



TEACHER'S PET PUBLICATIONS

LITPLAN TEACHER PACK™

for

Ethan Frome

based on the book by  
Edith Wharton

Written by  
Jill Bloomfield

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### **Edith Wharton**

There is an adage for writers which says, "Write what you know." This means that the best material for a writer is rooted in the writer's own experience. The depth and richness of Edith Wharton's writing is derived from her own life. Wharton was born in 1862 to a highly privileged family in New York City. Originally born Edith Jones, her surname is thought to be the one referred to in the idiom, "keeping up with the Joneses." Her family was socially well-connected and young Edith grew up among the social elite in New York, the epicenter of culture, arts, fashion, and style. Wharton developed a propensity for the arts--both written and visual--from an early age. An avid storyteller and illustrator, Wharton showed creativity as a child and young adult. Interior decorating was a favorite creative outlet for Wharton, as it gave her a means of artistic self-expression that was socially acceptable for a woman.

Wharton's highly privileged lifestyle afforded her with opportunities to travel abroad, which gave her a great deal of creative inspiration. Though she built an expansive estate in New England, Wharton maintained a residence in France. Wharton frequently entertained guests and invited friends who were among the greatest authors and artists of the day to her homes. Most notable of these friends was Henry James, an American novelist whose works explore themes similar to those in Wharton's writing.

While living in France during World War I, Wharton became involved in support efforts for the allied side. Wharton did not return to America to live after the war. During this period Wharton wrote some of her most celebrated works including *The Age of Innocence*. This novel and others such as *The House of Mirth* and *The Buccaneers* explores the issues faced by upper-class women at the turn of the 20th century. Marked by wit and irony, Wharton's works insightfully challenge the societal expectations for women. Wharton's novel *The Age of Innocence* was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1921; this is especially notable, as Wharton was the first woman to receive this distinction. Wharton died of a stroke in France in 1937, her lifetime spanning great change in American culture and society.

## INTRODUCTION *Ethan Frome*

This LitPlan has been designed to develop students' reading, writing, thinking, and language skills through exercises and activities related to *Ethan Frome*. It includes twenty-one lessons, supported by extra resource materials.

The **introductory lesson** introduces students to the concept of a "framed" story observed by a detached observer. Students will observe a photograph of a stranger and create a biography for that person basing their invented biographies on visual evidence in the picture. Following the introductory activity, students are given the materials they will be using during the unit. Students also begin the pre-reading and reading work for the first assignment.

The **reading assignments** are approximately thirty pages each; some are a little shorter while others are a little longer. Students have approximately 15 minutes of pre-reading work to do prior to each reading assignment. This pre-reading work involves reviewing the study questions for the assignment and doing some vocabulary work for selected vocabulary words they will encounter in their reading.

The **study guide questions** are fact-based questions; students can find the answers to these questions right in the text. These questions come in two formats: short answer or multiple choice. The best use of these materials is probably to use the short answer version of the questions as study guides for students (since answers will be more complete), and to use the multiple choice version for occasional quizzes.

The **vocabulary work** is intended to enrich students' vocabularies as well as to aid in the students' understanding of the book. Prior to each reading assignment, students will complete a two-part worksheet for selected vocabulary words in the upcoming reading assignment. Part I focuses on students' use of general knowledge and contextual clues by giving the sentence in which the word appears in the text. Students are then to write down what they think the words mean based on the words' usage. Part II nails down the definitions of the words by giving students dictionary definitions of the words and having students match the words to the correct definitions based on the words' contextual usage. Students should then have an understanding of the words when they meet them in the text.

After each reading assignment, students will go back and formulate answers for the study guide questions. Discussion of these questions serves as a **review** of the most important events and ideas presented in the reading assignments.

After students complete reading the work, there is a **vocabulary review** lesson which pulls together all of the fragmented vocabulary lists for the reading assignments and gives students a review of all of the words they have studied.

Following the vocabulary review, a lesson is devoted to the **extra discussion questions/writing assignments**. These questions focus on interpretation, critical analysis, and personal response, employing a variety of thinking skills and adding to the students' understanding of the novel.

There is a **project** in this unit. Students select moments from the text and write alternative scenes to create a "choose-your-own-adventure" text. Students will revise Wharton's ironic choices.

