

Study Guide  
for

# Across Five

# Aprils

by Irene Hunt

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Before You Read

Across Five Aprils Chapters 1–3

## **VOCABULARY PREVIEW**

**aloof** [ə lōōf] *adj.* removed or distant either physically or emotionally (p. 12)

**comeuppance** [kum' up' əns] *n.* a deserved penalty or punishment (p. 5)

**desolate** [des' ə lit] *adj.* miserable; forsaken (p. 29)

**hedge** [hej] *v.* avoid giving a direct answer; evade the risk of commitment (p. 20)

**secession** [si sesh' ən] *n.* formal withdrawal from an organization; withdrawal from the Union by the eleven Southern states that formed the Confederacy (p. 9)

**tumult** [too' məlt] *n.* mental or emotional agitation (p. 21)

# Active Reading

## Across Five Aprils Chapters 1–3

In this section, the author introduces many characters. Pay attention to qualities that help define each character. Summarize your ideas in a few words, and then jot them down in the appropriate spaces in the chart below.

Character	Distinguishing Traits
Jethro	intelligent, sensitive, curious
Ellen	
Matt	
Jenny	
John	
Nancy	
Bill	
Tom	
Eb Carron	
Shadrach Yale	

# Responding

## Across Five Aprils Chapters 1–3

### Personal Response

What images from the Creighton farmstead are still in your mind? Identify the scenes, people, and things that you remember the most vividly.

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### Recall and Interpret

1. Briefly describe what you learn in chapter 1 about the Creightons and their way of life. What threatens to disrupt their lives?

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2. Who was Mary Creighton, and what happened to her? What does Matthew's reaction to this tragedy seem to suggest about his character?

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**3.** Who is the Creightons' dinner guest? What is the main topic of conversation? Why does Ellen finally order the young men to change the subject?

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**4.** What news does Shad bring back to the family? What appears to be the prevailing reaction to this news? Who appears to be troubled by it? Explain.

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**5.** Why is it so hard for Bill to go off to war? What does he think his decision will cost him? Explain.

