Name______________________

Tornado by Betsy Byars
Summer Reading Study Guide for Students Entering 3rd Grade
Answer all questions in complete sentences.

1. Before Reading: See, Think, & Wonder Thinking Routine

   It is always helpful to think about what we are reading before we even start reading. Having even a little bit of background knowledge helps readers to better understand any text. Use cover illustrations and titles to help you think about a book even before you begin to read.

   Look at the cover of the book. Describe what you see. What do you think is happening in this illustration?

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   Using what you have seen and thought about the cover illustration and the title of this book, what do you wonder about the book or story? Can you make any predictions?

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2. Making Connections: Text to Self, Text to World

   The title of this book usually brings to the reader's mind a vivid picture and the reader can make a connection to his or her own life or the news. What connections can you make with the title of this book?

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Chapter 1: The Storm

1. **Literary Elements: Setting** (chapter 1)

   When an author begins a story, he or she must set-up or introduce the story. This part of the story introduces the reader to the setting and main characters in the story.

   The setting of a story includes both the time and the place where a story takes place. Do you think this story takes place in present day times? Why or why not? What clues are present in the first chapter of Tornado that supports your answer?

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   Where does this story take place? (Be more specific than a storm cellar. Where is the storm cellar?) Do you think this story takes place near Memphis or in some other state? Support your answer.

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   An important part of creating a believable setting is a vivid description of the setting which appeals to all the reader’s senses. Give examples from the text of how Byars’ description of the setting appeals to the reader’s senses of hearing, sight and smell.

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2. **Author’s Craft: Point of View (POV) (chapter 1)**

When an author begins writing a story, he or she must decide **how** to tell the story and **who** should tell it.

Most books or stories are told from a **third person point of view**. The narrator (person telling the story) is **not** a character in the story, but is an outside observer who does **not** take part in the action of the story. The reader learns about the characters (how they think, feel and act) from this unknown narrator. The author uses the pronouns **he, she** and **they** when writing from the third person point of view.

In **first person point of view**, the narrator **is** a character in the story. The narrator actually **takes part** in the action of the story. When an author uses first person point of view to tell a story, the reader learns about events as the narrator learns about them. Everything we know about the other characters in the story is from what the narrator knows about the other characters and events. The narrator uses the pronouns **I, we, and me**.

Who are the characters that seek shelter in the storm cellar in the first chapter of **Tornado**?

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What **point of view** does Betsy Byars use in the first chapter of **Tornado** to tell the story? **How** do you know?

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Who is telling the story in the first chapter?

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3. **Reading for Details** (chapter 1)
   An author includes many details to help a reader visualize a scene in the story. As the family flees to their shelter, their father is not with them. Mrs. Byars gives the reader some details so that readers can visualize the situation.

   Where is the boy’s father when the storm hits?

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   Where does Pete say the boy’s father can go to be safe from the storm?

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4. **Making Inferences and Drawing Conclusions** (chapter 1)

   Authors seldom write down everything the reader needs to know to understand the story, but they often include hints or clues that help the reader use his or her own knowledge to understand the story.

   For example, in *Tornado*, the narrator of the first chapter tells the reader, “My daddy had been named for a president.” The narrator’s mother then calls out, “Lincoln!”

   The author never specifically tells the reader the name of the president for which the narrator’s father is named. She expects the reader to infer or draw their own conclusion using their own knowledge. For which president do you think the narrator’s father is named? How do you know?

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   Betsy Byars never tells the reader exactly what emotions the family in the story is feeling as they flee to the storm cellar. She expects readers to understand the family’s feelings using their own background knowledge of similar events. What emotions do you think the family is feeling at this time? How do you know?

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Why do you think Pete brings up the subject of his dog? How does this affect the mood of everyone in the cellar?

Chapter 2: In the Doghouse

1. **Author’s Craft: Point of View and Flashback** (chapter 2)

Did you notice that although the story is still being told from the first person point of view, the narrator of the story changed? Who is telling the story now? Why do you think the author changed the narrator?

Betsy Byars is using the literary device known as a **flashback** to tell part of the story. A flashback interrupts the time sequence [or chronological sequence] of the story to tell a part of the story that happened before the main action of the story. A flashback is really a story-within-a-story. In *Tornado*, the flashback takes the reader back to the time when Pete was a little boy and lived through a tornado.

2. **Author’s Craft: Figurative Language** (chapter 2)

To help readers understand their story, authors paint pictures with words. One way authors do this is through the use of **figurative language**. Figurative language is a method by which authors describe something by comparing it to something else. In order to understand the pictures the author paints with figurative language, readers need to be able to recognize figurative language when it occurs in a story.

One figurative language device that authors frequently use is the **simile**. A simile is a comparison between two things using the words *like* or *as*. For
example, she is busy as a bee is a simile comparing a busy girl to a worker bee because it uses the word as to compare a girl to a bee.

Byars uses a simile to draw a word picture of the damage after the storm. The narrator says, “The roof of the kitchen lay at the edge of the garden. It was folded shut like a book.”

What is the simile in this passage? What makes it a simile? What two items are compared in the simile?

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Does the simile help you picture in your mind the condition of the roof after the storm? Explain.

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Later in the first chapter, Pete says, “My daddy put out his hand. Tornado put out his paw. They shook like two men striking a bargain.”

Is there a simile in the above passage? If so, what makes it a simile and what is being compared in the simile?

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Earlier, Pete says, “Folks didn’t call our part of the country Tornado Alley for nothing.”

Is there a simile in the above passage? Why or why not?

