

Alabama Moon  
By Watt Key

Directions: Go to Watt Key's website <http://www.wattkey.com/> and answer the following questions in your reader's journal.

1. When and where was Watt Key born?
2. How did Watt Key spend his summers as a child?
3. Where did Watt Key attend college?
4. Describe the research Key conducted while a student.
5. What type of life does Key prefer according to his webpage?
6. Where does Key reside now?
7. If you wanted to contact Watt Key, how would you? Write his addresses out.
8. What awards has Watt Key received for his first novel?

### Alabama Moon chapters 1-3

1. Who is the main character in Alabama Moon?
2. How old is this character?
3. What did Pap say Momma reminded him of?
4. What year is this book set in?
5. Describe the living conditions in these first few chapters.
6. Who owned the land in the beginning of the book?
7. Who bought the land?
8. What is his occupation?
9. Where was the only place the main character and Pap went?
10. What hints in the story tell you Pap is nervous about land being bought?
11. What had Pap always told his son to do?
12. What is Pap's real first name?
13. Abroscotto's first name?
14. What happened to Pap that caused an injury?
15. Explain the following quote: "Because we never asked for anything and nobody ever gave us anything. Because of that we don't owe anything to anybody."
16. Do you agree with this philosophy?
17. Who, according to Pap, thinks we owe them something?
18. How did Pap die?
19. How was he buried?
20. Where does Pap want his son to go?

List questions you have.

How do you feel about the two main characters so far?

## Alabama Moon chapters 4-6

### **Chapter Four**

1. Describe how Moon felt the first day after he buried his Pap.
2. What are his plans for the next day?
3. How do you feel about Moon at this point?
4. What would you do if you were Moon?

### **Chapter Five**

1. Why did Moon attack Mr. Abroscotto?
2. What did Mr. Abroscotto say wasn't "reasonable?"
3. What was the last thing Mr. Abroscotto did before Moon left his store?

### **Chapter Six**

1. After reading the letter in Chapter six, what would you do if you were Moon?
2. What does Moon do that night and who does he meet the next morning?
3. What could Moon not take his eyes off in Mr. Wellington's house?
4. Who did Mr. Wellington call to help Moon? How do you feel about this decision?
5. What upset Moon's stomach?
6. How did Moon escape and from whom?

### **Alabama Moon chapters 8-10**

1. Where did the constable first take Moon?
2. What's the first thing they did to Moon at the police department?
3. What can you infer from this passage:
  - a. "It was the first time I'd ever taken a shower and had so much warm water over me. I shut my eyes and hoped I could stay there for a while." Pg 48
4. What does constable Sanders's father do for a living?
5. How did Moon feel about jail? Why did he feel this way?
6. Who was the other person in the jail? What did he do to get put in there?
7. How is it that Obregon already knows who Moon is?
8. What item of Moon's do we discover has sentimental value to him?
9. Who does the constable turn Moon over to?
10. What did constable Sanders have to do to get Moon into the car?
11. What kind of trash does Sanders describe Moon as?
12. What can you predict about the conversation between constable Sanders and Davy? (pg 58-59)
13. What happens when Moon and Sanders first get to the boys' home?
14. How does Mr. Carter describe Moon's body build?
15. Mr. Carter seems like a nice guy at first. However, Moon says something that makes him get more serious and upset. What did Moon say?

### **Alabama Moon chapters 11-15**

1. Describe the way Moon reacts to food and other “modern conveniences” while at Pinson.
2. Describe Mrs. Broomstead. What did she do for Moon? Look for everything....
3. What could Moon do that surprised Mrs. Crutcher?
4. Why did Moon trade sleeping arrangements with Hal? Could there be more than one reason?
5. The boys want to make Moon president of Pinson. Does this surprise you? What does this tell you about Moon? How does Moon feel about this?

### **Alabama Moon chapters 16-18**

1. Who does Moon get to help him and Kit escape from the Boys' Home? Explain why this is surprising.
2. When does Moon decide to carry out the escape plan?
3. How is Moon going to use the sheet tin from the roof of the trailer?
4. The definition of the word "kit" is "a set or collection of tools, supplies, instructional matter, etc., for a specific purpose." Knowing this, why is Kit a good name for Moon's friend?
5. What woke Mr. Gene up?
6. On page 101, Moon tells Kit to get his medicine. Kit responds that he does not need it. When Moon asks him again, the text reads, "Kit hesitated for a second, then said, 'I'm sure. I don't need it anymore.'" What can you infer about the word "hesitated"?
7. What kind of vehicle does Hal get?
8. How many boys go with Moon, Kit, and Hal?
9. What are some of the conditions of leaving the Boys' Home and living in the forest that the other kids don't realize?
10. Describe Moon's leadership skills seen in chapters 16-18.

