

*Rachel Carson:  
Clearing the Way for Environmental Protection*

**Discussion Guide**  
Grades 4-6

**Before Reading: to activate schema, build background knowledge, and set a purpose.**

- Discuss the importance of the life's work of Rachel Carson.
- Before reading, have a class discussion to activate prior knowledge about Rachel Carson. What is she best known for? Did you know she is considered a pioneer of the environmental protection movement? Make a list of student generated responses on an anchor chart or whiteboard.
- Frontload vocabulary: environment, protection, pesticides, chemicals, EPA

**During Reading: to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.**

- Why do you think Rachel Carson became passionate about protecting & preserving the environment?
- What role do you think Congress and the President played in helping to protect the environment in the 1960s?
- Rachel Carson was a determined student who became very interested in science growing up and in college. However, she lived at a time when not many women were accepted into scientific fields. Why do you think Rachel Carson succeeded in her scientific work throughout her life, despite the challenges?

**After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.**

Make a timeline of Rachel Carson's life. Start with her interest in science as a child/teenager, include her college & post-college days, and be sure to include the many types of work she did through her adult life. Don't forget the books she wrote, too!

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons and conversations.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books with similar themes, structure, characters, or content.