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How to Use This Literature Guide

Today's standards demand rigor and relevance in the reading of complex texts. The units in this series guide teachers in a rich and deep exploration of worthwhile works of literature for classroom study. The most rigorous instruction can also be interesting and engaging!

Many current strategies for effective literacy instruction have been incorporated into these instructional guides for literature. Throughout the units, text-dependent questions are used to determine comprehension of the book as well as student interpretation of the vocabulary words. The books chosen for the series are complex and exemplars of carefully crafted works of literature. Close reading is used throughout the units to guide students toward revisiting the text and using textual evidence to respond to prompts orally and in writing. Students must analyze the story elements in multiple assignments for each section of the book. All of these strategies work together to rigorously guide students through their study of literature.

The next few pages will make clear how to use this guide for a purposeful and meaningful literature study. Each section of this guide is set up in the same way to make it easier for you to implement the instruction in your classroom.

Theme Thoughts

The great works of literature used throughout this series have important themes that have been relevant to people for many years. Many of the themes will be discussed during the various sections of this instructional guide. However, it would also benefit students to have independent time to think about the key themes of the novel.

Before students begin reading, have them complete *Pre-Reading Theme Thoughts* (page 13). This graphic organizer will allow students to think about the themes outside the context of the story. They'll have the opportunity to evaluate statements based on important themes and defend their opinions. Be sure to have students keep their papers for comparison to the *Post-Reading Theme Thoughts* (page 64). This graphic organizer is similar to the pre-reading activity. However, this time, students will be answering the questions from the point of view of one of the characters of the novel. They have to think about how the character would feel about each statement and defend their thoughts. To conclude the activity, have students compare what they thought about the themes before the novel to what the characters discovered during the story.

How to Use This Literature Guide *(cont.)*

Vocabulary

Each teacher overview page has definitions and sentences about how key vocabulary words are used in the section. These words should be introduced and discussed with students. There are two student vocabulary activity pages in each section. On the first page, students are asked to define the ten words chosen by the author of this unit. On the second page in most sections, each student will select at least eight words that he or she finds interesting or difficult. For each section, choose one of these pages for your students to complete. With either assignment, you may want to have students get into pairs to discuss the meanings of the words. Allow students to use reference guides to define the words. Monitor students to make sure the definitions they have found are accurate and relate to how the words are used in the text.

On some of the vocabulary student pages, students are asked to answer text-related questions about the vocabulary words. The following question stems will help you create your own vocabulary questions if you'd like to extend the discussion.

- How does this word describe _____'s character?
- In what ways does this word relate to the problem in this story?
- How does this word help you understand the setting?
- In what ways is this word related to the story's solution?
- Describe how this word supports the novel's theme of
- What visual images does this word bring to your mind?
- For what reasons might the author have chosen to use this particular word?

At times, more work with the words will help students understand their meanings. The following quick vocabulary activities are a good way to further study the words.

- Have students practice their vocabulary and writing skills by creating sentences and/or paragraphs in which multiple vocabulary words are used correctly and with evidence of understanding.
- Students can play vocabulary concentration. Students make a set of cards with the words and a separate set of cards with the definitions. Then, students lay the cards out on the table and play concentration. The goal of the game is to match vocabulary words with their definitions.
- Students can create word journal entries about the words. Students choose words they think are important and then describe why they think each word is important within the book.

How to Use This Literature Guide *(cont.)*

Analyzing the Literature

After students have read each section, hold small-group or whole-class discussions. Questions are written at two levels of complexity to allow you to decide which questions best meet the needs of your students. The Level 1 questions are typically less abstract than the Level 2 questions. Level 1 is indicated by a square, while Level 2 is indicated by a triangle.

These questions focus on the various story elements, such as character, setting, and plot. Student pages are provided if you want to assign these questions for individual student work before your group discussion. Be sure to add further questions as your students discuss what they've read. For each question, a few key points are provided for your reference as you discuss the novel with students.

Reader Response

In today's classrooms, there are often great readers who are below average writers. So much time and energy is spent in classrooms getting students to read on grade level, that little time is left to focus on writing skills. To help teachers include more writing in their daily literacy instruction, each section of this guide has a literature-based reader response prompt. Each of the three genres of writing is used in the reader responses within this guide: narrative, informative/explanatory, and opinion/argument. Students have a choice between two prompts for each reader response. One response requires students to make connections between the reading and their own lives. The other prompt requires students to determine text-to-text connections or connections within the text.

Close Reading the Literature

Within each section, students are asked to closely reread a short section of text. Since some versions of the novels have different page numbers, the selections are described by chapter and location, along with quotations to guide the readers. After each close reading, there are text-dependent questions to be answered by students.

Encourage students to read each question one at a time and then go back to the text and discover the answer. Work with students to ensure that they use the text to determine their answers rather than making unsupported inferences. Once students have answered the questions, discuss what they discovered. Suggested answers are provided in the answer key.

How to Use This Literature Guide *(cont.)*

Close Reading the Literature *(cont.)*

The generic, open-ended stems below can be used to write your own text-dependent questions if you would like to give students more practice.

