED”), which has 23 large volumes for “A” to “Z!” Nowadays, we usually don’t use heavy books like that.

Research: What do we use instead for research today? What are the pros and cons of each method?

Chapter 5

1. As they drive toward Santa Fe, Beatrice realizes she has indeed found a place that is very different from her home in England. How does the landscape appear to Beatrice? How does the author describe the mountains and how Beatrice responds to them? Have you ever been in a special place in Nature that inspired you, like a mountain or a lake or a waterfall? If so, describe your feelings.
2. Clem says she prefers to live in remote areas rather than in cities. What kind of environment do you prefer?
3. Beatrice learns that many of the houses in Santa Fe are constructed of *adobe* (mud) bricks. Can you imagine living in a house made of mud?

Research: Using online and book resources, learn more about adobe and how to build a model of an adobe house.

4. When Beatrice and Clem eat dinner, they talk and get to know each other. After dinner, Clem starts to clear the table and wash dishes. Beatrice has never helped wash dishes before. Why does she finally decide to help out? Does this indicate a change in her *character*?

Chapter 6

1. Beatrice writes in her journal about Clem's calling her "a little princess." Have you ever heard that phrase? Do you think you'd like to be called "a little princess" or "a little prince"? Why doesn't Beatrice like it?
2. We now meet a new character named Esteban. Describe him. Does Beatrice like him? Why is he angry when Beatrice asks if he knows English? What are Spitfires and newsreels? Before they arrive at the school, he asks her to call him "Steve" at school. Why do you think he asks her to call him Steve?
3. On the playground, Beatrice sees ways that the organization of the school is new school is different from her old school in England. Did you ever attend a different sort of school? If so, in what ways was it different?
4. Before school starts, Beatrice meets Arabella, a friendly girl who's tickled by Beatrice's English accent. What are some of the English books that Arabella has read? Do you think Arabella has stereotypes about English culture in the same way that Beatrice has them about the Wild West?

Chapter 7

1. Beatrice is shocked when she realizes that her fellow students are not impressed by her family heritage or family name: “Not one person in that entire room knew or cared who Lord Duckchester was,” she reflects. This reflects a cultural difference between the United States and England. In England, there are kings, queens, dukes, duchesses, lords and ladies. They belong to a “higher class” than do other people in England. Do we have anything equivalent to that in the United States? Do we have our own system of “*status*” and “*prestige*?” When Beatrice realizes that no one cares that she’s the *descendent* of Lord Duckchester, she suddenly sees the opportunity for what?

2. Donald Riggsbee is another student in Beatrice’s class. What is Donald like? Do you think he’ll make friends with Beatrice? Do you think you’d want him as a friend?

Research: Find a historical map of Europe that shows the countries involved in World War II. How far is Germany from England (in miles)? Compare the sizes of these two countries. Eventually, Germany takes over almost all of Europe; only Great Britain stands alone against the Nazi threat. Can you imagine how this makes Beatrice feel?

3. After school, Arabella takes Beatrice to the Santa Fe Plaza. What is a plaza? Do you have a plaza or town square in your community? Is there another place where people go to meet? Describe some of the people and places Beatrice observes.

4. Why are people in Santa Fe speaking Spanish?

Research: Learn about the history of New Mexico. How is its history different from other regions of the country? Even today some people think New Mexico is not a part of the United States. Why would they think this?

Note: The author uses the word “Indian” because this term was commonly used to name Native Americans in 1940, the year this story takes place. The word “Indian” is still often used in the American Southwest to describe the Pueblo Indians. Yet, today the term “Native Americans” is usually preferred in describing the people who lived on this continent when Columbus arrived.

Research: There were many different Native American groups (tribes) living in the United States. They each have their own culture (foods, languages, housing, dress, etc.). Find out about the Pueblo Indian culture of the Southwest. Have you ever heard of the Pueblo Revolt? When did it occur and what were the reasons for it? In Washington, D.C., in the basement floor of the U.S. Capitol Building, there is a room of statues honoring great people of American history. One statue honors the Native American named Popay. Learn who he was and why he is honored this way.

