



## FOCUS: AUTHOR

# KATHERINE PATERSON

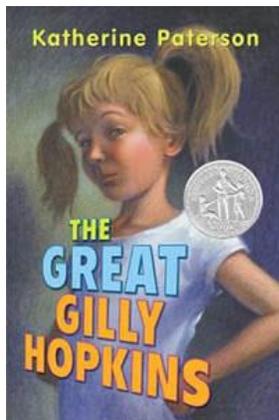
This education resource guide supplements the presentation made by Katherine Paterson at *In Search of Wonder: Common Core and More*, a professional development day presented by The National Children’s Book and Literacy Alliance, in conjunction with the Perry Ohio School District. Included on these pages are engaging activities and discussion questions based on Common Core English Language Standards for two of

Paterson’s books: *The Great Gilly Hopkins* and *The Same Stuff as Stars*. We invite you to print and share these materials as needed. Education resource guides for authors Steven Kellogg, Nikki Grimes, Tanya Lee Stone, and Chris Crutcher are available at: [thencbla.org](http://thencbla.org)

*You know the young people in your own classroom. You know their academic prowess, their study habits, and the level of their literacy skills. You know what resources you have on hand and your students’ capabilities using those resources. You know what your students will find exciting and challenging. Consequently, we present these activities and discussion questions for general use in classrooms and libraries, hoping that you will use your own insightful creativity and sound judgment to shape the ideas, activities, and resources we offer, expanding on them to meet the needs of your students. These materials were created by Mary Brigid Barrett, President and Executive Director of The National Children’s Book and Literacy Alliance, author, and illustrator.*

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## THE GREAT GILLY HOPKINS

by Katherine Paterson

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**SUMMARY:** In Katherine Paterson’s own words, “I am trying to tell the story of a lost child who is angry with the world that regards her as disposable and who is fighting it with every available weapon—fair or foul.” (from “Ideas” in *The Invisible Child: On Reading and Writing Books for Children* by Katherine Paterson)

**Grade Levels:** Grades 5-8, but can also be used for advanced 4th graders and may be applicable for certain students and topics in high school.

### COMMON CORE ENGLISH LANGUAGE STANDARD:

Explain how the author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in the text. How does the author’s connotative meaning (feelings associated with words) and tone (the author’s attitude toward his or her subject) reflect the personality of each of the main characters in the book?

#### Application:

In Katherine Paterson’s National Book Award acceptance speech for *The Great Gilly Hopkins*, she stated, “I wrote this book because, by chance rather than by design, I was for two months a foster mother. ....I was not serviceable as a foster mother, and this is why: I knew from the beginning that the children were going to be with us only a short time, so when a problem arose, as problems will, I’d say to myself, ‘I can’t really deal with that, they’ll be here only a few weeks.’ Suddenly and too late I heard what I been saying. I was regarding two human beings as Kleenex, disposable. And it forced me to think, what must it be like for those thousands of children in our midst who find themselves rated as disposable? So, I wrote a book, a confession of sin, in which one of those embittered children meets the world’s greatest foster mother.”

Share the excerpt from Katherine’s speech with your students, then conduct a class discussion about Katherine’s statement related to characters in *The Great Gilly Hopkins*. You may want to use some of the following questions:

- ❖ What does the word *disposable* mean? (Depending on the age and experience level of your students you may have to discuss the meaning of other words in Katherine’s speech, such as *serviceable*.) What things, besides Kleenex, are disposable? Do you value things that are disposable?
- ❖ What does Katherine Paterson mean when she used the word *disposable* in regard to children? What words would communicate the opposite of disposable, in regards to feelings about children? Think about the main characters, and the off-page minor characters, in *The Great Gilly Hopkins*—Mr. and Mrs. Nevins, Mrs. Richards, Maime Trotter, William Earnest, Ms. Ellis, Mr. Randolph, Miss Barbara Harris, Courtney Hopkins, Nonnie Hopkins, and Agnes Stokes. What kind of people were they? Did they feel Gilly was disposable? How do you know? Can you find places in the story, in the text and dialog, that support your opinions?

