Table of Contents

Table of Contents (CONT.)

Table of Contents (cont.)

✦ ✦

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 10–15.

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 16–35)
  Analyze character traits, development, and growth.
  Examine relationships between characters. Consider narrative perspective and how it affects the story.

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.

- **Plot & Structure** (pages 36–55)
  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 56–69)
  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 70–79)
  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 80–98)
  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 99–105)
  Examine word choice. Identify unknown words and use context to determine meaning.

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 16–105 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 they will encounter in works of fiction.
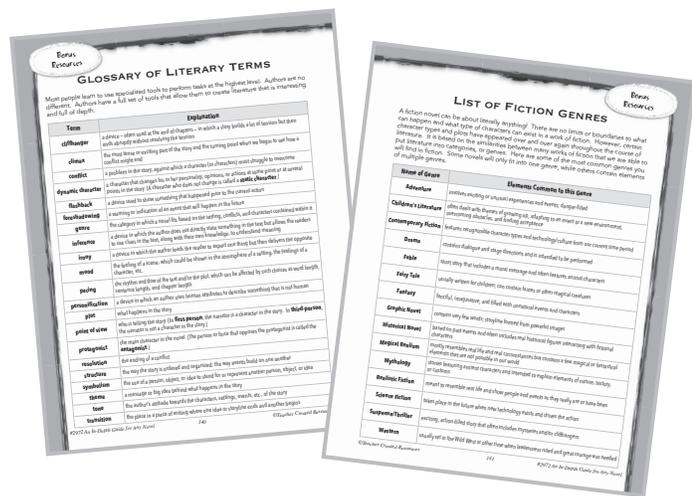
Meeting Standards

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 3–5 range. However, teacher discretion should be used to determine if any activity is appropriate for lower or higher grades, as well.)

A Door to a New World

When you open up a new novel and begin reading, it is as if you are opening a door to a new world. This new world of the novel is filled with people you have never met and places you have never been. An author must introduce you to that world and make you want to stay in it for a long time.

Who lives in this world? What happened to these people before the novel began? What is happening to them in these first few pages of the novel? Use the diagram below to answer these questions about the beginning of the novel.

✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦

Name of Novel: _____

Characters
Who lives in this world?

Background
What happened before?

Action
What is happening now?

✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦ + ✦
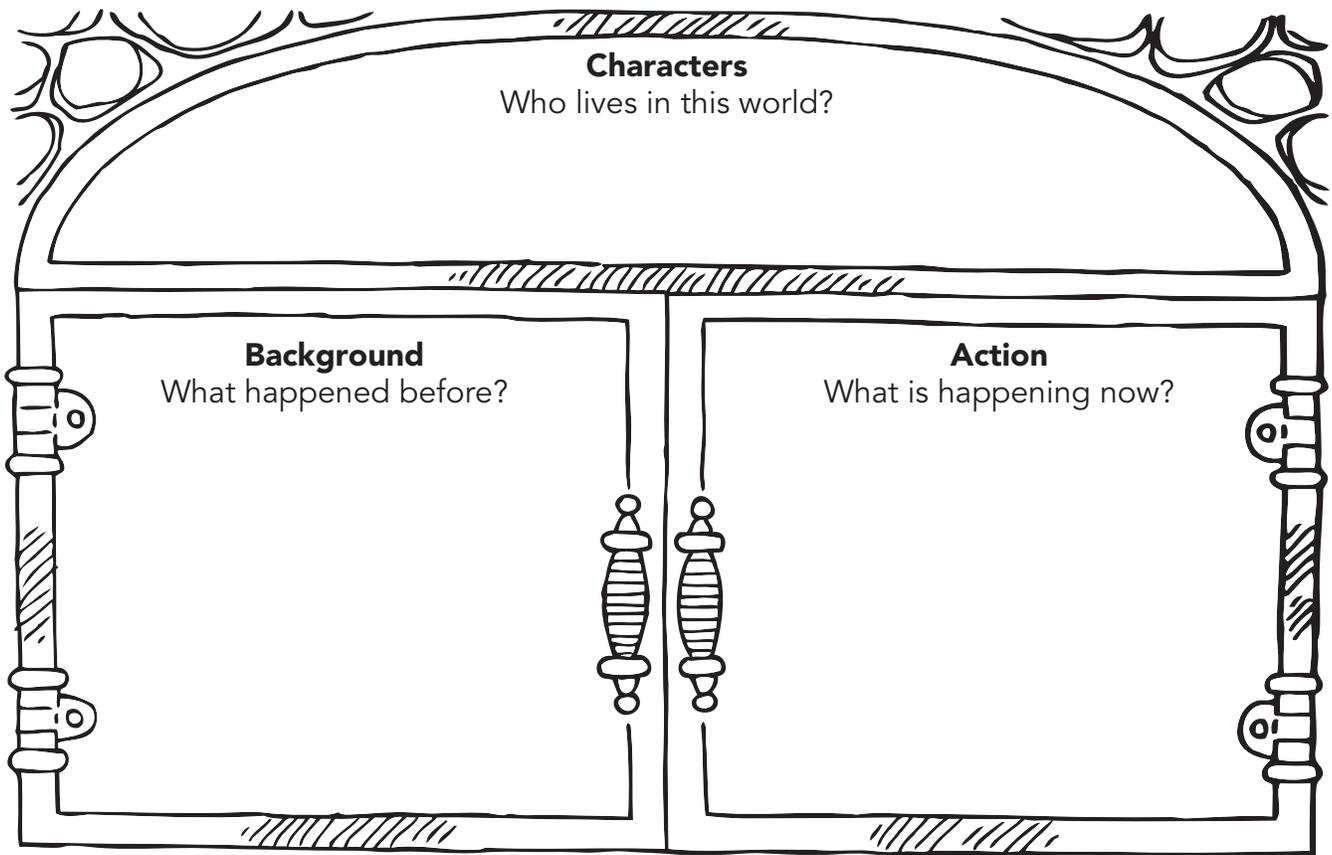
Considering Craft: Why do you think the author chose to start the book in this way? What effect does it have on you as a reader? In what ways does this scene draw you into the book and make you want to read more?