6. Beatrice sees Indians sitting on the porch of the Governor's Palace. Why are they there? Do they fit the stereotypes of Indians that Beatrice had seen in the movies?
7. Arabella tells about La Llorona. Have you ever heard this story? Do you know any other story about a mythical figure that haunts and harasses children?
8. Esteban seems embarrassed to be seen by Beatrice while he is working at the plaza as a shoeshine boy. Why do you think this is? Beatrice seems shocked to learn Esteban is a shoeshine boy. What does she know about shoeshine boys from her experience in London? What is Beatrice learning about "class" and "culture" from her experiences in New Mexico?

Chapter 8

1. Clem says Arabella "doesn't always bother to think...That's a mistake no woman 'worth her salt' can make." Beatrice's mother has told her: "Men don't care for brainy girls." What does Beatrice think about these comments? How do people in your culture talk about "girls who think?" How does this affect girls' attitudes toward their future, especially their careers? How does this affect boys' attitudes towards girls?
2. Clem is a public health nurse who works with people in the Indian pueblos and in nearby Hispanic villages. She tells Beatrice about children who are so poor they have nothing to eat for breakfast. She also says she does not always have enough medicine to treat them. Why do you think she thinks it's important to tell Beatrice about these problems?
3. Beatrice asks to accompany Clem to the Indian Hospital. When she arrives, she compares this hospital to the hospital in London.

Research: Hospitals that serve Native Americans in the U.S. are supervised by a federal agency called the Indian Health Service. Learn about its history and its accomplishments and failures.

4. Clem invites Beatrice to help change the dirty sheets, but Beatrice refuses to help. Later, she wishes she had jumped in and helped. Why does Beatrice hold back at first, and then change her mind? If you were invited to help in such a task, would you participate or hold back? Why or why not?
5. As Beatrice's father had said, Beatrice is encountering many new things. How is she reacting? Is she changing? And he adds, "...but that's a good thing." Do you think it's a good thing?

Chapter 9

1. Arabella takes Beatrice to visit Arabella's Uncle Diego, an artist. What do the girls see that surprises and shocks them?
2. Is Uncle Diego a stereotype of an "artist"? If so, how is he portrayed this way?
3. Can stereotypes sometimes be funny? Explain your answer.
4. How does the author use dialogue to portray Lola? Is the author using "exaggeration" to describe her?" Would you say she's a comic character?

Chapter 10

1. Donald Riggsbee tells Beatrice why his father is against the war. How does Beatrice react to Donald's ideas?
2. In her red notebook, Beatrice is collecting new words that she is learning: creep, clobber, doggone, gussy up, doozie, gunk, bebop, A-okay. Some of these words were new in the World War II era. Most were considered *slang*.

Research: What is slang? What are some slang words of the past? What are some slang words that are popular today?

3. As they enjoy watching the night sky, Clem tells Beatrice more about her own growing up in Oklahoma. She grew up in a town where many Indian tribes lived and she went to school with Indian students. How does her experience affect her opinion of Native American young people? When you know someone personally, is it difficult to keep a stereotype?

Research: Why do so many Indian tribes live in Oklahoma?

4. Beatrice is shocked to find a centipede in her bathtub. What did Beatrice ask Clem to do and what is Clem's reply? Do you agree with her advice? Are you afraid of insects and other creepy critters? If so, how could you overcome your fear?

Chapter 11

1. Because she is going to help Uncle Diego, Arabella writes her own excuse to be absent from school. Do you think she could get away with this behavior in today's schools? Why or why not? What do we learn about Arabella's life? What do Arabella and Beatrice have in common? Why do people like Arabella? Do you think you'd like her? Why or why not?
2. Walking home, Beatrice has a long conversation with Esteban. She asks him why his friends called her "faceta." (Note: This word has a different meaning in "standard" Spanish than its meaning in northern New Mexico Spanish, where it means "snobby" or "stuck up.") Why would the boys call her "faceta"? Do you think they're correct? How does Beatrice react? Is this an important learning experience for Beatrice? How do you react when people correct you, telling you of negative things in your behavior? Could you learn anything from such an experience?
3. Esteban and Beatrice walk through the *barrio*. How is the *barrio* different from the Santa Fe neighborhood where Beatrice lives at present?
4. Esteban brings Beatrice to a field where two ponies are grazing. He calls one of them "*Diablo*, you old *caballo*." He swings up on *Diablo* and gallops away. Beatrice is left with the other pony, Daisy. Again, Beatrice compares her experience with Daisy with her riding experiences in England. How are they different or similar?
5. Esteban shares more about himself and his family. He describes how he has fun in the summer, visiting his grandparents in one of the pueblos north of Santa Fe. He explains that he is half "Indian."

