Literature Circle Guide:

Walk Two Moons

by Kathleen Simpson
# Contents

To the Teacher .................................................. 4
Using the Literature Circle Guides in Your Classroom ............... 5
Setting Up Literature Response Journals .............................. 7
The Good Discussion ........................................... 8
About Walk Two Moons ........................................ 9
About the Author: Sharon Creech ................................. 9
Enrichment Readings: Storytelling, Yellowstone and Old Faithful, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow ................................. 10
Literature Response Journal Reproducible: Before Reading the Book .......... 13
Group Discussion Reproducible: Before Reading the Book ............ 14
Literature Response Journal Reproducible: Chapters 1-6 .............. 15
Group Discussion Reproducible: Chapters 1-6 ........................ 16
Literature Response Journal Reproducible: Chapters 7-11 ............ 17
Group Discussion Reproducible: Chapters 7-11 ........................ 18
Literature Response Journal Reproducible: Chapters 12-17 .......... 19
Group Discussion Reproducible: Chapters 12-17 ...................... 20
Literature Response Journal Reproducible: Chapters 18-22 .......... 21
Group Discussion Reproducible: Chapters 18-22 ...................... 22
Literature Response Journal Reproducible: Chapters 23-27 .......... 23
Group Discussion Reproducible: Chapters 23-27 ...................... 24
Literature Response Journal Reproducible: Chapters 28-32 .......... 25
Group Discussion Reproducible: Chapters 28-32 ...................... 26
Literature Response Journal Reproducible: Chapters 33-39 .......... 27
Group Discussion Reproducible: Chapters 33-39 ...................... 28
Literature Response Journal Reproducible: Chapters 40-44 .......... 29
Group Discussion Reproducible: Chapters 40-44 ...................... 30
Reproducible: After Reading ................................... 31
Reproducible: Individual Projects .................................. 32
Reproducible: Group Projects .................................... 32
Literature Discussion Evaluation Sheet ................................ 33
To the Teacher

As a teacher, you naturally want to instill in your students the habits of confident, critical, independent, and lifelong readers. You hope that even when students are not in school they will seek out books on their own, think about and question what they are reading, and share those ideas with friends. An excellent way to further this goal is by using literature circles in your classroom.

In a literature circle, students select a book to read as a group. They think and write about it on their own in a literature response journal and then discuss it together. Both journals and discussions enable students to respond to a book and develop their insights into it. They also learn to identify themes and issues, analyze vocabulary, recognize writing techniques, and share ideas with each other—all of which are necessary to meet state and national standards.

This guide provides the support materials for using literature circles with *Walk Two Moons* by Sharon Creech. The reading strategies, discussion questions, projects, and enrichment readings will also support a whole class reading of this text or can be given to enhance the experience of an individual student reading the book as part of a reading workshop.

Literature Circles

A literature circle consists of several students (usually three to five) who agree to read a book together and share their observations, questions, and interpretations. Groups may be organized by reading level or choice of book. Often these groups read more than one book together since, as students become more comfortable talking with one another, their observations and insights deepen.

When planning to use literature circles in your classroom, it can be helpful to do the following:

* Recommend four or five books from which students may choose. These books might be grouped by theme, genre, or author.
* Allow three or four weeks for students to read each book. Each of Scholastic’s *Literature Circle Guides* has the same number of sections as well as enrichment activities and projects. Even if students are reading different books in the Literature Circle guide series, they can be scheduled to finish at the same time.
* Create a daily routine so students can focus on journal writing and discussions.
* Decide whether students will be reading books in class or for homework. If students do all their reading for homework, then allot class time for sharing journals and discussions. You can also alternate silent reading and writing days in the classroom with discussion groups.

Read More About Literature Circles

* **Getting the Most from Literature Groups**
  by Penny Strube (Scholastic Professional Books, 1996)

* **Literature Circles**
  by Harvey Daniels
  (Stenhouse Publishers, 1994)
Using the Literature Circle Guides in Your Classroom

Each guide contains the following sections:
- background information about the author and book
- enrichment readings relevant to the book
- Literature Response Journal reproducibles
- Group Discussion reproducibles
- Individual and group projects
- Literature Discussion Evaluation Sheet

Background Information and Enrichment Readings

The background information about the author and the book and the enrichment readings are designed to offer information that will enhance students’ understanding of the book. You may choose to assign and discuss these sections before, during, or after the reading of the book. Because each enrichment concludes with questions that invite students to connect it to the book, you can use this section to inspire them to think and record their thoughts in the literature response journal.

Literature Response Journal Reproducibles

Although these reproducibles are designed for individual students, they should also be used to stimulate and support discussions in literature circles. Each page begins with a reading strategy and follows with several journal topics. At the bottom of the page, students select a type of response (prediction, question, observation, or connection) for free-choice writing in their response journals.

◆ Reading Strategies
Since the goal of the literature circle is to empower lifelong readers, a different reading strategy is introduced in each section. Not only does the reading strategy allow students to understand this particular book better, it also instills a habit of mind that will continue to be useful when they read other books. A question from the Literature Response Journal and the Group Discussion pages is always tied to the reading strategy.

If everyone in class is reading the same book, you may present the reading strategy as a mini-lesson to the entire class. For literature circles, however, the group of students can read over and discuss the strategy together at the start of class and then experiment with the strategy as they read silently for the rest of the period. You may want to allow time at the end of class so the group can talk about what they noticed as they read. As an alternative, the literature circle can review the reading strategy for the next section after they have completed their discussion. That night, students can try out the reading strategy as they read on their own so they will be ready for the next day’s literature circle discussion.

◆ Literature Response Journal Topics
A literature response journal allows a reader to “converse” with a book. Students write questions, point out things they notice about the story, recall personal experiences, and make connections to other texts in their journals. In other words, they are using writing to explore what they think about the book. See page 7 for tips on how to help students set up their literature response journals.

1. The questions for the literature response journals have no right or wrong answers but are designed to help students look beneath the surface of the plot and develop a richer connection to the story and its characters.