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# Before You Read

Across Five Aprils Chapters 4–6

## **VOCABULARY PREVIEW**

**abolitionist** [ab'ə lishə nist] *n.* a person in favor of abolishing, or ending, slavery (p. 44)

**demotion** [di mō'shən] *n.* a reduction to a lower rank or a grade of lesser importance (p. 68)

**detain** [di tān'] *v.* to delay or hold back (p. 38)

**dissipate** [dis'ə pāt'] *v.* to break up and scatter (p. 75)

**forte** [fôrt] *n.* one's strong point (p. 58)

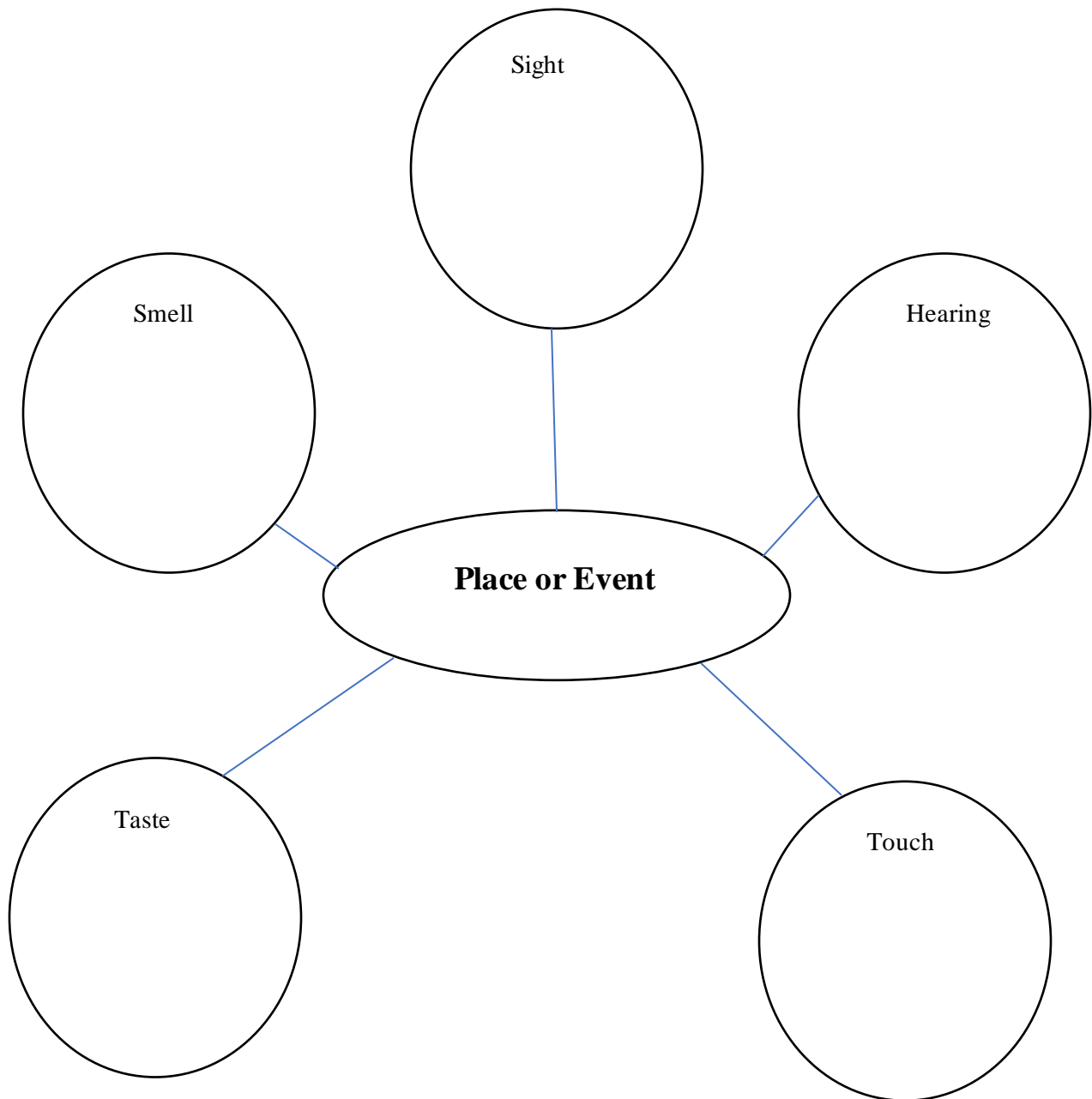
**indistinct** [in'dis tɪŋkt'] *adj.* not sharply outlined (p. 50)

**pompous** [pɒm'pəs] *adj.* self-important or arrogant (p. 45)

# Active Reading

## Across Five Aprils Chapters 4–6

To help readers vividly imagine people, places, and events, writers use **sensory details**—descriptions that appeal to one or more of the five senses. As you read the following chapters, choose a place or an event that comes across vividly to you. In the appropriate circle, jot down details that help you imagine this place or event. If a detail appeals to more than one sense, record it in each appropriate circle.



# Responding

## Across Five Aprils Chapters 4–6

### Personal Response

What went through your mind as you read about Jethro's encounters with Guy Wortman and Dave Burdow?

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### Recall and Interpret

1. Summarize what Tom says in his letter (page 36). Why does Ed Turner remark, "A fam'ly needs to be alone when one of these letters comes"?

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2. Why, do you suppose, does Ellen detain Jeth so long before finally sending him off to Shad's? Describe Jeth's visit with Shad.

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**3.** What does Ellen try to do without and why? What happens as a result of her decision? What might explain Matt's contradictory instructions?

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**4.** Describe Jeth's encounters with Guy Wortman. What does Jeth's response to Wortman's question suggest about Jeth's character and his loyalties? Explain.

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**5.** What are the two major misfortunes that befall the Creightons during the spring of 1862? What impact do these events have on Jeth?