Research: Many New Mexicans and Mexicans are part Native American. Their ancestry and heritage include both Native American and Hispanic cultures. What do the words "diablo" and "caballo"?

Research: On a map of New Mexico, find the Rio Grande. What are some of the little Hispanic towns and Indian pueblos which border the river? How are the two similar in culture? How are they different?

6. Throughout the story, Beatrice worries about her family back home. When she receives a letter about her brother's accident, she's especially upset. How does this letter plus the talk she had with Esteban motivate her to want to behave differently?

Chapter 12

1. Uncle Diego has a party to celebrate the completion of his painting. Beatrice learns to iron clothes, curl her hair and wear makeup. At what age do girls in your culture wear makeup? When she arrives, she sees farolitos for the first time. What is a *farolito*? How do people dress for this party? What can clothes tell you about a culture? What food is served at the party? Have you ever eaten a *tamale*?
2. Uncle Diego tells Beatrice about his understanding of art: “The hard part, of course, is the seeing, not the painting. Once you see what you want to paint, then you just have to figure out the right colors and how to make the picture come alive.” What do you think of his idea?
3. Arabella says: “People here feel free to do whatever they want and no one much cares.” What do you think Arabella means? Do you think she could be referring to the way she’s being raised and her family? Beatrice wonders if so much freedom is good or bad. What do you think? Explain.
4. Beatrice recognizes Ana at the party. Ana tells her about her sick relatives who live in a pueblo, and Esteban explains that there is very little communication in the pueblos with the “outside world.” Imagine not having access to phones or email - what would that be like? There are obvious problems with so little communication but are there any benefits? Explain.

Chapter 13

1. Clem explains that the other public health nurse, Irene Fennipurse, quit and went back to Boston. Why do you think Ms. Fennipurse left? Clem’s work was based on a number of real nurses who worked in the pueblos during the 1920’s and 1930’s. What qualities do you think it took to be a nurse in Northern New Mexico at that time?
2. Although she is still sick, Clem prepares to go to the pueblo. Beatrice compares Clem’s behavior when she is ill with that of her own mother. How are they different?

Research: What is diphtheria and what does it mean to be inoculated? Learn more about diphtheria – is it still a dangerous illness in the world today?
3. In Beatrice’s dream, Esteban claims that Beatrice is too “faceta” to be useful in the pueblo. How did this dream affect her and motivate her to take action?
4. Beatrice insists on going with Clem to the pueblo. Why is this so important to her? Why does Clem change her own mind about taking Beatrice with her?

Chapter 14

1. As they start their journey, Beatrice considers her change in attitude from the beginning of her journey to the present: “At that time, I had been an unwilling adventurer, forced here against my will; a very reluctant explorer. Now, I look forward to seeing new things and meeting new people.” What helped Beatrice to change her attitude? Explain. What helps you to change an attitude or belief?
2. Clem said: “...mountains make your soul rise up in you.” What landscape or setting do you think is beautiful and inspiring? Write a short story, essay, poem or song, or draw a picture about it.
3. Beatrice states: “...writing causes me to look at things more carefully.” What does Beatrice notice about the landscape she is riding through? Have you ever noticed that writing helps you to observe and to think about things more carefully?
4. Clem tells Beatrice more of her life story. Why was Clem motivated to become a public health nurse? What makes her job so difficult?
5. The truck has a flat tire. Beatrice is amazed at Clem’s resourcefulness and the fact that she can fix the tire by herself. But then Beatrice begins to help. How does she feel about doing this work? Does she want to be self-reliant like Clem? Is this a goal of yours? Describe.