_____

_____

NAME: _____

A Place of Meaning

For this activity, think about setting as it relates to a character in this novel. Begin by choosing an important character. Then match that character to a setting that has special significance for him or her. Try to find both simple connections and also deeper connections. (See examples of each below.) Support these connections with evidence from the novel.

Examples:

Simple	Deeper
Character A is connected to Setting A because it was once her home.	Character A is connected to Setting A because that is the last place where she saw her father, and this setting represents the childhood that she feels she has lost forever.

Name of Novel: _____

Name of Character: _____

Name of Setting: _____

How is this character connected to this setting?

In a <u>simple</u> way

Connection: _____

_____

_____

Quotation or example from novel that shows this:

_____

_____

In a <u>deeper</u> way

Connection: _____

_____

_____

Quotation or example from novel that shows this:

_____

_____

Draw a picture of this character in this setting.

NAME: _____

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

Think about the main idea(s) of the section you have just read.

✦ ✦

Name of Novel: _____

Chapters or page numbers in section: _____

✦ ✦

What happens?

Name three events from this section. Choose the most major events that occurred in this part of the novel.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

How are these events related?

Think about how these three events are related. Can you find connections between all three (or at least two of the three)? List those connections here.

_____

_____

_____

_____

So what's the big idea?

Add up what you've learned about this section to determine the main idea of this part of the novel. The main idea is a brief description (usually one sentence) that tells you what the author most wants you think about or take from this part of the novel.

Main Idea: _____

What evidence (examples, quotations) from the novel can you give to support your answer?

_____

_____

_____

NAME: _____

PAINTING A PICTURE

Authors describe people, places, and events in their novels. When they do this, they want their readers to form a picture in their minds of what is being described. Authors want to paint that picture as clearly and vividly as possible. Authors do this by using **imagery**. *Imagery* is descriptive writing that helps readers imagine themselves in the place being described, listening to the people talking, and watching the events unfold.

From the novel you are reading, choose a scene that you feel is filled with vivid imagery. Your chosen scene should be one that you feel you can picture very well in your mind. Then complete the activity below.

Describe the scene here.
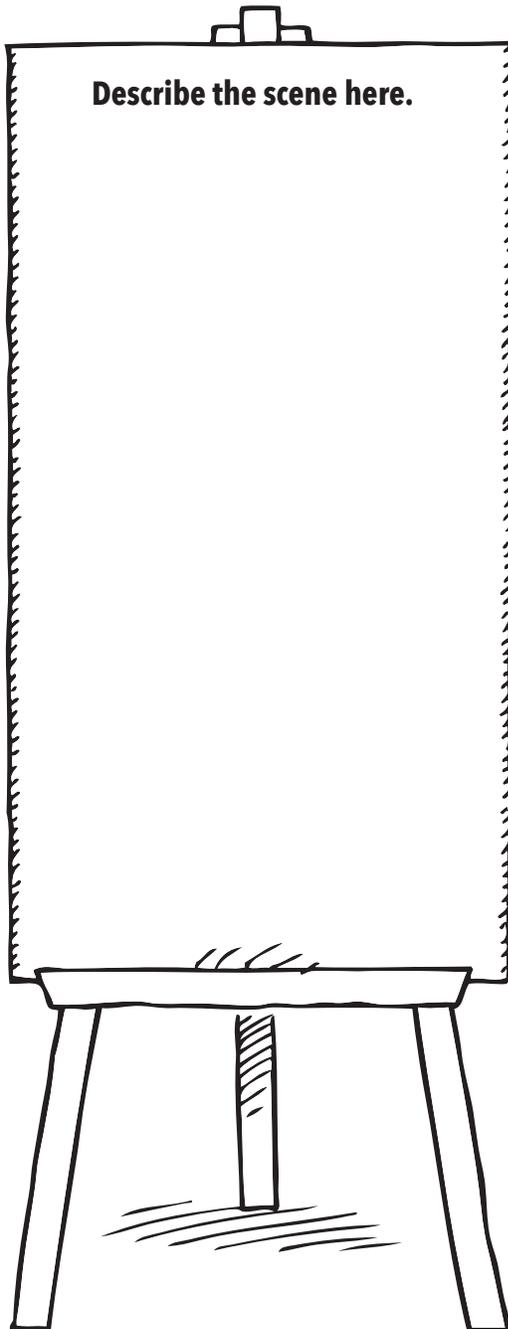
List some words or phrases the author uses to create imagery.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How do these words and phrases paint a picture of the scene for the reader?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____