

***Firegold*: Related Concepts**

The Apple

Firegold offers readers an exciting place from which to explore the uses of symbolism in fiction. The book's primary symbol, the apple, is a rich, evocative source. For thousands of years the apple has had an important role in the religions, mythologies, and legends of cultures the world over. The story of Jonathon's search for the *Firegold* provides numerous opportunities for discussion, interpretation, and inspiration .

The apple has a place in innumerable myths, legends, and fairy tales belonging to cultures from ancient Babylon and Persia, to ancient Greece and Rome, Scandinavia, China, and the British Isles. Where would Snow White (and her stepmother) be without the apple? An apple can even be said to have initiated the Trojan War.

In cultures throughout the world, the apple has appeared as a symbol for, among other things, such qualities as fertility and knowledge, and for such celestial bodies as the sun. In its role as a fertility symbol it is also associated with the female breast and with the womb.

Sometimes, of course, an apple is just an apple! But the complex world of apples and apple growing may be of great interest to students. With over 7,000 varieties of apple being grown worldwide, the study of apple genetics and the methods by which apple varieties are mixed to create new ones can provide material for all kinds of science investigations and activities.

There is some evidence that the apple originated in central Asia. Found on most continents, it is a hardy tree, easily cultivated and bearing edible fruit. A member of the rose family (*Rosaceae*), the apple tree grows in a variety of moderate climates. An apple tree doesn't begin to produce fruit until it is between three and eight years old, but may continue to do so for up to a hundred years.

It would be impossible to list the names of all apple varieties here, but apart from Red Delicious, Golden Delicious, and Granny Smith (said to be the three most popular varieties in the U.S.), readers of *Firegold* may be particularly interested in learning more about varieties like Jonathans, Jonagolds, Ginger Golds, and Braes.

Apples are used as food in innumerable places around the globe. Served dried, fresh, baked, and stewed, they are a high-fiber, vitamin-rich fruit. Many books are devoted solely to apples and apple recipes, not the least of which is the "classic" American dish, apple pie.

In different parts of the world, at different times, apples have been used medicinally. We know that in medieval and Renaissance Europe they were also used cosmetically, in skin and hair preparations ("pomade," for example, comes from the French word for apple, *pomme*).

According to the Dole Food Company, Americans eat an average of eighteen pounds of fresh apples every year. Apples are a big business in the United States, and *Firegold* author Dia Calhoun's home state of Washington produced 133 million boxes of them in 1996. America has its own apple-related folklore and imagery, including its identification

with apple pie (“wholesome” and “American as...”) and the lasting popularity of the Johnny Appleseed story.

The “Johnny Appleseed” with whom most of us are familiar is an American legend, but there was a real Johnny Appleseed. John Chapman was born in Leominster, Massachusetts, in 1774. As a young man he wandered west with the intention of finding himself some land in western Pennsylvania. Apparently obsessed with starting an apple orchard, he looked for the place that would be most suitable. Rather than settling in the Alleghenies, however, Chapman moved across the frontier, just ahead of the majority of settlers, and he kept moving. For nearly fifty years he traveled the Midwest, planting and selling apple trees. Though he was not, as legend has it, the first person to plant apple trees out west, he was the first (and perhaps only) person for whom creating apple orchards was a kind of personal mission. While apples were good business in those days too, his mission may have had its roots in his religious beliefs—in his travels he sought to spread the word of the church to which he belonged. John Chapman was an eccentric man, highly visible in the small and even remote communities where he traveled. He was often called “John Appleseed,” and the stories, like the trees, grew up around him wherever he went.

Apples and stories seem to have grown together throughout much of human history. From very far back, apples have appeared as symbols of fertility, immortality, knowledge, love, and sin, as well as being the tree most commonly associated in different cultures with the idea of a Paradise or Eden.

Adam and Eve ate the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge and lost their innocence. Having done what was forbidden, they were evicted from Paradise. Though apples were not always regarded by Christian sects as the forbidden fruit of which the Bible spoke, they have always had an association with knowledge (of good and evil) and with Paradise. But by about 1500 years ago it was accepted in the Judaeo-Christian tradition that the forbidden fruit was an apple.

In many stories, it is a magic apple that confers immortality—and therefore, knowledge—upon the human who possesses or eats it. The ancient Greeks believed that the golden apples of immortality grew on a tree on a mountain at the end of the world. The ancient Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh also features a tree or plant of immortality. The plant grows at the bottom of a lake, and the giant Gilgamesh swims to the bottom of the lake and retrieves it. Once he has the plant in his possession, it is stolen from him by a snake, who eats it and becomes immortal. This is why the snake began to shed his skin each year for a new one—he was immortal.

A feature of Norse legend is the attempts of mortals to steal the golden apples of immortality from the gods. Idun, the Norse goddess of spring, was keeper of the golden apples, given to her by her husband, the god of poetry. Idun would serve the apples to all of her fellow deities so that they would remain alive, for some of these gods were not immortal, although they had far longer life spans than did humans. The lure of immortality was of course irresistible to humans and also to giants, who battled for the apples.

The Celts also believed in these golden apples, and it was to the Isle of Apples, or Avalon (the ancient Welsh word for apple was *aval*), the island where these golden apples grew, that King Arthur went to rest until he is called again. In at least one version of this story it is suggested that these golden apples are the apples of Eden.

Golden apples may also share a connection with the sun. The apple tree was sacred to Apollo (who is also associated with knowledge). In his book *Apples*, Frank Browning

mentions the Baltic sun goddess who was strongly associated with the apple (the sun was represented as an apple tree), as well as a divinity sacred to the ancient Latvians and Lithuanians who was sometimes described as an apple. The legendary Celtic figure Cuchulain, who was associated with the sun, crossed the Plain of Ill Luck by following (in addition to a wheel) an apple that rolled in front of him as a guide.

The cultural/mythic connection between apples and fertility (and therefore with femininity, love/courtship, beauty, and breasts) is as strong as any of these other associations. The rounded apple, seeds in its center, is connected in different cultures with the idea of woman and abundance. Apples have been used for many years as love tokens and as symbols of fertility.

It was the apple in its incarnation as a token of love and beauty that can be blamed for starting the Trojan War. The Goddess of Discord, in an effort to provoke war, tossed an apple inscribed “Fair one, make this your own” into a wedding party attended by Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite. The three goddesses, each claiming the apple as her own, fought over who was the fairest of them all. They asked Paris, Prince of Troy, to choose, and he chose Aphrodite—because she had promised him the most beautiful woman in the world. “The most beautiful woman in the world” was Helen of Troy, wife of King Menelaus. Paris, who was also married, ran off with Helen, thereby kicking off the Trojan War. Such is the power of the apple.

In some cultures, a man who was courting would give his beloved an apple to win her affections. And of course there is the tradition of placing an apple on the teacher’s desk. Apples would be thrown or eaten at weddings to ensure the fruitfulness of the couple. In Kentucky there is, as there was in ancient Rome, a folk tradition of lovers popping apple seeds through their fingers and shooting them at the ceiling in order to determine their romantic futures. The ancient Celtic festival of Samhain (November 1, the day after Halloween) initiated the custom of bobbing for apples in order to discover their futures during the coming year. Young people would name the apples, and the apple each person caught in his or her teeth would have the name of their future spouse.

