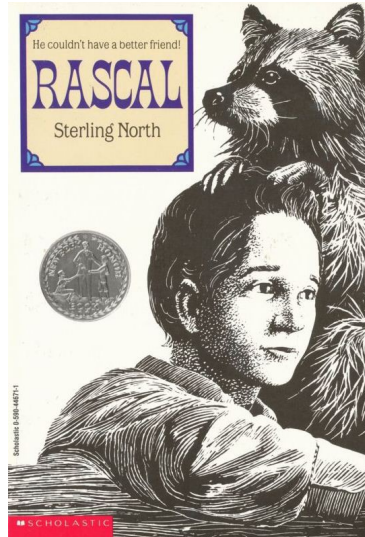


# Rascal



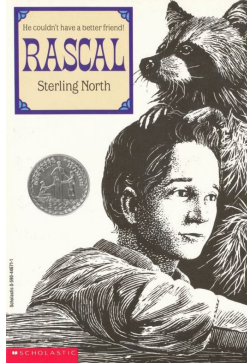
By

Sterling North

A Novel Study  
by Nat Reed

# Rascal

By Sterling North



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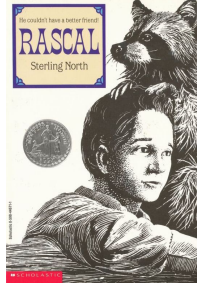
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**About the author:** Nat Reed has been a member of the teaching profession for more than 30 years. He is presently a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program. For more information on his work and literature, please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

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# Rascal

By Sterling North



## Suggestions and Expectations

This 63 page curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on one chapter of *Rascal* 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** which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include overcoming loss, conservation and ecology, raccoons/wildlife of Wisconsin, World War I, Spanish influenza pandemic, assuming responsibility, perseverance, courage.

# Rascal

By Sterling North

## 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
4. Comparing two Characters

### Creative and Critical Thinking

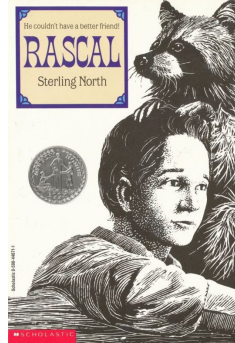
1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Write a letter to a friend
4. Complete an Observation Chart
5. Conduct an interview
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete a KWS Chart

### Art Activities

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

# Rascal

By Sterling North



## Synopsis

Skunks, woodchucks, a crow named Poe, an 18-foot, half-finished canoe in the living room ... welcome to the North home! Rascal is only a baby when Sterling brings him home to join the menagerie, but soon raccoon and boy are best friends, doing everything together – until the spring day when Sterling realizes things must change. [The Publisher]

A website you may wish to check out with some interesting reviews and discussions of the novel is **goodreads** ~ <http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/967511.Rascal>

## Author Biography

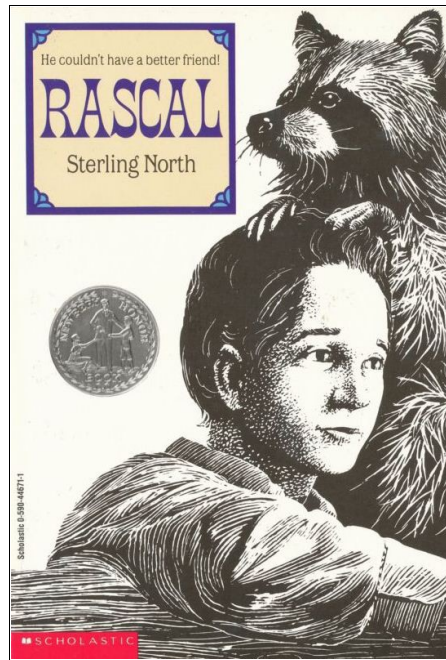
*Sterling North*

Sterling North was born into a family of poets on the second floor of a farmhouse on the shores of Lake Koshkonong, a few miles from Edgerton, Wisconsin, in 1906. First published at the age of eight, he went on to have a successful career as a journalist and editor of several well-respected newspapers. Sterling North won a host of literary awards during his lifetime, including a Newbery Honor for the autobiographical **Rascal**. As is mentioned in **Rascal**, Sterling survived a near-fatal bout with polio when he was in his teens. He died in Morristown, New Jersey in 1974 at the age of 68. [Adapted from The Publisher]