There are three **writing assignments** in this unit, each with the purpose of informing, persuading,

or expressing personal opinions or creativity. The first writing assignment asks students to select three literary terms, define them, and provide examples of them from *Ethan Frome* in a factual essay. The second writing assignment challenges students to write about three goals which they would like to achieve; they must define their goals and explain how they intend to achieve them. In Writing Assignment #3 students write a letter to students in the next class that will be reading *Ethan Frome*, persuading them that although the book was published in 1911, it is not a dusty, old, has-been book; it has value for readers today.

There is a non-fiction **reading assignment**. Students must read non-fiction articles, books, etc. to gather information about topics related to *Ethan Frome*.

The **review lesson** pulls together all of the aspects of the unit. The teacher is given four or five choices of activities or games to use which all serve the same basic function of reviewing all of the information presented in the unit.

The **unit test** comes in two formats: multiple choice or short answer. As a convenience, two different tests for each format have been included. There is also an advanced short answer unit test for advanced students.

There are additional **support materials** included with this unit. The **Unit Resource Materials** section includes suggestions for an in-class library, crossword and word search puzzles related to the novel, and extra worksheets. There is a list of **bulletin board ideas** which gives the teacher suggestions for bulletin boards to go along with this unit. In addition, there is a list of **extra class activities** the teacher could choose from to enhance the unit or as a substitution for an exercise the teacher might feel is inappropriate for his/her class. **Answer keys** are located directly after the **reproducible student materials** throughout the unit. The **Vocabulary Resource Materials** section includes similar worksheets and games to reinforce the vocabulary words.

The **level** of this unit can be varied depending upon the criteria on which the individual assignments are graded, the teacher's expectations of his/her students in class discussions, and the formats chosen for the study guides, quizzes and test. If teachers have other ideas/activities they wish to use, they can usually easily be inserted prior to the review lesson.

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## UNIT OBJECTIVES *Ethan Frome*

1. Through reading *Ethan Frome*, students will develop close reading skills and consider foreshadowing, irony, and "framed" narration in greater depth.
2. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the text on four levels: factual, interpretive, critical, and personal.
3. Students will learn how to set goals that are realistic and measurable. Similarly, students will consider how they define success and failure. As students consider these issues, they will also explore the balance between duty and personal ambition.
4. Students will be given the opportunity to practice reading aloud and silently to improve their skills in each area.
5. Students will answer questions to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the main events and characters in *Ethan Frome* as they relate to the author's theme development.
6. Students will enrich their vocabularies and improve their understanding of the novel through the vocabulary lessons prepared for use in conjunction with the novel.
7. Students will read aloud, report, and participate in large and small group discussions to improve their public speaking and personal interaction skills.
8. The writing assignments in this unit are designed for several purposes:
  - a. To check and increase students reading comprehension
  - b. To make students think about the ideas presented by the novel
  - c. To encourage logical thinking
  - d. To provide an opportunity to practice good grammar and improve students' use of the English language
  - e. To encourage students' creativity

READING ASSIGNMENTS *Ethan Frome*

Date Assigned	Assignment	Completion Date
	<i>Assignment 1</i> Prologue and Chapter 1	
	<i>Assignment 2</i> Chapter 2	
	<i>Assignment 3</i> Chapter 3	
	<i>Assignment 4</i> Chapter 4	
	<i>Assignment 5</i> Chapters 5 & 6	
	<i>Assignment 6</i> Chapters 7 & 8	
	<i>Assignment 7</i> Chapter 9 & Epilogue	

UNIT OUTLINE *Ethan Frome*

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Introduction  PVR Prologue & Ch. 1	Study ?s Prologue & Ch. 1  Writing Assignment #1  PVR Ch. 2	Study ?s Ch. 2  PVR Ch. 3	Study ?s Ch. 3  Oral Reading Evaluation  PVR Ch. 4	Study ?s Ch. 4  PVR Ch. 5 & 6
<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
Study ?s Ch. 5 & 6  Jigsaw Activity  PVR Ch.7 & 8	Study ?s Ch. 7 & 8  PVR 9 & Epilogue	Study ?s Ch. 9 & Epilogue	Non-fiction Reading Assignment	Understanding Symbol, Motif, and Theme
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
Goal Setting Writing Assignment #2	Writing Assignment #2, Continued	Non-fiction Oral Reports	Close Passage Analysis Writing Assignment #3	Writing Assignment #3, Continued
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
Group Project	Group Project	Vocabulary Review	Further Discussion	Unit Review
<b>21</b>				
Test				

Key: P = Preview Study Questions V = Vocabulary Work R = Read



## LESSON ONE

### Objectives

1. To introduce the *Ethan Frome* unit through close observation and creative writing
2. To distribute books and other related materials
3. To preview the study questions for the Prologue and Chapter 1
4. To familiarize students with the vocabulary for the Prologue and Chapter 1
5. To read the Prologue and Chapter 1

### Activity 1

This activity asks students to "judge a book by its cover" by observing a photograph of a stranger. This will place students in the same position of the narrator/observer in the story.