There are infinite possibilities for the exploration of apples—as fruits and as symbols—suggested by *Firegold*, but it is the idea of a golden apple of knowledge that may connect most closely with the story of Jonathon Brae. His search for the Firegold is a search for knowledge, a journey undertaken by a boy in search of the truth. He will change his relationship with the world as he knows it, becoming a young man in the course of this journey.

Coming of Age

As a story, *Firegold* considers what it means to discover our true selves. The quest for the Firegold is part of a quest for identity, an attempt to discover the truth about family and community relationships. Jonathon's story is full of possibility, a look at one boy's coming of age played out against the backdrop of a fantasy world that all too clearly mirrors both the faults and virtues of our own.

Jonathon's quest is a process of discovery, grieving, searching, and discovering his own strength (as well as his identity) in the process. Like many, if not all, protagonists/heroes, he is someone who doesn't fit in. His sense of self is uncertain, as is his place in his community. It takes the tragedy of his mother's death, and the threat of his own death, to propel him into a search for himself. In finding his role, and in proving himself, Jonathon is a classic questing hero, carrying an amulet (the Farlith) and accompanied by an animal totem (the kingfisher), paralleling myths and legends the world over.

He is also a classic adolescent. Our hero feels different, strange, misunderstood, convinced that he belongs nowhere. He is frightened by his own intense yearnings and imaginings, and wary of the changes occurring in his body. On the verge of falling in love for the first time, he confronts social mores and expectations that he has never been fully aware of. He questions and challenges the beliefs of his family and community, while experiencing the tension of pulling away and trying to form his own belief system and identity. Jonathon is full of questions and puzzles, and his search for answers is not only an internal but an external process as well, taking the form of a journey into the Red Mountains.

In many cultures, this kind of quest has been a traditional part of a boy's coming of age. Among many Native American tribes, there are variations on a ritual known as the Vision Quest. The Vision Quest occurs when a boy has reached puberty, a symbol of his coming-of-age. The purpose of the quest is to find one's spiritual guide or helper. It is this guide who will help the boy throughout the rest of his life as a man. In order to find this guardian spirit, a boy must search alone. After a ritual cleansing or purification has taken place, the boy leaves his home and sets off for an isolated place far from the tribe. For some period of time he will be alone there, usually fasting, in an effort to achieve a state of being that will allow him to have a vision of his guardian spirit. In some tribes, a young girl may also have a guardian spirit but she is not generally sent out alone on a quest. The spirit is said to come to her in other ways.

A young person's coming of age is the point at which they are considered by their cultures to have achieved—or aready to achieve—both physical/sexual and social maturity. Along with a changing body comes a changed place in society, and most coming of age rituals address both the sexual and social elements of this transition. These rituals may take the form of tests of bravery or endurance, and they always involve the community in some way or another. Ritual cleansings are also a large part of many of these ceremonies. Events may be centered around a girl's first menstrual period or a boy's circumcision. The adolescent's participation in the rituals establishes his or her new place in the world and his or her new responsibilities, traditionally making clear identity as a member of the group and as an individual.

Coming-of-age rituals often involve the separation of a young person from his or her community, though the reasons for this can differ from culture to culture. It can be a way of symbolizing a child's departure from the family home and his or her entrance into the wider world. It is an acknowledgment that the adolescent is now responsible for making his or her own way and becoming a full-fledged member of the community. Among the aborigine tribes of Australia, a boy undergoing initiation into adulthood is "taken" from the

group by the other men and brought to a secret ceremonial ground where he is told the secrets of his tribe and made privy to secret rituals. Later, he will be taken into the Outback on a hunt, during which he is forbidden to speak. His job is to listen and absorb all that he sees and hears.

Among the Masai of East Africa, pubescent boys are taken in a group to an isolated camp where they spend several months being educated about the customs of their tribe and about their duties as warriors and young men. When they return, they are circumcised in a public, men-only ceremony.

In many cases, the isolation of a young person has to do with ideas about purification and cleanliness—this is most true in the case of young girls who have had their first menstrual period. The first period is a clear physical sign of maturity, and throughout history, most cultures have developed specific ceremonies for marking this event in a woman's life. The Lakota Sioux coming-of-age ceremony for a girl is the *Isnati Awicalowanpi*, in which a girl who has had her first period must be “purified” in preparation for womanhood and motherhood.

Among some Pacific Northwest tribes, girls were traditionally hidden away for as long as a year following the start of their first menstrual period. They were also required to fast for certain periods of time. In these cultures, as in others, a menstruating woman was considered very powerful, and was even a threat to the community, to the environment, and even to inanimate objects).

The Tukuna Indians of the Amazon isolate a young girl after her first period not only because of her perceived power as a woman but also because she is thought to be vulnerable to evil spirits at this time. When a girl has her first period, she goes and hides in the woods, where her mother will come to find her and bring her home again. Then, she will spend three months in an isolation hut, to be welcomed back into the community by a great festival that takes place around the hut while she is still in it. Rituals are performed to protect her from evil spirits. Karen Liptak, in *Coming-of-Age*, provides an account of the entire process. In one of several steps, the young woman asserts her new power: When the girl has been ritually painted and prepared, she is brought out of the hut to participate in a ceremony to drive away the evil spirits. Once she has thrown a piece of burning wood against a tree trunk she is considered safe. Having driven the demons away on her own, she no longer needs to be isolated or protected by her relatives. Liptak points out that the Tukuna have no comparable ritual for young boys entering manhood.

An important element in most coming-of-age rituals is the transmission of culture and spirituality. Stories, beliefs, history, and customs are “given” to young men and women. One generation entrusts the next with its culture, and this is an indication that the young person is ready to assume responsibility in both spiritual and intellectual ways. Australian aborigine tribes pass stories of their cultures' heroes and spirits to young boys; and the Masai of East Africa teach boys what it means to be a man in that culture. In the Christian church, many denominations celebrate a young person's confirmation, in which he or she makes a personal decision to become a member of the Church. This entails a period of learning and guidance in the customs and beliefs of the church. Confirmation is another example of how young people are entrusted with the responsibility of carrying on their heritage as part of their journey to maturity.

Similarly, in Judaism, the *bar mitzvah* (for girls, *bat mitzvah*), meaning “son/daughter of the commandment,” is the ceremony that marks an adolescent's spiritual coming of age and acceptance as a full—and fully accountable—member of the religious community. The *bar mitzvah* means that the child is now fully responsible for following the commandments.

For boys, this occurs at the age of thirteen, as traditionally, that was the age at which a boy was considered a man in the official or legal sense. For girls, the ceremony may occur when they are twelve or thirteen and it is a relatively new part of Jewish culture, reflecting some changing perceptions of women's roles in the religion. In preparation for the bar/bat mitzvah, the young person studies the Torah, from which he or she will read passages on the day of the ceremony. The teen must also prepare a brief speech in which he or she says something about what the day means to him or her.

A key element of all coming-of-age rituals, whatever their nature, is the assumption or exploration of one's identity as a mature person. Traditionally, this has meant assuming a particular, well-defined role in an established community, just at the time when a person may be starting to question that community's beliefs with the most intensity. Becoming a full member of a community also means confronting difficulties and divides in that community that might previously have been unknown or not immediately relevant to the adolescent.

