



TEACHER'S PET PUBLICATIONS

LITPLAN TEACHER PACK™

for

Witness

based on the book by
Karen Hesse

Written by
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karen Hesse

Karen Hesse is originally from Baltimore, Maryland. While growing up, she spent a lot of time at her local library, where a friendly librarian supplied her with a healthy dose of children's books to occupy her time at home. She fell in love with Dr. Seuss' use of language and read constantly. While in elementary school, Hesse received encouraging compliments from her teachers who admired her creativity in writing.

Her teachers' compliments combined with her passion for reading encouraged her to become the person she is today. "One day, when I was eleven, I wandered out of the children's section of the library and got my hands on John Hersey's *Hiroshima*. Here were people surviving under the most extreme adversity and behaving in a manner of extraordinary grace and dignity. I think you can hear the echo of *Hiroshima* in my work."

Hesse later graduated from the University of Maryland where she earned her B.A. in English with double minors in Psychology and Anthropology. After various odd jobs, she finally got the chance to follow her dream of becoming an author.

Hesse still loves writing and can't wait to get to her keyboard every morning. She also enjoys reading, hiking, traveling, and spending time with friends and family. She currently lives in Vermont with her husband and two teenage daughters.

Major Works

Hesse has written several children's books and young adult novels. Her most popular works include *Phoenix Rising*, *Letters from Rifka*, *The Music of Dolphins*, *Witness*, and *Out of the Dust*.

Awards

Out of the Dust won the 1998 Newberry Medal and the Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction.

INTRODUCTION *Witness*

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

The **introductory lesson** introduces students to the title and themes of the book. This activity forces students to realize that the outward appearance of people/objects isn't always as important as what is inside. Following the introductory activity, students are given the materials they will be using during the unit. At the end of the lesson, students begin the pre-reading work for the first reading 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 **hate crimes project** in this unit. This project requires students to research hate crimes against a specific group.

There are three **writing assignments** in this unit, each with the purpose of informing, persuading, or having students express personal opinions. The first writing assignment asks students to write from the perspective of someone in the 1920's time period. The second asks students to persuade someone to practice tolerance, and the third asks students to write about one of the many issues related to this book.

There is a non-fiction **reading assignment**. Students must read non-fiction articles, books, etc. to gather information about their themes in our world today.

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 *Witness*

1. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the text on four levels: factual, interpretive, critical, and personal.
2. Students will make connections with the material in the text and apply the lessons learned to their lives.
3. Students will be given the opportunity to practice reading aloud and silently to improve their skills in each area.
4. Through reading the story *Witness*, students will compare hatred to tolerance in regards to the treatment of others.
5. Students will answer questions to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the main events and characters in *Witness* 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 demonstrate the ability to write effectively to inform by developing and organizing facts to convey information. Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively to persuade by selecting and organizing relevant information, establishing an argumentative purpose, and by designing an appropriate strategy for an identified audience. Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively to express personal ideas by selecting a form and its appropriate elements.
8. Students will read aloud, report, and participate in large and small group discussions to improve their public speaking and personal interaction skills.

READING ASSIGNMENTS *Witness*

Date Assigned	Assignment	Completion Date
	<i>Assignment 1</i> Act 1	
	<i>Assignment 2</i> Act 2	
	<i>Assignment 3</i> Act 3	
	<i>Assignment 4</i> Act 4	
	<i>Assignment 5</i> Act 5	

UNIT OUTLINE *Witness*

1 Introduction Activity Project Assignment PV1	2 Time Period Information & Background Knowledge	3 Read Act 1	4 Study ?s 1 Vocabulary 1 Character Cut Outs	5 Nonfiction Assignment PV2
6 Read Act 2	7 Study ?s 2 Vocabulary 2 Writing Assignment #1	8 Speaker PV3	9 Read Act 3 Oral Reading Evaluation	10 Study ?s 3 Vocabulary 3 Hate Crimes in Depth
11 Writing Assignment #2 PV4	12 Read Act 4	13 Study ?s 4 Vocabular 4 PV5	14 Read Act 5	15 Study ?s 5 Vocabulary 5 Extra Discussion Questions
16 Extra Discussion Questions Cont.	17 Writing Assignment #3	18 Project Presentations Unit Reflection	19 Vocabulary Review Letter to Author	20 Unit Review
21 Unit Test				