Research: Beatrice fears the creatures she may encounter. What do you know about *tarantulas* and *scorpions*? Are they dangerous? Where do they live? Find a map of their territory.

Chapter 15

1. Clem asks Beatrice to drive the truck “for a bit.” Beatrice learns quickly. Describe her feelings while she is driving - do they change? Is she becoming more confident?
2. They pass through the village of Eduardo. An old woman scolds them. Why is she angry with Clem? How is the *curandera*’s job different from Clem’s? Who else do they meet in the village?
3. Beatrice learns more about Clem. How and when did she go to England and France? Beatrice and Clem argue when Clem says she won’t serve in the upcoming war in Europe? Whom do you agree with? Explain why.
4. What is the final crisis of the trip? How does Beatrice help?

Chapter 16

1. They reach Ana's pueblo at sunset. Now Beatrice is entering a culture that is completely new to her (and may be new to you too). What does she notice?
2. At the make-shift clinic, Beatrice sees whole families who are staying with their sick loved one. How does Clem explain this? Does your family have a tradition for when people are sick?
3. At the clinic, an exhausted Beatrice panics and runs away. Her desire to be helpful crumbles. How does she feel about what the way she behaved? Have you ever been "freaked out" by a new situation? If so, what did you do to cope?
4. Where do Beatrice and Clem spend the night? Describe Alana's home. Is Beatrice comfortable there? Did you ever stay somewhere that was a totally different environment? If so, how did you feel?

Chapter 17

1. Clem says: "There is a lot here to learn. Especially if you're interested in nursing." Have you gone on any "*field trips*," where you observed people working in a field or subject you are interested in? If so, what was the trip like and what did you learn?

Research: There are many medical words in this chapter: *cholera*, *typhoid*, *abscess*, *antitoxin*, *trachoma*, *thermometer*, *stethoscope*, *gauze*, *salve*, *ointment*. How many of these words do you already know? Find the definitions of the words you don't know.

2. In this experience, Beatrice learns a lot about trachoma. Notice all the allusions to nursing in this story going back to her conversation with her brother Willy in Chapter 1. Do you think this could a *theme* in the book? Nursing is one of the most helping professions. Do you think Beatrice might be interested in having a career as a nurse or doctor?

Chapter 18

1. This chapter is about Beatrice's efforts to save the life of a baby who is dying from dysentery. What happens when the couple comes to the clinic? What does Beatrice beg Clem to let her do? Why do you think Clem is reluctant to have her help?
2. Beatrice persists in helping the child. How does she "prove herself"? Why is this so important to her? Have you ever had a similar experience? If so describe.
3. This is an important chapter of the book. Consider if this story had been written in "third person" instead of "first person?" Would it have the same impact? ["First person" means the story was told from the viewpoint of the main character ("I"); "Third person" means the story was told by someone who is observing the character ("He or She").] Why?

Chapter 19

1. When she wakes up the next morning in Alana's home, what is Beatrice's first thought?
2. What is Clem's fear as they go over to the clinic?
3. How does Beatrice feel when she gives the baby back to her parents? Why does Beatrice start to cry and run away to the creek?
4. The Indians are drumming and dancing. Why are they dancing?
5. How do people pay Clem for her help?
6. Explain why Beatrice finally understands Clem's choice to stay and work in New Mexico.
7. On the road back to Santa Fe, Clem tells Beatrice: "...you've got quite a bit of starch for a gal your age." What does she mean? Is this a compliment? How do we see that Beatrice appreciates this comment?