In *Firegold*, we can see parallels to the racism and bigotry in our own society reflected in the relationship between the Dalriadas and the Valley folk. In the process of discovering himself, Jonathon has to confront his community's ugliest fears and beliefs and make his own hard choices about what he believes. This is a frequent theme in literature for young adults.

A child's growth into maturity has long been ritualized in cultures around the world, but more and more, at least in affluent, industrialized cultures, the period of adolescence has been extended. Sexual maturity and social maturity are no longer assumed to go hand-in-hand, and adolescents headed towards adulthood have a variety of rituals and initiations to mark the long, though less specific, journey. From debutante balls and quinceaneras to gang initiations, these experiences cover much ground, but all have in common the assumption of an identity, a role.

Students may be interested in talking about these milestones in their own lives, both experienced and anticipated. For some it may be getting their first job or driver's license, their first sexual experience, or some other event that they feel marks their transition into adulthood. The lines are blurred, but as ever, the quest for maturity is strongly linked to the search for identity.

Chapter 1

Chapter Summary:

Vocabulary Words:

barbarians
blanched
chiseled
dimpled
eddy
grouse
hewn
hypnotic
nocked
peninsula
roans
spawned
verblight

Questions:

1. Where does the story take place? (Using specific examples from Chapter 1, describe the place where Jonathon lives.)
2. What do you know about Jonathon and the girl with blue eyes?
3. How do you think Jonathon feels about the Dalriadas? Use specific examples to support your statements.
4. Jonathon finds a rock by the river. What is different or unique about this rock?

Predictive Questions:

1. Why do you think Jonathon is intrigued by the color of the girl's eyes?
2. A river divides Jonathon from the Sky Riders. Why do you think this is important to the story?

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary:

Vocabulary Words:

ancestors
eclipsed
ford
irrigation
orchard
rudder
sheathed
stallion

Questions:

1. What do you learn in this chapter about the conflict between Jonathon and his father?
2. What does the author mean when she says “the silence stretched between them like an invisible string”?
3. What do you think “Golden Age” means, and why did the author capitalize it?
4. What characters have we met so far, and what do we know about them?

Predictive Questions:

1. Jonathon wants to go to the Red Mountains. What importance do you think this event has in his life?
2. What do you think is dangerous about the Red Mountains?

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary:

Vocabulary Words:

carcass
grafts
haunch
obsession
orchardises
straggly
tainted
trellis
trudged
whirling

Questions:

1. What can you infer from the beginning of this chapter about the treatment of the Brae family by other community members?
2. What name is Jonathon called? How do you think it made him feel? What would you have done?
3. Respond to the following quote: “His mother was different, and that, he knew, was a terrible thing.” Being different was bad. Have students discuss/respond.
4. What does it mean when Mr. Tiller suggests that Brian Brae is obsessed with the golden apples?

Predictive Questions:

1. Jonathon very much wants to show Timothy the rock. Why do you think he changes his mind?
2. What might be the symbolism behind the cake that Jonathon’s mother made?

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary:

Vocabulary Words:

brooding
crimson
evading
neighed
ominous
piebald

Questions:

1. How does Jonathon feel about his father leaving him behind? Why?
2. Describe the single portrait that hangs on the landing of the stairs to the attic. Who might he be? Why is the portrait alone?
3. How does the author describe Uncle Wilford?
4. In order for Jonathon to go with his father, what must he promise to do?
5. How does Jonathon feel when he sees his mother standing beside the hay bales? Why doesn't she return the wave?

Predictive Questions:

1. Was the rock magic? Why did its magic awaken on the stairs?
2. What do you think the Beyond lands might represent?
3. Why does Jonathon have such a strong yearning to go to the Red Mountains?
4. Jonathon feels his mother might be evading the truth. Why is this important?

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary:

Jonathon's father has not returned from the Red Mountains, and Mrs. Brae decides to follow him. Jonathon is contemplating going as well.

Vocabulary Words:

bland
bleating
damask
daubed
defend
glared
image
incredulous
persuade
scraggly
scuffled
solstice
stalking

Questions:

1. According to his mother, how long will Jonathon need to practice with the bow and arrow before he is "good"?
2. What is Sunturn? What holiday does it remind you of?
3. Why do you think Jonathon is upset when his mother visits the old man?
4. What is the significance of finding four dark hairs on his chest and his mother not answering questions about his light eyes?
5. What are Jonathon's reasons, so far, for fearing that he might be going crazy?

Predictive Question:

1. Is Jonathon going to go after his mother? Why do you think he might?

Chapter 6

Chapter Summary:

Unaware that his wife has been gone for two weeks, Jonathon's father returns from the Red Mountains with a colt.

Vocabulary Words:

amber
cleft
embodied
lean
lurch
paddock
pole lopper
prey
pruning
rasped
superstition
tarnished
tooled

Questions:

1. What is the significance of the hooded man? What images come to mind?
2. What is the mood of the poem? What colors come to mind?
3. What is the story told by the poem?
4. Why did Mr. Landers say most men would be too afraid to form a search party?
5. What does Jonathon learn about the Red Mountains from meeting the horse for the first time?

Predictive Questions:

1. What do all the dark, winter words and images foreshadow about coming events?
2. Do you think that Jonathon's mother will return from the Red Mountains?

Chapter 7

Chapter Summary:

Jonathon has a vision that he doesn't understand. Mr. Dakken threatens Jonathon's father about the dangerousness of the horse. Jonathon's mother returns and threatens to kill the horse.

Vocabulary Words:

arrested
balked
blight
crude
curry
exhilaration
gusted
listing
muffler
quivering
scowled
scrutiny
tenant
uncanny
urgent

Questions:

1. Why is Jonathon fascinated with his colt? How are boy and horse alike?
2. What is the connection between the colt and the rock?
3. When does Jonathon hear the drums? How does it relate to the first time?
4. Why does Mr. Dakken fear the Braes? Why is this significant?
5. What do you think "gathering wild honey in the hills" means?
6. Why does Karena believe she must kill the colt?
7. What images go with the colt—light, or dark? Explain.
8. How is Jonathon's tension about "going crazy" building? Give examples.

Predictive Question:

1. What kind of feelings do you get from the advancing storm?

Chapter 8

Chapter Summary:

Jonathon is mad at his mother for shooting an arrow at the colt. The family celebrates Sunturn and Jonathon's mother gives him a beautiful bow. Shortly after, he hears drums again and sees a vision. So does Karena, but faintly.

Vocabulary Words:

burrowed
contorted
cringed
faltered
mantle
reverently
shuddered

Questions:

1. How do you think going to the Red Mountains might change a person?
2. What dangers would be worse for Jonathon than going to the Red Mountains?
3. What was the "agreement," and when did Brian break it?
4. What do you think Jonathon and his mother hear at the end of the chapter?

Predictive Questions:

1. What does Karena mean when she complains the world is too small? Why would she feel confused?
2. What does Jonathon's "vision" foreshadow? Why is it growing more intense?

Chapter 9

Chapter Summary:

Jonathon wakes early and makes plans to leave home. He encounters his mother in the pasture, where they have both gone to see the colt. She tells him she is going to take the horse back. Before he can protest, a score of Dalriadas come riding toward them.