2. Students can write in their literature response journals as soon as they have finished a reading assignment. Again, you may choose to have students do this for homework or make time during class.

3. The literature response journals are an excellent tool for students to use in their literature circles. They can highlight ideas and thoughts in their journals that they want to share with the group.

4. When you evaluate students’ journals, consider whether they have completed all the assignments and have responded in depth and thoughtfully. You may want to check each day to make sure students are keeping up with the assignments. You can read and respond to the journals at a halfway point (after five entries) and again at the end. Some teachers suggest that students pick out their five best entries for a grade.
Group Discussion Reproducibles

These reproducibles are designed for use in literature circles. Each page begins with a series of discussion questions for the group to consider. A mini-lesson on an aspect of the writer’s craft follows the discussion questions. See page 8 for tips on how to model good discussions for students.

◆ Literature Discussion Questions: In a literature discussion, students experience a book from different points of view. Each reader brings her or his own unique observations, questions, and associations to the text. When students share their different reading experiences, they often come to a wider and deeper understanding than they would have reached on their own.

The discussion is not an exercise in finding the right answers nor is it a debate. Its goal is to explore the many possible meanings of a book. Be sure to allow enough time for these conversations to move beyond easy answers—try to schedule 25–35 minutes for each one. In addition, there are important guidelines to ensure that everyone’s voice is heard.

1. Let students know that participation in the literature discussion is an important part of their grade. You may choose to watch one discussion and grade it. (You can use the Literature Discussion Evaluation Sheet on page 33.)

2. Encourage students to evaluate their own performance in discussions using the Literature Discussion Evaluation Sheet. They can assess not only their own level of involvement but also how the group itself has functioned.

3. Help students learn how to talk to one another effectively. After a discussion, help them process what worked and what didn’t. Videotape discussions if possible, and then evaluate them together. Let one literature circle watch another and provide feedback to it.

4. It can be helpful to have a facilitator for each discussion. The facilitator can keep students from interrupting each other, help the conversation get back on track when it digresses, and encourage shyer members to contribute. At the end of each discussion, the facilitator can summarize everyone’s contributions and suggest areas for improvement.

5. Designate other roles for group members. For instance, a recorder can take notes and/or list questions for further discussion. A summarizer can open each literature circle meeting by summarizing the chapter(s) the group has just read. Encourage students to rotate these roles, as well as that of the facilitator.

◆ The Writer’s Craft: This section encourages students to look at the writer’s most important tool—words. It points out new vocabulary, writing techniques, and uses of language. One or two questions invite students to think more deeply about the book and writing in general. These questions can either become part of the literature circle discussion or be written about in students’ journals.

Literature Discussion Evaluation Sheet

Both you and your students will benefit from completing these evaluation sheets. You can use them to assess students’ performance, and as mentioned earlier, students can evaluate their own individual performances, as well as their group’s performance. The Literature Discussion Evaluation Sheet appears on page 33.
Setting Up Literature Response Journals

Although some students may already keep literature response journals, others may not know how to begin. To discourage students from merely writing elaborate plot summaries and to encourage them to use their journals in a meaningful way, help them focus their responses around the following elements: predictions, observations, questions, and connections. Have students take time after each assigned section to think about and record their responses in their journals. Sample responses appear below.

◆ Predictions: Before students read the book, have them study the cover and the jacket copy. Ask if anyone has read any other books by Sharon Creech. To begin their literature response journals, tell students to jot down their impressions about the book. As they read, students will continue to make predictions about what a character might do or how the plot might turn. After finishing the book, students can reassess their initial predictions. Good readers understand that they must constantly activate prior knowledge before, during, and after they read. They adjust their expectations and predictions; a book that is completely predictable is not likely to capture anyone's interest. A student about to read Walk Two Moons for the first time might predict the following:

*The way that the girl on the book cover looks out over the mountains and the lake makes her seem kind of lonely. On the back of the book, it says her mother is missing, so that's probably what she's sad about.*

◆ Observations: This activity takes place immediately after reading begins. In a literature response journal, the reader recalls fresh impressions about the characters, setting, and events. Most readers mention details that stand out for them even if they are not sure what their importance is. For example, a reader might list phrases that describe how a character looks or the feeling a setting evokes. Many readers note certain words, phrases, or passages in a book. Others note the style of an author's writing or the voice in which the story is told. A student just starting to read Walk Two Moons might write the following:

_Sal seems pretty unhappy about moving. She talks about being plucked up “like a weed” and leaving her trees behind, along with the swimming hole and the hayloft. Her father seems to know how she feels, though, because he isn’t surprised by the way she is acting._

◆ Questions: Point out that good readers don't necessarily understand everything they read. To clarify their uncertainty, they ask questions. Encourage students to identify passages that confuse or trouble them and emphasize that they shouldn't take anything for granted. Share the following student example:

*Why would Sal be locked in a car with her grandparents for six days? That sounds like her grandparents are going to take her somewhere against her will. But on the book jacket, it says she “entertains” her grandparents with stories. Why would she entertain them if she didn’t want to be in the car with them in the first place?*

◆ Connections: Remind students that one story often leads to another. When one friend tells a story, the other friend is often inspired to tell one, too. The same thing happens when someone reads a book. A character reminds the reader of a relative, or a situation is similar to something that happened to him or her. Sometimes a book makes a reader recall other books or movies. These connections can be helpful in revealing some of the deeper meanings or patterns of a book. The following is an example of a student connection:

*The characters in this book seem a little bit peculiar. They remind me of the characters in From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler, by E. L. Konigsburg. The characters in that book run away to an art museum. They manage to avoid security guards and live there for a few days.*
The Good Discussion

In a good literature discussion, students are always learning from one another. They listen to one another and respond to what their peers have to say. They share their ideas, questions, and observations. Everyone feels comfortable about talking, and no one interrupts or puts down what anyone else says. Students leave a good literature discussion with a new understanding of the book—and sometimes with new questions about it. They almost always feel more engaged by what they have read.

◆ Modeling a Good Discussion: In this era of combative and confessional TV talk shows, students often don’t have any idea of what it means to talk productively and creatively together. You can help them have a better idea of what a good literature discussion is if you let them experience one. Select a thought-provoking short story or poem for students to read, and then choose a small group to model a discussion of the work for the class.

