

Introduction

Eric Wilson novels excite the imagination of young readers in grades 4-6. Appealing to children's inherent keen interest in mystery, Eric Wilson has skilfully woven accurate Canadian geographic and historic information into his writing. He also touches on current Canadian social and political issues in many of his novels. As such, these novels lend themselves to the integrated study of the mystery genre with Canadian geography topics in social studies and investigation units in science.

Spirit in the Rainforest provides rich material for the study of setting, characterization and plot development. It can be used independently or as an introduction to the other novels in the series, thereby providing a national setting within which the regional stories come together to make a whole. The varying levels of difficulty in the novels provide opportunity to accommodate individual student ability, experience and interests.

Students can supplement the package with meaningful research which will strengthen the impact of their work. They will take great delight in finding information on the Internet that directly links to the places or events in the novels. Every province, territory, and most cities have up-to-date information available on an Internet website.

This novel could be easily integrated into the science program. The environmental issues of saving the rainforest, cutting of old-growth forest, clear-cut logging and taking whales into captivity are involved in this novel. These topics could be explored at length and debated in the classroom.

Through the internet, students can be introduced to the author, Eric Wilson. His website address is www.ericwilson.com.

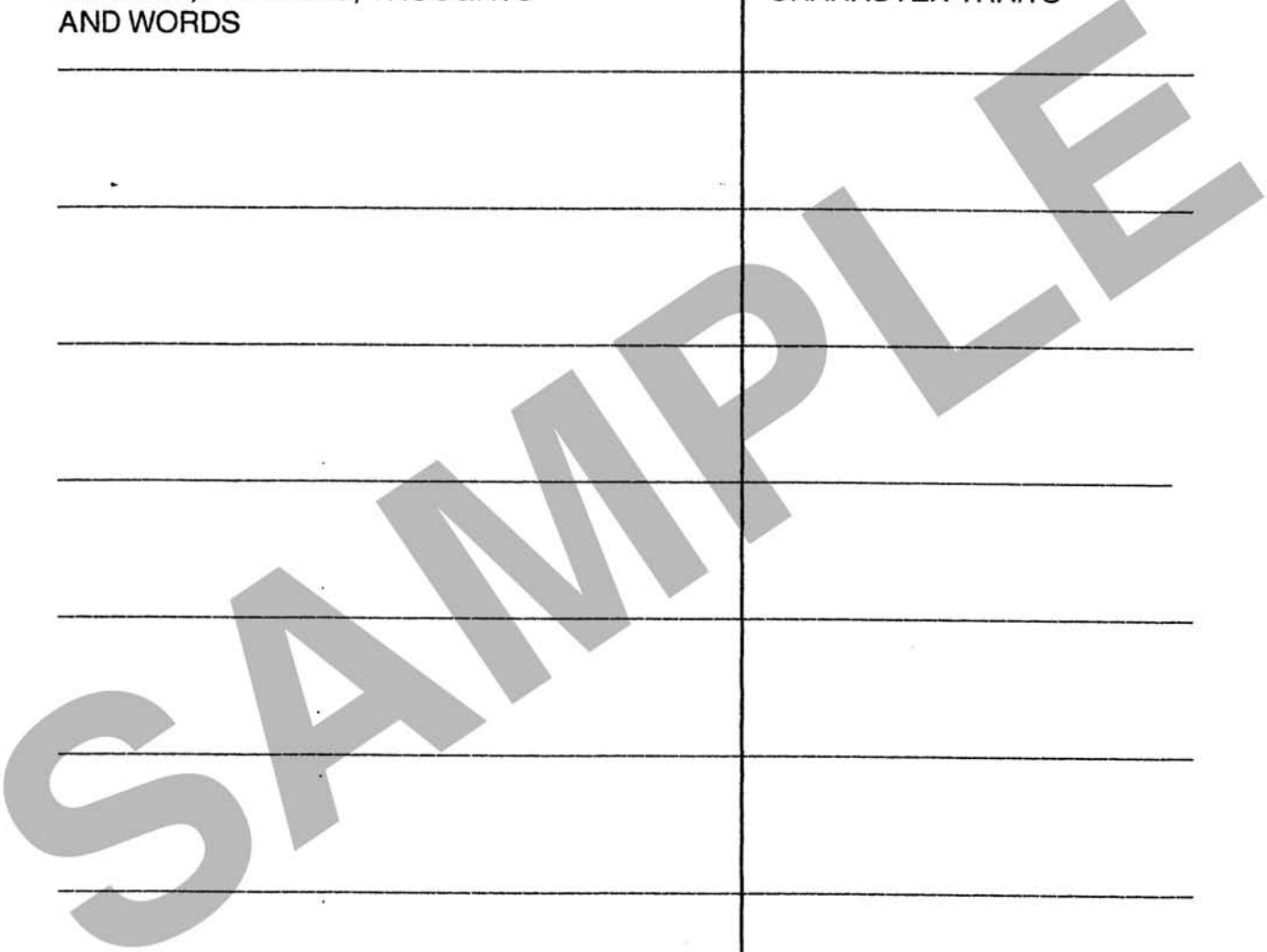
Character Summary of Tom Austen

APPEARANCE

ACTIONS, FEELINGS, THOUGHTS
AND WORDS

CHARACTER TRAITS

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Chapter 4



1. Tom went to the library and searched in the vertical files for old newspaper articles.

a) What did he learn about Major Tosca and his previous businesses?

b) What did he learn about the accident at the school?

Final Projects

1. Characterization

Use the items you have recorded on your character summary to write a one paragraph character sketch of Tom Austen. Your paragraph should include the following:

- a) a brief description of the character's appearance
- b) five (5) character traits, supported with information from the story
- c) a topic and concluding sentence.

2. Letter

Imagine you are Tom Austen. Write a letter to a school friend, telling of your experiences as a participant in this Greenpeace demonstration. Be sure to use friendly letter format.

3. Map Activity

On your classroom map of Canada, mark and label the main setting of this novel.

4. Illustration

On the front cover, illustrate your favourite scene from the story.