Vocabulary Words:

ceased
foundered
plough
shrouded
thrummed

Questions:

1. Why do you think Jonathon chose to take his old bow and leave the new one behind?
2. When Karena says “He means so ... he’s so beautiful,” what do you think she’s really thinking? What do you think Karena was about to say, before she caught herself?
3. How do Karena and Jonathon’s ideas about the beating drums differ?
4. What “great danger” might Karena be talking about?
5. Reread the last sentence of the chapter and consider:
 - Why is it now too late?
 - What “agreements” is Karena talking about?
 - Why does Karena tell Jonathon the meaning of “Rhoar”?

Chapter 10

Chapter Summary:

Karena hides Jonathon from the Dalriadas by dragging a hay bale over him. From his hiding place, he watches the Dalriadas herd the colt away. He sees his mother approach them, and watches as they shoot her.

Vocabulary Words:

brooch
croup
ebbed

Questions:

1. Karena hides Jonathon, but not herself. What does this tell you about her character?
2. What does Jonathon hope to accomplish when he says “I don’t want the colt. Take him back.”
3. Look over the past few chapters. What are some indications that the rock Jonathon found may have been magic? Why does he throw it away?

Predictive Question:

1. Whose hands grabbed Jonathon and pulled him away from his mother? What is going to happen to him?

Chapter 11

Chapter Summary:

The spring after Karena's death, Jonathon is growing more concerned about going mad, frightened by the changes occurring in his body and by a glimpse of the hooded man.

Vocabulary Words:

potent
crooned
dremweed
rogue
agates

Questions:

1. What physical changes are happening to Jonathon?
2. When Jonathon sees the hooded man, how is it different this time?
3. How has Jonathon's life changed since his mother died?

Chapter 12

Chapter Summary:

Jonathon and Rosamund Landers talk on the hillside while Rosamund's father visits the Brae house. Mr. Landers then orders her to leave, angry about the friendship between the teenagers. Jonathon confronts some of his anger and fears about hunting.

Vocabulary Words:

coiled

Questions:

1. Why was it okay for Rosamund to fish when she was little, but not anymore? Why does this confuse Jonathon?
2. Mr. Landers “talks about the things women do and the things men do.” Think about examples from your own life that connect to this statement.
3. Why does Mr. Landers warn Jonathon that he and Rosamund shouldn't “get too friendly?”
4. What important thing does Uncle Wilford tell Jonathon?

Predictive Question:

1. Jonathon doesn't need to hunt or shoot because he already knows what is inside him—do you think he will give up on learning to use the bow and arrow?

Chapter 13

Chapter Summary:

Jonathon's Ruby Spice trees are damaged by Timothy Dakken, who warns him to stay away from Rosamund. Brian calls in a debt and gives Jonathon the deed to land being farmed by the Dakkens. Verblight is discovered in the orchards.

Vocabulary Words:

girdled
deed
parchment
plume
contaminated
befouled

Questions:

1. What does Timothy Dakken do to Jonathon's trees? Why?
2. What does the destruction of his trees make Jonathon think of?
3. What does Brian Brae do for his son?

Predictive Question:

1. How might verblight affect the lives of the Braes?

Chapter 14

Chapter Summary:

As Jonathon works in the blight-stricken fields, he is insulted and attacked by an angry Timothy Dakken and two other boys. His attackers are frightened by the sight of the ridge on Jonathon's forehead, and run. Jonathon shows the ridge to his father. Uncle Wilford urges Brian Brae to "tell" Jonathon something.

Vocabulary Words:

bastard
besieged
doggedly
malaise

Questions:

1. What questions does Timothy's taunt "poor little boy don't know who his pappy is" raise for Jonathon?
2. Why do Timothy, Nick, and Egan run away from Jonathan?
3. How does Brian react when he sees the ridge on Jonathon's forehead?
4. Compare the ways in which Uncle Wilford and Brian Brae each react to Jonathon's fight with Timothy.

Predictive Question:

1. Uncle Wilford says, "You have to tell the boy, Brian." What do you think Jonathon's father will tell him?

Chapter 15

Chapter Summary:

Jonathon is in the depths of grief over losing his mother. He learns more about his roots, the clashing worlds, and his possible illegitimacy. His being part Sky and part Valley means that Jonathon feels much tension and anxiety about his identity.

Vocabulary Words:

inlaid
luminous
pungent

Questions:

1. Why does Jonathon think his father doesn't like to look at him?
2. Why does Jonathon think he has ruined his father's life?
3. What is Jonathon's "strange legacy"?
4. Why do the Valley folk think a blue-eyed child might grow up to be insane?
5. Do we learn for sure whether Brian is Jonathon's biological father?

Predictive Question:

1. Who do you think the mysterious girl by the river is?

Chapter 16

Chapter Summary:

Jonathon takes the “barbarian” bow and walks up the canyon. He can neither draw nor aim the bow. Frustrated and angry, he runs away. The bow speaks and sings to him, but, sensing danger, Jonathon cannot use it to shoot a buck. Returning home, he finds his father being confronted by a group of local men.

Vocabulary Words:

recoiled
subtlety
translucent
yielded

Questions:

1. Why does Jonathon sneak out of the house with the “barbarian” bow?
2. What problems does he have with the bow?
3. Why doesn't Jonathon want to kill anything?
4. What does Uncle Wilford learn about Rhohar the colt?

Predictive Question:

1. Why do you think Mr. Dakken, Mr. Landers, and the other local men have come to the Brae house?

Chapter 17

Chapter Summary

Men from the community come to the Brae house and confront Brian with the assertion that Jonathon is a Dalriada. They demand that Brian hand the boy over to them. Brian resists, and threatens them with a curse. Jonathon springs from his hiding place, holding the Dalriada bow, and goes into a “dream” state in which he feels powerful and elated, only to find that he cannot shoot and kill Mr. Landers because of what happened to his mother.

Vocabulary Words:

defiling
disown
dispensation
grotesque
immaculate
pinnacles
purge
superstitious

Questions:

1. What reasons do the men give for believing that Jonathon is a Dalriada?
2. What do they say about Brian’s relationship with his son?
3. In their confrontation, Mr. Landers and Brian both reveal something about what was supposed to happen to blue-eyed babies at the time Jonathon was born. What is it?
4. Why do the men want Brian to hand over Jonathon? What do they intend to do with the boy?
5. What do you think is happening when Jonathon springs out with his bow and suddenly feels as though he is “dreaming”?

Chapter 18

Chapter Summary:

Frightened for his son, Brian orders Jonathon to stay inside the house. Jonathon is forced to confront the fact that he is different from the Valley folk, and that they are a threat to him. Brian speaks of his plans to make Jonathon the richest farmer in the Valley. Jonathon feels that there is no safe place for him. That day, he and Brian learn that Old Man Craven has been stabbed to death.

Vocabulary Words:

dross
finagle
sentry
squatter
waiver

Questions:

1. What warning does his father give to Jonathon?
2. What does Brian plan to do to ensure his son's future?
3. How is the Brae house different since Karena's death and the Widow Grey's arrival?
4. Who is Old Man Craven and why does Jonathon find it especially upsetting that he has been killed?

