

THE BOXCAR[®] CHILDREN

Student Worksheets



Before We Begin.



I predict...



1. Take a look at the front cover.

What do you think the title means? What would make a child a “boxcar child”?

Where do you think this story takes place? _____

When do you think this story takes place? When do you think this story

was written? _____

2. Take a look at the Table of Contents.

How many chapters are in this book? _____

What is one main character’s name? _____





History Clue: *Who is Gertrude Chandler Warner?:*

Gertrude Chandler Warner lived from 1890-1979. She wrote the children's version of *The Boxcar Children* in 1942. This is probably before or around the time your grandparents were born! They may have read this book as children.

As a child, Gertrude Chandler Warner loved to read, write, and play the cello. She wrote *The Boxcar Children* because throughout her life she had imagined how delightful it would be to live in a caboose or freight car. She wrote 18 *Boxcar Children* books.



Complete this timeline by putting the letters in the following locations:

- A. Year Gertrude Chandler was born.
- C. Year you were born.
- B. Year she wrote *Boxcar Children*.
- D. This year.



Chapter 1. The Four Hungry Children

Use complete sentences to explain what happened in the chapter.

Why do the children enter the bakery? _____

Why do they decide to leave in the middle of the night? _____



History clue:

Children's Home.

In the 1940s, an orphanage was often called a *Children's Home*.

An orphanage was a place where children could live if they didn't have parents or if their parents couldn't afford to take care of them.

Character spotlight:

The Baker's Wife

The Baker's Wife does not like children, especially boys. She says the children can stay, but only after they offer to wash the dishes.

An adjective is a descriptive word. Circle the adjectives that you would use to describe The Baker's Wife.

Cross Kind Loving Sweet Angry Caring Selfish

Choose one adjective from above and write a sentence that explains why it is the best word to describe the Baker's Wife.

Adjective

Jessie describes the baker's wife as good. What did the baker's wife do that was good? -----

On the back of the page, draw a picture of how you imagine the baker's wife.

Chapter 2. Night Is Turned into Day.

Circle the names of the two **older** Alden children.

- A. Henry
- B. James
- C. Benny
- D. Jessie

Circle the names of the two **younger** Alden children.

- A. Jessie
- B. Violet
- C. Gertrude
- D. Benny



Why do the children decide to head toward Silver City instead of Greenfield?

- A. They think it sounds like a fun place.
- B. They want to get away from the baker and his wife.
- C. They want to follow the baker and his wife.
- D. Their favorite color is silver.



The children sleep in two different places. What are they? _____

Which do you think would be more comfortable and why? _____

On the back, draw a map with pictures of the children's journey so far.

Be sure to include these locations:

Woods

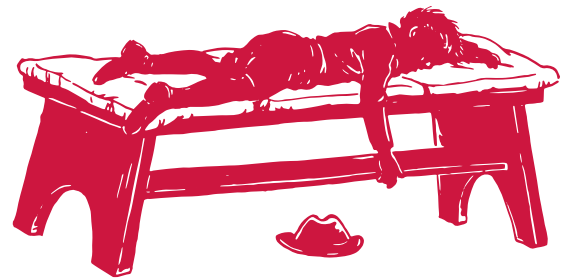
Bakery

Road to Greenfield

Road to Silver City

Farmhouse with haystack and water pump

Fountain



Chapter 3: A New Home in the Woods.

Circle the statement that is true.

Why is Benny afraid to stay in the boxcar at first?

- A. He is afraid the train will come and take it away.
- B. He thinks it's too small for them.
- C. He wants to sleep outside in the rain.
- D. He has bad dreams about trains.

Why do the other children know the boxcar is abandoned?

- A. Because it is made out of wood.
- B. Because grass is growing all over the track.
- C. Because it smells clean and new.



I predict...

Use complete sentences to answer the questions below.

What do you think the noise is the children hear outside the

boxcar after Henry leaves? _____

The next chapter is called "Henry has two surprises." What are the two surprises

for Henry? Make a guess. _____



Character spotlight:



Jessie

Jessie is the first to wake up as the storm is getting stronger. She doesn't panic and finds the boxcar.



Word detective: Decisive. Can decide important things easily.

This word describes Jessie. An adjective is a descriptive word. Circle the other adjectives that you would use to describe Jessie.