- ❖ In developing the character of Gilly does Katherine Paterson bluntly state what kind of kid Gilly is? Or is that inferred? How does the author convey Gilly’s feelings, beliefs, and opinions? Is Gilly respectful of Maime Trotter, her home, and William Earnest? Is the author’s tone and point of view respectful or disrespectful of Gilly, a girl who does not have much money or many possessions? Is the author’s tone respectful of Maime Trotter’s home? How do you know? Ask students to support their observations and opinions by citing excerpts in the story that support their point of view.
- ❖ Do we—our society at large, or particular individuals—view children living with their biological parents as disposable? Do we view adopted children as disposable? Do we view foster children as disposable? Do we view poor children as disposable? What evidence, proof, or examples can you share that support your opinions. (If your students cannot support their opinions, you may want to assign them research tasks to investigate how our society values children of different socioeconomic backgrounds. One way to do this would be to have your students read and examine your local city newspaper and major online news sources for a week to observe how we, as a society, and the media prioritize issues related to young people. Ask your students—What issues make headlines? What issues are addressed on the front or main page? What issues are addressed in op/ed essays and articles? Are education and social welfare articles related to young people’s needs on the front page or are they buried somewhere in the newspaper or website?)

### Activities:

#### ❖ **Creative Writing Exercise: Pack a Suitcase Like Gilly**

Ask your students to imagine that, for whatever reason, their parents, guardians, and immediate family can no longer care for them. They are being taken into foster care and a social worker is arriving to transport them to a foster family where they will live in a home and a neighborhood that is unfamiliar. They will be attending a different school. They have only one suitcase. They will need to pick and pack items they think they will need, and all those things have to fit in that one suitcase. Ask them to write an essay showing their packing process, an essay that describes, in detail, the items and objects they will take with them. Then have the students read their pieces aloud to the class; if a child is reluctant to share, perhaps you could read his or her essay aloud. Listen to and discuss the essays with the class. Discuss not only how students use language, but if their packing choices and descriptions reveal feelings and priorities. Do they underline the importance of each item by wordy explanations? Or do they *reveal* the importance and impact of each item by *inference*? Writers often infer meaning, rather than state things bluntly, because inference makes readers’ brains work and draws readers further into the story. After discussing how Katherine Paterson employs the use of inference in writing *The Great Gilly Hopkins*, citing examples, you might want students to rewrite their essays, employing the same technique.

Teaching “Inference” resource links:

<http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/inference>

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/author-study-improving-reading-906.html>

❖ **Creative Writing Exercise: Friends Like Family**

We often have strong feelings and emotional ties to people to whom we are not biologically related. Ask students to write an essay about a person who they feel especially close to, someone young or old, who is like an adopted family member. They should share an anecdote or experience they have had with that person, an anecdote that will reveal this person's character and why the student cherishes this person.

❖ **Creative and Critical Thinking Skills Art Exercise: Design a Special Bedroom**

This activity can be done by individual students or in small groups. Ask students to imagine that their family is going to host a foster child. In some states, foster children need not have their own bedroom, but must have their own bed. Ask your students to create a drawing or painting of the bedroom in their home that the foster child will have when he or she moves in. Before your students begin their drawing or painting, they may want to do a few rough sketches. Before your students begin their drawing or painting, you may want to ask them to think carefully about the following questions, reminding them that there are no right or wrong answers, but there are choices and possibilities:

- ~ How can they create a room setting for a foster child that sends the message *you are important, you are not disposable*?
- ~ Would they be willing to share their bedroom with a foster child? If yes, how much are they willing to share in the room related to space and objects?
- ~ We often make judgments on objects and spaces valuing some over others. We may think bigger closets are better and more valuable than smaller closets. We may feel bigger rooms are better than smaller rooms. We may think that one dresser in a room is better than another dresser. Are they willing to share the best things with the foster child? Or to let the foster child use the best room, the best bed, the best dresser? Is that fair? Is that a sacrifice? What does the word *sacrifice* mean? What do their family members sacrifice to make them feel wanted and valuable in their families?
- ~ Is it important that a foster child feel that he or she is a member of the family? Is there something that family members could do to make the bedroom the foster child will use feel more welcoming?
- ~ How can the use of color make a foster child feel welcome and wanted?
- ~ Are there objects and items that can be used or placed in the room that would be welcoming?