Explain to participating students that the objective of the discussion is to explore the text thoroughly and learn from each other. Explain to the whole class that it takes time to learn how to have a good discussion, and that the first discussion may not achieve everything they hope it will. Duplicate a copy of the Literature Discussion Evaluation Sheet for each student. Go over the helpful and unhelpful contributions shown on the Literature Discussion Evaluation Sheet. Tell them to fill out the sheets as they watch the model discussion. Then have the group of students hold its discussion while the rest of the class observes. Try not to interrupt or control the discussion, and remind the student audience not to participate. It’s okay if the discussion falters, as this is a learning experience.

Allow 15-20 minutes for the discussion. When it is finished, ask each student in the group to reflect out loud about what worked and what didn’t. Then have the students who observed share their impressions. What kinds of comments were helpful? How could the group have talked to each other more productively?

In good discussions, you will often hear students say the following:

“I was wondering if anyone knew . . .”

“I see what you are saying. That reminds me of something that happened earlier in the book.”

“What do you think?”

“Did anyone notice on page 57 that . . .”

“I disagree with you because . . .”

“I agree with you because . . .”

“This reminds me so much of when . . .”

“What do you think this could mean . . .”

“I’m not sure I understand what you’re saying. Could you explain it a little more to me?”

“That reminds me of what you were saying yesterday about . . .”

“I just don’t understand this.”

“I love the part that says . . .”

“Here, let me read this paragraph. It’s an example of what I’m talking about.”

You may want to let another group experiment with a discussion so students can try out what they learned from the first one.

◆ Assessing Discussions: The following tips will help students monitor how well their group is functioning:

1. One person should keep track of all behaviors by each group member, both helpful and unhelpful, during the discussion.

2. At the end of the discussion, each individual should think about how he or she did. How many helpful checks did he or she receive? How many unhelpful checks did he or she receive?

3. The group should look at the Literature Discussion Evaluation Sheet and assess their performance as a whole. Were most of the behaviors helpful? Were any behaviors unhelpful? How could they improve as a group?
About *Walk Two Moons*

Winner of the 1995 Newbery Medal, *Walk Two Moons* describes the journeys of Salamanca Hiddle. In her meandering, storyteller's style, Sharon Creech relates thirteen-year-old Sal’s passage from a state of anger and denial at the absence of her mother to hopeful understanding. In a more physical journey, Sal travels with her grandparents across several states, exploring such weighty issues as love, loss, and leaving. Written in Sal's first-person voice, the story unfolds gradually, and the reader shares in Sal’s perceptions, misunderstandings, and illusions. This slow revealing of events fills the reading with mystery, and makes *Walk Two Moons* especially ideal for predicting and connecting activities.

About the Author: Sharon Creech

Sharon Creech was born in Euclid, Ohio, one of five children. It was a busy household, and hers was a noisy and rambunctious childhood. On summer evenings, storytelling was a favorite pastime. Creech family summers also involved long car trips to Wisconsin, Michigan, Idaho, or the cousins’ farm in Quincy, Kentucky. These trips provide background for her books. For example, the trip to Idaho was recounted in *Walk Two Moons*, although Sal’s experiences on that trip were very different from the author’s.

While events in her own life often provide setting and characters, Sharon Creech finds it hard to pinpoint where story ideas come from. On her Web site, she writes:

> Often it seems as if the main character and the place just arrive in my head one day, but later I can see that perhaps they arrived there because I’d been thinking about my family or someone I’d seen at a bus stop.

Many ideas in *Walk Two Moons* came from a single fortune cookie message: “Don’t judge a man until you’ve walked two moons in his moccasins.” From that came the ideas of a journey (walking along) and of Native American heritage and of people not being what they might at first seem to be.

Sharon Creech moved to England in 1979, and lived in Europe for nearly two decades. Her first two books were written for adults, and were not published in the United States. She taught English, literature, and writing in Switzerland and England. This, combined with the fact that her husband was headmaster of schools in both places, gave her plenty of contact with a young audience. The wonderful stories that Creech taught in her classes may have led to her first book for children, *Absolutely Normal Chaos*. *Walk Two Moons* was her first book to be published in the United States.

Writing stories, of course, is an activity that Sharon Creech enjoys, but spending time with her husband and their two grown children tops the list of favorite things to do. She now lives in Pennington, New Jersey, where her husband is headmaster of a private school.

**Other Books by Sharon Creech**

- Absolutely Normal Chaos
- Chasing Redbird
- Pleasing the Ghost
- Bloomability
- The Wanderer
- A Fine, Fine School (picture book)
- Fishing in the Air (picture book)
Enrichment: Storytelling

Storytelling goes back to a time in history when there was no written word. To get news, understand religion and culture, or simply to be entertained, people relied on storytellers. In many cultures, certain individuals became expert storytellers, memorizing legends and religious stories, and keeping up on current events. Among some early cultures in America, storytellers became shamans or priests, who were valued for the wisdom they gained by knowing the old stories. In other cultures, storytelling became a skill that was practiced and admired among all the people.

Native American stories often include talking animals that are as large as people. Some of these animals are wise, even godly. Some are foolish tricksters or braggarts who cause trouble for everyone. In these stories, the earth and animals are often said to have their own spirits and great powers. This may be because the earliest Americans relied heavily on nature for food and life, and typically felt great respect for it.

Tales from America’s earliest people usually fall into one of two groups: some are sacred recountings of how the people and customs came to be, and others are less serious tales that explain why certain things happen the way they do.

Among sacred tales, there are many creation stories. These describe how the earth was formed, and how the first people came to be.

Many sacred tales discuss death, as does the Blackfoot tale of Napi, retold in Chapter 23 of *Walk Two Moons*. Other sacred stories help people know how to behave, by describing mistakes that others have made and telling how those people suffered.