Calm Smart Goofy Caring Weak Strong Bossy Clever

Choose one adjective from above and write a sentence that explains why it is the best word to describe Jessie.

Adjective

Look at the words you circled above. Are you like Jessie? Pick one word and explain why it describes you. _____

On the back of the page, draw a picture of what you think Jessie looks like.

Chapter 4: Henry Has Two Surprises

Use complete sentences to explain what happened in the chapter.

How do the children help the dog? _____

What are the two surprises the younger children have for Henry? _____

Word Detective:

Fine.

The best kind.

Excellent quality.

"Where did you get that
fine dog," he cried.



Food math:

1. Benny estimates that he sees 5 or 10 blueberries on the bush. Jessie laughs and says she guesses there are more. Draw a bush below and add blueberries. Have a partner estimate how many blueberries you have drawn. Count them up to see if their guess was right.

2. Watch has joined the Alden children, so they now have to divide some of their food differently. Draw a loaf of bread below. Draw slice marks to show how they cut it. Color in one portion to show how much bread each gets.

Bonus: Write the fraction and percentage that each child gets.

3. Draw a rectangle of cheese below. Draw slice marks to show how they cut it. Color in one portion to show how much cheese each gets.

Bonus: Write the fraction and percentage that each child gets.

4. The milk starts in four full containers. The children eat and each have some left at the end. Draw four jars below with lines to show the milk in each jar as half full at the end of the meal.

5. Henry then decides they need two containers for water. They could dump out two jars, but Henry has a better idea. Draw four jars to show how they keep all of the milk and still have two containers for water.



Chapter 5. The Explorers Find Treasure

Circle the items the children collect from the dump:

Extra clothes

A pink cup

A washing machine

Wheels

A kettle

Combs and brushes

A doll

Put numbers next to each to show the sequence of events.

_____ The children build a shelf.

_____ The children find the dump.

_____ The children wash dishes.

_____ Henry leaves for work.

_____ The children gather treasure.



What do you think is in Henry's bundle? Use a complete

I predict... sentence to answer. _____

Science: *Cooling milk by the waterfall.*

Jessie creates a refrigerator for the milk using the waterfall and a hole in a rock.
Draw a picture of her refrigerator.

Why do you think this works? What makes this place cool? _____

What natural refrigerator or other appliance could you invent using resources from outside? On the back, draw a picture and explain.

Chapter 6: A Queer Noise in the Night

What does Henry do with the first cookie the cook gives him?

- A. He gobbles it right up.
- B. He eats it slowly and savors it.
- C. He pretends to eat it but really puts it in his pocket.
- D. He says he doesn't want it.

Draw a line to match the child up with the action.

Watch	Makes a broom out of sticks.
Henry	Hems the tablecloth.
Benny	Brings home a tablecloth.
Violet	Is the first to hear a sound outside.
Jessie	Gathers sticks that will be used to make a broom.



I predict...

What made the noise that they heard outside at night?
Use a complete sentence to answer.

Character spotlight:



Henry

Henry is the oldest, and he works hard. Instead of eating the cookie, he saved it to bring home to his siblings. When he hears a scary noise outside, he grabs the broom.



Word detective: Resourceful. Is able to use skills and talents to solve problems in new situations.

This word describes Henry. An adjective is a descriptive word. Circle the other adjectives that you would use to describe Henry.

Kind Caring Boring Scared Brave Polite Rude

Choose one adjective from above and write a sentence that explains why it is the best word to describe Henry.

Adjective

Look at the words you circled above. Are you like Henry? Pick one word and explain why it describes you. _____

On the back of the page, draw a picture of what you think Henry looks like.

Chapter 7: A Big Meal from Little Onions

Circle the jobs Henry completes at the doctor's house that day.

- A. He mows the lawn.
- B. He organizes the garage.
- C. He makes cookies.
- D. He washes dishes.
- E. He thins the vegetables.

Word Detective:

Eager.

Wanting something to happen quickly. "Henry was so eager to begin work that he ran all the way to town."

True or False?

- _____ Henry builds a cart.
- _____ Henry does not like onions.
- _____ Henry buys a ladle.
- _____ Henry brings home a hammer.
- _____ Henry complains about cleaning the garage.



