

6. Themes and Things to Think About, Discuss, and Write About in Your Journal

1. The Power of Friendship

- a. Fern saved Wilbur's life when he was a piglet. She set up the events that will continue to save his life. Where was she when he celebrated his greatest moment at the fair? Did she stop being his friend?
- b. Templeton did kind things to help Wilbur, but he did them for selfish reasons. What do you think of Templeton?
- c. Think of your friends. What makes them a friend to you? What do you look for in a friend?

1. Celebrating everyone's uniqueness

- a. How were members of Fern's family alike and how were they different? Why do you think each one was unique?
- b. E. B. White was known for "putting perfect words in perfect places." The story of Charlotte and Wilbur is told most frequently through the dialog between characters. Do you think that the author, E.B. White, wrote the animal's dialog in a way that reminded you of the noise the animal usually makes? Did the author tell us something about these animals' personalities by his choice of words?
- c. Who was your favorite character and why?
- d. Which character changed the most and how did the character change?

2. Death and new birth as part of life

- a. Some people have wished for a different ending to the story because they want a happier ending. Would you like to change the ending? If so, how would you change it?
- b. What is "survival of the fittest"? Do you agree or disagree with this concept?

- c. What is the difference between a pet and farm animal? Do you think that Fern's parents had different attitudes towards Fern's desire to save the piglet?

An Invitation to Explore Further:

Farm Life:

1. What is the difference between a farm and a ranch? Watch Leslie Triplett work on her farm on Instagram: Leslie_thepondgal.
2. What is the difference between a wood, an orchard or a grove? Have you been to any of these places?
3. What are the names for baby animals on a farm?
4. How do the seasons change the activities on a farm?

Illustrations:

1. Look at more of your favorite books that include illustrations. How do they compare to the illustrations in Charlotte's Web?
2. Are illustrations still popular in books published today? Have you tried reading a graphic novel? (Graphic novels are available in the adult literacy collection at A. K. Smiley Public Library.)

How Life Was Lived:

1. Were there words in Charlotte's Web that you no longer hear today? If so, list some of them. Then list some of the words that we use today that are new. One example, when you hear the word "web", do you think of a spider's web?
2. Do you think the Zuckerman family is typical of families today? Do you think that their lives were unique because they lived on a farm?
3. What surprised you the most about Charlotte's Web?