Less serious tales often tell how animals came to have certain characteristics. For example, the Cherokee have a story that explains why the opossum’s tail has no fur. The Seminole have one that tells why snakes have fangs. These stories are often told for entertainment, but they also include lessons about how people should live. They teach by sharing examples of what has happened to animals and people in the past.

Storytelling is an important element in most of the world’s cultures, and it is important in smaller, family groups as well. In *Walk Two Moons*, many of Sal’s stories have significance within her family. One example is the story of the marriage bed.

This story helps Sal understand how families come together to help each other, and how important Gramps’s marriage is to him. What stories are told and retold in your family? Why are they important? Are they told strictly for entertainment? What do they teach about life or family?
Enrichment:
Yellowstone and Old Faithful

Evidence suggests that Native American people have enjoyed Yellowstone for thousands of years. A people known as the Sheepeaters lived in the area, and others, including the Crow, Blackfeet, and Bannock, hunted there for centuries. In 1803, the U.S. government claimed Yellowstone as part of the Louisiana Purchase.

In 1807, a man named John Colter, having left the Lewis and Clark Expedition, explored the area. He reported an amazing land of waterfalls, hot springs, and geysers. A bounty of game, both small and large, populated the area, and hunters soon arrived to trap there. Two artists, William Henry Jackson and Thomas Moran, came to paint and photograph the natural wonders of Yellowstone in 1871. The images they created so impressed the rest of America that in 1872 President Grant signed a bill making Yellowstone America’s first national park.

The hundreds of geysers and hot springs that stirred John Colter continue to excite visitors today. Geysers are a rarity in nature, and Yellowstone’s Old Faithful is unquestionably the most famous.

About two million years ago, the area that we now know as Yellowstone National Park exploded with volcanic activity. Then, a little over a half million years ago, major volcanic eruptions occurred again. Today, molten rock still simmers beneath the park, a mile or two below ground. This molten rock, or magma, is the heat source that propels thousands of gallons of water into the sky when Old Faithful erupts.

Narrow cracks in the earth’s surface stretch down to the magma beneath Yellowstone. Cool water filters through rock and soil near the surface. It runs into the deep cracks, draining all the way down to the magma. There, water near the bottom of the cracks is heated by molten rock. The weight of water pressing down from above keeps it from boiling, and the water becomes superheated. Finally, the water near the bottom is turned to vapor. It expands, pushing the water above upward. Some spills out the top of the crack. When this happens, there is less pressure on water below. With less pressure, the water immediately boils and spews upward, often rising more than one hundred feet in the air.

Old Faithful has been known to send hot water and vapor as much as 184 feet in the air. It erupts about once every 70 or 80 minutes. Each year, millions of people come from all over the world to see it.

Like so many others, Sharon Creech’s character Gram is terribly excited about visiting Old Faithful. In fact, she says that she has waited her whole life to see it. Just as Gram feels a strong connection to the geyser, other characters in Walk Two Moons also feel connected to nature. What are some examples of the characters’ strong connections to nature?
Enrichment: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882)

When Longfellow was 13, a newspaper in his hometown of Portland, Massachusetts, (now Portland, Maine) published one of his poems. It was the first of many. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow would become the most popular American poet of the 19th century.

At the age of 18, Longfellow was asked to become the first professor of Modern Languages at Bowdoin College in Maine. To prepare for the job, he traveled across Europe for three years, studying the languages and literature of other countries. He learned to speak Italian, French, Spanish, and German. In the five years that he taught at Bowdoin College (1829-1834), Longfellow published some translations and prose, but seemed to give little thought to writing poetry.

Then, in 1834, Longfellow was offered a job teaching at Harvard College. Again, he traveled Europe to prepare himself, and took his young wife, Mary, with him. Sadly, Mary suffered a miscarriage in the Netherlands, and died. In the years that followed at Harvard, Longfellow published two popular books of poetry, *Voices of the Night* and *Ballads and Other Poems*. By 1842, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was famous.

He married a second time in 1843. Longfellow and his wife, Fanny, had six children over 18 years of marriage. Tragedy struck when Fanny's dress caught fire from hot candle wax. Longfellow tried to put out the flames, but he burned himself badly in the process and was unable to save his wife. Apparently, Longfellow longed for Fanny for the rest of his life. Eighteen years after her death, he wrote a sonnet entitled “The Cross of Snow”, which tells how much he missed her. Many feel it is his best work.

Much of Longfellow’s poetry deals with the landscape and history of his young country. The language is easy to understand, and his topics are often romantic. *Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie* (1847) was his first long narrative poem. It tells the story of two lovers separated by war and a woman’s lifelong search for the man she loves. Some critics, both then and now, have said that Longfellow’s poetry is too sentimental, but common people of his time loved it. His long narrative poems would become his best-known works, including *The Song of Hiawatha*, *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, and *The Courtship of Miles Standish*.

The poem that so affects Sal and Phoebe in *Walk Two Moons* was written when Longfellow was an older man. Read “The Tide Rises, The Tide Falls” for yourself. How do you respond to it? Is it terrifying, as Sal suggests? Do you find it peaceful, as her classmates did?

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**The Tide Rises, The Tide Falls**

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

*The tide rises, the tide falls,*

*The twilight darkens, the curlew calls;*

*Along the sea-sands damp and brown*

*The traveler hastens toward the town,*

*And the tide rises, the tide falls.*

*Darkness settles on roofs and walls,*

*But sea, the sea in darkness calls;*

*The little waves, with their soft, white hands*

*Efface the footprints in the sands,*

*And the tide rises, the tide falls.*

*The morning breaks; the steeds in their stalls*

*Stamp and neigh, as the hostler calls;*

*The day returns, but nevermore*

*Returns the traveler to the shore,*

*And the tide rises, the tide falls.*
Walk Two Moons

Before Reading the Book

Reading Strategy:
Having Expectations About a Book

Readers pick up and read books because of what they expect to find there. These expectations grow out of what readers already know, what they see on the cover, and what others say about the book. Think about what you expect from Walk Two Moons and the reasons for your expectations. Do you expect it to be realistic fiction or fantasy? Do you expect a sad story or a funny one? The best stories usually meet some of readers’ expectations but include surprises as well. As you read, consider what is surprising to you about Walk Two Moons.