Prior to this class period, gather photographs of models of all types from magazines. Students should not be able to identify the model (it should not be a photograph of a celebrity or well-known person). You can instead ask students to bring 2-3 of these pictures. Collect the pictures and then redistribute them so students receive new pictures.

Ask students to take out paper and pens. They will be writing the biography of the person in the picture. Instruct students to write 3-5 paragraphs that provide details about the individual pictured - students should make up these details such as name, place of birth, occupation, etc. Tell students that some single incident dramatically affected the individual, and that they need to decide what that incident was: did the person win the lottery, get bitten by a shark, become a double agent, get fired from a job?

When students complete the assignment, which should take 15-20 minutes, ask for volunteers to share what they have written and to discuss how and what they observed in the photographs helped them develop their ideas about the characters' biographies.

### Activity 2

Distribute the materials students will use in this unit. Explain in detail how students are to use these materials.

Study Guides Students should read the study guide questions for each reading assignment prior to beginning the reading assignment to get a feeling for what events and ideas are important in the section they are about to read. After reading the section, students will (as a class or individually) answer the questions to review the important events and ideas from that section of the book. Students should keep the study guides as study materials for the unit test. **Review the study questions for the first reading assignment (Prologue and Chapter 1) together in class.**

Vocabulary Prior to each a reading assignment, students will do vocabulary work related to the section of the book they are about to read. Following the completion of the reading of the book, there will be a vocabulary review of all the words used in the vocabulary assignments. Students should keep their vocabulary work as study materials for the unit test. **Do the vocabulary worksheet for the first reading assignment (Prologue and Chapter 1) together in class to show students how the worksheets are done.**

Reading Assignment Sheet You need to fill in the reading assignment sheet to let students know by when their reading has to be completed. You can either write the assignment sheet up on a side blackboard or bulletin board and leave it there for students to see each day, or you can make copies for each student to have. In either case, you should advise students to become very familiar with with reading assignments so they know what is expected of them.

## WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1

### PROMPT

To become an expert at writing about literature, one must learn the vocabulary of literature study. Your assignment is to investigate the meanings of three terms from the list below and to write an essay that explains the terms, gives examples, and advises students about how to determine examples in other works of fiction.

allegory	figurative language	omniscient narrator
alliteration	foil	paradox
antagonist	foreshadowing	personification
archetype	flashback	poetic justice
connotation	genre	point of view
denotation	hyperbole	protagonist
denouement	image	rising action
diction	irony	setting
didactic	mood	symbol
exposition	motif	theme
falling action	narrator	tone

### PREWRITING

Begin by selecting 4-5 possible terms from the list. Using a textbook, a packet provided by your teacher, or the Internet, look up the definitions of each of these terms. If you use the Internet, be sure to evaluate the credibility of the web sites you use. Carefully write down the definitions and make note of the sources that you used. Now you must think of examples from books or films with which you are familiar for your terms. Thinking of examples will help you determine which three terms will be included in your essay. If you have trouble thinking of an example for one term, you might eliminate that term. Once you have thought of an example, think about how you know that specific example fits the definition of the term. For example, how do you know that Spiderman is a protagonist?

### DRAFTING

Write an introductory paragraph which explains why students should be familiar with the terms you selected to define. In the body of your composition, write one paragraph for each of the terms you are presenting. In each paragraph, begin by defining the term, then offer your example(s) and explanations as to how the example fits the definition. Write a concluding paragraph in which you remind readers how to identify these literary elements in stories.

### PROMPT

When you finish the rough draft of your composition, ask a student whose opinions you trust to read it. After reading your rough draft, he/she should tell you what he/she liked best about your work, which parts were difficult to understand, and ways in which your work could be improved.

### PROOFREADING

Reread your paper considering your critic's comments, and make the corrections you think are necessary. Do a final proofreading of your paper, double-checking your grammar, spelling, organization, and the clarity of your ideas.