Inventions:

The children make a lot of inventions in this chapter! They make a fireplace, a hanging kettle, a ladle, a cart, and more. Draw a picture of one of these inventions and label the various parts:

On the back of the page, draw your own invention. You have a cup, a stick, boards, wheels, rocks, and any other part or piece the Adler children had to make their inventions. Draw your own useful item using these parts. Label the parts. Write a sentence describing what it does or how it is helpful.

Chapter 8: A Swimming Pool at Last

Use complete sentences to answer the following questions.

What do the children build this chapter, and why do they want to build it?

What do the children find on their walk, and what do they eat for supper?



I predict...

At the end of the chapter, Jessie says they will have to eat bread and milk tomorrow. But the narrator says tomorrow they will get more than bread and milk. What do you think they will get?



Before and After

The Alden children build a pool by blocking the water flow in the brook. Draw a picture of the brook and the waterfall. Then draw a picture of the pool, including as much detail as you can remember.

Before:

After:

Chapter 9: Fun in the Cherry Orchard

Circle the sentence that is true.

The children walk to the doctor's house all together.

The children walk to the doctor's house two by two.

The men think Benny is a bother.

The men think Benny is funny.

The children stay for dinner.

The children decide not to stay for dinner.

Dr. Moore figures out that James Henry Alden is looking for the children.

Dr. Moore doesn't know who the children are by the end of the chapter.



Word Detective:

Dumplings.

A round mass of dough. It can be steamed and seasoned or it can be wrapped around fruit for a dessert. "The cherries are cooked in the dumplings."

Character spotlight:



Benny

Benny is too young to climb the trees and pick cherries. But he makes the men laugh, and everyone in the orchard likes him. Mrs. Moore even loves him within a few minutes.



Word detective: Spunky. Lively and cheerful.

This word describes Benny. An adjective is a descriptive word. Circle the other adjectives that you would use to describe Benny.

Goofy Boring Sad Whiney Charming Mean Angry Sweet

Choose one adjective from above and write a sentence that explains why it is the best word to describe Benny.

Adjective

Look at the words you circled above. Are you like Benny? Pick one word and

explain why it describes you. _____

On the back of the page, draw a picture of what you think Benny looks like.

Chapter 10: Henry and the Free-for-All

What is Field Day?

- A. A day where famous athletes compete.
- B. A day where people in the town race.
- C. A day when everyone helps cut down corn and wheat.

Why does James Alden host field day?

- A. He loves to watch people run and jump and play.
- B. He loves to race and is very fast.
- C. He has a lot of corn to cut, and that is hard work.

What is the Free-for-all?

- A. A day when corn is free for everyone.
- B. A race where anyone can run and try to win \$25.
- C. A race that costs \$25 to enter.

Word Detective:


Remark.

To note, comment, or say.

*"These boys have
been training all year,"
remarked the man.*



The Price Is Right

 **History Clue:** In 1940, based on what things cost in the US then versus now, \$1 was worth the same amount as around \$17 dollars today. Today it costs around \$17 for two kids to go to the movies on a Saturday afternoon. In the 1940s, it would have cost closer to \$1.

We have seen a lot of dollar amounts throughout the book. Check out the History Clue above. We are going to graph what the dollar amounts would be at today's value.

Henry often makes \$1 per day when he works for Dr. Moore. How much money would that be today?

Color in the graph to show the difference.

1 square equals \$2

Would you work for \$17 in one day? Write a sentence explaining why or why not.



When the Alden children pick cherries for Dr. Moore, he gives them \$4. That would be the same as \$68 today.

Color in the graph to show the difference.
1 square equals \$8.

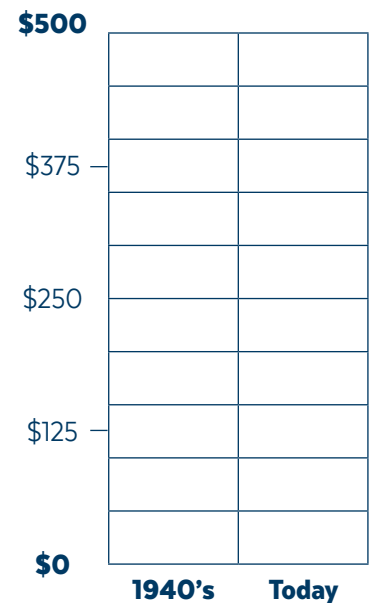
If you were the Alden children, what would you buy with the \$68? Write a sentence and say why. _____



When Henry wins the Free-for-All, he wins \$25. That would be the same as \$425 today.

