



TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

And Then There Were None

Agatha Christie



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

And Then There Were None

Agatha Christie

TEACHER GUIDE

NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Identifying attributes, analysis, compare/contrast, brainstorming, paradox, identifying stereotypes

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, interview, oral report, tape recording, role-playing, oral reading, courtroom simulation

Literary Elements

Foreshadowing, characterization, setting, simile, metaphor, figures of speech, suspense, complex plot, comparison of British & American English, dialect, ellipses

Comprehension

Predicting, summarizing, cause/effect, inference, main idea, sequencing

Writing

Description, report, play, letter, time line, clue cards

Across the Curriculum

Art—collage, floor plan, 3-D model; Social Studies—Morse code, maps; Research—Internet, reference books, autobiography, biography; Science—drugs and medicine, fingerprinting, weather

Information About the Novel

Genre:	Mystery
Main Characters:	8 guests—Dr. Armstrong, Miss Brent, Mr. Blore (a.k.a. Mr. Davis), Miss Claythorne, Captain Lombard, General MacArthur, Mr. Tony Marston, Justice Wargrave; and the butler and housekeeper, Mr. & Mrs. Rogers
Setting:	August 1939 on Indian Island off Devon coast in England. The shape of the island resembles a man's head. A modern, luxurious house was built by an American millionaire crazy about yachting and later sold.
Themes:	Mystery, secrecy, human weaknesses, guilt

Summary

Ten strangers gather together on isolated Indian Island for a holiday hosted by a mysterious Mr. Owen who is not present. During their first night some dark and wicked secrets about each are revealed. Terror and suspicion begin to mount and then one by one they die.

Special Notes to the Teacher

The mystery novel, *And Then There Were None*, was originally published in 1939 under the title *Ten Little Niggers*. The title *Ten Little Indians* was used in the American Broadway Play in 1944. In 1945, Hollywood adapted the book to film and titled it *And Then There Were None*. The last title is the one used most often in the United States.

Prejudice against certain racial and ethnic groups was much more tolerated in the first half of the 20th century than it is now. A teacher may want to discuss this with the students. Ms. Christie often uses stereotypes in her works. In *And Then There Were None* there are prejudicial descriptions of Mr. Morris being Jewish on pages 4, 5, 95. There are racial slurs on pages 25, 73, 79. A teacher may choose to use these references for discussions about prejudices, stereotypes, and political correctness.

A teacher should be aware that Ms. Christie uses the word "damn" and its variations throughout the novel (pages 4, 5, 7, 9, 26, 43, 45, 55, 57, 79, 86, 93, 95, 132, 137, 139, 150, 167, 168, 184, 189, 195). There are numerous references to alcoholic drinks (pages 9, 28, 34, 36, 46, 61).

About the Author

Agatha Christie is considered the most popular mystery writer of all time. She is considered the world's best-selling author next to Shakespeare. Over two billion copies of her books are in print in 104 languages. Often called the "Queen of Mystery" and the "Duchess of Death," she penned over 100 mystery novels and short stories, 21 plays, a two-volume autobiography, and six romantic novels over a 55-year period. Agatha Christie's characters, Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple, are famous in literature, film, and television.

Using Predictions in the Novel Unit Approach

We all make predictions as we read—little guesses about what will happen next, how a conflict will be resolved, which details will be important to the plot, which details will help fill in our sense of a character. Students should be encouraged to predict, to make sensible guesses as they read the novel.

As students work on their predictions, these discussion questions can be used to guide them: What are some of the ways to predict? What is the process of a sophisticated reader's thinking and predicting? What clues does an author give to help us make predictions? Why are some predictions more likely to be accurate than others?

Create a chart for recording predictions. This could be either an individual or class activity. As each subsequent chapter is discussed, students can review and correct their previous predictions about plot and characters as necessary.

Use the facts and ideas the author gives.

Use your own prior knowledge.

Apply any new information (i.e., from class discussion) that may cause you to change your mind.

Predictions:

Chapter 2, Pages 12-27

The eight guests arriving by train or car travel from Sticklehaven to the island on a small boat owned by Mr. Fred Narracott. The guests settle into the modern house facing the sea with the help of Mr. and Mrs. Rogers, the servants hired for the holiday. In the bedroom of Miss Claythorne is a nursery rhyme, "Ten Little Indians," framed over the mantel (pp. 22-23). Each character is described more fully as they prepare for dinner and as Mr. Narracott sums them up.

Vocabulary

assent (12)

deuced (26)

surreptitious (12)

cairngorm (27)

assenting (16)

malevolence (16)

Discussion Questions

1. Mr. Narracott, the boatman, sums up the characters on pages 18-19. Characteristics about each guest are also given on pages 23-27. As students add these characteristics to their Character Chart, do they find any connections between the characters? If so, describe. (*Dr. Armstrong knew Justice Wargrave, p. 24*). What characteristics of the setting given in this chapter foreshadow possible problems? (*wasps in summer, p. 14; hills, red earth, green and luscious, p. 15; fishing village with cottages near the beach, p. 16; rock on the island in the silhouette of a giant Indian's head with a sinister look, p. 16; house on south side of island facing south—low and square and modern-looking with rounded windows letting in light, p. 19; a southeasterly or summer storm can come up quickly and cut the island off from the mainland, p. 19; well-decorated house and rooms, pp. 20, 22; something magical about the island suggesting fantasy, p. 24*)
2. What is the significance of the children's rhyme framed in Miss Claythorne's room on pages 22-23? (*The "Ten Little Indians" rhyme was thought by Miss Claythorne to be appropriate as the island is called Indian Island. If students say it also foreshadows what will happen to the characters say, "We will see."*)

Supplementary Activities

1. Have the students add to the Character Chart.
2. Have the students begin labeling the map of Indian Island or draw their own version.
3. Have students pair up and read the rhyme "Ten Little Indians" aloud to each other (pp. 22-23).

Chapter 3, Pages 28-41

The guests are at dinner and have been told their hosts, Mr. and Mrs. Owens, have been delayed. The centerpiece at the table is a set of ten small china Indian figurines as in the nursery rhyme. The guests share that they each have the framed rhyme in their rooms. Suddenly a voice from an undisclosed place in the drawing room charges each guest with a crime. They are startled and alarmed and discover a gramophone and record are the source of the voice. Each guest discloses how and why he/she was invited to the island.