Notable Trade Book Lesson  
*F is for Friendship: A Quilt Alphabet*  
Written by Helen L. Wilbur

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Esther Howard  
*The University of West Alabama*

This lesson plan allows one’s class to develop an appreciation for history through an examination of the symbolic art of quilting. The story *F is for Friendship: A Quilt Alphabet* by Helen L. Wilbur is utilized to create a classroom environment filled with appreciation for one another. Students are taken on a journey of quilts through the alphabet in this book. With the creation of a classroom quilt, students embrace diversity and appreciate historical contributions.

| NCSS Notable Trade Book Title: | *F is for Friendship: A Quilt Alphabet*  
Written by Helen L. Wilbur  
Illustrated by Gijsbert van Frandenhuyzen  
Sleeping Bear Press  
Ann Arbor, MI  
This lesson for first and second graders should take approximately 3-6 hours and extend over three or more days. |
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<td>Book Summary:</td>
<td>In <em>F is Friendship: A Quilt Alphabet</em>, Helen L. Wilbur uses the alphabet and quilting in diverse forms to take students on a journey through American history. This story examines both the art and history of quilting. Through the book, readers explore the early history of quilts by visiting a cave in Mongolia. They travel in wagon trains investigating the patchwork quilts used as bedcoverings. Museums are visited to view the quilts on display and the history associated with them.</td>
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| NCSS Standards: | • People, Places, and Environments  
• Individual Development and Identity  
• Culture |
| Materials: | • Various examples of quilts  
• Items used for quilting (thimble, scissors, fabric squares, measuring tape, string, needle), and photos/pictures of quilting.  
• Two large pieces of bulletin board paper (3 ft. x 3 ft.) for class quilts.  
• Construction paper, glue, rulers, pieces of wrapping paper, sequins, pre-cut shapes in various colors, and five 3 inch x 4
### Objectives:
1. The students will describe the history of quilting as told through the stories in the book.
2. The students will describe the characteristics of a good friend.
3. The students will describe the responsibilities of a friend.
4. The students will describe how quilts are made.

### Procedures:

#### Exploration/Introduction:

Day 1 (60-90 minutes)

1. Introduce the students to quilting by inviting one or more quilters to demonstrate quilting. (An example of such a visitor might be a grandparent who quilts. If no one in your school quilts, contact your local historical society for help). If no quilters are available, show video *The Quilters of Gee’s Bend* (See link in Reference section.).
2. Display various quilts around the room.
3. Encourage students to ask the quilter questions about the work they do.
4. Let the students touch and hold the quilts while the quilter shares experiences with the class.
5. Continue with a discussion on friendship. Ask, “Why do we have friends?” “What is friendship?” “How do you make new friends?”
6. Have children brainstorm the characteristics of being a good friend (record responses on chart paper).
7. Allow students to hold, touch, smell, and feel the quilts during discussion. Ask, “Who do you think this quilt was made for?” “What type of quilt would you make for your best friend?”
8. Complete the first two parts of a KWL chart: Ask, “What do you know about quilts?” “What would you like to know?”

#### Assessment:
Use the discussion of the KWL chart, questions to quilters, discussion of quilts, and discussion of friendship to determine prior knowledge. Make notes.

1. Introduce the book. Look at the friends on the cover.
2. Read aloud pages with letters A-F (no pages numbers are given in this book). As you read, emphasize new words in the story and how each relates to quilts and friends. (Note. F is for friendship and discusses how to make a quilt.).
3. Discuss the history lesson on each page (Note. Each alphabet page presents a word beginning with the letter associated with the letter on the page and a brief history lesson of that word as it relates to quilts. For example, G is for generations...
## Expansion:

and the story on that page discussed how quilting was passed down through generations.)