Writing in Your Literature Response Journal

A. Write about one of these topics in your journal. Circle the topic you chose.

1. Look carefully at the cover art for Walk Two Moons. Write about what the art might represent and possible reasons why it was chosen for this story. What does the art tell you about the story?

2. Have you read anything by Sharon Creech before? If so, write your thoughts about the book or story that you have read.

3. Describe the place where you live. What is important to you there? If you were moving, what would you miss? What would you be glad to leave behind?

B. What were your predictions, questions, observations, and connections about the book? Write about one of them in your journal. Check the response you chose.

☐ Prediction  ☐ Question  ☐ Observation  ☐ Connection
Group Discussion

Name ______________________________________ Date _______________________

Walk Two Moons
Before Reading the Book

For Your Discussion Group

★ What kind of story do group members expect Walk Two Moons to be? Will it be an adventure story? Will it be a mystery? Will characters and settings be realistic? What will the story be about? Discuss reasons for group members’ expectations. If you have read Walk Two Moons before, join in the discussion, but don’t give away important details to those who have not read it.

★ If you have read other books by Sharon Creech, share what you know about this author with the group. What did you notice about her writing style? What was the other book about?

★ Choose a group member to read aloud the first paragraph of Walk Two Moons to the group. Discuss what you learn from this paragraph. What does it tell you about the girl? What do you learn about her family?

TIP

When you are brainstorming, remember that the goal is to collect as many different ideas as possible without commenting on them. Everybody’s ideas should be included.
**Walk Two Moons**

**Chapters 1–6**

**Reading Strategy:** Comparing and Contrasting

Sharon Creech’s characters in *Walk Two Moons* are puzzling, layered with conflicting attitudes and character traits. To understand complex characters, it sometimes helps to think about them in relation to each other. For instance, compare what you know so far about Sal’s parents and Phoebe’s parents. How are they alike? How are they different? Are some of their experiences similar? Are their lives vastly different?

**Writing in Your Literature Response Journal**

A. Write about one of these topics in your journal. Circle the topic you chose.

1. Make a two-column chart in your journal. Title one column Sal and the other column Phoebe. Write events and character traits in the columns that show how Phoebe and Sal are similar and how they are different.

2. In some cultures, a young person chooses or is given a name that represents some aspect of who he or she is. If you could choose your own name now, what name would you choose? Explain the reasons for your choice.

3. In Chapter 2, Sal states her belief that if there were any chance to bring her mother home, it would occur on her mother’s birthday. Then Sal says, “*My father says I lean on broken reeds and will get a face full of swamp mud one day.*” What does this expression mean to you?

B. What were your predictions, questions, observations, and connections as you read? Write about one of them in your journal. Check the response you chose.

☐ Prediction  ☐ Question  ☐ Observation  ☐ Connection
Walk Two Moons
Chapters 1–6

For Your Discussion Group

In what ways are Mrs. Winterbottom and Sal’s mother similar? In what ways are they different? Support your ideas with examples from the story.

In Chapter 6, the author describes mealtime at Phoebe’s home and writes briefly about a breakfast at Sal’s house. Discuss how the two experiences are different. Describe what mealtimes are like at your own homes.

Discuss examples of how character names are important in Walk Two Moons.

Writer’s Craft: Foreshadowing

Hints about coming events are buried throughout Sharon Creech’s novel.

The reason that Phoebe’s story reminds me of that plaster wall and the hidden fireplace is that beneath Phoebe’s story was another one. Mine.

Such hints create mystery, sharpening readers’ interest. These hints are called foreshadowing. Look for other examples of foreshadowing in Chapters 1 through 6. How did you respond to these examples? What did you think when you read them? Reread a story you have written. Are there hints you might add in the beginning that would help spark your readers’ interest—without giving away the ending?
Walk Two Moons
Chapters 7–11

Reading Strategy: Making Predictions

Walk Two Moons has a plot that is full of mystery and foreshadowing. There is much to wonder about, and many clues that hint at future developments. Look for these clues as you read and note them in your journal. Use them to help you predict how things will turn out for the characters. As the story develops, re-examine your predictions and adjust them to include new information. For example, what do you think the notes mean? Who could be leaving them on Phoebe’s doorstep, and why?

Writing in Your Literature Response Journal

A. Write about one of these topics in your journal. Circle the topic you chose.

1. Who might the young man who appears at Phoebe’s doorstep be? Predict why he is looking for Mrs. Winterbottom and why he is so interested in Phoebe.

2. Do Sal’s grandparents remind you of someone you know? Who is it, and what do they have in common with Gramps and Gram?

3. Have you ever believed you’d been left behind, as Sal did when Gram went to join the dancers? Describe your experience.

B. What were your predictions, questions, observations, and connections as you read? Write about one of them in your journal. Check the response you chose.

☐ Prediction  ☐ Question  ☐ Observation  ☐ Connection
**Walk Two Moons**

**Chapters 7–11**

**For Your Discussion Group**

* Why do you suppose Sal’s mother is in Idaho? Why is it important for Sal to get there by her mother’s birthday? Discuss your predictions and those of other group members. If you have already read *Walk Two Moons*, avoid giving away information that would spoil the surprise for other group members.

* Sal feels that the Winterbottoms are “thumpingly stiff.” Phoebe warns her that the Finneys are not as “civilized” as her own family is. Discuss examples of uncivilized and stiff behavior in these households. How do Phoebe and Sal feel about it? If you had to spend a week with the Finneys, the Winterbottoms, or Sal’s family, which would you choose? Compare group members’ choices and discuss reasons.

* Sal says that the wind, the clouds, and the trees whisper, “Rush, rush, rush” and “Hurry, hurry.” What do you think she means by this? Does she really hear voices whispering to her?

**Writer’s Craft: Similes**

Authors sometimes make unexpected comparisons between characters or events in order to help readers understand them in a new way. When the comparison includes *like* or *as*, it is called a **simile**. Read the simile below from Chapter 10.

"Being a mother is like trying to hold a wolf by the ears,” Gram said.

