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INTRODUCTION

Read through the latest state standards, and you will find that the work expected of students is expressed using such academic terminology as *describe*, *determine*, *develop*, *support*, and *cite*. Requirements such as these cannot be met via the comprehension-question worksheets and culminating quizzes that have long been the staples of literature guides designed for classroom use. The primary objective of those traditional activities was to make sure that students were keeping track of what was happening in the section of the novel that they had just read. Very little rigor and synthesis was asked of students—and usually none until the entire novel was read.

From a teacher's standpoint, this style of classroom analysis misses multiple opportunities to delve deeply into the details that make a specific piece of literature a classic; from a student's standpoint, this way to reflect on literature is monotonous and inflexible, and it fails to nurture the momentum experienced when one is invested in a compelling work of art. That is why the in-depth guides in the *Rigorous Reading* series aim to do much more: they aim to transform the reading of a great novel into a journey of discovery for students.

Instead of merely asking students what happened in any given section, this resource asks questions that require closer reading and deeper analysis—questions such as “Why did the author choose to include this information?” and “How does this information further the plot or offer more insight into the themes, characters, settings, etc.?” And instead of waiting until the end of the novel to put the pieces of the puzzle in place, students will learn to add to and alter their understanding of the novel as *they are reading it*. The various activities in this resource prompt students to consider and appreciate the many ingredients the author has combined to form the novel as a whole.

A RIGOROUS APPROACH

A Customizable Resource

This guide offers you incredible flexibility as you share and explore great literature with your students. The activities contained within are general enough to be used with just about any novel, yet they are designed to be completely customizable to the novel you are teaching. Classic literary works feature certain elements, such as characterization, plot, setting, and theme. By directing attention to these literary elements and the author's reasons for employing them, you will make your students better readers *and* writers.

Teacher Tip #1: Mentor Texts

Use great novels to model great writing. The activities in this resource will get your students thinking about the components of compelling literature. When possible, provide your students with opportunities to try out these literary techniques in their own writing.

Getting Started

The goal of this approach is to systematically build understanding of the novel and of the choices the author made in creating it. In order to do that, the novel should be read and examined section by section.

Teacher Tip #2: Sectioning the Novel

Making each section the same size is not always the best choice. It's more important to consider the ebb, flow, and momentum your young readers experience as they journey through the book. Pay attention to where the natural breaks in action come. Often there are minor resolutions to storylines along the way, and these can be ideal places to stop and reflect on what has happened in the plot and to the characters. Conversely, a chapter may end with a particularly exciting cliffhanger that leaves the reader excited and eager to learn more. Stop there, and look closely at such elements as the following:

- **characterization** (What does this cliffhanger mean for the protagonist?)
- **craft** (Which devices does the author use to build up to this moment and create this effect?)
- **plot** (Based on the context of the story, what will likely happen next? What are the possible consequences of what could happen next?)

Once you have decided on how to divide the novel, have students begin to read the first section. You may also wish to distribute some pre-reading activities.

Teacher Tip #3: Limited Frontloading

With this more rigorous approach to analyzing literature, less frontloading of the material is required. Almost all student work should focus on the text. However, this guide does offer a select few pre-reading activity ideas on pages 10-14.

A RIGOROUS APPROACH (CONT.)

Getting Started *(cont.)*

Before distributing activities for the first section of the novel, have each student assemble his or her own Interactive Novel Log.

Teacher Tip #4: Interactive Novel Logs

These student-created resources give the individual members of your class a place and a space to connect with the novel in ways of their choosing. For more information on what to include in these Interactive Novel Logs and how to create them, see pages 8–9 in this guide.

Studying Each Section of the Novel

After students have completed their reading of a section of the novel, distribute copies of the activities that best fit the content of that section. Each section begins with a “Teacher Instructions” page that provides an overview of each activity in that section.

This guide is organized by the literary elements found in great literature.

