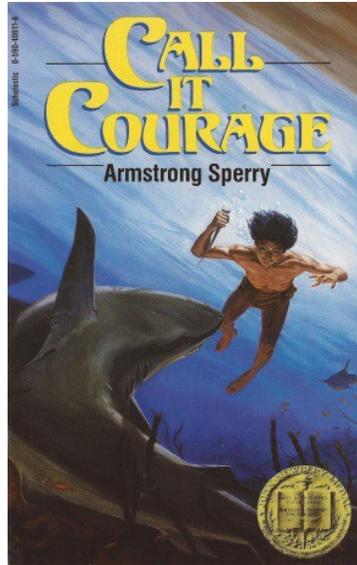


# Call It Courage



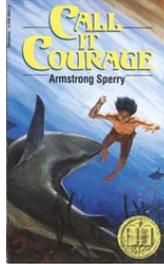
By

Armstrong Sperry

A Novel Study  
by Nat Reed

# Call it Courage

By Armstrong Sperry



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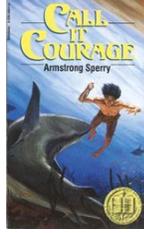
**About the author:** Nat Reed has been a member of the teaching profession for more than 30 years. He is presently a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program. For more information on his work and literature, please visit the websites [www.reedpublications.org](http://www.reedpublications.org) and [www.novelstudies.org](http://www.novelstudies.org).

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## Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on one chapter of ***Call it Courage*** and is comprised of four different activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language and Extension Activities

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking.

### Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters . . . respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

Students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A **portfolio cover** is included as well as a **Student Checklist**.

**Themes** and **topics** which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include facing one's fears, courage, overcoming difficult circumstances, indigenous cultures of the South Pacific, the importance of perseverance, being different.

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## List of Skills

### Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words / phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homonyms
3. Identifying / creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *anagrams*
7. Identify *personification*
8. Use of singular / plural nouns
9. Listing compound words
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identification of root words
13. Identify/create *similes*
14. Identification of a *cliffhanger*

### Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

### Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Identify the climax of the novel
4. Five W's Chart

### Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Protagonists
3. Relating personal experiences

### Creative and Critical Thinking

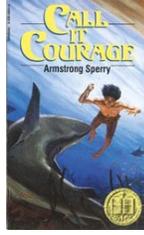
1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Write a letter to a friend
4. Complete an Observation Chart
5. Conduct an interview
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete a KWS Chart

### Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Design an Information Card

# Call it Courage

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## Synopsis

Mafatu's name means "Stout Heart", but his people call him a coward. Ever since the sea took his mother's life and spared his own, he has lived with a deep fear. And even though his father is the Great Chief of Hikueru – an island whose seafaring people worship courage – he is terrified and so they hate him.

By the time he is fifteen years old, Mafatu can bear it no longer. He must conquer his fear alone . . . even if it means certain death.[The Publisher]

Check out the clips of the movie *Call it Courage* on [YouTube](#)

## Author Biography

*Armstrong Sperry*

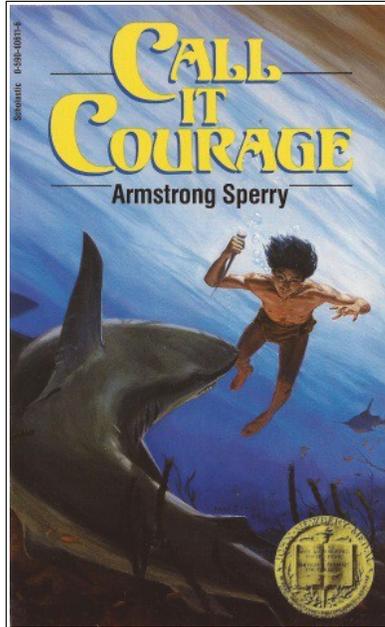
**Armstrong Wells Sperry** (November 7, 1897 – April 26, 1976) was an American writer and illustrator of children's literature. His books include historical fiction and biography, often stories of boys from Polynesia, Asia and indigenous American cultures. He is best known for his 1941 Newbery Medal-winning book *Call It Courage*.



An accomplished artist, Sperry attended the Art Students League of New York from 1915 to 1918, and the Yale School of Art. Following World War I, Sperry travelled around the islands of the South Pacific. In 1930 he married Margaret Robertson, a doctor, and was employed as an illustrator for an advertising agency. His first book, *One Day With Manu* appeared in 1933. *Call it Courage* was first published in 1940 and has since been translated into several languages.