Predictive Questions

1. Why do you think Brian Brae changes his plans and decides to take Jonathon and Uncle Wilford to Middlefield?

Chapter 19

Chapter Summary:

The Braes and Uncle Wilford arrive at Middlefield, where Brian will go to the Village Council in an attempt to buy Jonathon the right to live. On his first night at the Middlefield Inn, Jonathon spots a Dalriada there. The innkeeper says that having a “loony-blue” in residence is bad for business, so Brian takes his son on a mysterious trip.

Vocabulary Words:

alehouse
deadlocked
dormant
elude
percussive
tamarack
throngs
vista

Questions:

1. Why does Brian Brae need to go to the Village Council? What happens when he arrives there?
2. How is Middlefield different from Jonathon’s home?
3. What does Jonathon think about on his first night at the Inn? What does he see there? What is significant about it?
4. Where does Brian take Jonathon when they must leave the Inn?

Predictive Question:

1. Why do you think Brian has finally brought Jonathon and his grandmother together?

Chapter 20

Chapter Summary:

Jonathon meets his grandmother, Sephonie, for the first time. He discovers that she is the “famous weaver” whose work hangs in the Brae home. Sephonie begins to tell him about the history of the Valley folk and the Dalriadas.

Vocabulary Words:

faltered
hewn
promontories
shuttle
skeins

Questions:

1. What is Jonathon’s reaction to meeting his grandmother? What does he think about doing?
2. How does Sephonie feel about meeting her grandson? Is it difficult for her?
3. What is it about Sephonie that Jonathon recognizes, although they have never met?

Chapter 21

Chapter Summary:

Jonathon feels contented and safe in his grandmother's home, but Brian announces that it's time they head toward their own home. Jonathon asks Sephonie who his "real" father is, but she cannot tell him for sure. Jonathon doesn't want to leave, and he and Brian fight bitterly. Jonathon stays with his grandmother.

Vocabulary Words:

encroachment
kingfisher
mica
renegade

Questions:

1. Why do you think Jonathon might feel "content" and "safe" with his grandmother? Is there a bond forming between the two of them?
2. Jonathon is upset when his father says that it is time to return home. Why?
3. What does Uncle Wilford mean when he tells Sephonie that he'll be back, and that "I'm an old fool, I know. But I'll never give up hoping"?

Chapter 22

Chapter Summary:

Jonathon is living with Sephonie in her home between the Mountains and the Valley. He and his grandmother quarrel over his difficulty accepting himself as part Dalriada.

Vocabulary Words:

abrupt
beacon
bobbin
seeped

Questions:

1. Sephonie began a new tapestry on the day she heard of Karena's death. What story does it tell, and how?
2. Why is Jonathon at odds with his grandmother? What is he having trouble accepting?

Predictive Questions:

1. Why do you suppose Jonathon is being called up to the ridge where the ruins are?

Chapter 23

Chapter Summary:

Jonathon takes Minna the horse and heads up the ridge. Inside the ruined walls, he encounters the strange hooded man again. The man reveals his face—and it is Jonathon's face, but twenty years older. While holding the red rock, Jonathon receives a dazzling vision of a great, golden apple tree. Finally, he can acknowledge that he is a Dalriada. Filled with courage, he decides to set out for the Red Mountains then and there.

Vocabulary Words:

constellation
fragment
squelched
troweled

Questions:

1. Since Jonathon arrived at his grandmother's home, the kingfisher has accompanied him almost constantly. Even when he is on his way up the ridge, the bird is there. What role do you think the kingfisher plays in this story? What might be significant about this bird?
2. Who does Jonathon see up in the ruins? What does he hear? How does this affect him?
3. What is the vision that Jonathon sees when he holds the red rock?

Chapter 24

Chapter Summary:

After three weeks in the Red Mountains, Jonathon encounters the Dalriadas. Kiron, who seems to be a leader, takes Jonathon's bow and makes the boy struggle to get it back. Jonathon rides with the Dalriadas, and encounters Athira, the red-headed young woman whom he had seen by the river long ago.

Vocabulary Words:

contemptuous
cornice
filigree
hypnotic
lichen
prowling
strata

Questions:

1. How does Jonathon react when he is encircled by the Dalriadas?
2. What sort of role do you think Kiron plays among the Dalriadas? How does his behavior toward Jonathon illustrate this?
3. Who does Jonathon see when the Dalriadas stop to rest beneath the trees?

Predictive Question:

1. If Athira has Rhohar with her, what might this mean to Jonathon?

Chapter 25

Chapter Summary:

Jonathon thinks that these Dalriadas have Rhohar with them, and he becomes enraged, accusing them of killing his mother. Too late, he realizes that he is mistaken about the horse. Kiron nearly kills him, but is commanded to stop by Athira. Jonathon follows the Dalriadas to their camp and joins in their meal, but is suddenly grabbed by Kiron and dragged toward the fire.

Vocabulary Words:

crosshatched
hewn
protruded

Questions:

1. What mistake does Jonathon make? What are the results?
2. What do you think Athira's role is among the Dalriada? Why do you think this?

Predictive Question:

1. What do you suppose the Dalriadas are arguing about? Why does Kiron grab Jonathon and drag him toward the fire?

Chapter 26

Chapter Summary:

At the fire's edge, Jonathon breathes smoke from herbs that have been tossed into the fire by Owalen, the Seer. Jonathon becomes dizzy, and finds that somehow he can understand the Dalriadas' language. The Dalriadas want to know how Jonathon came to possess "Angarath's mighty bow." When they find that he is Angarath's grandson, Athira wonders if he has been sent to help them find the lost Farlith. Athira is revealed to be the queen of the Dalriadas. Owalen tells the story of the Farlith, and Jonathon, realizing that he knows what the Farlith is, shows them the red rock.

Vocabulary Words:

crag
ignite
invocation
scintillated
sentinel
sparse

Questions:

1. Who is Athira?
2. Why does Athira believe that Jonathon must have been sent to her people? Why would Jonathon have a special relationship to the Dalriadas because of his grandfather?
3. How does the story of the Farlith explain the separate existence of the Dalriadas and the Valley folk?
4. Has the Farlith appeared before in this story? Do you know what it is?

Chapter 27

Chapter Summary:

Barli, who feeds him and allows him to rest, nurses Jonathon back to health. When he regains his energy, Tlell, the Master Bowman, visits Jonathon and tells him about the perfect balance of his bow, Cahaud. Tlell brings him to the meadow to shoot the Cahaud.

Vocabulary Words:

crevasse
discerning
evoke
relinquish

Questions:

1. Why does Tlell know so much about Jonathon's bow?
2. What does "Making" mean in this chapter? Why isn't Jonathon's offer to "make things grow" considered by the Dalriadas to be of value?
3. How does Kiron feel about Jonathon? How can you tell?

Predictive Questions:

1. Will Jonathon learn to shoot Cahaud?
2. Why doesn't Tlell give the bow to someone who already knows how to shoot?

Chapter 28

Chapter Summary:

Tlell asks Kiron to be Jonathon's Atenar, or "hart brother," much to Kiron's dismay. Nevertheless, Kiron presents Jonathon with a gift of clothing and takes him to see Elanae, the Master Fletcher, to make arrows for Jonathon's bow.