Color in the graph to show the difference.
1 square equals \$50.

Henry says he would give the money to Jessie. Write a sentence that says who you would give the money to and why. _____

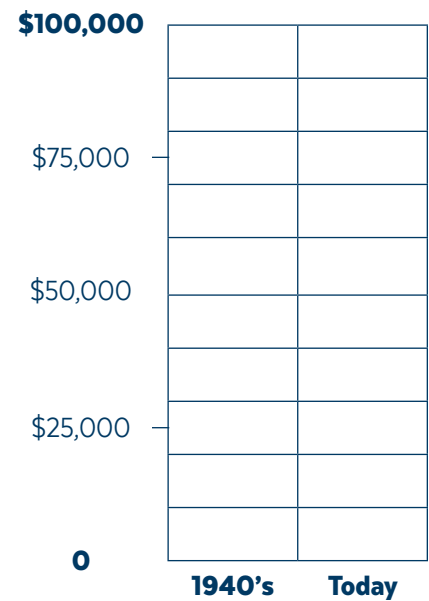


Dr. Moore read that there is a \$5,000 reward for finding the children. That would be the same as \$85,000 today.

Color in the graph to show the difference.

1 square equals \$10,000.

Would you turn the children in for \$85,000? Write a sentence explaining why or why not.



What do you notice about all of the graphs?
This is because each problem was a ratio of 1:17,
showing that \$1 was the same as \$17 today.

Chapter 11: The Doctor Takes a Hand

Put the events from the chapter in order.

- ___ Mr. Alden meets Benny.
- ___ Benny cuts Watch's hair.
- ___ Violet gets sick.
- ___ Dr. Moore tells Mr. Alden who his grandchildren are.
- ___ Jessie makes Benny a teddy bear out of stockings.



History Clue:

Stockings: In this chapter, Henry buys Benny new stockings. In the 1940s, boys wore stockings (which were long socks) with shorts. On top they wore a collared shirt and a suit jacket, and very often a tie (even on a casual day)!

What letter does Benny cut into Watch's hair, and why? Use complete

sentences to answer. _____



I predict...

Will the children like Mr. Alden once they meet him? Why or why

not? _____

Character spotlight:

Dr.
Moore

Dr. Moore runs to the boxcar to help Violet. He stays up all night by her bed because she is so sick. Benny says he thinks Dr. Moore wouldn't leave Violet's side, even for \$5,000.



Word detective: *Dedicated*. Focused all the way on one thing or task.

This word describes Dr. Moore when he is taking care of Violet. An adjective is a descriptive word. Circle the other adjectives that you would use to describe Dr. Moore.

Angry Kind Caring Cross Selfish Trustworthy Generous

Choose one adjective from above and write a sentence that explains why it is the best word to describe Dr. Moore.

_____ Adjective _____

Look at the words you circled above. Are you like Dr. Moore? Pick one word and explain why it describes you. _____

On the back of the page, draw a picture of what you think Dr. Moore looks like.

Chapter 12: James Henry and Henry James

Write either “Mr. Alden”, “Dr. Moore”, or “Henry” to complete the sentence.

_____ will not take the reward money.

_____ goes by “Mr. Henry.”

_____ at first can’t figure out where he has seen Mr. Alden before.

_____ meets all the children for the first time.

_____ realizes that Mr. Alden is kind, not cross.

_____ is the one who made the sound outside the boxcar at night.

_____ sees the boxcar for the first time.

_____ has known about the boxcar for a long time.



I predict... you think the kids will continue to live in the boxcar? Why do you think the next chapter is called “A New Home for the Boxcar”?



Word Detective:

Delight: Happiness and joy. “He smiled with delight when he saw Jessie come into the room in her quiet way.”

Perception

At the beginning of the book, the children are running away from Mr. Alden because they imagine him to be a certain way. Draw a picture of how the children imagine him to be before they have met him. Write 2-3 complete sentences below that explain what the children think he will be like.