Chapter 20

1. Esteban and Arabella ask Beatrice what she thinks about the pueblo. What does Beatrice tell them about her trip?
2. Clem and Beatrice return to Santa Fe just in time for the national election. Franklin Delano Roosevelt (“FDR”) is re-elected President of the United States. Why is Beatrice so happy that he won?
3. Beatrice receives a letter from her father. What does he tell her? As she writes her reply, Beatrice has *mixed feelings*. How does she respond in her letter? Have you ever had mixed feelings about a person or a situation? Describe what this means to you and why it can be uncomfortable.
4. Who is Sir Winston Churchill? What was his responsibility during World War II? His words and how he spoke had a huge impact on the morale of the British people. Research: Find one of his famous quotes during the War.
5. Plot: In the final chapter, it is the job of the author to “wrap up” the story. What are some of the ways that the author does this? Does she leave any questions in your mind about the characters or the plot?
6. Why do you think the story ends with Beatrice riding the pony Daisy? What does this ending show us about Beatrice? Would you have ended the story this way? Why or why not? Can you think of another ending?

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

Ways to Look At and Consider the Book: Plot, Characterization, Setting, Style, Theme

1. The Plot of the story is the action that happens. “Action” can include thoughts and conversations as well as physical movement. Is this story active enough to draw you in, so that you want to know what happens next? What kinds of action are used by the author? What do you believe is the *climax* or turning point of the story?
2. Plot: The story ends with Beatrice staying in the United States – were you surprised by the ending? Was it satisfying to you or did you feel it was incomplete? Why or why not?
3. Characterization: Compare Beatrice’s personality in Chapter 1 with her personality in Chapter 20. By the end of the story, Beatrice has made changes in her identity (her feelings and knowledge about her self as well as her feelings about the place and community she lives in). Describe three key moments in the story where Beatrice changes or makes a decision to change. Who or what influences her? Describe a character who is important to her.
4. Characterization: How well “developed” are the other characters in the story? In other words, do they come alive to you? Can you imagine going to school with them or becoming friends?
5. Who is your favorite character? What do you like about this person?
6. Setting: How well is the environment portrayed? Do the physical places described in this story seem real - can you picture them? In some ways, the setting is like a character in this story. Describe an example.
7. Culture as Setting: We’ve discussed “culture” a lot in this Teacher’s Guide. How do the different cultures influence each character’s life? Give an example.
8. Style: One component of style is dialogue. Using dialogue (conversations) between the characters can create a feeling of action. In this story, there are many characters and even different languages spoken. Does the dialogue show the personality of the character speaking? Give an example. Have you learned any new words or phrases? Give an example.
9. Theme: The *theme* is the basic “lesson,” - the message or idea - of the story. What would you say the theme of this book is?
10. *Credibility*: This novel is an example of historical fiction. That is, it portrays a real time in history. Be sure to read the “Author’s Note” and the “About the Author” section. How does the author lead you to believe that the plot, characters, dialogue and setting portray a real time in

history? What details do you notice that ground the setting in the time of World War II? What are some ways that you can determine if this is an *accurate* portrayal of time and place? Have you read other stories that take place during the same time period? How are these books the same or different?

11. Drama: If you could select one scene or chapter from this story to show it as a *preview* of a theatrical play, which scene would you choose? Why?

12. The title of this book -“True Brit”- is a play on the title of another novel: “True Grit” by Charles Portis (c1968). “True Grit” was made into two movies. That story also describes the life of young girl in the Wild West and her relationship with a tough old cowboy. Do you think the title -“True Brit” - is appropriate for the story you have just read? Why or why not?

13. Are there other stories or movies that portray a character who changes in a similar way to Beatrice? (Do you see any similarities to “The Secret Garden”, for example?) Describe. What changes have you made in your own life? Who or what influenced you to change?

14. What dictionaries, encyclopedias, online information tools, etc. did you use for research while you read this book? Which ones do you like, that you would use again?

If you would like to read more about this time in history at the beginning of WWII, the author, Rosemary Zibart, has written another historical novel called “Forced Journey: The Saga of Werner Berlinger” in which a 12-year-old boy escapes from Nazi Germany and struggles to make it on his own in New York City. This story is also based on the actual lives of young people during World War II.

You can find out more about Rosemary Zibart or write to her. She welcomes any questions or comments about her books. Her website addresses are www.rosemaryzibart.com or www.zproductions505.com. You can also write to her via zproductions505@gmail.com. She would love to hear from you!

“True Brit” will have a *sequel* that carries our heroine through Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941), the beginning of World War II for the United States of America.