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The middle of the United States, from Texas northward through Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska and into South Dakota is often called Tornado Alley. (You might like to locate those states on a map.) Tornado Alley is a colloquial term (a word or group of words used by people who live in an area to mean something that may not be used by people living in other areas) to describe the area of the United States where strong tornados are common. The term Tornado Alley is also a metaphor. A metaphor is a comparison between two items without using the words like or as in the comparison.

What is being compared in this metaphor?

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Do you think this is a good comparison? Why or why not?

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Sometimes, the author gives the reader new information as the story progresses or moves along that may change a reader’s inferences or predictions. Does the information that Pete lives in the area of the United States that is called Tornado Alley change your idea about where the setting is for this story? Why or why not?

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3. Making Inferences and Drawing Conclusions (chapter 2)

When Pete says, “Maybe I could pull him [the dog] out [of the doghouse].” His mother says, “Don’t put your hand in there,” and his father adds, “Yes, leave him be, Pete.”

Why did Pete’s parents not want Pete to pull the dog out of the doghouse?

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Chapter 3: A Card Trick

1. Using Text Features to Indicate Changing Viewpoints (chapter 3)

Did you notice that the narrator changed back to the unnamed boy at the very beginning of Chapter 3? Mrs. Byars wants to remind readers about the family in the storm cellar and that Pete is simply telling the family a story to keep their mind off the storm raging outside. When the author returns to Pete’s story there is a double space in the chapter to indicate the change in narrator or viewpoint from the boy in the cellar asking Pete to tell the story to Pete’s flashback.

Watch for features in the text structure to give you clues about changes in narration or setting in a story.

Who is telling the story at the beginning of the chapter?

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Who is telling the story after the double space?

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2. Reading for Main Ideas and Details (chapter 3)

What were Pete and his younger brother doing at the beginning of this chapter? Why were they not supposed to be doing this activity?

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3. Making Inferences and Drawing Conclusions (chapter 3)

Why do you think Pete’s father said he wanted to hear the news instead of watch the news? Does this help you identify the setting of Pete’s story?

Why did Pete’s father decide not to go and watch the news?

Chapter 4: Carey’s Turtle

1. Author’s Craft: Point of View and Flashbacks

Who is the narrator at the beginning of this chapter?

What text feature does the publisher use in this chapter to indicate a change in the point of view?
2. **Author's Craft: Figurative Language**

Pete said the turtle “was as big as a silver dollar.” What form of figurative language is this phrase? (Hint: Refer back to Chapter 2 Question 2 for help.)

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What is being compared in this phrase?

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3. **Author's Craft: Dialect**

Authors want to make their stories sound real for the setting of the story. One way they do this is to have the characters speak in dialect. For example, in a story set in the South, the characters would use the term y'all for the plural you. Y'all is not proper English, but southerners use the term all the time in their conversation. Y'all is southern dialect.

Byar’s used dialect in *Tornado* to make Pete’s stories sound more realistic. Tell what the underlined dialect in the following sentences means by writing a sentence without the dialect that means the same thing.

Telling that story always puts me in mind of the turtle.

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You never heard such carrying on.

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My mother . . . was giving my brother and me a little talking-to about playing jokes on people.

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4. Making Inferences and Drawing Conclusions

Why do you think Emma Lou accused Pete and Sammy of taking the turtle? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

Why do you think Betsy Byars placed the card trick chapter before the turtle chapter in the book? Did it matter what order these stories were told? Why or why not?

Chapter 5: Five-Thirty

1. Reading for Details

How did Five-Thirty get her name?

2. Making Inferences and Drawing Conclusions

What might another dog have done if it found a cat in its special place? What does this tell you about Tornado?
3. Reading for Details: Compare and Contrast

Pete tells his listeners that he his dog Babe and Tornado both liked to dig holes, but that the reasons why the dogs dug the holes and how they went about digging holes were different. Compare (tell how they are alike) and contrast (tell how they are different) the dogs and their reasons for digging and ways that the dogs had for digging holes using the Venn Diagram.

Babe                                                   Tornado

Both
1. Making Inferences and Drawing Conclusions

Why does Pete decide that the family needs to stay in the storm cellar a little longer?

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Why didn’t Pete want to tell the next story?
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2. Character and Plot -- Choices, Choices

In this chapter, Tornado’s other family finds him. Pete’s father tells the man that he could take Tornado. Why does he do this?
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Do you think this was the best solution to the problem? Would you have made the same choice? Explain.
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3. Author’s Craft: Figurative Language

As Tornado’s other family drives away with Tornado, Pete says he couldn’t do anything to stop them because he was “still nailed to the concrete.” What does this phrase mean?

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Is this phrase a simile or a metaphor? (Hint: See Chapter 2 Question 2 to review.) Support your answer.

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Does this phrase help you to visualize this scene? How?

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Chapter 7: The End of the Storm

1. Making Inferences and Drawing Conclusions

Why do you think Tornado came back to Pete’s home?

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What do you think Pete’s father meant when he said, “half a Tornado is better than none.”

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2. Making Connections – Text to Self: Choices, Choices

Pete says that his family didn’t try to contact the other family after Tornado came back because the family didn’t give them their name, but he also says that they never took Tornado back to town. Do you think this was honest of Pete and his family? Should they have tried to find the other family? Would you have made the same decision? Explain your answer.

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After Reading – Seeing Yourself as a Reader

Part of becoming a reader is developing an idea of the kinds of books that you like to read and sharing your thoughts about a book with other readers. Think about this book. Did you like the story? Why or why not? Would you recommend this book to a friend? Explain your reasons below.

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Note: There are additional book suggestions for summer reading and activities and vocabulary puzzles for Tornado on the website.