**COMMON CORE ENGLISH LANGUAGE STANDARD:**

**Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they “see” and “hear” when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.**

*The Great Gilly Hopkins* is being produced as a movie. Its release is tentatively scheduled for winter/early spring in 2015. The following discussion questions and activities can be used comparing and contrasting any book with the movie inspired by the book. We highly recommend that students read the book before watching the movie because once your students see the movie, that visual imprint will override their own imaginations and their image of the characters, setting, time, and place will be that of the movie and not of their own imaginings.

## Activities:

### ❖ **Critical and Creative Thinking Skills Small Group Activity: Design Your Own Movie**

Before viewing the movie, divide your class into small groups so that each group will have one main director, one casting director, one set designer, one location scout, and one costume designer. Movie making is a collaborative art; they will all have to work together on every step of the project.

- ~ The **main director** is the group leader; he or she needs to have an overall vision of what the movie should look like, and he or she needs to be able to communicate this vision to the rest of the crew.
- ~ The **director** will need to decide how much their movie will adhere to the original book. Will it take place in the same time era of the book? Will it follow the plot of the book exactly? Where will the movie begin—at the book’s beginning? Or somewhere in the middle with flashbacks?
- ~ The **casting director**, thinking of the director’s vision, needs to offer suggestions as to which actors should be cast as the main characters in the book. The casting director can use online sources to look at possible actors.
- ~ The **location scout** will pick locations where movie scenes will be filmed. Photos of locations all over the world can be researched in books from libraries as well as online.
- ~ **Set designers** can use their own sketches or photographs from websites, magazines, and books to illustrate the rooms the characters will inhabit in the movie world of the book.
- ~ **Costume designers**, too, can sketch out costumes for the characters, or may assemble photos from catalogues, magazines, books, and online resources.

Then the crews will have to organize a presentation to sell their classmates on their vision of the movie. After all the crews have shared their visual concepts for their movie, and only then, watch the commercial movie of the book. Afterward, conduct a class discussion comparing and contrasting each crew’s visual concept with the book’s movie. You may want to ask them what interpretation best projects the theme and emotional content of the book.

### ❖ **Critical and Creative Thinking Skills Exercise and Discussion: Book/Movie Comparisons**

Comparing book and book movie treatments is an excellent way to hone students’ critical and creative thinking skills, besides its literacy and literature value, such a comparison also addresses media literacy issues.

Read the book first and then have students watch the movie, comparing and contrasting character and characterization, plot development, conflict, theme, tone, and atmosphere. Do not limit your choice of book and movie to current books and films, or movie treatments that successfully share the meaning and tone of the book. Book lovers assume that the book is always better than the movie, but that may not be true in all cases. Many people feel *The Wizard of Oz* 1939 film is much better than L. Frank Baum’s book *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Conversely, both authors Natalie Babbitt and Susan Cooper feel the more recent movies based on their books, *Tuck Everlasting* and *The Dark is Rising*, were horrendous treatments.

❖ **Theater Arts Activity: *The Great Gilly Hopkins* Musical Play**

Launch a school production of *The Great Gilly Hopkins* in its musical theatrical adaptation. Written by David Paterson with Steve Liebman, it was produced on Broadway to critical acclaim. "A rare piece of children's theatre that doesn't wear a sugar coat... Rewards in abundance await audiences [of this] excellent, bittersweet play." - *The New York Times*

You can obtain script copies and/or licensing by contacting Samuel French, Inc. at: <http://www.samuel french.com/p/4257/great-gilly-hopkins-the>

If your school does not have the funding to mount a full production of the play, you can obtain script copies and do a reading in class. After your reading, conduct a class discussion that compares and contrasts the play to the movie. One item for specific discussion would be comparing and contrasting the difference in the art forms between books, movies, and plays noting how each deals with the internal and external lives of its characters.