### **Alabama Moon chapters 19-25**

1. How was the “fight” with the dog different than what Moon expected? Why do you think the boys had such a good relationship with the dogs?
2. While the boys were in the forest with Moon, they learned many “do’s and don’ts” about living in the wild. Write about 3 interesting discoveries Kit and Hal made with Moon’s help.
3. Reread the conversation between Hal and Moon on pages 124-126. What bond are they forming here? Why?
4. Discuss some of the things that Hal was so disgruntled about. What does he know that Moon may not? Where did he go at the end of chapter 24?

### **Alabama Moon chapters 26-35**

1. Why did Moon and Kit name the creek Deer Creek?
2. Why is Moon so intent on coming into contact and “whipping” Sanders?
3. Why is Sanders so intent on “catching” Moon?
4. How did Moon get Kit medical attention?
5. Where does Moon go after he leaves Kit?
6. Moon is learning that his Pap was wrong about a lot of things. What are some of those things?
7. What are some of the things Hal’s dad let him do that Moon had never done before?
8. Moon’s letter on page 194 reveals he has changed his mind about going to Alaska. Why?
9. Mr. Abrosotto explains that Pap didn’t want to go to Vietnam. He also explains a little about Sanders’ reasoning for treating Moon the way he does. What was the reason?
10. Was Moon a good friend to Kit? Why do you answer this way?

### **Alabama Moon chapters 36-45**

1. What did the boys do in the beginning of chapter 36 that was not a “safe” thing for boys of this age to do?
2. Where did Moon go in chapter 37? What happened?
3. Describe Sanders’ treatment of Moon. What does this reveal to you about Sanders? What does this reveal to you about the author?
4. How does Mr. Wellington help Moon?
5. There are very few female characters in the novel. Why do you think the author chose to leave them out?

### **Alabama Moon chapters 46-51**

1. What happened to Kit? What were your feelings during this part of the novel?
2. Where does Moon go in the end of the novel?
3. How does Moon entertain his new family in the end of the novel.
4. How was Moon's father like Uncle Mike? How is he different?
5. Will Moon have a good life now?
6. Did you like the ending of the novel? Why or why not?

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Chapters 1-35 quiz

**Part I: Matching of characters-Match the following characters with their descriptions.**

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. Mr. Carter       | A. Sanders' first dog                             |
| 2. Pinson           | B. Watchman at Pinson                             |
| 3. Sanders          | C. takes medicine, 1 <sup>st</sup> friend of Moon |
| 4. Mr. Gene         | D. Sanders' 2 <sup>nd</sup> dog                   |
| 5. Daisy            | E. boys' home in Tuscaloosa                       |
| 6. Mr. Wellington   | AB. Cook at Pinson, cut Moon's hair               |
| 7. Mr. Abroscotto   | AC. Mean constable                                |
| 8. Moon             | AD. 1 <sup>st</sup> boy Moon fought at Pinson     |
| 9. Hal              | AE.gave Moon his 1 <sup>st</sup> car ride         |
| 10. Mrs. Broomstead | BC 10 yr. old main character                      |
| 11. Kit             | BD owns store                                     |
| 12. Snapper         | BE lawyer; lives in cabin near Moon               |
| 13. Sawbone         | CD Hal's Dad                                      |
| 14. Mr. Mitchell    | CEHospital where Kit is                           |
| 15. Bryant Memorial | DE another dog at Mr. Mitchell's place            |

**Part II: Multiple Choice**

16. What did the boys at Pinson want to make Moon?
  - a. an outcast
  - b. president
  - c. escape victim
  - d. scapegoat
17. Pap called Moon's mom a....
  - a. Yellow finch
  - b. bluebird
  - c. swallow
  - d. mockingbird
18. What does Sanders's father do for a living?
  - a. police officer
  - b. lawyer
  - c. construction worker
  - d. judge
19. Pap died because.....
  - a. he loved to hunt
  - b. he refused medical attention
  - c. he wanted to die free
  - d. he broke his neck
20. Where does Pap want Moon to go?
  - a. Mr. Abroscotto's store
  - b. Atlanta
  - c. Alaska

d. Tuscaloosa

**Part III: Short answer-Inference skills. Answer the following questions in paragraph form.**

21. In chapters 20-24, Moon demonstrates his ability to survive in the forest. He finds food, catches fish, creates pillows, makes weapons, makes shelter, etc. What's the author's purpose of showing us Moon's abilities? First write if it's to inform, to entertain, or to persuade. Then tell why.
22. Cause and Effect.
  - a. If the effect is Kit has a new sense of confidence, what is the cause? In other words, what happens to change Kit's confidence level? There will be more than one answer.
23. The definition of the word "kit" is "a set or collection of tools, supplies, instructional matter, etc., for a specific purpose." Knowing this, why is Kit a good name for Moon's friend?
24. Describe Moon's leadership skills.
25. Was Moon's father a good father? What about Hal's father? Should Hal be allowed to stay with his father? Explain.
26. Knowing that Moon has lived his entire life in the wild with only the human contact of his father, how much do you believe in Moon's ability to socialize with Hal and Kit?
27. In what ways had Pap helped Moon develop as a person? What are some things that Pap could not have taught Moon that Moon seems to know? Why do you or why do you not believe Moon could have developed these human skills? Explain.
28. What qualities does Moon possess that make him successful in our world? What qualities make him unsuccessful?
29. After reading the articles on feral children, explain your perspective on the book and Moon.

