**Book:** Return to Hawk's Hill  
**Level W**  
**By Allan W. Eckert**

Quick summary: Running away from a vicious trapper, seven-year-old Ben MacDonald is separated from his family and eventually ends up on the shores of Lake Winnipeg, where he is taken in by a tribe of Metis Indians.


| Prologue  
p. 3-10 | Summary | Difficult vocabulary | Purpose for reading/Comp. Strategy |
|----------|---------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| We are introduced to the MacDonald family: William, Esther, John, Beth, Coral & Ben. A year ago, 6 yr. old Ben had been scared and taken refuge in a badger hole. The female badger had lost her litter of pups when she was trapped in George Burton's steel trap. She gnawed off her own toes and found Ben in her den. They bonded and spent 8 weeks taking care of each other. When found by his brother John, Ben brought the badger home, but it was shot by Burton. The MacDonald family had a standoff with him and he was told never to return to their land. | 5 "Maternal instinct"  
7 rapport  
9 conical | Describe the characters you meet.  
How did Ben take care of the badger?  
How did the badger take care of Ben?  
How do you think Ben's experience with the badger started to help him get over his extreme shyness?  
What is the relationship between the MacDonald's & George Burton? |

| Chapter 1  
p. 11-21 | Summary | Difficult vocabulary | Purpose for reading/Comp. Strategy |
|----------|---------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Chapter 1 starts at the end of Ben's first year at school. He had gained notoriety as "the wild child" and had excelled in school to everyone's surprise. After school, 17 yr. old John picks up Ben, Coral 10, and Beth 13, in the buggy to travel the 10 miles home to Hawk's Hill. Ben gets out of the buggy 1½ miles from home to walk the rest of the way. Burton is there, looking for Ben. Ben escapes by jumping in the rowboat, but he's floating fast and the oars are missing! | 11 clapboard  
schoolhouse  
12 notoriety  
13 "eke by" (get by)  
13 astute  
15 contrite  
18 "damn" | What is the setting of this story?  
Describe Ben and how he reacts to his new-found fame.  
Imagery: Can you picture that 10 mile ride home from school in the buggy?  
Predict: What do you think Burton wants with the children? |

| Chapter 2  
p. 22-31 | Summary | Difficult vocabulary | Purpose for reading/Comp. Strategy |
|----------|---------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| John & his father quickly mount horses and arm themselves to go find Ben. They search for an hour without finding him & fear Burton has him. Meanwhile Burton is heading to one of his many cabins. He is planning to trade with the Cree village called Oiseau. (He called it Wa-Za). He also planned to trade with the Metis - giving them forbidden guns, ammunition etc. John & William return home. | 26 nebulosity | Who are the Metis (MAY-tee)? (People of mixed French and Cree ancestry)  
Why are the Indians trading with Burton even though he tries to cheat them? |

| Chapter 3  
p. 32-53 | Summary | Difficult vocabulary | Purpose for reading/Comp. Strategy |
|----------|---------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Meanwhile, Ben is adrift on the Red River headed towards violent rapids, strong currents. Ben is also worried about the Metis Villages. The Metis (also called Half-Breeds) are unhappy | 33 "sinuous" curves  
34 usurping  
36 privation  
36 fallow | Why did William, Ben's father, have such disdain or contempt for the Indians?  
Who are the Half-Breeds? |
with the Canadian government for taking their land. He drifts all night, sleeping fitfully, through the rapids, past the Metis, into Lake Winnipeg. An Indian boy (Little Buffalo) approaches and speaks to him in Cree. He is friendly. Ben climbs in his canoe, leaving the rowboat behind. They start trying to communicate. Once they reach land, he is taken to the Indian Village where they take good care of him.

**Chapter 4**
**p. 54-74**

At Hawk's Hill, the search for Ben continues. Even soldiers are helping. After several days, Coral is the one to suggest looking at the river, and they discover the missing boat. William remembers the oars aren't in the boat. William & John take off to find Ben. John wants to go inquire at the Metis Village, but his father disagrees. Near sunset they find the empty boat.

**Chapter 5**
**p. 75-101**

Ben has been with the Metis for 6 days, waiting for the chief to return. The chief would decide what would be done with him. He is treated well by the Metis. Little Buffalo continues to educate Ben about the Metis. In the woods, Ben and some Indians encounter a wolverine, a dangerous threat to the. Ben imitates the wolverines crying litter and in effect, calms the wolverine down – saving all of them. Ben is taken to the chief's council. Louis Riel speaks English and questions Ben. He then sends 2 men to Hawk's Hill to let them know he will personally return Ben home in 2 days. Two dogs are fighting to the death, again Ben calms them and the Metis believe it is due to mystical powers.

**Chapter 6**
**p. 102-119**

The Metis believe Ben to "be a vessel for a powerful spirit." Riel spends much time talking to Ben and tells him of an occasion long, long ago where many white men came to their lands. They believe it was the Vikings. Riel also speaks at length on the unfair treatment the Metis are receiving by the Canadian government. He recounts how he forced Manitoba to be set up as a province - but it still didn't solve things. We meet Gabriel Dumont, the Metis military general. Ben watches
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<tr>
<th>Chapter 7 p. 120-132</th>
<th>Esther is convinced her son is with the Metis. She leaves her daughters with neighbors, and takes off on her horse, Pirouette, to go to the Metis village. They have to cross the rushing river, barely making it. She dries her clothes in the sun, and as she prepares to resume her travels, George Burton appears.</th>
<th>120 disconsolate 122 brusqueness</th>
<th>Predict: How will she cross the Red River if the ferry is not in operation? Predict: What will George Burton do with Esther?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter 8 p.133-144</td>
<td>It’s been 7 days since Ben disappeared. William &amp; John arrive home to find Esther gone. After a few hours rest they head out. Crossing the Red River, William lost not only his gun, but his horse too. They find the tracks of Esther and her horse... and some big man! They suspect it is Burton.</td>
<td>140 fatalistic</td>
<td>How much time has gone by since Ben disappeared? How do they know that Esther has been there?</td>
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<td>Chapter 9 p. 145-158</td>
<td>Meanwhile, Esther is now Burton’s captive. She almost had escaped him but was badly injured and Burton now has her tied to Pirouette and is heading to the Metis village. They stop at a camp for the night and Esther is forced to gather firewood. Burton reveals his plan - to sell her to the Metis as a slave.</td>
<td>Read to find out what Burton’s plan is for Esther. Imagery: Can you picture what Esther must have looked like tied to her horse? Predict: Will Esther find Ben at the Metis village?</td>
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<td>Chapter 10 p. 159-188</td>
<td>Riel continues to educate Ben on the Metis, explaining the reverence for nature and animals that they have. He explains where the Metis came from and what may eventually happen to them. They are interrupted when Burton &amp; Esther arrive in camp. Ben manages to cut his mother loose, Burton is sent from the camp. He is angry and hides, planning to shoot Esther, Ben and Riel. But his is stopped by William &amp; John who just arrived. There is a happy reunion – and the MacDonald’s become friends with the Metis.</td>
<td>The white men are frustrated that the Metis waste the land, because they don’t farm it. Why do the Metis not grow crops on the land? Read to find out what Riel thinks may eventually happen to his people? After finding Ben safe, how does William feel about the Metis now?</td>
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<td>Epilogue</td>
<td>William, Esther, John &amp; Ben are reunited with Coral &amp; Beth.</td>
<td>Imagery: Can you picture this joyful reunion? Where is “home” to Ben?</td>
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End of book response activities: Story Pyramid