❖ **Creative Writing Activity:**

**Students Create a *Great Gilly Hopkins* Reader's Theater Production**

Using *Gilly Hopkins* as your students' inspiration, have them write a Reader's Theater version of the play. Small groups or individuals can be assigned chapters to turn into Reader's Theater. For information on how to work with students on Reader's Theater, go to: <http://www.thencbla.org/ReadersTheater.html>

## **COMMON CORE ENGLISH LANGUAGE STANDARD:**

**Compare and contrast text in different forms or genres (e.g. stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.**

### **Activities:**

❖ **Critical and Creative Thinking Group Activity: Reading, Comparing, and Contrasting *The Great Gilly Hopkins* with *Anne of Green Gables* by Lucy Maude Montgomery**

Have students read *The Great Gilly Hopkins* and all, or the opening chapters of, *Anne of Green Gables*. Note that like *Gilly Hopkins*, when originally published in 1908 almost 100 years ago, *Anne of Green Gables* was considered realistic fiction. It is now considered to be historical fiction. One question you and your students might like to ponder is when does a realistic fiction novel become a work of historical fiction? What qualities in a novel ensure that it will become a classic novel? Does that potential exist for *The Great Gilly Hopkins*?

### **Class Discussion Questions related to previous activity:**

Ask students to support their viewpoint with book content references:

- ~ How are Gilly and Anne alike in their personalities? How do they differ? How are their circumstances the same? How do they differ? Do Gilly and Anne both have a strong influence on others? How do they use that influence? How do Gilly and Anne use their imaginations to cope with their circumstances?
- ~ How are Gilly and Anne welcomed and perceived by their new guardians and by others in their community? *Anne of Green Gables* was published in 1908; *The Great Gilly Hopkins* was published 70 years later in 1978. Have school atmospheres changed in 70 years? Did Gilly and Anne confront the same or different school challenges? Did Gilly and Anne have to deal with the same attitudes toward newcomer foster children/orphans in school, or had attitudes changed and evolved? Using references from the book to support your viewpoint, do you think community and society attitudes towards orphans and foster children have changed over the years? Do you think attitudes have changed now?
- ~ How does the situation of a foster child differ from the situation of an adopted child? Which would you rather be?

### **❖ Creative Writing Activity: Write a Student Handbook for Gilly and/or Anne**

**For Anne:** Have students do some research to find out what schools were like in your area in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Discovering local primary sources, if available, would add both depth and reality to your students' intellectual journey. After they have done research, ask them to design and write a handbook or guidebook for new students. You may also want to add an interdisciplinary element to this activity by having them research printed pamphlets and other published ephemera from this time period, including popular typefaces of the era, that they can use as models for their handbook.

**For Gilly:** Does your school have a student handbook, or a welcoming pamphlet for new students? Is it created by adults or children? Ask your students to think about the difference between a student handbook or welcome pamphlet created by adults for new kids coming to school, and one planned and created by kids. What might kids include that adults might not? Have your students design and write a new student handbook and/or welcome pamphlet for new kids coming to your school. Ask them to include practical advice to best help the new student navigate through his or her first week at school and make specific recommendations to make new students feel welcome, as well as advice that will help them avoid pitfalls. For example: What are the best and /or most fun activities for the school yard or playground? How should they dress? Are there any foods they should avoid in the cafeteria?

**Other books of fiction featuring a main character in foster care situations for further reading, or for using as a compare/contrast exercise to promote critical and creative thinking and writing skills** (descriptions courtesy of Minuteman Library System, MA):

❖ ***Finding Stinko* by Michael De Guzman**

Having spent his life trying to escape the foster care system, eventually becoming mute to keep out of trouble, twelve-year-old Newboy finally hits the streets, where a discarded ventriloquist's dummy gives him back his voice and his hope.

❖ ***The Road to Paris* by Nikki Grimes**

Inconsolable at being separated from her older brother, eight-year-old Paris is apprehensive about her new foster family but just as she learns to trust them, she faces a life-changing decision.

❖ ***Locomotion* by Jacqueline Woodson**

In a series of poems, eleven-year-old Lonnie writes about his life, after the death of his parents, separated from his younger sister, living in a foster home, and finding his poetic voice at school.

❖ ***The Pinballs* by Betsy Byars**

Three lonely foster children learn to care about themselves and each other.