**Part IV: Essay. In a well-developed five- paragraph essay, answer the following.**

- 30. Towards the end of Chapter 24, Hal decides to leave Moon and Kit and return home to his father. Read the following lines:**

- a. *“We just need to get the shelter built. We’ve gotta get it built fast and get him comfortable. First thing in the mornin’...Then we’ve gotta get him some food he likes.” I looked at Kit. “He’ll stay then. Don’t you think?” Kit looked at me and nodded quickly, but I could tell he wasn’t sure. “He’ll stay then,” I repeated.*
- b. *“We’re gonna have shelter tomorrow, and weapons, and deer meat. No school either!” Moon said. “Shut up, Moon!” Hal yelled. I grew sick with worry as Hal’s words echoed in my head.*
- c. *“Hal, you know all that I said about not carin’ who came? Dogs or people? Well, I like it that y’all came.” Hal looked down like he didn’t know what to say. “I cared who came,” I said. “Be honest with you, I could probably take all this for a while longer, but I wanna see my daddy....” I didn’t want him to go and I felt like crying, but I knew he was right.*

**Reflect for a moment on how Moon is acting towards Hal. What can you infer Moon is feeling about Hal? How does this change the aspect of his character and how do you explain someone like Moon being capable of compassion and other feelings?**

### Essay questions for Alabama Moon

**Directions:** In a five-paragraph essay, answer one of the following questions. Be sure to include a strong thesis.

1. Humanity, love, and friendship are all themes of the novel. Discuss examples of each of these from the novel and determine which is the greatest theme and why? At least one example must be given for each abstract noun.
2. At the end of Alabama Moon, Moon has made many discoveries about life and people. What do you believe is the greatest discovery he has made?
3. In The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd, August says, “There is nothing perfect, there is only life.” How can this be applied to Moon and the novel?
4. Is Moon and his situation a realistic one to you? Are there people who live as Moon once did? Why would people choose this lifestyle?
5. This novel has already won many awards. What characteristics does this novel have that makes it so hard to put down?
6. Compare and contrast the living condition of the Blake’s with Sander’s philosophy of “white trash.” Sanders says, “Your daddy ain’t never owned...” Pg. 56. Do you understand Sanders’ perspective? What is wrong with the way the Blake’s lived? Why would someone like Sanders be disappointed in the way the Blake’s lived?

### **Research opportunities for Alabama Moon**

Assignment: Research one or more of the following topics to aid in your understanding of the novel. Present your findings to the class. A visual such as a power point or poster should also be presented.

- Research the Vietnam War and the sociological and psychological affects it had on the lives of soldiers and their families.
- Research the economic condition of Alabama during the early 1980's when the novel is set.
- Research edible plants that grow in the wild. For example, honeysuckle.
- Research feral children.
- Research the towns, rivers, and places the novel mentions.

**Connector**

Your job is to find connections between the book and the wider world. This means connecting the reading to your own past experiences, to happenings at school or in the community, to stories in the news, to similar events at other times and places, to other people or problems that you are reminded of. You may also see connections between this book and other writings of the same topic.

**Illustrator**

Good readers make pictures in their minds as they read. This is a chance to share some of your own images and visions. Draw a picture related to the reading you have just done. It can be a sketch, cartoon, diagram, flowchart, etc. You can draw a picture of something that happened in your book, or something that the reading reminded you of, or a picture that conveys any idea or feeling you got from the reading.

**Literary Luminary**

Your job is to locate a few special sections or quotations in the text for your group to talk over. The idea is to help people go back to some especially interesting, powerful, funny, puzzling, or important sections of the reading and think about them more carefully. Read passages aloud and discuss.

**Passage Picker**

Your job is to pick parts of the story that you want to read aloud and talk about in your group. These can be

- A good part
- An interesting part
- A funny part
- A scary part
- Some good writing
- A good description

**Questioner**

Your job is to write down a few questions that you and your group have about this part of the book. What were you wondering about while you were reading? Did you have questions about what was happening? What a word meant? What a character did? What was going to happen next? Why the author used a certain style?

**Word Wizard**

Your job is to look for special words in the story. Words that are new, strange, funny, interesting, hard. How does this word fit in the story? What does it mean?