# Rascal

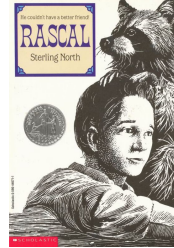


*By Sterling North*

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

# Rascal

By Sterling North



## Chapter 1 May



### Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of *Rascal* is the author, Sterling North, for this novel is actually the story of the author’s boyhood. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels 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.

exceptional	badgered	luminescent	amiable	maneuvered
laborious	ecstasy	courteous	indignant	delicacies

1. Helga \_\_\_\_\_ her poor little brother until he finally gave her a piece of his candy bar.
2. Mr. Sellers was extremely \_\_\_\_\_ when someone stole his wallet.
3. What do the Cree people consider as \_\_\_\_\_ in their daily diet?
4. Building a house is a very \_\_\_\_\_ undertaking.
5. Charlene \_\_\_\_\_ her motorcycle in the thickest city traffic.
6. Leonard is an \_\_\_\_\_ chess player.



7. The St. Bernard breed is famous for its \_\_\_\_\_ disposition.
8. Jerome experienced a feeling of \_\_\_\_\_ when he won the lottery.
9. The glow of the fireflies was as \_\_\_\_\_ as several light bulbs.
10. "Remember," their mother reminded them. "Always be \_\_\_\_\_ to your elders."

## Questions



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

--

2. What four adjectives do you think would best describe **Wowser**? (Try to come up with two that describe his appearance and two which describe his personality.)

--	--	--	--

3. Match each character from Chapter One with the correct description.

1	Herman Sutherland
2	Oscar Sutherland
3	Oscar's mother
4	Sterling's dad
5	Sterling North

a	Distracted
b	Very competent 11-year-old
c	Bad-tempered
d	A good friend
e	Tender-hearted.

### Test Your Math

- a) If the story is set in the year 1918 and Sterling is eleven years old, what year was Sterling probably born? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Later in the novel Sterling states that his mother was only 47 when she died. Check the year that she died in Chapter One. In what year was his mother probably born? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Write a brief description of the odd relationship that Sterling had with his dad. Do you think Mr. Sterling (as a parent) should have been investigated by the local Children's Aid Society? Why or why not?


### Good to Know

The Great War mentioned in this chapter is now known as **World War I**. It took place mainly in Europe and lasted from 1914-1918. In this devastating conflict, countries such as The United States, Canada, Great Britain and Australia were at war with Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Italy. World War I was one of the world's most destructive conflicts (approximately 37 million people were casualties).



5. Describe the strategy used by Sterling and Oscar to get the raccoon down from the tree.


6. Why did they need the mother raccoon?


7. Why did Oscar let Sterling keep the one baby raccoon that they captured?


8. Sterling's mother died in the year \_\_\_\_\_. Sterling's brother, \_\_\_\_\_, was fighting in the army in France.

9. As the first chapter comes to an end, what unusual fact do we learn about the relationship between Oscar's parents?




## Language Activities

### A. The Raccoon

Not too many novels feature a raccoon as one of the main characters. Other than being regarded as a nuisance by many people, what do you know about this fascinating animal?



Two of the raccoon's most famous features are his extremely nimble front paws, and its bandit-like mask. Did you know, however, that they are very intelligent creatures, being able to remember tasks for up to three years?

Using resources in your school library or on the Internet investigate the raccoon. Your investigation should uncover at least three facts about this animal and include an appropriate picture.


**B.** Choose ten words from these chapters with two or more **syllables**. Indicate the syllables by drawing a line between each syllable. **Example:** good / bye.


**C. Personification** is giving human qualities to something that is not human. In Chapter One the author writes, ***The tasseled limb of the white oak sighed at last ...*** In this sentence the oak is given human characteristics (it sighs).

a) Why do you think personification is a literary device used by many authors?


b) Create your own example of personification.


## Extension Activity

### 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 *Rascal*. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6