❖ ***Team Picture* by Dean Hughes**

Trying to hold onto the newfound stability of his life in a foster home, thirteen-year-old David worries about the growing moodiness of his guardian Paul and the fluctuating fortunes of his Pony League baseball team.

❖ ***Little Soldier* by Bernard Ashley**

Taken from Africa to a foster home in London after his family is killed by an enemy tribe, Kaninda discovers the meaning of hate and the value of not hating.

❖ ***Pictures of Hollis Woods* by Patricia Reilly Giff**

A troublesome twelve-year-old orphan, staying with an elderly artist who needs her, remembers the only other time she was happy in a foster home, with a family that truly seemed to care about her.

❖ ***Where I'd Like to Be* by Frances O'Roark Dowell**

A ghost saved twelve-year-old Maddie's life when she was an infant, her Granny Lane claims, so Maddie must always remember that she is special. But it's hard to feel special when you've spent your life being shuttled from one foster home to another. And now that she's at the East Tennessee Children's Home, Maddie feels, well, less than ordinary. Then one day, a new girl, Murphy, shows up at the Home armed with tales about exotic travels, being able to fly, and boys who recite poetry to wild horses. Maddie is enchanted.... Frances O'Roark Dowell explores the many definitions, both heartbreaking and awe-inspiring, of home and family.

## **COMMON CORE AND MUCH MORE: MULTIPLE-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES!**

### **American History: Origins of Foster Care for Children ~ The Orphan Trains**

A key theme author Katherine Paterson asks in *The Great Gilly Hopkins* revolves around issues related to attitudes we as a society and individuals have about young people, especially young people in need. Do we view kids in need as disposable? What were our attitudes toward needy children in the past? What will they be in the future?

The Orphan Train Movement lasted from 1853 to the early 1900s and more than 120,000 children were placed in host homes across the country. This ambitious, unusual, and controversial social experiment is now recognized as the beginning of the foster care concept in the United States. (<http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/about/history/orphan-trains>)

A number of the Orphan Train children ended up in Ohio. Using both nonfiction and fiction online and traditional book resources, have students discover and research a recently highlighted chapter in American history and compare and contrast the experiences of more contemporary children in foster care, exemplified by Gilly Hopkins, and the historical experiences of the orphan train children, some of whom are still alive.

After researching and reading about the Orphan Trains, conduct a class discussion on the subject of society's attitudes toward young people in need. How were the young people on the orphan trains treated by adults? Who cared about them? Who did not? Were the adults who organized these orphan trains motivated by love and concern? Were they motivated by anything else? Why did they think it would be a positive change for the children? Were they right? Were the orphan trains and the relocation of the children a success?

How has our society changed its attitudes toward children in need? Do we value poor children? What does it mean to be poor? Do poor children have the same opportunities as middle class children, or children from very wealthy families? If there are differences between how we treat and value children who are poor, how can we change things? How can we make life better for all of our children?

### **Creative Writing Activity: Imagined Orphan Train Journal or Diary**

After doing historical research on orphan trains and reading primary and secondary accounts of the young people who were transported on the trains, ask students to imagine that they have been removed from their family, loved ones, and their community and sent off to a different place, a different family, to begin a new life in another part of the country. Each student can then write an imaginary diary or journal beginning on the day before they are told they will be leaving their homes—if, they were told anything at all—and ending a week into their lives in their new homes. They can add to their journals in any way they wish by adding sketches and drawings, and/or by photocopying pictures and old photos and scrapbook items that kids might collect and save.

### **American History: Orphan Train Resource Books**

*Orphan Train Rider: One Boy's True Story* by Andrea Warren (nonfiction)

*We Road the Orphan Trains* by Andrea Warren (nonfiction)

*Train to Somewhere* by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Ronald Himmler (historical fiction, picture book)

*Orphan Train* by Christina Baker Cline (historical fiction, YA)

### **Online Resources: The History of Foster Care in America**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foster\\_care](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foster_care)

<http://nfpaonline.org/page-1105741>

### **Online Orphan Train Historical Materials**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orphan\\_Train](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orphan_Train)

