

# The Mud Trilogy

A Four-Level Literature  
Parent Manual

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## STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

Vocabulary Prestudy:  
Ten Classic Words

Quotations for Quote Quizzes

Discussion Questions

*The Mud Trilogy*

Vocabulary Prestudy:  
Ten Classic Words

Here are ten classic words common to all three novels. These words are heavily represented in classic literature for children. In the homeschool setting, take time to study and discuss these before embarking on the novels.

**countenance:** n. facial expression

“...his normally alert countenance would freeze into a wide-eyed stare...”

*The Rescue at Fragment Crag*

**profound:** adj. deep

“...lots of profound discussions...”

*The Red Tide*

## *The Mud Trilogy*

### Quotations for Quote Quizzes

The purpose of these quotations is to promote close reading. For example, if the child has been assigned to read certain chapters, you can read aloud four or five quotations to see if he or she can name the character who is speaking. This practice fosters careful attention to the reading.

The advantage of quote quizzes is that each quote contains only the author's own language and the character's own voice, and this keeps the pedagogy located within the text, rather than turning it into a schooly experience. It does no damage to the spell of the story.

What I have always done is to read out the quotations at the beginning of the lesson. If I am going to read four quotations, I have the child number one through four on a sheet of paper, and then I read the quotations in spirited character voice. The child has only to write

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4. I know what this is. This is a bioluminescent bloom. These are microscopic ocean creatures that make their own light....  
- Fishmeal
  
  5. I like a path and I have been on many wide paths and I tried a path yesterday but I-yi took a side path, a slide path, and my-yi night paths are sometimes dry-yi and....  
- Aye-Aye
  
  5. Aye-Aye, may I ask you a few questions, please, and you will reply either *yes* or *no*?  
- Fishmeal
  
  6. To the right. Follow the chirple to the right.  
- Mud
  
  6. We have to move faster. Watch where you step, Baldwin, and try not to kick those rocks.  
- Mud
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## *The Mud Trilogy*

### Discussion Questions

These questions are designed to promote open-ended discussions—explorations—more than to discover a right answer. Most important questions are not what is called *convergent*; they do not have exact right answers, and so none of the questions here will be of the sort that cause the child to look in the book to find the answers and copy them onto paper. Rather, the child will have to talk, to think about the animals and their decisions, and to assert ideas and conclusions of his or her own.

Some of the questions for the second and third novels are cumulative, meaning that some of the questions ask the child to make comparisons or contrasts between the novels. These kinds of questions lead to larger ideas: What important themes do you see in both books or in all three books?

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Questions for  
*The Rescue at Fragment Crag*

Here is a bank of questions that you can choose from to create an atmosphere of inquiry into the stories. Just choose the questions you like; there is no expectation that you must do them all. You might sometimes give the child a choice; for example, you could present the child with three questions and ask him or her to choose one to discuss.

1. Which of the animals in this story do you think is most trustworthy? Why?
  2. Why do you think that Baldwin had such an antipathy (dislike) for Mud? Why Mud, and not another animal?
  3. Explain in some detail why you think that Baldwin changes his attitude toward Mud. What accounts for the change?
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Questions for  
*The Red Tide*

1. What is the most important thing that the animals learn about language in the first chapter? Explain why you think it is important.
  2. When Baldwin says a great wave is coming, only Mud believes him. Why do you think Mud believes Baldwin when no one else does?
  3. In Chapter Two, the other animals make a mistake by assuming anything Baldwin says is wrong, and Baldwin makes mistakes by thinking that weird explanations are probably the true ones. Everyone learns something about how to think. Explain these lessons as clearly as you can.
  4. What do the animals learn about thinking from the red tide calamity? Which of these lessons do you think is the most important?
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