What do you think the author wanted you to understand about motherhood? Write your ideas in your journal.

By having Gram make the comparison, the author also tells you something about the character. How would your impression of Gram be different if she had said, “Being a mother is like trying to dance on the deck of a rolling ship”? 
**Walk Two Moons**  
**Chapters 12–17**

**Reading Strategy: Drawing Conclusions**

The story has become quite complicated. It involves a number of interesting characters, each with his or her own problems and goals. The author has provided enough information for readers to begin drawing conclusions about characters and the challenges they face. Use all that you now know to help you figure out some of the puzzles in *Walk Two Moons*. For example, why are Phoebe and her sister unable to see their mother's unhappiness? How does this cause Mrs. Winterbottom to feel?

**Writing in Your Literature Response Journal**

**A. Write about one of these topics in your journal. Circle the topic you chose.**

1. Reread Chapter 15, in which Gram is bitten by a snake. Draw conclusions about Gramps's character based on events in this chapter. How would you have described Gramps before reading this chapter? Does his behavior in Chapter 15 change your opinion of him? Explain.

2. At the end of Chapter 16, Sal’s whispers stop telling her to rush and instead warn her to slow down. What might the whispers be warning her about?

3. Should Sal and her grandparents continue on their journey? If you could send Sal a postcard with a few sentences of advice or comfort, what would you write?

**B. What were your predictions, questions, observations, and connections as you read? Write about one of them in your journal. Check the response you chose.**

- [ ] Prediction
- [ ] Question
- [ ] Observation
- [ ] Connection
**Group Discussion**

**Walk Two Moons**
**Chapters 12–17**

**For Your Discussion Group**

- How would you describe the relationship between Mrs. Cadaver and Sal’s father? What’s the real reason that Sal doesn’t like Mrs. Cadaver?

- Suppose you could leave a message on the Winterbottoms’ front step. What would you write? Brainstorm with other group members a list of messages that might help the family with their problems. Discuss each possibility and then choose one.

- Review the group’s earlier predictions about Sal’s mother. Discuss whether these predictions should now be adjusted.

**Writer’s Craft: Aphorisms**

An **aphorism** is a brief statement of an observation about life. As the following example shows, aphorisms are sometimes funny: Sometimes you’re the flyswatter, and sometimes you’re the fly.

The aphorisms in *Walk Two Moons* tell us as much about the characters and their situations as they do about life. For example, when Mrs. Winterbottom tells Phoebe, “You can never be too careful,” it illustrates the fearfulness that is a symptom of her own unhappiness. When Phoebe finds a note that reads, “Everyone has his own agenda,” readers think of the insensitivity that Mr. Winterbottom and his daughters show to Mrs. Winterbottom.

What observations can you make about life? Create a few aphorisms of your own, and discuss them with your group.
Walk Two Moons
Chapters 18–22

Reading Strategy:
Adjusting Your Reading Speed

As the action in a story speeds up, it is tempting to read faster. You may feel an urgent need to find out what will happen next. This is a good time, however, to slow your reading speed. As exciting things occur, one right after another, it is easy to miss important details that may explain future events. Slowing your reading speed will not only help you avoid confusion later; it will also allow you to enjoy Sharon Creech’s unique writing style. Slowly read the description of Sal’s father in Chapter 18. Do you have a picture of this character in your mind? Do you feel that you know him well?

Writing in Your Literature Response Journal

A. Write about one of these topics in your journal. Circle the topic you chose.

1. Read the first two pages of Chapter 20 that describe the blackberry kiss. Why do you suppose this memory holds so much meaning for Sal?

2. Have you been wondering what else there is to know about Margaret Cadaver, about the boy who comes to Phoebe’s door, about Ben, or about something else? Write your questions in your journal, and include any theories you may have developed to answer them.

3. Why do you think Ben offers to read Sal’s palm? How do you think Sal feels about Ben?

B. What were your predictions, questions, observations, and connections as you read? Write about one of them in your journal. Check the response you chose.

☐ Prediction  ☐ Question  ☐ Observation  ☐ Connection
Walk Two Moons
Chapters 18–22

For Your Discussion Group

* Reread the middle of Chapter 22 where Phoebe lies about her mother’s business trip. Why does Phoebe tell the other children that her mother has gone to London? How do you think Phoebe feels at this moment?

* Why do you think Phoebe keeps insisting that someone has kidnapped her mother? How does Sal respond to Phoebe’s theory? Why do you think Sal responds the way she does?

* Make predictions about what has happened to Phoebe’s mother. Support your predictions with details from the story. Have a group member record the predictions for later review.

Writer’s Craft: Adjectives and Adverbs

Using adjectives that appeal to the senses and specific adverbs, the author puts together an image that is complete and easy to understand. Read the following passage from the book:

I faced that tree squarely and kissed it firmly. To this day I can smell the smell of the bark—a sweet, woody smell—and feel the ridges in the bark, taste that distinctive taste on my lips.

The author has carefully selected adjectives and adverbs that will help readers experience what the character is experiencing. When you choose adverbs and adjectives to use in your writing, be careful. Too many can weaken your writing by making it seem flowery and insincere.

Take a moment to look around you. Choose something or someone to describe in your journal. Choose only those adjectives and adverbs that say exactly what you mean.
Walk Two Moons
Chapters 23–27

Reading Strategy: Identifying Confusing Parts

Although the different plot strands and complex characters in Walk Two Moons make the novel exciting to read, it’s possible to become confused about when and why events have occurred. When you feel confused, mark the parts of the story that you don’t understand. Reread the page or pages immediately before it. If you’re still confused, look for answers in the paragraphs that follow. Making diagrams or notes may help you get events straight in your mind as well. In your journal, note questions about the reading so that you can discuss them with your group.

Writing in Your Literature Response Journal

A. Write about one of these topics in your journal. Circle the topic you chose.

1. Choose a character from Walk Two Moons whose behavior you do not understand. What does the character do or say that confuses you?

2. Do you think the Blackfoot story of Napi and the stones has some special meaning for Sal? Explain.

3. Think about a time when you behaved badly because you were worried about something. Describe what you did and why you did it.