- ◆ **Characterization & P.O.V.** (pages 15–34)
Analyze character traits, development, and growth. Examine relationships between characters. Consider narrative perspective and how it affects the story.
- ◆ **Plot & Structure** (pages 35–57)
Summarize and sequence events. Examine the types of conflict in the story. Analyze the structure and organization of the novel and the parts within it.
- ◆ **Setting & Genre** (pages 58–70)
List physical settings, noting how the author describes them and how they contribute to the tone and plot of the story. Pay attention to the author’s use of time period and the passage of time. Analyze genre elements.
- ◆ **Main Idea & Theme** (pages 71–79)
Look at the big ideas and the themes that are woven throughout the story. (If help is needed determining the themes of the specific novel being taught, using the online search term “Themes for [name of novel]” should provide a few websites that offer helpful information.)
- ◆ **Author’s Craft** (pages 80–100)
Pay close attention to such authorial choices as pacing, chapter length, and how chapters begin and end. Examine the use of imagery and how the author establishes mood and reveals tone. Search for examples of literary devices and note the effects they create.
- ◆ **Vocabulary** (pages 101–105)
Examine word choice. Identify unknown words and use context to determine meaning.

Teacher Tip #5: Learning Types

Most activities are labeled as either **Individual** or **Collaborative** on the “Teacher Instructions” pages. The majority of the activities, however, can be adapted to fit any type of learning environment.

A RIGOROUS APPROACH (CONT.)

After Finishing the Novel

As the story is being read, many of the activities described previously can be used to build layers of understanding of both the story as a whole and the elements that have been combined to create it. A lot of synthesis is included in those activities on pages 15–105 of this guide.

The following activities call for even more synthesis and include larger projects and essays to culminate your class's exploration of the novel.

- ♦ **Post-Reading Activities** (pages 106–126)
Plan, draft, write, and review essays. Create a class encyclopedia devoted to the novel. Choose from several group projects that appeal to multiple learning styles.

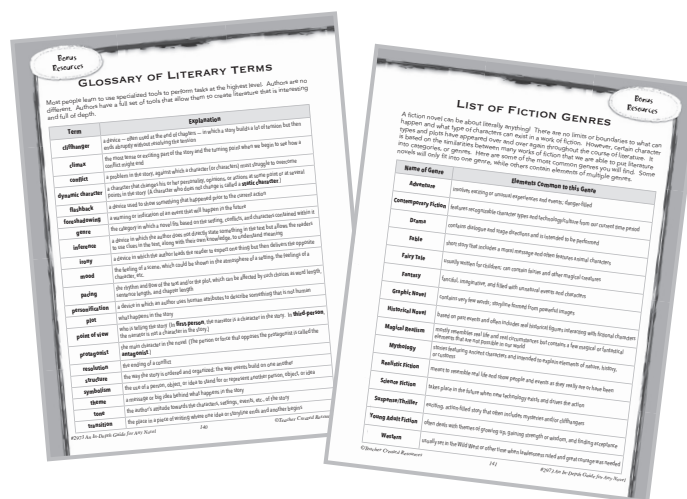
Using Paired Texts in the Classroom

The use of multiple texts can help build and extend knowledge about a theme or topic. It can also illustrate the similarities and differences in how multiple authors approach similar content or how an individual author approaches multiple novels. This guide offers several activities designed to be used with text sets. These activities can be used when pairing any two works of fiction, be they novels or shorter story forms.

- ♦ **Text-Set Connections** (pages 127–139)
Examine and compare the characterization of the protagonists, antagonists, and supporting characters in two works of fiction. Compare and contrast each author's use of perspective, setting, conflict, theme, and other literary elements.

Bonus Resources

Additionally, this guide contains two useful bonus handouts. A glossary of literary terms (page 140) gives students a quick explanation of many of the terms discussed in this guide. Similarly, a list of fiction genres (page 141) is provided to give students an overview and explanation of the most common genres of fiction.



Meeting Standards

A complete list of the Common Core State Standards met by the activities in this guide can be found on pages 142–144. (**Note:** The standards correlations provided on these pages focus on the grades 6–8 range. However, teacher discretion should be used to determine if any activity is appropriate for lower or higher grades, as well.)