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

LESSON ONE

Objectives

1. To introduce the *Witness* unit
2. To distribute books, study questions, and other related materials
3. To assign the unit project
4. To preview the vocabulary and study questions for Assignment 1

Activity 1

To prepare for this lesson, purchase several oranges of a similar size. Do not remove any stickers, and try to find oranges with distinguishing marks or coloring. Place the oranges in a bowl and have them for the start of class.

At the start of class select students to come up to the front of the room and select an orange from the bowl. Ask students to really study the orange they selected, making sure to note any marks or colors that could set it apart from the others. After giving students a few minutes to study their oranges, have students place the oranges back into the bowl. Ask your students to look away from the bowl and mix them up with your hand. Next, have the students turn back to the bowl and find the orange they just studied. Most students will be able to tell from stickers, discolorations, etc which orange was theirs. Have students briefly explain to the rest of the class how they identified their orange. Collect the oranges and place them back into the bowl and set it aside for the moment.

Distribute copies of *Witness* to students and ask them to take a few moments to look over the structure of the novel. Instruct them to read the first few pages where the characters are introduced with a photo and to try to determine how the novel is arranged structurally.

As students are becoming familiar with the novel, peel each of the oranges and place them back into the bowl. When you are finished, talk to your students regarding the structure of the story. Prompt them to discuss how the story is arranged, making sure to point out that it is a cross between a play, with varying speakers, and a series of poems with the odd arrangement of words and sentences.

Transition: When you have completed your discussion on the structure of the story, ask the same students to come to the front of the room to once again find their orange. Students will be unable to select their original orange since it will be peeled and all distinguishing marks gone. Explain to students that originally they were able to tell which orange was theirs based on its outside appearance, but once the orange was peeled, it was essentially the same as the others. Explain that each orange, though different on the outside, is as sweet and delicious as the next. Bridge the connection between the oranges to people. Talk to your students about judging others based on outward appearances and try to reinforce the idea that it is the personality, or the inside, that really matters. Once you have made this connection, tell students that they will be reading a story about people who are judged and are judging others based on their outward appearance. Talk to your students briefly about the racial and religious hatred they will encounter throughout the story.

Activity 2

Distribute the project requirements and discuss in detail.

Activity 3

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

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 *Witness*

PROMPT

Select one of the scenarios listed on the RAFT writing assignment for the topic of your essay. The role is the point of view from which you are writing, the audience is to whom you are writing, the format is the type of writing you are doing, and the topic/task is the actual information you are writing about.

PREWRITING

After you have selected your writing scenario, begin to brainstorm ideas. Remember to think about the role from which you are writing, and the topic you are writing about. Use your book, notes about the time period, and notes from the non-fiction articles to help you with your support.

DRAFTING

Write an introductory paragraph that allows the reader to know the role you have assumed and the audience to whom you are writing. Give a general overview of the points you will make in the body paragraphs of your writing. Use the format of your writing to guide you on how to begin (speech would begin with a little about yourself, letter begins with Dear _____, etc).

In the body paragraphs, give the details of your topic. Use information from the novel, the speaker, and the non-fiction article you read to help provide support. Be sure to reread the topic/task you are writing about and be sure to cover all portions listed there.

In your conclusion paragraph, summarize your main points and conclude the writing assignment. For unity with your writing, you may want to tie in your role and audience once again.

PROMPT

When you finish the rough draft of your composition, ask a student who sits near you 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. Reread your paper considering your critic's comments, and make the corrections you think are necessary. Ask your classmate what he/she thought of each of the characters/events you chose for your assignment.

PROOFREADING

Do a final proofreading of your paper double-checking your grammar, spelling, organization, and the clarity of your ideas.