<http://ohiosyesterday.blogspot.com/2012/07/following-orphan-train-riders.html>

<http://orphantraindepot.org/orphan-train-rider-stories/>

<http://orphantraindepot.org/history/>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2000/05/13/nyregion/riders-of-orphan-train-meet-to-tell-life-stories.html>

<http://www.kidskonnnect.com/subjectindex/16-educational/history/274-orphan-trains.html>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/orphan/>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/orphan/teachers.html>

[http://www.kancoll.org/articles/orphans/or\\_hist.htm](http://www.kancoll.org/articles/orphans/or_hist.htm)

<http://www.neh.gov/humanities/2007/novemberdecember/feature/lost-children-riders-the-orphan-train>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/horizon/nov98/orphan.htm>

<http://www.wcl.american.edu/modernamerican/documents/Trammell.pdf>

<http://orphantraindepot.org/history/artifacts-of-the-orphan-trains/new-york-daily-tribune-2/>

### **Online Orphan Train Videos**

These videos explain why and how the orphan trains originated and how they began the foster care system we know today. Terrific video made by a sixth grader:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cWTTcNBfaRw>

Description of the Orphan Trains by the New-York Historical Society and NYC Media:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ciSHiO7hAiQ>

"Riders on the Orphan Train: The Story of the Largest Child Migration in the U.S." by the St. Tammany Parish Library: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2nqLt5YGIs>

## **ONLINE RESOURCES FOR *THE GREAT GILLY HOPKINS***

### ***The Great Gilly Hopkins: Existing Online Educational Materials***

<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/3330>

<http://www.readworks.org/lessons/grade5/great-gilly-hopkins>

<http://www.ket.org/artstoolkit/drama/lessonplan/122.htm>

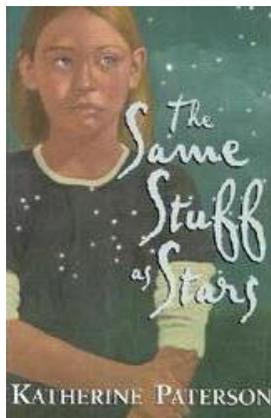
<http://thegreatgillyhopkinswebquest.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.teachingbooks.net/tb.cgi?tid=2832&a=1>

<https://sites.google.com/site/thesisactivities/activities-for-katherine-paterson-s-books/the-great-gilly-hopkins>

### **Wikipedia Summary of *The Great Gilly Hopkins***

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Great\\_Gilly\\_Hopkins](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gilly_Hopkins)



## THE SAME STUFF AS STARS

by Katherine Paterson

©2002

“You gotta know someone cares about you,  
or you just give up.”

**SUMMARY:** “In *The Same Stuff as Stars*, Paterson has created a unique and unlikely heroine: Angel, an unwanted, neglected latchkey kid of eleven who is forced to care for herself and her difficult younger brother in the absence of responsible adults. Their father is in jail, and their mother, unable to cope, abandons them at their great-grandmother's crumbling Vermont farmhouse and disappears. Such unstable circumstances cause a girl like Angel — sensitive, perceptive, with a highly developed sense of responsibility — a great deal of anxiety. Yet she finds solace in one person: a mysterious stranger who appears whenever the night sky is clear and teaches her about the stars, planets, and constellations.

Angel, Bernie, and Grandma do eventually find a sense of balance — until events conspire against them. It's then that Angel must find the strength within herself to persevere, reminding us once again of the incredible resilience of childhood . . . and the unquenchable human spirit.

Asked for the source of this novel and its characters, Katherine Paterson tells a story almost as moving as the book itself. The author was attending a reading group at a local prison. The participants in the group, male and female, were discussing her novel *The Great Gilly Hopkins*. Katherine found herself shaken when the facilitator asked the readers how many of them had been foster children themselves — and every single one of the twenty-odd people around the table raised a hand.

When the discussion was over, Katherine agreed to sign the prisoners' books. She asked one man for his name, but he said she shouldn't sign his book that way. The book was for his little girl. "Her name is Angel," he said.

In the vein of Katherine Paterson's best-loved novels comes a new work about a spunky, compelling girl who determinedly seeks order in her universe. Her name is Angel.”