III. APPENDICES

The following lists of words from the book are intended to be aids for teachers to use when organizing learning activities.

Appendix A. FRENCH WORDS AND PHRASES

Allez-vous-en!	Je m'appelle Alphonse
Au revoir	La pièce de résistance
Bonne chance	Oui
Comment appelez-vous?	Petit four
Dépêche	

Appendix B. SPANISH WORDS AND PHRASES

<i>adobe</i> - the mud base for bricks for house	<i>no problema</i> - no problem
<i>barrio</i> - neighborhood	<i>plaza</i> - square
<i>biscochito</i> - cookie	<i>posole</i> - a hominy-based meat stew
<i>buenas tardes</i> - good afternoon or evening	<i>pueblo</i> - town or people or capitalized it means Pueblo - a group of tribes of the Southwest United States
<i>buenos días</i> - good morning or good day	<i>qué pasa?</i> - what's happening? What's going on?
<i>burros</i> - donkeys	<i>Rio Grande</i> - Big River
<i>caballo</i> - horse	<i>ristras</i> - a string of chiles
<i>camposanto</i> - cemetery	<i>señor</i> - sir
<i>cerro gordo</i> - big hill	<i>señoritas</i> - young ladies - also written in the book as "signorinas" (?)
<i>chile</i> - green or red spicy food plant	<i>tamale</i> - cornmeal and meat mixed in a paste inside a corn husk
<i>como se llama?</i> - what is his [or her] name?	<i>tortilla</i> - flat pancake made of corn meal or flour
<i>curandera</i> - healer	[<i>ojalà que Usted</i>] <i>vaya con Diòs</i> - go with God [I hope that you may go with God's protection]
<i>diablo</i> - devil	
<i>faceta</i> - conceited, vain, "stuck-up"	
<i>farolito</i> - small candle light	
<i>fiesta</i> - party	
<i>hola</i> - hello	
<i>horno</i> - outdoor oven	
<i>La Llorona</i> - The Weeping/Wailing Woman	
<i>mi hita</i> [<i>mi hijita</i>] - my dear daughter	

Appendix C. MEDICINE

abscess	diarrhea
antiseptic	diphtheria
antitoxin	dysentery
bedpan	gauze
cholera	hypodermic needle
delirious	inoculate
epidemic	influenza
etymology	injection

mucus
mumps
ointment
pharmacy
pus
salve
serum
stethoscope

suture
tetanus
thyroid
trachoma
tuberculosis
typhoid
whooping cough

Appendix D. FOOD

chile
Eskimo pie
fry bread
griddle cake
hot dog

pickle
posole
shake
sundae
tamale

Appendix E. BOOKS, PLAYS AND MOVIES

A Midsummer Night's Dream
Gone With the Wind
Heidi
Mary Poppins
Peter Pan

The Secret Garden
The Three Musketeers
The Wizard of Oz
Wind in the Willows
Winnie the Pooh

Appendix F. WORDS AND PHRASES RELATED TO WORLD WAR II

America First
blackout
gas mask
gunner
Nazis
newsreel
petrol

Spitfire
submarine
torpedo
U-boat
Uncle Sam
War Office

Appendix G. THEMES

Identity
Bravery and Compassion

Dealing with Change
Aspects of Culture

Appendix H. OTHER WORDS AND PHRASES IN ITALICS

“A bit of starch”
A-OK or A-okay
accurate
atlas
bebop

breakdown
British
centipede
character
charaterization

cinema
class
climax
clobber
comedy
compartment
credibility
creep
culture
descendent
dialect
dialogue
doggone
doozie
ethical
etymology
field trip
first-class
folklore
foreshadowing
gunk
gussy up
historical fiction
image
insect
justifiable
learning curve

linguist
mixed feelings
model
mythology
narrative
novelty
Oklahoma
Oxford English Dictionary
person (1st or 3rd)
plot
prestige
preview
“red-blooded American”
scorpion
sequel
setting
slang
status
stereotype/stereotyping
taboo
tarantula
theme
tradition
tragedy
valid reason
Wild West
“worth her salt”