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# Before You Read

Across Five Aprils Chapters 7–9

## **VOCABULARY PREVIEW**

**compassion** [kəm pash'ən] *n.* concern for another's distress; pity (p. 115)

**disillusioned** [dis'ɪ lōō'zhənd] *adj.* stripped of hopes or optimistic notions (p. 99)

**hoard** [hōrd] *v.* to keep [something] to oneself (p. 96)

**inept** [i nept'] *adj.* lacking in fitness or aptitude (p. 90)

**interminable** [in tur'mi nə bəl] *adj.* having or seeming to have no end (p. 113)

**lurk** [lurk] *v.* to lie in wait in a place (p. 83)

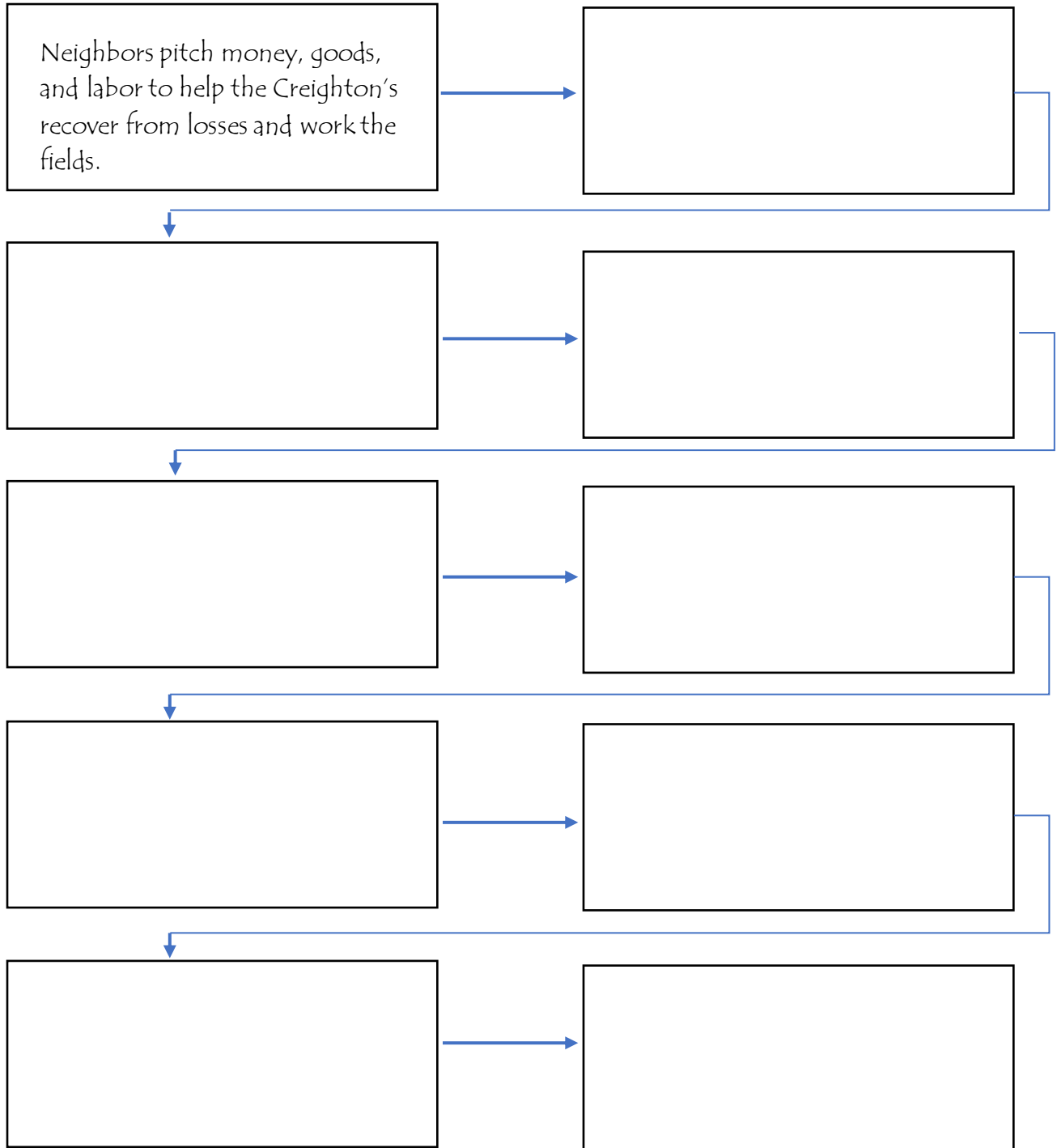
**provoke** [prə vōk'] *v.* to call forth a feeling or an action (p. 103)