- *From Houghton Mifflin Harcourt*

**Grade Levels:** Grades 5-8, but can also be used for advanced 4th graders and may be applicable for certain students and topics in high school.

## **COMMON CORE ENGLISH LANGUAGE STANDARD:**

**Compare and contrast text in different forms or genres (e.g. stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.**

Have your students read *The Same Stuff as Stars*, or individual chapters from *The Same Stuff as Stars*, after reading *The Great Gilly Hopkins*. Ask your students to explore, compare, and contrast the main characters, plots, story locations, and themes of both books in a classroom discussion or writing exercise.

You may then want to discuss the challenges of children who must take on adult responsibilities at an early age. What do young people learn and gain in such situations, and what do they lose? A larger question to discuss: when does it help to put children in need in foster care, and when is it better to leave them with family members or guardians? Is it always a clear cut and easy decision? Have your students reference both books to support their opinions and viewpoints.

## **COMMON CORE ENGLISH LANGUAGE STANDARD:**

**Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. 1.) Introduce claims and organize the reasons and evidence clearly. 2.) Support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or texts. 3.) Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claims and reasons. 4.) Establish and maintain a formal style. 5.) Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.**

### **Creative Writing Activity:**

#### **Write a Newspaper Editorial in Support or Opposition of the Foster Care System**

After the class discussion comparing and contrasting *The Great Gilly Hopkins* and *The Same Stuff as Stars* above, have your students write a newspaper editorial supporting or arguing against placing children in the foster care system. You will find a great lesson plan, and video, on how to write persuasive editorials on “The Learning Network” pages of *The New York Times* (<http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/>) at: <http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/02/07/for-the-sake-of-argument-writing-persuasively-to-craft-short-evidence-based-editorials/#more-142027>

Your students may need to research information and statistics on the foster care system. They may even interview area social workers to find supporting information for their viewpoint. Your students may even want to submit their editorials to your local newspaper for publication. If they do, check your local newspaper for submission guidelines.

## COMMON CORE AND MUCH MORE: MULTIPLE-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES!

### ❖ Creative Writing and Art Activity: Constellations

The subject of astronomy, stars, and constellations plays an important role in both the plot and theme of *The Same Stuff as Stars*. Discuss that role with your class and use the story as a springboard into an interdisciplinary astronomy investigation.

### ❖ Art and Creative Writing Activity: Create a Folktale Inspired by the Constellations

Assign each student a constellation to investigate and study. They should investigate their constellation, write all about it, and also create a fiction story or folktale based on their constellation. Last, they can draw or paint a picture of their constellation to illustrate their work.

### Online Resources for Writing Folktales

[http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/folktalewshop\\_index.htm](http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/folktalewshop_index.htm)

[https://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/~media/ArtsEdge/LessonPrintables/grade-6-8/writing\\_folktales\\_ideas\\_for\\_writing.ashx](https://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/~media/ArtsEdge/LessonPrintables/grade-6-8/writing_folktales_ideas_for_writing.ashx)

### Online Astronomy and Constellation Resources

<http://www.challenger.org/>

<http://www.nasa.gov/audience/forkids/kidsclub/flash/index.html#.U95px0g2yXU>

<http://amazing-space.stsci.edu/>

<http://saturn.jpl.nasa.gov/>

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

<http://www.dibonsmith.com/menu.htm>

<http://www.hawastsoc.org/deepsky/index.html>

<http://hubblesite.org/>

<http://www.skymaponline.net/>

[http://www.texasastro.org/star\\_charts.php](http://www.texasastro.org/star_charts.php)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constellation>

<http://stardate.org/nightsky/constellations>

### Online Resources

<http://www.iau.org/public/themes/constellations/>

<http://stars.astro.illinois.edu/sow/const.html>

### Other Novels With Science Connections

<http://www.ala.org/offices/resources/sciencenovels>

## ONLINE RESOURCES FOR *THE SAME STUFF AS STARS*

### ***The Same Stuff as Stars: Existing Online Educational Materials***

[http://home.igc.org/~japa/curriculum\\_files/educating\\_for\\_peace.pdf](http://home.igc.org/~japa/curriculum_files/educating_for_peace.pdf)