Vocabulary Words:

fletcher
glowered
obsidian

Questions:

1. Why is Jonathon reluctant to give back the Farlith?
2. Why did Kiron give Jonathon a gift of clothing?
3. Why do you think Tlell made Kiron Jonathon's Atenar, or "brother?"

Predictive Question:

1. What do you think is the significance of the tree vision Jonathon saw when Elanae looked at him?

Chapter 29

Chapter Summary:

Jonathon continues to build his relationship of trust with Tlell and tells him some of his life story. Jonathon learns about the Ridgewalk from Tlell and begins to worry about his ability to complete it and come back alive. While fishing to repay his debts to others, Jonathon has an encounter with Athira and Kiron and determines that Kiron may be jealous.

Vocabulary Words:

envoy
perilous
sedges

Questions:

1. Why is the Ridgewalk so important? Why is Jonathon nervous about it?
2. Can you think of events in your life that symbolize reaching adulthood?
3. What does Jonathon learn from Athira about the history of the Dalriadas and the Valley Folk?

Predictive Question:

1. Why do you think Jonathon saw Rosamund when he was imagining kissing Athira? Do you think he will see Rosamund again?

Chapter 30

Chapter Summary:

Jonathon spends the weeks before the Ridgewalk continuing to practice shooting and running to get in shape for the event. He learns that after the Ridgewalk, new adults can choose a mate. His friends think Athira is showing interest in him, which will make Kiron even more angry and dangerous. Yet, Jonathon has asked Kiron to take him into the woods and teach him to hunt.

Vocabulary Words:

inexorably
rangy
rigorous
rucksack

Questions:

1. Why was Jonathon running with Halla and Sear?
2. Give some examples of why Athira might be interested in Jonathon rather than Kiron.

Predictive Question:

1. Do you think Jonathon will go hunting with Kiron? Do you think Kiron will harm him?

Chapter 31

Chapter Summary:

Jonathon and Kiron hunt together in the woods. Jonathon struggles to keep up with Kiron and move smoothly like a Dalriada. Kiron confesses his concern over Elanae having to take the Ridgewalk, and in doing so a bond is formed between the two.

Vocabulary Words:

glaciers
rampant
ramparts
transfixed

Questions:

1. Do you think Kiron is deliberately making it difficult for Jonathon to learn to hunt?
2. Why is Kiron so upset about Elanae having to take the Ridgewalk? Do you think she should have to go on the Ridgewalk like everyone else?
3. What happens between Kiron and Jonathon at the end of the chapter? Why?

Predictive Question:

1. Will Elanae go on the Ridgewalk? Do you think she will return?

Chapter 32

Chapter Summary:

The day of the long-awaited Ridgewalk arrives. Athira tries once again to get Jonathon to return the Farlith to her before going on the Ridgewalk but he convinces the seers that he must keep it and present it to the Eldest on the mountain. Jonathon waits while the names are called, one by one, to begin the journey.

Vocabulary Words:

beckoning
pinnacles
rollicking
vastness

Questions:

1. What happens when Kiron and Jonathon are bear hunting? Why do you think Kiron shoots the bear and lets Jonathon live?
2. Why does Athira want the Farlith back before Jonathon leaves on the Ridgewalk? Why does she ask for it in front of everyone?
3. Why does Jonathon think he must keep the Farlith in order to survive the Ridgewalk?

Predictive Questions:

1. What do you think is the significance of the skull Jonathon frequently sees in his dreams?
2. Who do you think will return from the Ridgewalk? Who won't? Why?

Chapter 33

Chapter Summary:

Jonathon begins the Ridgewalk and faces his fears. He chooses path after path until he comes to a wooden door in the mountain, his only option for going forward.

Vocabulary Words:

cauldron
cirque
imminent
rabid
rending
scree
vassals

Questions:

1. How did the teachings of Tlell help Jonathon on the Ridgewalk?
2. Do you think the hooded man intends good or evil for Jonathon?

Predictive Questions:

1. What do you think Jonathon will find behind the wooden door?
2. Has he chosen the correct path up the mountain?

Chapter 34

Chapter Summary:

Jonathon moves through the terrifying cavern in the mountain as the voices of his mother, father and others taunt him. He throws the Farlith out of the cave. Jonathon shoots the Red Hart and the antlers form a tree filled with delicious apples. He is called by a horse that carries him down the mountain. On the way, Elanae rides up next to him, hands him the Farlith and vanishes.

Vocabulary Words:

coalesced
putrid
suffused

Questions:

1. Why does Jonathon hear all the angry, negative voices as he moves through the cave?
2. How does the cave symbolize death?
3. What do you think Elanae means when she says “the promise?”

Chapter 35

Chapter Summary:

Jonathon returns from the Ridgewalk to find the High Summer Camp deserted. Later, he rides to Kiron's camp and learns that he has been gone for six days and has been counted as one of the dead. Finding Kiron, Jonathon comforts him in his grief over the loss of Elanae and then realizes that it was Kiron's arrow that killed his mother.

Questions:

1. Why isn't Jonathon concerned when he returns to the High Summer Camp to find it deserted?
2. What does Jonathon learn from Kiron about the different paths over the mountain?
3. Is Kiron surprised to see Jonathon on Rhoar?
4. How does Jonathon figure out that Kiron killed his mother?

Predictive Question:

1. What will Jonathon do to Kiron, now that he has discovered him to be Karena's killer?

Chapter 36

Chapter Summary:

Jonathon fights with Kiron but stops short of killing him. He rides back to the camp and reunites with his friends, surprising all as he rides in on Rhohar.

Vocabulary Words:

brandishing
censured
copse
ewe

Questions:

1. What stopped Jonathon from killing Kiron?
2. Why didn't Tlell or any of Jonathon's friends tell him that Kiron had killed his mother?
3. Why were people shocked to see Jonathon ride in on Rhohar?

Chapter 37

Chapter Summary:

Owalen doesn't give Jonathon the mark of manhood because he feels his heart is not whole. He leaves Jonathon to deal once again with a lack of acceptance. He returns the Farlith to Athira and leaves the Red Mountains.

Vocabulary Words:

cerulean
pommel
resolute
withers

Questions:

1. Why do you think Jonathon's heart is not whole?
2. Jonathon says he doesn't want to leave the Red Mountains. Do you think this is true? Why or why not?
3. What does Jonathon take with him when he leaves the Red Mountains?
4. How does Jonathon feel at the end of the chapter?

Predictive Questions:

1. Do you think Athira will join with Kiron on Joining Night?
2. Where do you think Jonathon will go now?

Chapter 38

Chapter Summary:

Jonathon decides to return to the Valley and present the *Firegold* to his father. Kiron catches up with him to ride with him at least part of the way to the Valley.

Vocabulary Words:

hilt

Questions:

1. Why does Jonathon decide to go home to the Valley?
2. Why does Kiron have Jonathon wash his knife in the river?

Predictive Questions:

1. Do you think Jonathon is a king?
2. Do you think he will return to the Red Mountains or stay in the Valley?
3. Do you think his father will be happy to see him?

Chapter 39

Chapter Summary:

Jonathon arrives home to find that angry Valley folk have destroyed much of the orchard. Rosamund is now living with Jonathon's father. Jonathon discovers that the portrait in the attic is of a descendant of the Braes who was also half Dalriada. Jonathon realizes that the *Firegold* may be the magic that brings the Valley people and the Red Mountain people together as one for the first time in over 400 years.