- Give evidence from the text to support
- Justify your thinking using text evidence about
- Find evidence to support your conclusions about
- What text evidence helps the reader understand . . . ?
- Use the book to tell why _____ happens.
- Based on events in the story,
- Use text evidence to describe why

Making Connections

The activities in this section help students make cross-curricular connections to writing, mathematics, science, social studies, or the fine arts. In some of these lessons, students are asked to use the author as a mentor. The writing in the novel models a skill for them that they can then try to emulate. Students may also be asked to look for examples of language conventions within the novel. Each of these types of activities requires higher-order thinking skills from students.

Creating with the Story Elements

It is important to spend time discussing the common story elements in literature. Understanding the characters, setting, and plot can increase students' comprehension and appreciation of the story. If teachers discuss these elements daily, students will more likely internalize the concepts and look for the elements in their independent reading. Another very important reason for focusing on the story elements is that students will be better writers if they think about how the stories they read are constructed.

Students are given three options for working with the story elements. They are asked to create something related to the characters, setting, or plot of the novel. Students are given choice on this activity so that they can decide to complete the activity that most appeals to them. Different multiple intelligences are used so that the activities are diverse and interesting to all students.

Analyzing the Literature

Provided below are discussion questions you can use in small groups, with the whole class, or for written assignments. Each question is given at two levels so you can choose the right question for each group of students. Activity sheets with these questions are provided (pages 18–19) if you want students to write their responses. For each question, a few key discussion points are provided for your reference.

Story Element	■ Level 1	▲ Level 2	Key Discussion Points
Setting	Describe the woods near Winnie’s home—Tregap Wood.	Why do you think no road went through Tregap? Would you feel safe exploring it?	Discuss the author’s use of words that set the mood of the Tregap Wood: <i>sleeping</i> , <i>otherworld</i> , etc. Lead students to demonstrate understanding of how a setting can contribute to the mood of a story.
Character	Describe Mae or Pa Tuck.	Describe Mae and Pa Tuck. How are their personalities different?	Students should contrast Mae’s excitement at seeing her sons with Pa Tuck’s weary acceptance that nothing ever changes for them. The unchanging nature of their lives sets the stage for one of the story’s dilemmas—choosing life everlasting.
Character	Describe how Winnie feels about her family.	Describe how your parents are similar to or different from Winnie’s mother and Granny.	Students should begin to identify with Winnie’s desire to strike out on her own.
Plot	Jesse tries to keep Winnie from drinking the water. Why?	Jesse is relieved when Mae shows up, and Mae is distressed. Why?	If students are not familiar with the plot, have them speculate on what could be so special about the water. Speculate on how the Tucks can keep Winnie away from the spring, given that it’s on her father’s land.

Analyzing the Literature

Directions: Think about the section you have just read. Read each question and state your response with textual evidence.

1. Describe the woods near Winnie’s home—Treegap Wood.

2. Describe Mae or Pa Tuck.

3. Describe how Winnie feels about her family.

4. Jesse tries to keep Winnie from drinking the water. Why?

Name _____

Date _____

▲ Analyzing the Literature

Directions: Think about the section you have just read. Read each question and state your response with textual evidence.

1. Why do you think no road went through Treegap? Would you feel safe exploring it?

2. Describe Mae and Pa Tuck. How are their personalities different?

3. Describe how your parents are similar to or different from Winnie’s mother and Granny.

4. Jesse is relieved when Mae shows up, and Mae is distressed. Why?

Name _____

Date _____

Close Reading the Literature

Directions: Closely reread the section from the beginning of chapter four to where the cottage door opens and grandmother asks, “Winifred? Who are you talking to out there?” Read each question and then revisit the text to find the evidence that supports your answer.

1. Describe how the man in the yellow suit moves when he talks with Winnie. Give examples based on text evidence.

2. Use examples from the book to explain why Winnie decides the man is “perfectly all right.”

3. Use text evidence to tell what information the man in the yellow suit is trying to learn from Winnie and her grandmother.

4. In what ways is the man in the yellow suit suspicious? Use the text to support your opinion.

Name _____

Date _____

Creating with the Story Elements

Directions: Thinking about the story elements of character, setting, and plot in a novel is very important to understanding what is happening and why. Complete **one** of the following activities about what you’ve read so far. Be creative and have fun!

Characters

The man in the yellow suit has no name. Make up a first, middle, and last name for him. It should match a stranger who shows up unannounced and asks many questions. Write a paragraph to justify your choice. If you need ideas, use the dictionary to look up words that describe the man or his personality.

Setting

Create a bird’s-eye-view map of the Tregap Wood and Winnie’s house based on what you know so far. Be detailed. You can add to the map as you continue reading.

Plot

Create a plot wheel that describes the events of the story so far. Make a list of the key events. You should have at least five. Draw a circle and divide it into the appropriate number of sections. Starting with the top section, such as 12 on a clock, write a short description of the first event. Then turn the paper and write about the next event in the order of its occurrence.