**tenacious** [ti nā'shəs] *adj.* determined; unyielding; persistent (p. 89)

# Active Reading

## Across Five Aprils Chapters 7–9

Jotting down events on a diagram such as the one below can help you keep track of the order in which events occur. As you read chapters 7–9, follow the arrows as you note important events in the boxes.



# Responding

## Across Five Aprils Chapters 7-9

### Personal Response

What did you find most surprising or most inspiring about this section of the novel? Explain your choice.

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### Recall and Interpret

1. What news does Dan Lawrence bring to the Creightons? How does Jenny's outlook change as a result of this news? What does she seem to realize for the first time?

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2. Describe the incident involving Sam Gardiner and Guy Wortman. What does this incident suggest about methods of dealing with bullies?

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3. According to the narrator, what effect do the battles of Fredericksburg and Stones River have on Union soldiers and their supporters? In your opinion, why do these battles have this effect?

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4. Whom does Jeth find hiding in the woods? What **internal conflict**, or inner struggle, does this discovery create for Jeth? How does he try to resolve this conflict?

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5. What response does Jeth receive to his letter? What does this response suggest about the character of the person who wrote it?

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# Before You Read

Across Five Aprils Chapters 10–12

## **VOCABULARY PREVIEW**

**bigot** [big'ət] *n.* a person stubbornly devoted to his or her own prejudices and opinions (p. 142)

**complicity** [kəm plis'ə tē] *n.* participation in a wrongful act (p. 127)

**egotism** [ē' gə tiz'əm] *n.* an exaggerated sense of self-importance: conceit (p. 117)

**gracious** [grā'shəs] *adj.* characterized by charm, good taste, and generosity of spirit (p. 139)

**irreparable** [i rep'ər ə bəl] *adj.* not able to be fixed, repaired, or undone (p. 147)

**siege** [sēj] *n.* a military blockade of a city or fortified place to force its inhabitants to surrender (p. 133)

# Active Reading

## Across Five Aprils Chapters 10–12

In this novel, characters write letters that help the reader understand the human dimensions of war. Many of these letters are written by soldiers and include eyewitness accounts of battles. Such letters help the reader imagine what it was like to be on the battlefield and to participate in scenes of mass destruction and death. As you read the letters in chapters 10–12, take notes on what you learn from selected letters, following the model below.

Letter from Shad (page 117)

Shad has escaped injury in three battles but had seen much suffering.

He has become pessimistic about surviving the war. He warns Jenny to prepare for his probable death.

Letter from

Letter from

Letter from

# Responding

## Across Five Aprils Chapters 10-12

### Personal Response

What events in this last part of the novel did you find the most memorable or powerful?  
Give reasons for your choices.

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### Recall and Interpret

1. What happens at Gettysburg? After this battle, why do people begin to suspect a conspiracy among the generals?

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2. Why does Jenny go to Washington, D.C.? How does this journey mark an important turning point in her life? Explain.

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**3.** Describe John's meeting with Bill. What does Bill's request suggest about the cost of following his conscience?

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**4.** When does word come that the war has finally ended? Why does the narrator say that this April is the "saddest and most cruel" of the five?

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**5.** What will Jethro do now that the war has ended? How does his decision reflect the Creighton's' values?

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