In this chapter, the children meet Mr. Alden (or they realize that he is their grandfather if they already have met him). Draw a picture of what he is actually like. Write 2-3 complete sentences below that explain what the children think of him and what he is like.

Chapter 13: A New Home for the Boxcar

Put the following events in order.

_____ The children ask the woman if they can keep Watch.

_____ Jessie fixes Watch's paw.

_____ Watch gets the name "Watch"

_____ Watch runs away.

_____ The children find out where Watch came from.

_____ Watch is sold to a woman.

_____ Watch gets a thorn in his paw.



The children love Mr. Alden's house, but what is one thing that makes them sad? (Answer using a complete sentence.)

Word Detective:

Homesick.

When you are not at home and you miss it and are very sad about it. "Would you ever think that four children could be homesick in such a beautiful house?"

In this chapter, we get to see the rooms that Mr. Alden designed for Jessie, Violet, and Benny. Draw one of the rooms using the details described in the chapter.

Henry's room is not described. Now draw what you think Henry's room looks like based on what you know about him. Write 2-3 sentences about what you included that you think he would like and why?

My Book Review

Did you like The Boxcar Children? Why or why not? _____

Who was your favorite character? Why? _____

What was your favorite part of the book? _____

Do you want to spend more time with the Alden children? You can!

There are 144 total Boxcar Children books in this series.

The rest of the Boxcar Children books are mysteries. You may have noticed that the Alden children are excellent detectives. When they first found the boxcar, Benny was nervous that it might drive away with them in it. But Henry knew that it wouldn't—he saw the long grass growing around the boxcar and used it as a clue to understand that the boxcar was abandoned.

In the rest of the series, Henry, Jessie, Violet, and Benny go on several adventures to solve mysteries. Several of the books take place in the 1940s like this book, and some of the newer ones take place in modern day.

Look for more Boxcar Children adventures at your library or bookstore!



Project 2: Design your modern day boxcar.

The boxcar in the book was probably 40 feet long, 10 feet wide, and 10 feet high. We are going to draw a boxcar from above and from the front so you can show how the boxcar was arranged. Then you can draw your own modern day boxcar to show how you would arrange a boxcar if you and three other people were going to live in it.

The Alden Children's Boxcar

1. Use a ruler to draw a boxcar from above. Every 1 cm equals 1 ft. Make the boxcar 40 long by 10 wide.
2. Arrange the furniture the children planned in their boxcar. Include 4 beds, one table, 4 chairs, and a shelf for the dishes.
3. Now draw a boxcar from the front view. Every 1 cm equals 1 ft. Make the boxcar 40 long by 10 high. Imagine that the front wall is missing so you can see entirely into the boxcar. Draw the items that are inside of the boxcar from this view.

My Boxcar

4. Now draw another boxcar from above. Every 1 cm equals 1 ft. Make the boxcar 40 long by 10 wide.
5. Imagine that the boxcar is wired with electricity and plumbing. This is your modern day boxcar. Show how you would arrange any furniture, technology, modern appliances, and decoration you would like in the space for four people to live in it.
6. Now draw your boxcar from the front view. Every 1 cm equals 1 ft. Make the boxcar 40 long by 10 high. Imagine that the front wall is missing so you can see entirely into the boxcar. Draw the items that are inside of the boxcar from this view.

Scene: The Alden Children Build a Pool (4 students)

We can really get a feel for the Alden children's teamwork if we act out the dialogue to see what each character says as they work at building the pool and making dinner. Read the words, and act out the words that are in parentheses. Think about how your character would feel based on what is happening, and make faces that your character would make as you hear the others talk. If you are in the crowd, clap and cheer every time one of the characters gives another a compliment.

Note: Violet didn't have lines in this section, so we have given her some of Henry's lines.

Henry: We'll make a dam across the brook.

Benny: Here is my cart. I'll cart some stones and logs in it.

Henry: Good for you. *(laugh)*

(Look around at the "pool" on the ground.)

Henry: It's big enough for a swimming pool, but I don't think it's deep enough. *(Use a stick to measure where the wet shows.)*

Violet: The swimming pool should be 3 times as deep. Then it will be deep enough to swim in and won't be too deep for Benny. We'll build the dam here with logs and stones.

Jessie: We won't want our stockings on while we are working in the brook, so this is a good time to wash them. *(Rinse them and hang them to dry.)*

(Everyone starts to stack stones in a wall.)

