

# Stone Fox Study Guide

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For the novel by **John Reynold Gardiner**



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# Table of Contents

Study Guide Authors .....	3
Peer Review Panel .....	4
Note to Instructor .....	6
Synopsis .....	7
About the Novel's Author .....	8
Background Information .....	9
Ideas for Prereading Activities .....	10
Chapters 1–2 .....	12
Chapters 3–4 .....	20
Chapters 5–6 .....	26
Chapters 7–8 .....	35
Chapters 9–10 .....	41
Overview .....	45
Review Puzzle Race .....	51
Essays and Projects .....	53
Ideas for Postreading Activities .....	55
Related Resources .....	57
Answer Key .....	58

## Synopsis

Willy and his grandfather live on a farm in Wyoming where they grow potatoes. One day Grandfather will not get out of bed or even speak. Willy runs to get Doc Smith. Doc Smith examines Grandfather and discovers that there is nothing wrong with him physically. She tells Willy that Grandfather has just given up on life.

Willy brings in the potato harvest to cheer Grandfather, using only his dog, Searchlight, to pull the plow. He is able to sell the potato harvest just as Grandfather has always done, but Grandfather doesn't improve.

Each winter, Searchlight lets Willy hitch her to an old sled and, daily, they race the distance from town back to their farm. One winter day, he returns to find a "city slicker" at the farm. The man says he is from the State of Wyoming and tells Willy that Grandfather owes the state \$500 in back taxes or they will lose the farm.

Then Willy sees a poster advertising the National Dogsled Races. The prize for winning the race is . . . \$500! Willy decides to enter the race, convinced he and Searchlight can win; but an Indian named Stone Fox also enters the race. Stone Fox has never lost a race. Can Willy and Searchlight beat Stone Fox and his five white Samoyeds?

## *Stone Fox Study Guide*

4. When Searchlight sees the buildings in town, it says she “poured on the steam.” What does this mean?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What tragedy occurs at the beginning of Chapter 10?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What does Stone Fox do?

### **Thinking About the Story:**

7. *Point of view* is the perspective from which a story is being told. *First-person narrative* means the story is told by one of the characters in the story. The action of the story and the feelings of the characters are limited to the narrator’s knowledge. The personal pronouns *I, my, mine*, etc., indicate first-person narrative. In *third-person narrative* the story is told from an outside viewpoint (not someone in the story), as if the narrator is standing above everything that is happening and describing it, often even telling what some characters are thinking. It is the most common point of view used.

From what point of view is *Stone Fox* told?

*Stone Fox Study Guide*

12. There are several times in the Gospels where it is written that Jesus was filled with compassion for the people he encountered. See Matthew 9:36, Matthew 14:14, Matthew 15:32, Mark 1:41, and Mark 6:34–37. (The word that means “compassion” may also be translated as “pity” or “mercy” in various versions of the Bible.) In what ways is Jesus our example in ways to be compassionate?
  
13. How does Stone Fox show compassion for Willy?
  
14. We are also called to show compassion to others. (See Colossians 3:12.) Do you know someone who could use your compassion right now? What are some practical things you can do to show compassion to people you know? People you don't know?

## Stone Fox Study Guide

15. The debt we are to leave outstanding or unpaid is the continuing debt to love one another. To leave this debt outstanding means that we should consider this debt to be never paid off. The duty to love one another is always owed. We must *always* love one another.

16. This means that Willy will go to college if his grandfather wants him to go.

17. These verses teach us to honor those who are due honor (our parents), grandchildren are to be a crown to grandparents, a wise son listens to his parents, obey and honor your parents and things should go well.

18. Answers will vary. Willing obedience is a starting point.

### Chapters 5–6

#### Vocabulary:

1. c; 2. a; 3. b; 4. c; 5. d; 6. a; 7. c; 8. granite: d, cunning: b; 9. a

#### Questions:

1. He goes to the bank to try to get a loan. Mr. Foster tells him no and tells him he must sell the farm.

2. He talks to everybody he can think of to see if they have any ideas of how to save the farm.

3. Willy sees that he will have an advantage because he travels five miles of the race route every day and knows it “with his eyes closed.”

4. Stone Fox enters many races and uses the money he wins to buy back land that was taken from his people, the Shoshone. He has already purchased four farms and over 200 acres. His dream is for all his people to return to their homeland.

5. To win the prize money and pay off the taxes on the farm so he and his grandfather can keep it. Both are hoping to use the prize money to buy back land that was (or in Willy’s case, will be) confiscated by the government.

#### Similes and Metaphors:

6. like wet paint; S

7. as lightning; S

8. as hard as stone; S

9. was solid granite; M

#### Sayings and Proverbs:

10. a. If you really want to do something and try hard enough, you will find a way to do it; b. He felt so good inside, and so cheerful, that he felt as if nothing could go wrong and he could win anything he tried. He felt as if he were a giant and could not be beaten; c. He had traveled the route so often that he knew every little turn and twist so well he felt he could follow it even without being able to see it; d. He had every detail memorized.

#### Thinking About the Story:

11. The word picture in the first part of the verse is “hidden your word in my heart.” Answers may vary, but the picture is of putting something deep inside ourselves, making it part of the deepest and most important part of us. So the writer is saying that he has put God’s word in the deepest part of himself so it is part of everything he does and helps make it automatic to obey.

12. The word “big” is repeated three times. It emphasizes that everything about Mr. Foster is “big,” suggesting that he is not only physically large, but an important man—probably the most important member of the community. It also may imply that Mr. Foster thinks of himself as very important.

13. Answers may vary. The author continually interrupts the narrative to mention Mr. Foster’s cigar. He begins by noting that “When he talked, the cigar bobbed up and down, and little Willy wondered why the ash didn’t fall off the end of it.” Two paragraphs later, the author inserts the sentence “The cigar bobbed up and down.” Then, two paragraphs later, he writes that “The cigar ash fell onto the desk.” Finally, two paragraphs later, the author notes that Mr. Foster “wiped the ash off onto the floor.” Continually interrupting the discussion with descriptions of the cigar draws attention away from the discussion taking place. The cigar merits almost as much attention as Willy himself. It may be worth pointing out that the cigar is almost a picture of Mr. Foster deciding what he will do: As Mr. Foster is making up his mind, the cigar bobbles up and down (as if Mr. Foster’s ideas go back and forth). When Mr. Foster decides, the cigar is ash and it falls onto his desk (the decision is bad for Willy). When Willy tries to get him to change his mind, Mr. Foster says “I’m sorry,” and wipes the ash off the desk onto the floor (Willy’s hopes and chances are like the ash that holds on, falls, and is wiped away).