



Nature Study and More

Rascal

by
Sterling North



1. The lightning and thunder reminded the boys 'that the war was still raging in France.' What war and where is France? Locate and label France on your outline map of Europe.
2. Sterling described some of the homes in his town as 'late Victorian homes.' Do some research to see what these homes looked like.
3. Sterling and Oscar manage to catch one of the baby raccoons and take it home. Research and find out more about raccoons – biological name, diet, size, life span, appearance, where located, and any interesting facts. Use this information to write a report, make a mini-poster or create a mini-book. Don't forget to sketch a picture, also. A form of this report can be found in the back of this study guide, along with an unlabeled ruled page that can be used for a second page, if needed.
4. Describe the way Sterling and his father lived and kept their house. Some of the housewives said 'this was no way to bring up a child.' Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?
5. Start your *Animals of Rascal* page with these animals from the first chapter: St. Bernard, duck, muskrat, lightning bug, skunk, woodchuck, crow, cat, pickerel, kildeer (or killdeer), fox, raccoon, tree frog, tree toad, screech owl, quail, crawdad (or crayfish), puppy.
6. Start your *Plants of Rascal* page with these plants from the first chapter: violet, anemone, grass, apple tree, grape, walnut, hickory, phosphorescent stump, white oak, hazel brush, flowering spirea.
7. Define and add these words to your *Vocabulary and Facts from Rascal* page: tremolo, anemone, quavering, hasenpfeffer, plaintive, trundled.

Chapter 2

1. Add the following animals to your *Animals of Rascal* page: bass, minnow, shiner, chub, cricket, meadow mouse, hawk, night crawler, red-winged blackbird, catfish, sunfish, yellow-bellied bullheads.
2. Add the following plants to your *Plants of Rascal* page: cherry, water lily, clover, red oak, corn, tobacco, wheat, oats, willow, wild strawberry, pond lily, flowers called arrowheads, water elm, radish.
3. Define and add these words to your *Vocabulary and Facts from Rascal* page: trill, chirred, impertinent, martinet, epaulets, cleats.
4. Sterling has a war garden. What is a war garden? Why did people have them and what did they usually grow in them? Write a paragraph about it for your *Vocabulary and Facts from Rascal* page. Use copies of the unlabeled ruled page for additional pages, if needed.
5. Sterling's sister, Theo, lives in Northern Minnesota. His other sister, Jessica, is at the University of Chicago, which is in Illinois. Label Minnesota and Illinois on your Wisconsin state map.
6. What happens when Rascal first encounters Sterling's bait pond? How does Rascal already know what to do?
7. Sterling tells about news stories in the Janesville Daily Gazette concerning the Germans being on the banks of the Marne and within sight of the Eiffel Tower. Where are the Marne and the Eiffel Tower?

8. What about the thunder and lightning made Sterling have nightmares?
9. 'Rock River rises in the Horicon marshes.' Label the Rock River on the map of Wisconsin and on the map of Rock County. Label the Horicon Marshes on the map of Wisconsin only.
10. Sketch a picture of Rascal in the basket on Sterling's bike.
11. Sterling compares Rascal riding in the bike basket to Barney Oldfield. Who is Barney Oldfield? Add this information to your *People of Rascal* page.
12. Sterling mentions 'the barns were newly painted a cheerful red.' Why were so many barns painted red in those days? Do some research about this.
13. Sterling gives a detailed description of Indian Ford. Lake Koshkonog was formed by the Indian Ford dam on the Rock River. Label Lake Koshkonog on your map of Wisconsin.
14. Sterling tells of eating crayfish as an appetizer before an entrée of fried catfish or Mulligan Stew. What is Mulligan Stew? Find out and add to your *Vocabulary and Facts from Rascal* page.
15. Sterling let Rascal put his hands into the bottle of strawberry pop and then Sterling drank from the bottle. Is that something you would do?
16. Sterling's canoe will be 18 feet long and 28 inches wide when finished. To give you a mental picture of the size of his canoe, mark the size out on a floor or carpet, using masking tape or painter's tape. Is your living room big enough to hold the canoe? If it is, would there be room for anything else?
17. Theo arrived in a Stutz Bearcat. Research about the car and write a paragraph for your *Vocabulary and Facts from Rascal* pages.
18. Sterling talks about being stricken with infantile paralysis some years later, after his time with Rascal. What is infantile paralysis? Add this information to your *Vocabulary and Facts from Rascal* pages.
19. What is a Norfolk suit? Research to find out. Sterling did not want to wear one again. What do you think...would you want to wear one?
20. What are glassies and steelies?
21. Brailsford Junction is really Edgerton. Label Edgerton on the map of Rock County and on the map of Wisconsin.
22. Sterling said he was 'feeling as keen as a Scotland Yard detective.' What is Scotland Yard?

Chapter 3

1. Add the following animals to your *Animals of Rascal* page: cicada, horse, nightingale, whippoorwill, panther, wild duck and goose, wall-eyed pike, blue heron, Cecropia moth, sandpiper, rail, American bittern, mallard duck, turtle, Holstein and Guernsey cattle, nighthawk.
2. Add the following plants to your *Plants of Rascal* page: wild rice, wild columbine, thistle, dandelion, mint, fern.
3. Define and add these words to your *Vocabulary and Facts from Rascal* page: furrowed, rivulet, strata, obsidian, flotilla, meridian.
4. Sterling played records for Rascal on a wind-up Victrola. What is a wind-up Victrola?

5. What food did Sterling take on his canoe trip to release Rascal back into the wild? Why did he take these particular items?
6. In your opinion, did Sterling do the right thing by releasing Rascal back into the wild?

After-Reading Comprehension Discussion

1. There are four kinds of conflict in literature, even biographies: person against person, person against nature, person against society, and person against self. Which of these conflicts can you identify in Rascal? Give examples of the conflicts you have identified.
2. Some people in Rascal reacted positively to Rascal. Others acted negatively. First, name who had a positive reaction. Then, name who had a negative reaction.
3. In what ways did Sterling's life change from the time Rascal came into his life until Sterling released Rascal back into the wild?
4. Taking turns, have everyone who read or heard Rascal tell the plot of the story. One person starts and each person adds to the story. Continue taking turns until the entire story has been told.

Answers to Comprehension Questions

Chapter 1

1. Rock County, Wisconsin
2. 11 years old
6. Oscar's mother was especially kind to Sterling because Sterling's mother is dead and she knows he has been without a mother's loving kindness for several years. One reason why Sterling didn't want to show his tears could be that he doesn't want to seem weak. Your student may have other reasons which are valid, too.
7. Marbles was popular game at the time that the author was growing up. The game was played with glass marbles and the idea was to collect the most marbles through playing the game.
8. 'Bats in his belfry' was a common way to say a person was crazy.
10. World War 1. France is in Europe.
13. Sterling's house had many animals, a canoe in the living room and great shelves of books. Sterling came and went as he liked, with little parental supervision. There seemed to be no set mealtimes and probably no set cleaning schedule, either.

Chapter 2

6. Rascal wades in and feels all over the bottom of the pond to find a fish. He knows how to do this by instinct.
7. The Marne is a river in France. The Eiffel Tower is in Paris, France.

Native American Fact Sheet



Tribe Name:

Where they lived:

Food they ate:

Kinds of homes they had:

Language they spoke:

Their handcrafts:

Clothes they wore:

Two additional facts about this tribe:

1. _____

2. _____