Vocabulary Words:

brocade
gilt-encrusted
ravaged
rift
sidled
statuesque
taint

Questions:

1. Why does Jonathon eat the *Firegold* before he presents it to his father?
2. Why is Jonathon drawn to the attic in his home? What does he find there?
3. What do you think Jonathon's life will be like now? Will he marry Rosamund? Will he go back to the Red Mountains?

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

FIREGOLD

Interdisciplinary Activities

Writing Activities

1. **Jonathon's Journal.** After each chapter is read, students retell its events, from Jonathon's point of view, in journal form. Journal entries may be shared with classmates. Students may make and design their own journals for this project.
2. **Eulogy.** Write a eulogy for Jonathon's mother. Students should write as if they are Jonathon, recalling memories of their mother and detailing her strengths. This eulogy may be also be written as a poem or ballad.
3. **Autobiography.** Students write an essay telling about their lives to date and focusing on a time or an incident that made them feel they were growing up and gaining independence.
4. **Book Review.** Students read book reviews from newspapers and magazines, developing familiarity with the general styles and components of a review. When they have finished reading *Firegold*, each student will review the book; this review may be posted on a classroom or library bulletin board.
5. **Ballad.** After reading *Firegold*, students reread the ballad of the *Firegold* and, as a class, discuss the ways in which it parallels Jonathon's journey. Ask students to consider how would they choose to tell of their own lives, making an outline of important events. If they think of their lives as journeys, how far do they feel they have come? What has mattered most to them? Students will write ballads detailing their own lives.
6. **Persuasive Essay.** Students will discuss central themes in the novel and choose a topic they wish to discuss. The students will then brainstorm examples of the theme being illustrated throughout the story. The students will complete an outline which fleshes out topic sentences, examples, and conclusion sentences. The students will then write a standard five-paragraph essay.

Sample topic sentences:

- Jonathon needs to pass several trials and goes through many rites of passage to prove he has become an adult.
- The characters in the story have been divided into two groups, the blue eyes and the brown eyes, which establishes many conflicts between different types of people.
- Jonathon has to struggle with the idea of death throughout the story.
- Jonathon's relationship with his father/his mother/Kiron/etc. (choose one) changes throughout the story.
- Through the use of symbols (such as apples, gold, eyes), the author represents important aspects of Jonathon's life.
- Throughout the story, Jonathon struggles for acceptance by two different cultures.

The Ridgewalk

As a class, create a celebration around a rite of passage known as the Ridgewalk. The following activities have been designed around this theme. The event may be held at your school, or in a nearby park. Activities can be modified or discarded by the teacher depending on time, space, and other facilities available. Students may do these tasks in

small groups; responsibility can be delegated by the teacher or by drawing the activity (these are addressed to the student) from a hat.

1. Planning the Event. Consult with your classmates and teacher in order to determine the best time and place for the Ridgewalk. Plan a guest list: will you be inviting people from outside the class to watch or participate? Write and design invitations to the event, and plan and create the decorations. Create a seating arrangement that will accommodate both students and guests.

Intelligences: linguistic, visual/spatial, logical/mathematical

2. Ridgewalk design. You have been assigned the task of creating a “Ridgewalk” for your classmates. In designing the ridgewalk, think of it as an obstacle course. Be sure to include a variety of obstacles that will test your classmates’ physical strength/skills. Make sure that various levels of difficulty are included so that everyone can “Come Returning.” Have a teacher or staff member examine the obstacles to make sure they are safe ones. Also make sure that you can set up and take down the course without too much difficulty. When you have finished testing out your course, map the Ridgewalk on a long sheet of butcher paper so that everyone can see it before the event takes place. Intelligences:

logical/mathematical, visual

3. Job Placement. Make a list of the various jobs done by members of the Sky Rider culture. Create a survey that will help you determine your classmates’ strengths and interests. (What kinds of questions will you ask? Look at the list of jobs and think about what you might need to find out.) Use the results of the survey to match students with jobs.

Extension: Write classified ads for positions still vacant after students have been “assigned” their preferred roles.

4. Recipe: Create a recipe for Barli’s stew. Make sure to write down the measurements and ingredients used. With the assistance of a parent or teacher, make the stew a week before the Ridgewalk is scheduled and test it out on your classmates. Create a rating scale and have your classmates rate the stew (aroma, spices, texture, overall flavor, etc.).

Incorporate the results of the survey into a spreadsheet. Revise your recipe if necessary, based on the results of your survey. Make the stew again, and bring in the “final” version on the day of the Ridgewalk.

Intelligences: logical/mathematical, kinesthetic

Ridgewalk Class Event

As a culminating event, plan a class celebration for returning from the Ridgewalk. Divide up the planning roles. Allow students to do the part of planning that interests them. Title the sign-up sheets “Choose the Kind of Making You Like.”

Suggested events (teacher and students choose format):

- Start with the Ridgewalk
- Have students share personal reflections on their Ridgewalk and how it feels not to be a kid anymore
- Share their own projects
- Sing together
- Designate a queen (by drawing only; no votes)
- Returning Ridgewalkers receive a special mark (costume makeup, sticker, temporary tattoo, etc.)

Post-celebration events:

- Write newspaper articles about the event
- Make Hyperstudio presentation on the festivities
- Videotape and present at Open House, etc.
- Thank-you notes to people outside the class who helped with the Ridgewalk

The Eyes Have It!

Vision, and imagery related to eyes, play an important role in *Firegold*. The following activities have been designed around this theme.

1. **Eye Booklet.** As students read each chapter, have them create a booklet in which they note any references to eyes or vision that they find. Students should write down the person or object that is mentioned, the colors and/or other descriptive words used to describe the situation, and predict the possible significance of the situation. Extension: Have students think about the many ways in which we describe the act of looking at something depending on the mood or purpose of the person who is doing the looking. List synonyms for “look” as they are found (such as stared, glanced, gazed, etc.).
2. **“Eyes are the windows of the soul.”** Students choose a character from their booklets and, considering all references made to that character’s eyes, write a brief essay, keeping the above in mind. That is: How do the eyes of this person reflect his or her character?
3. **Visuals.** Students will use the materials of their (or their teacher’s) choice and create an image of what they think the skull (Jonathon throws the Farlith through its eye and later climbs through that eye to escape) looks like. Extension: Discuss the concept of a mandala with the class (this may involve research on the students’ part) and have each student create a mandala that represents the eye.
4. **History/Discussion.** Discuss with the students what it means to separate or define people based on a physical characteristic. What happens when you create a situation in which a group of people are separated or treated differently because of some characteristic they share? How might the people in the group feel? How might the other people feel? And how might they treat each other? Discuss times and places when people have been either favored or discriminated against based on physical characteristics.
5. **Farlith.** The new Farlith was created from a tear from the eye of the Red Hart. What might the significance be?

GEOGRAPHY

Relief Map

Students, working alone or in small groups, will create a three-dimensional map that describes the route taken by Jonathon in *Firegold*. Legend and compass rose must be included. Discuss the standard elements of a map, including the legend. When students create their maps, they can design their own symbols to be used in the map legend.