# Call it Courage

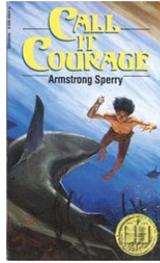


*By Armstrong Sperry*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Call it Courage

By Armstrong Sperry



## Chapter 1



### Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of *Call it Courage* is an intriguing young boy who experiences many exciting adventures as the story unfolds. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels that you have read or movies you’ve seen. What do you think makes for an especially interesting **protagonist**?




### Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

nondescript	serene	resentment	security	desolation
intimacy	ominous	convulsively	cowering	profound

1. We found our little puppy \_\_\_\_\_ in a corner of the closet during the thunderstorm.
2. It was hard not to have a feeling of \_\_\_\_\_ when the thieves ransacked our trailer.
3. The tornado left a path of \_\_\_\_\_ and destruction.
4. Surprisingly, the army general’s appearance was quite \_\_\_\_\_.

5. The students found the principal's remarks regarding their possible punishment to be disturbingly \_\_\_\_\_.
6. A real \_\_\_\_\_ developed between Mafatu and the creatures of the island.
7. The octopus moved its tentacles \_\_\_\_\_ after being speared by the fisherman.
8. The young minister had a \_\_\_\_\_ influence on the members of the youth group.
9. Early morning is usually peaceful and \_\_\_\_\_ down by the lake.
10. The parachute offered the student pilot a sense of \_\_\_\_\_.

## Words of the Islands

There are a number of words in the novel which have to do with the region that Mafatu called home. Use your dictionary to match each word on the left from Chapter One, with its correct meaning.

A	OUTRIGGER
B	BONITO
C	BARRIER-REEF
D	POLYNESIA
E	HIKUERU
F	ISLET
G	FRIGATE
H	PURAU

1	Coral running roughly parallel to the shore and separated from it by a wide, deep lagoon.
2	Today there are approximately 250 people who live on this island which covers an area of about 41 square miles (107 sq. km.).
3	A framework extended outboard from the side of a boat, especially in South Pacific canoes, supporting a float that gives stability.
4	A word meaning "very small island".
5	A type of bird resembling a pelican. They are also called <i>pirate birds</i> .
6	A shrubby tree whose tough wood is often used to build canoes.
7	A mackerel-like fish
8	A group of Pacific islands stretching from New Zealand to the Hawaiian Islands.

## Questions



1. What is the **setting** of Chapter One?


### Good to Know

**Thalassophobia** is an intense and persistent fear of the sea. A common cause of fear of the oceans is often triggered by fearing the sight of a large sea creature underwater.

Do you think this was the particular cause of Mafatu's intense fear of the ocean?

**Yes**  **No**

2. What event caused Mafatu to be so terrified of the sea?


3. What do you think Mafatu found most difficult about his fear of the sea?


4. Mafatu tried to make up for his refusal to join the others on their fishing trip by:

- a) hunting wild boar instead
- b) becoming a medicine man and healer
- c) making spears and nets
- d) becoming an accomplished farmer

5. Mafatu's only friends were \_\_\_\_\_, his yellow dog, and Kivi, who was an \_\_\_\_\_.

6. What did Mafatu finally determine to do – and why?




## Language Activities

### A. Anagrams

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word **PAN** can also form the word **NAP**. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:

a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters.

The words in the left-hand column are found in Chapter 1 of our novel.

Word	Anagram	Clue
caring		Speeding.
dawn		Used to scan a bar code.
threat		One who makes head-coverings.
crash		Sears.
later		Aware.
shark		Listens.

**B.** Place the following words from this chapter in **alphabetical order**.

Mafatu	1.
mother	2.
meat	3.
grim	4.
might	5.
morrow	6.
must	7.
pandanus	8.
more	9.
moonlight	10.

**C.** A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. We find a number of examples of this in Chapter One. Here is one: “The boy stood there taut as a drawn arrow...” In this example Mafatu’s tautness is compared to that of a drawn arrow.

Invent your own **similes** comparing the following items with something from your imagination:

a	the sound of waves crashing on the seashore
b	The barking of a dog
c	your own example

**D.** The word “**spear**” (found in Chapter 1) can be used as a **noun** or a **verb**, depending on the sentence. Use your imagination and write sentences to illustrate how this word can be used as both a noun and a verb.

**SPEAR**

Noun	
Verb	

## Extension Activities



### Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A storyboard can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel.

Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first chapter of ***Call it Courage***. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6