Henry: Splash the stones right into the water, but be careful to keep them in a line between these two trees.

(Everyone looks delighted, which means happy.)

Violet: The rock wall will help to hold the logs in place.

Jessie: Let's lay the first ones between these two trees. Then the trees will hold both ends of the logs.

Henry: Good work! That's just what we'll do.

(Drag heavy logs across the stone wall you just built. Pretend to watch as it doesn't work and the water overflows above the log.)

Jessie: Oh dear! The water runs around the ends every time! What shall we do?

Henry: We'll have to put lots of logs on, with brush between them. We'll put on so many that the water can't get through.

(Henry and Jessie continue adding logs, Violet stuff between them with brush, and Benny fill in pebbles at the ends.)

(Plop down to the ground to watch the pool finally fill.)

Violet: See how deep the pool is getting! See how still it is!



Scene: The children find the boxcar. (4 students)

The children all show who they are when they find the boxcar. Jessie is resourceful and a leader, as she finds it and encourages the children to go to it. Violet is positive and encouraging. Benny is so young and scared of the boxcar at first, and Henry works with him to gently help him to understand that he doesn't need to be afraid. When you act this out, play into those roles. Jessie and Henry should be confident. Violet should be happy and interested. Benny doesn't have lines for the first part, but he can start to look more and more worried as the other children get excited.

Jessie: Hurry, hurry! I have found a good place! Hurry as fast as you can!

(The children follow Jessie.)

Henry: It's beginning to rain!

Jessie: We'll soon be there. It's not far. When we get there, you must help me open the door. It is heavy.

(Henry and Jessie step on a step that leads into the boxcar and work together to open the door.)

Henry: There is nothing in here. Come Benny, we will help you up.

(Jessie and Henry give Violet and Benny a hand climbing in.)

Violet: What a good place this is! It is just like a warm little house with one room.

Jessie: Henry! Let's live here!

Henry: Live here?

Jessie: Yes! Why not? This boxcar is a fine little house. It is dry and warm in the rain.

Violet: We could wash in the brook.

Jessie: Please Henry!

(Jessie walks around the space, imagining where each thing could go.)

Jessie: We could have the nicest little home here, and we could find some dishes, and make four beds and a table, and maybe chairs!

Benny: No, I don't want to live here, Jessie.

Jessie: Oh, dear, why not, Benny?

Benny: I'm afraid the engine will come and take us away.

(Older children laugh.)

Henry: Oh, no, Benny. The engine will never take this car away. It is an old, old car, and grass and bushes are growing all over the track.

Benny: Then doesn't the engine use this track any more?

Henry: No, indeed. We'll stay here today, anyway.

Benny: Then can I have my dinner here?

Henry: Yes, you shall have dinner now.

Scene: The Explorers Find Treasure. (3 students)

During this scene, Benny, Violet, and Jessie explore for treasure. They are walking through a dump and finding chipped and broken things—and they are having so much fun while they do it! Be sure to play up their great attitudes as you pretend to go through the garbage, clean it, and put it on a shelf.

Benny: Look, Jessie! There's a treasure—a wheel!

Jessie: Oh, Benny! You saw the treasures first. What should we do without you!

Violet: Here's a white pitcher, Jessie! Here's a big white cup, too.

Benny: Can you use a teapot, Jessie?

Jessie: Yes, indeed! We can put water in it. I have found two cups and a bowl. Let's look for spoons, too!

(The children keep looking.)

Jessie: Here's a big kettle. Let's pile all the dishes in it. Then we can carry them back to the boxcar.

Benny: This will be my pink cup.

Violet: I hope it will hold milk.

Violet: It's a beautiful cup, Benny.

Jessie: Now we must wash them.

Benny: All right, we'll wash my pink cup.

(Wash the dishes in a brook.)

Jessie: There! How fine they look!

Violet: Oh, I know where to put them. Come and see what I found in the car last night.

(She shows them a spot on the wall, and then all three children (pretend to) pick up a board and hang it at the spot to make a shelf. Then pretend to put all the dishes up on the shelf.)

Jessie: There!

(Violet adds a flower.)

Jessie: There!

Benny: You said 'There' three times!

Jessie: So I did. And I'm going to say it again. There!

(Everyone laughs.)