4. Distribute one piece of construction paper to each student to trace his or her other handprint.

5. Have each student include one word on the hand print that describes a good friend.

6. Have each student create a design on the hand print. The designed hand prints will be used to make a class quilt.

7. Display completed hand prints on a large paper quilt (approx. 3 ft. x 3 ft.)

**Assessment.** Summarize each day with questions to test students’ awareness of the history of quilt making. Ask about the responsibilities of being a friend. Record notes.

### Day 2 (45-60 minutes)

1. Scaffold students’ learning to allow them to make connections between friendships and traditions. Sample questions may include: “Can you think of something that you and your closest friend do together often?” “Is this becoming a tradition for the two of you?” “What are some traditions your family has?”

2. Read aloud the pages for letters G-N pages (as you read emphasize how each new word in the story relates to quilting).

3. Introduce various pattern names to the students using the illustrations from the end of the book as visual examples. Utilize a projector, if available, to display the large colorful patterns in the book giving students the names of each as listed in the book.

4. Ask, “Why do you think this pattern is called….?”

5. Allow students time to work with a friend to create their own pattern and assign a name to their pattern. Give five white, pre-cut 3 inch x 4 inch squares to each student for a group total of ten. Give students various shapes, wrapping paper pieces, sequins, glitter, etc.

6. Have students begin to design their pattern pieces for a friendship quilt (completion will be on Day 3). Each square should depict an aspect of the two students’ friendship.

**Closure.** Revisit the pages in the book, reviewing the brief history lesson on each page allowing time for discussion and questioning. Discuss the people in the book and what you might do for a friend like this. Discuss what it means to be a friend. (Grand Discussion).

**Assessment.** Summarize each day with questions to test students’ awareness of the history of quilts and quilt making. Make a class list of things good friends do together.

### Day 3 (45-60 minutes)
1. Tell students they will complete their pattern design today.
2. Explain that the quilt to be made from their pattern designs depicts their friendship. All ten pieces will be decorated to illustrate something about their friendship.
3. Read aloud from O-Z (as you read, emphasize the word on each page and discuss how it relates to quilts.)
4. Have students work with their partner to complete their friendship quilt design. Encourage creativity.
5. Have students assemble their ten pieces to make their design.
6. Once all students have finished, have them share their friendship quilt design and name with the class. Students will then place patterns on the second large 3 foot x 3 foot classroom blank quilt on display.
7. Lesson summary. Complete the KWL chart, asking “What did you learn about quilts?” Engage students in final discussion of friendship, cooperation, traditions, generations, etc.

**Assessment.** Utilize anecdotal notes to document the participation and interest of the students during the read aloud and activities. Summarize each day with questions to assess students’ awareness of the history of quilt making. View completed classroom quilt to observe pattern design and completion. Discuss the quilt and the friends who made it. Discuss the role and responsibilities of friendship.

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<th>Assessment:</th>
<th>Use the following checklist to assess students.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Student discusses historical events related to quilting.</td>
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<td>Student explains and uses some of the new words associated with quilts.</td>
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<td>Student explains why friends are important.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student relates the responsibilities of being a friend.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student tells how quilts are made.</td>
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**Suggested Extension Activities:**
- Teach a lesson on making fabric from raw cotton.
- Bring samples of cotton pods and fabric samples to class and have each child feel and smell them.
- Show The Story of Cotton (link below) video clip illustrating the uses of cotton and how fabric is made.
- Make friend quilts for local nursing homes

**Additional References and**
Author Bios

Melina Vaughan is currently teaching undergraduate and graduate education courses at The University of West Alabama. She is also serving as the edTPA (upcoming teacher candidate performance assessment) coordinator for the College of Education. She has served previously as the interim associate director of the Early Childhood Institute at Mississippi State University. She has written numerous educational grants and presented at national, regional, and state conferences for many years and is a persistent advocate for quality early childhood education.

Esther Howard is professor of early childhood education at The University of West Alabama in Livingston. She began her career as a kindergarten teacher in Starkville, Mississippi. Upon completing her doctorate, she taught education classes at Mississippi State University.