B. What were your predictions, questions, observations, and connections as you read? Write about one of them in your journal. Check the response you chose.

☐ Prediction ☐ Question ☐ Observation ☐ Connection
Walk Two Moons
Chapters 23–27

For Your Discussion Group

* In *Walk Two Moons*, the author weaves three separate stories together: the story of Sal traveling with her grandparents; Sal, Phoebe, and their families in Euclid; and Sal and her parents in Bybanks. On three separate sheets of paper, draw story lines for these stories, and mark important events on the story lines. Keep the story lines, and update them as you read. You will need these later on. An example is shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sal and her father move to Euclid.</th>
<th>Sal meets Phoebe.</th>
<th>A strange young man comes to Phoebe’s door.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

* Below each story line, write the names of the characters involved.

* Did you find interesting relationships among the stories? For instance, are there similarities between events in the three stories? Do events in one story cause events in other stories? Which story happens first?

Writer’s Craft: Prefixes and Suffixes

Some language in *Walk Two Moons* might be unfamiliar to you, such as the word *besieging* in the passage below.

*She did not have a chance to respond, because we were at her house, and she was more interested in besieging her father with questions. “Any news? Did Mom come back? Did she call?”*

One way to figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word is to look at its parts. Many words include a base word and one or more prefixes and suffixes. To figure out the meaning of *besieging* in the passage, look for the base word *siege*. What does it mean? Next, consider the meanings of the prefix *be-* and suffix *-ing*. Do you know what *besieging* means? Try using your definition in the paragraph. Does it make sense?
**Walk Two Moons**  
**Chapters 28–32**

**Reading Strategy:**  
**Focusing on Important Details**

Reading a book without paying attention to details is like swallowing a cookie whole without chewing it. It isn’t half as much fun as taking the time to enjoy your treat. Authors include details to help you get to know characters, predict what will happen next, and connect events in the story. Some details make you scratch your head in curiosity, while others cause you to nod in understanding.

Sharon Creech’s *Walk Two Moons* is rich in intriguing details. Pay attention to them as you read, and think about why the author included them. Look, for example, at the paragraph that begins at the bottom of page 177. Think about Sal’s fear of “*the snaking curves down into Lewiston, Ohio.*” Why would she have heard so much about them?

**Writing in Your Literature Response Journal**

**A. Write about one of these topics in your journal. Circle the topic you chose.**

1. Why do you suppose both Phoebe and Sal are upset by Longfellow’s poem, “The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls”?

2. Consider the possible reasons why Sergeant Bickle might have a picture of Phoebe’s “lunatic” on his desk. If you were Sal, what would you think when you saw it? What would you do?

3. Do you think Mr. Birkway should have read the journals aloud? Explain.

**B. What were your predictions, questions, observations, and connections as you read? Write about one of them in your journal. Check the response you chose.**

☐ Prediction    ☐ Question    ☐ Observation    ☐ Connection
**Walk Two Moons**  
**Chapters 28–32**

For Your Discussion Group

1. The fifth message read, “We never know the worth of water until the well is dry.” What does the message mean? How might this message apply to Phoebe’s situation?

2. How does Mr. Winterbottom respond when Phoebe insists that they talk to the police about her mother’s disappearance? How does Sal feel about going to the police? Why do you think the two characters respond so differently?

3. Think about the phrase, “walk two moons in another man’s moccasins.” Review the meaning of this phrase with your group. How does Sal walk in Phoebe’s moccasins? Discuss as many specific examples as you can think of.

**Writer’s Craft: Clichés**

A cliché is a phrase that is used so often that it has lost some of its meaning. For example, when a basketball player is described as “lightning fast,” we no longer think of how fast a bolt of lightning strikes. We just think that the player is very fast. For the most part, skilled writers avoid the use of clichés. However, there are times when it is appropriate to use them, especially in writing fiction.

“Well, I am not fine,” Phoebe said, “and what does Mrs. Cadaver know anyway, and besides, Mrs. Cadaver is making the whole thing up. You should let the police talk to her. You should ask her about the rhododendron. You should find out who this lunatic is. Mrs. Cadaver probably hired him. You should—"

“Phoebe, your imagination is running away with you.”

The author could have given Mr. Winterbottom a more original expression, such as, “You’re trying to catch fish in the air.” However, that would seem odd coming from this character. Phoebe’s father is the kind of person who would probably use clichés to express himself. Look over a piece of your own writing. Have you used clichés? If so, do they add to your writing, or take away from it?
Walk Two Moons
Chapters 33–39

Reading Strategy: Making Inferences

Reading wouldn’t be as much fun if authors came right out and told you everything you needed to know. By leaving some things unsaid, authors challenge readers to think about what is really going on in the story. In Walk Two Moons, Sharon Creech describes characters’ behavior, encouraging readers to infer much more. Consider the way Sal and Ben behave at the psychiatric hospital, and what you infer about them. Why is Ben’s mother at the psychiatric hospital? How do you think Ben feels about his mother being there? How does he feel about Sal? Was it really an accident that Sal went to the hospital instead of the bus stop?

Writing in Your Literature Response Journal

A. Write about one of these topics in your journal. Circle the topic you chose.

1. How does Phoebe feel when her mother returns? Why do you suppose she feels the way she does? Support your ideas with details from the story.

2. Draw a picture of Gram at the eruption of Old Faithful. Look for details in the book that help you know what to draw. What does the behavior of Gram and Gramps at Old Faithful tell you about these characters?

3. Write about a time when you made up your mind about someone, only to learn later that you were completely wrong.

B. What were your predictions, questions, observations, and connections as you read? Write about one of them in your journal. Check the response you chose.

☐ Prediction  ☐ Question  ☐ Observation  ☐ Connection
**Group Discussion**

**Walk Two Moons**  
**Chapters 33–39**

**For Your Discussion Group**

* Review your group’s earlier predictions about what happened to Phoebe’s mother. How accurate were they?

* How does Phoebe’s family prepare for Mrs. Winterbottom’s return home? Discuss what each family member does and feels as they wait for her arrival. How have their attitudes changed since the beginning of the story?