As a class, brainstorm landforms, bodies of water, specific towns, and other landmarks that must be included in the maps. List these on the board. Students may also decide to include paths, roads, or other elements on their individual maps. When students work on their individual/group projects they should have access to the following:

Materials: poster board, glue, tin foil, construction paper/colored paper, markers/crayons/colored pencils, any other items that might enhance map (such as coffee grinds/candy/other three-dimensional objects for texture and effect).

Added Effects: Brown bags may be used for an “antiqued” effect—open and cut brown bag in long oval shape; wet bag and wrinkle it up; allow time to dry before drawing on it. Or, stain white paper with tea and tear edges to achieve aging effect.

Intelligences: linguistic, visual, logical, kinesthetic

VISUAL ARTS

Soapstone Etching:

Students will design their own versions of the Farlith that Jonathon finds in the Mirandin River, and then carve it out of soap or clay.

- Students will first reread passages that relate to the Farlith, and then work in groups to research soapstone carvings to find examples of the craft.
- Individually, students design their stones on paper, then transfer sketches to their “soapstones.” Suggest that they sketch out different designs and experiment on paper before choosing final design. (Teacher may play music of different cultures while mural and soapstone etchings are being created.)
- Students should have access to the following materials: a bar of soap or clay and plastic knives, or toothpicks or other small devices for sketching and carving into a soft substances.

Intelligences: visual/spatial, linguistic/verbal, musical

Tapestry Design

Students design and create tapestries using graph paper, using the description of Sephonie's tapestry work from *Firegold* as a "model" or else creating their own based on a significant event in Jonathon's life. (Students may also choose to base their work on significant events in their own lives)

- As a group, brainstorm what Sephonie's tapestry might look like. Students should also reread the passage and list details of the description.
- Using graph paper, students design a tapestry with a variety of colors, using colored pencils to fill in the squares.
- Students determine the amount of each color yarn they would need in order to make the actual tapestry by assigning a value to each square on the grid (i.e., 1 square=.25 skein of yarn). Then, they can find out the average price of the yarn (from a craft or needlework store) and figure out the cost of materials for their tapestries.

Intelligences: visual/spatial, kinesthetic, intrapersonal, verbal/linguistic, logical/mathematical

Independent Study Topics

Rites of Passage

- Tests and trials
- Self-knowledge
- Finding meaning in life
- Courage and bravery
- Peer pressure

Relationships

- Death
- Depression
- Conflict
- Problem solving
- Family
- Genetics
- Friends

Cultural Differences

- Belonging/Not belonging
- Prejudice
- Breaking down stereotypes
- Powerful women in legend and in fact
- Roots: Where We Come From
- Creation stories from different cultures

Cycles

- Seasons
- Ecology
- Orchards
- Light
- Life cycle

Extended Learning Opportunities

Note: We strongly recommend that teachers preview these resources before sharing them with students.

Books

- Browning, Frank. *Apples*. New York: North Point Press, 1998. A cultural and natural history of the apple by an orchard owner who has traveled the globe in order to learn about his subject.
- Christopher, John. *The White Mountains*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1967. On a future Earth, Will Parker and his friends try to escape the alien Tripods who rule the planet. The Tripods have instituted a “capping” ceremony in which adolescent humas come of age by being transformed into docile servants. Will has heard of one place the Tripods do not control, and he risks his life to find it rather than be capped. Young adult.
- Farmer, Nancy. *A Girl Named Disaster*. New York: Orchard Books, 1996. Set in contemporary Mozambique and Zimbabwe, a Shona girl named Nname runs away when the local “witchfinder” decrees that she must marry a stranger. Her escape, in which she navigates the Musengezi River in a boat owned by a dead man, is aided by spirits (including that of her dead mother). Nname must find her way, and find herself. A Newbery Honor Book. Young adult.
- Kimmel, Eric A. *Bar Mitzvah: A Jewish Boy’s Coming of Age*. Illustrated by Erika Weihs. New York: Viking Children’s Books, 1996. Stories and vignettes from men of all ages as they remember their coming-of-age experiences. Also includes religious, historical, and political background, and a chapter on how the bar mitzvah ritual has changed over the years. Makes comparisons between several major religions and discusses the significance of rituals in our lives. Middle grades.
- King, Elizabeth. *Quinceanera: Celebrating Fifteen*. New York: Dutton Books, 1998. Photographed by the author. This nonfiction book follows two girls—Cindy, whose family is from El Salvador, and Suzi, whose family is from Mexico, as they prepare for their “sweet fifteen” celebrations. Middle to upper grades.
- Leneman, Cantor Helen, Editor. *Bar/Bat Mitzvah basics: A Practical Family Guide to Coming of Age Together*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1996. This guide illustrates the practical and spiritual process of preparing for a bar/bat mitzvah, with text from rabbis, cantors, teenagers and others about their experiences preparing for the event. Deals with such topics as stress, high expectations, extended families, etc. Interesting resource for adults and students.
- Liptak, Karen. *Coming-of-Age: Traditions and Rituals Around the World*. Brookfield, CT: Millbrook Press, 1994. This accessible and informative text, illustrated with photographs, explores a variety of coming-of-age rituals from cultures and continents all over the world. Good resource for adults and students.
- Lowry, Lois. *The Giver*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1993. Jonas lives in a world where there is no crime, no illness, no poverty, and everyone is contented. When he turns twelve he is chosen by the Elders to be his community’s Receiver of Memories. He receives these memories from an elderly man known as The Giver and begins to wonder about what his world has given up in order to be as stable and pain-free as it is. Newbery Award-winner. Young adult.
- Martin, Alice A. *All About Apples*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976. A fun and informative survey of apples, their history, folklore, and horticulture. Focuses mainly on apples in North America. Includes recipes!
- Odell, Scott. *Island of the Blue Dolphins*. New York: Yearling Books (reissue edition), 1987. Classic story of a twelve-year-old Native American girl, Karana, whose

loyalty to her brother results in her being stranded alone on a pacific island for eighteen years. Newbery Award-winner, Young adult.

Internet Resources

Apples & More

<http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/apples>

This site, presented by the University of Illinois Extension, provides a wealth of information about apples. The site contains apple facts, history and legends, apple games, recipes and nutrition information.

Apple Growing Calendar

<http://www.norfolk-county.com/bigapple/seasons.html>

Provides a detailed look at what happens in an orchard each season.

Washington Apple Commission

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

Features information about growing apples, apple varieties, recipes, contests, and apple e-cards for kids

Bar and Bat Mitzvah at Shir Hadash

<http://www.shamash.org/jrf/shirhama/handbook/barBatMitzvah.html>

This site explains the origins and meaning of the rituals and outlines the requirements for and events leading up to the ceremony. This coming of age ceremony is also described.

The National Archery Association

<http://www.usarchery.org>

The Association offers a history of the sport as well as information on the types of archery and a calendar of Olympic events.

Designer Genes

<http://library.advanced.org/18258/index2.htm>

This ThinkQuest site shows kids how to use Punnett squares to figure out how genetic traits like eye color are passed from parents to children.

The Seven Sacred Rites

<http://www.lakota-studies.com/rit.htm>

Describes rites of the Lakota Sioux, including The Sun Dance and the Rite of Purification, as told by Black Elk to Joseph Brown.