<http://www.emporia.edu/libsv/wawbookaward/curriculumguides/cg04-05.html#samestuff>

<http://www.teachingbooks.net/tb.cgi?tid=5913&a=1>

<https://multcolib.org/same-stuff-st>

### **Wikipedia Summary of *The Same Stuff as Stars***

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Same\\_Stuff\\_as\\_Stars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Same_Stuff_as_Stars)

## IDEAS AND ONLINE RESOURCES FOR OTHER BOOKS BY KATHERINE PATERSON:

### **Historical Fiction Connections:**

#### **Vietnam War (grades 5-8):**

*Park's Quest* which you may want to have your students read with *Parzival: The Quest of the Grail Knight* both by Katherine Paterson.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Park%27s\\_Quest](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Park%27s_Quest)

<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/ALAN/winter98/lockhart.html>

<http://www.nytimes.com/books/98/06/21/reviews/980621.rv134416.html>

#### **American History (grades 5-8):**

##### *Lyddie*

Summary: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lyddie>

Writing prompts: <http://www.readingrockets.org/books/fun/exquisiteprompt/Paterson>

Book discussion and activities: <http://www.carolhurst.com/titles/lyddie.html>

Readers' guide: <http://eolit.hrw.com/hlla/novelguides/ms/Mini-Guide.Paterson.pdf>

Economics study: <http://www.econedlink.org/lessons/index.php?lid=702&type=student>

##### *Jip, His Story*

Summary: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jip,\\_His\\_Story](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jip,_His_Story)

##### *Bread and Roses, Too*

Summary: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bread\\_and\\_Roses,\\_Too](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bread_and_Roses,_Too)

About: <http://childrensbookalmanac.com/2011/09/bread-and-roses-too/>

Teaching History Guide: <http://zinnedproject.org/materials/bread-and-roses-too/>

##### *Preacher's Boy*

Summary: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preacher%27s\\_Boy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preacher%27s_Boy)

Reader's Guide: <http://files.harpercollins.com/PDF/ReadingGuides/0064472337.pdf>

## ONLINE AUTHOR RESOURCES

### **Katherine Paterson: General Information**

<http://terabithia.com/>

<http://www.thencbla.org/biopages/biopaterson.html>

<https://www.kennedycenter.org/education/pwvtv/studyguides/TellingStoriesKatherinePaterson2011.pdf>

<http://www.edupaperback.org/page-864494>

### **Katherine Paterson: Interviews**

<http://www.thencbla.org/boardinterviews/patersoninterview.html>

<http://www.oprah.com/oprahsbookclub/Author-Katherine-Paterson-After-Bridge-to-Terabithia/4>

<http://www.learningfirst.org/visionaries/KatherinePaterson>

<http://www.ipl.org/div/askauthor/paterson.html>

[http://archive.hbook.com/magazine/articles/2010/mar10\\_sutton.asp](http://archive.hbook.com/magazine/articles/2010/mar10_sutton.asp)

[http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/booksellers/press\\_release/paterson/question.shtml#questions](http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/booksellers/press_release/paterson/question.shtml#questions)

### **Katherine Paterson: Videos**

Reading Rockets interview in 2011 about reading aloud with families, the joys of writing historical fiction, and the challenge of adapting classic works:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3EAhJEjCSQ>

Reading Rockets interview in 2010 about Paterson's childhood, raising a family, the challenges of writing, and her favorite books for children: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJLaLc\\_kaZc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJLaLc_kaZc)

Commencement address at Johnson State College in May 2010:

[http://www.greenmountainaccess.tv/index.php?option=com\\_jvideo&view=watch&id=74](http://www.greenmountainaccess.tv/index.php?option=com_jvideo&view=watch&id=74)

Laura Ingalls Wilder speech in 2013: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4\\_KJYDwfmMw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_KJYDwfmMw)

“Lyddie and the Power of Historical Fiction” at Lowell National Historical Park in 2013:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dmQi-cYLZ-0>

Interview with Kate DiCamillo on becoming a writer:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QdVtSj2W68w>

Interview with Kate DiCamillo about the writing process:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GprltUiL-YQ>

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