* What do you think brought about the changes in Mrs. Winterbottom’s appearance?

**Writer’s Craft: Exaggeration**

> So all day long, as I took in the scenery, and as I imagined us in a thousand accidents, and as I prayed underneath it all to any tree whizzing by, I talked about Peeby.

Would Sal really imagine a thousand accidents in one day? Would she really pray to every tree? Of course she wouldn’t. Exaggeration is an especially useful tool in a story told in the first person as this one is. It makes the thirteen-year-old storyteller’s voice more believable because most people do exaggerate on occasion. If the story were told in Phoebe’s voice, would it be appropriate to include more exaggerations or fewer? What if Sal’s father were telling the story?
Walk Two Moons
Chapters 40–44

Reading Strategy:
Noticing the Author’s Style

Language, plot, theme, mood, and characters all contribute to an author’s style. Some authors use complicated sentences and unusual words to tell their stories; others write in voices that are easy and familiar. Some authors insert humor into even the saddest tales; others are somber or matter-of-fact. Some write plots with twists; others write tightly focused stories. Some authors write endings that are cloaked with uncertainty; others tie up loose ends so that you know what happens to every character. Now that you have read Walk Two Moons, how would you describe the writing style of Sharon Creech?

Writing in Your Literature Response Journal

A. Write about one of these topics in your journal. Circle the topic you chose.

1. What do you notice about the characters created by Sharon Creech in Walk Two Moons? Support your ideas with examples from the story.

2. Sal states, “In the course of a lifetime, there were some things that mattered.” What things are important to Sal and her family? Support your ideas with details from the story.

3. Did you enjoy the ending of Walk Two Moons? Explain why or why not.

B. What were your predictions, questions, observations, and connections as you read? Write about one of them in your journal. Check the response you chose.

☐ Prediction ☐ Question ☐ Observation ☐ Connection
**Walk Two Moons**  
**Chapters 40–44**

**For Your Discussion Group**

èmes How do Gram and Gramps feel about each other?  
Give examples from the story that support your ideas.

 ويم Why do you suppose Phoebe and Sal spit in the street?  
Does this signal a change in Phoebe’s outlook? Explain.

 ويم How does Sal change after visiting her mother’s grave?  
As you look over Chapter 44, how do you think Sal feels about the future?

**Writer’s Craft: Developing a Theme**

**Theme** is an idea that is central to a story or poem. Theme is not the same thing as subject. The subject of a story might be a fishing trip. One of the themes of the same story might be the awesome power of nature. Authors use characters, events, setting, imagery, and language to develop theme. For example, an author might develop the power of nature theme by beginning the story with a description of a storm. An author may develop several themes in one story, although a central theme may be given more importance.

In the following passage from *Walk Two Moons*, Sal has finally seen her mother’s grave.

> In the midst of the still morning, with only the sound of the river gurgling by, I heard a bird. It was singing a birdsong, a true, sweet birdsong. I looked all around and then up into the willow that leaned toward the river. The birdsong came from the top of the willow and I did not want to look too closely, because I wanted it to be the tree that was singing.  
> I kissed the willow. “Happy birthday,” I said.

What theme or themes do you think the author develops with this graveside description?
**Walk Two Moons**

**After Reading**

A journey takes you from one place to another. Very often, a person taking a journey makes important discoveries, either along the way or upon arrival. In literature, journeys are about those discoveries more than they are about traveling. In fact, in literature, some journeys don’t involve going anywhere at all. If a character goes through a long and difficult series of events leading to self-discovery, this, too, is called a journey.

* Think about a journey that you have made. It may be a literal journey (one that involved actual travel from one place to another), or it may be a journey of discovery. Describe your experience and what you learned from it in your journal.

* Take out the story lines that your group wrote earlier for *Walk Two Moons*. If these have not been completed, do it now.

* Brainstorm with group members to identify the main goals or conflicts of characters in each story line. Record these goals and conflicts, either below story lines or on separate sheets of paper. How was each goal or conflict resolved?

* Put a star next to the climax, or most suspenseful point, on each story line. Draw arrows next to other important turning points on your story lines.

* What important discoveries were made by Sal, Phoebe, Mrs. Winterbottom, Mr. Winterbottom, and other characters in *Walk Two Moons*?
Individual Projects

1. There are many proverbs like the following in *Walk Two Moons*.

   *You can't keep the birds of sadness from flying over your head, but you can keep them from nesting in your hair.*

   List several proverbs that you have heard, other than those in the book. Choose one, and then write a story that proves it to be true. Share your story with your group and other classmates.

2. Ask several people you know to take fifteen seconds to draw their souls. Then ask them to explain their drawings. Bind the drawings and explanations in book form and title it. Place it on display in the classroom.

3. Survey grandparents or other family members about favorite memories, and think about your own favorite memories. Consider what these memories have in common and why they are important to people. Write summaries and create illustrations for three or more of the memories from your survey. Share them with your group, and discuss what you believe makes them important.

Group Projects

1. Using a map of the United States, create a story map that shows the trip that Sal took with her grandparents. Refer to the book to list the various places they visited, and then plan their possible route to Idaho. Mark each destination on the map. Write a paragraph on a piece of paper or sticky note explaining what happened at each destination. Place the paragraphs on the map in the proper locations.

2. Find out more about one of the American Indian groups mentioned in *Walk Two Moons*. Two groups are named—the Seneca and the Sioux. But remember that Sal and her grandparents met Indians in Pipestone, Minnesota, and at the “Wisconsin Dells.” Sharpen your research skills by trying to identify which American Indian groups they met in those places. Begin by discussing which research tools will be most useful for you to use.

3. With your group, research trees native to your area. Each group member may select one type of tree that he or she would like to be named after. Individuals will want to learn as much as they can about the trees’ attributes and report back to the group with information and illustrations. Discuss why each tree was chosen. Consider organizing a tree-planting project on school grounds.
# Literature Discussion Evaluation Sheet

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<th>Student</th>
<th>Helpful Contributions</th>
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