NAME: _____

CHARACTER STUDY

Taking Inventory

When you take inventory, you see what you have and how much of it you have. Complete the diagram below to show what this character possesses, or has.

Name of Character: _____

Personality Traits	Physical Objects	Support System (friends, family)	Enemies (people who oppose)

Comfort Zone

Think about what the character likes to do and where he or she likes to be.

1. In what kinds of situations does the character feel comfortable or safe?

Quotation that shows this: _____

_____ Page number(s): _____

2. What events in the novel force the character out of his/her comfort zone?

How do these events do this? _____

In the world of a novel — just like in our world — there is often more than one storyline to follow at a time. While a main character's storyline is featured, other characters have their own storylines and other events happen at the same time.

- ✦ Do the events of the other storyline affect the main storyline in any way? If so, jot some notes about how they do this.
- ✦ Do the storylines meet up at the end? If so, fill in the final box to show how the two storylines come together.

[illegible]

Name of Novel: _____

#2973 *An In-Depth Guide for Any Novel*

Use the prompts below to make a more personal connection to what you have read. Choose one of the following suggestions and use it to fill a page in your Interactive Novel Log. Take this opportunity to connect to the novel in a way that interests you.

✦ ✦

- ❑ **First Day** — Imagine that you have just moved to the place (and/or time period) where the novel is set. How will you adjust to this new setting? Describe your first day.
- ❑ **Welcome Mat** — Imagine that the main character from the novel will be moving to your town or city. Write a short statement welcoming this person to your area. Also create two lists: one that tells the characters the things about your city that will make him or her feel right at home, and then another that names the things he or she will have to get used to. Base these lists on what you know about the character and also about your area.
- ❑ **Fit In, Stand Out** — Think about the world of the novel. Which objects, characters, or ideas from that world would fit right into the world you live in? Which would stand out as being completely different from anything in your world?
- ❑ **The Feel of a Place** — Think of a place in the novel where a character had a specific feeling (such as comfort, sadness, or excitement). Write about a place that gives you a similar feeling. Compare your experiences in your place with those of the character in his or hers.
- ❑ **Weather Watch** — Does weather play an important role in the novel? Create a 5-day weather forecast for the area featured in the novel. Pretend you are a meteorologist. Explain how the weather will affect the people and places in the novel.
- ❑ **Cloud Clusters** — Create two word clouds for the novel: one for *where* it is set, and one for *when* it is set. Think of words related to these two ideas. Arrange these words to make cloud-like shapes. Make the words naming the main places and times the largest. See the example to the right.

- ❑ **Genre Mash-Up** — If you could insert one element from a different genre into this story, which would you choose? Would you give someone a time machine? Would a historical figure move in next door to the main character? Would a crime be committed that must be solved? Describe the element. Explain how it would alter the novel.
- ❑ **Other** — Come up with an idea of your own! Your idea should be related to the concepts of setting or genre or to the specific places in the novel you are reading.



NAME: _____

MAKING THE MOOD

Authors have many ways of creating a feeling or mood. Think about a scene from the novel that was filled with mood. Choose a scene that made you feel an emotion such as fear, anxiety, joy, excitement, anger, or dread.

Scene (the events that happen): _____

Mood (the main feeling conveyed): _____

Complete the chart below. The column on the left lists five elements the author combined to create this scene. For each element, explain how it contributed to the mood of the scene.

Element	How It Contributed to the Mood
Plot (the events that happen)	
Setting (the time when and place where the events happen)	
Characterization (the people and animals in the story)	
Voice (the tone of the narrator who is telling the story)	
Dialogue (the words spoken by the characters)	

In your opinion, which of these elements — plot, setting, characterization, voice, or dialogue — was the most important for creating the mood of the scene? Check the box next to your answer, and then explain your choice on the lines below.

☐ Plot ☐ Setting ☐ Characterization ☐ Voice ☐ Dialogue
