



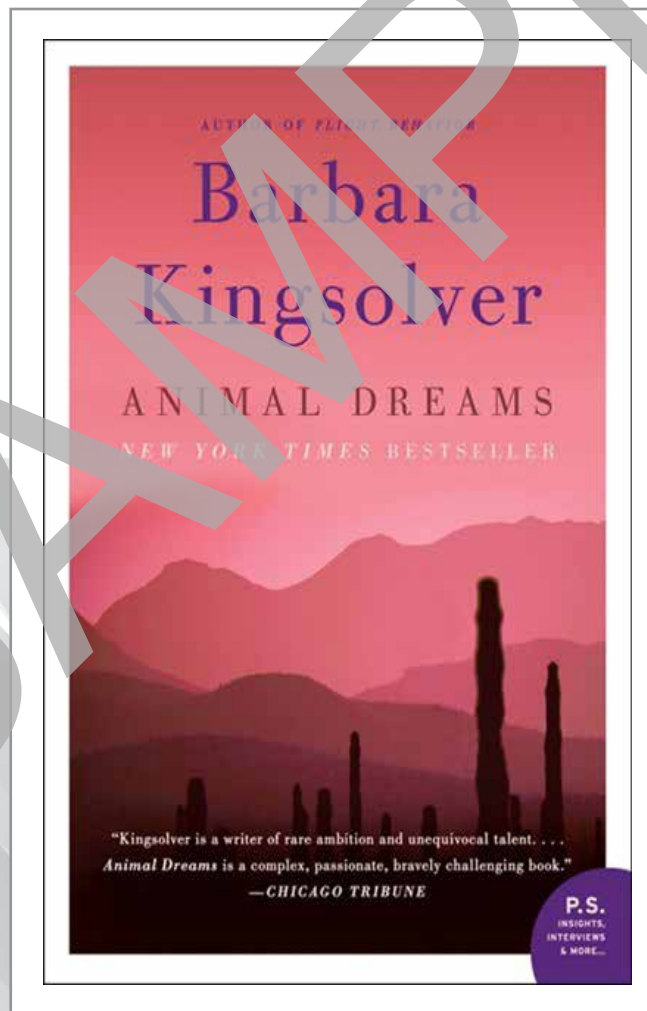
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 9-12

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Animal Dreams

Barbara Kingsolver



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Animal Dreams

Barbara Kingsolver

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,
compare/contrast, research,
analysis, evaluation,
brainstorming

Comprehension

Predicting, summarizing,
cause and effect, inference,
main idea

Writing

Report, characterization,
narrative poem, metaphor/
simile poem, dramatic script

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, oral report,
eulogy, dramatic presentation

Literary Elements

Characterization, plot, theme,
metaphor, simile, allusion,
personification

Other

Diorama, drawing, painting,
collage, folk songs/music,
map study, current events

Summary of *Animal Dreams*

Genre: Fiction

Setting: Grace, Arizona, and Santa Rosalia Pueblo (both imaginary); actual places include Tucson, Arizona

Date: 1985; flashbacks several years prior

Themes: loss; rejection; guilt; alienation; acceptance; love

Point-of-View: Primarily first-person narrative with occasional third-person omniscient chapters inserted

Summary: Cosima (Codi) Noline returns home to Grace, Arizona, to confront a troubled past and to care for her father, Doc Homer Noline, who is suffering from Alzheimer's disease. Through a series of dreams and flashbacks, Codi reveals hurtful childhood memories and her struggles to find meaning for her life. Halimeda (Hallie), Codi's only sibling, has gone to Nicaragua to offer agricultural expertise, and the letters between Hallie and Codi include information about the U.S. involvement with the Contras in the Sandinista revolution. As a biology teacher, Codi also discovers and becomes involved in an environmental issue that threatens the town. Hallie's death forces Codi to confront her own fears and to choose between a life of continued self-isolation and Loyd Peregrina, the man with whom she has fallen in love.

Characters:

Cosima (Codi) Noline: Thirty-two-year-old protagonist of the novel. She has been away from Grace for ten years. Codi's mother died when Codi was three, and she has always primarily felt rejection from her father. Although a graduate of medical school, she has worked at a variety of menial jobs. She has returned to Grace to see about her father and has taken a job as the high-school biology teacher.

Doc Homer Noline: Codi's father, the family physician in Grace. He suffers from Alzheimer's disease, and the novel reveals his increasing confusion as the disease progresses.

Halimeda (Hallie) Noline: Codi's sister, three years younger. She has recently gone to Nicaragua and is revealed to the reader by Codi's memories and their letters.

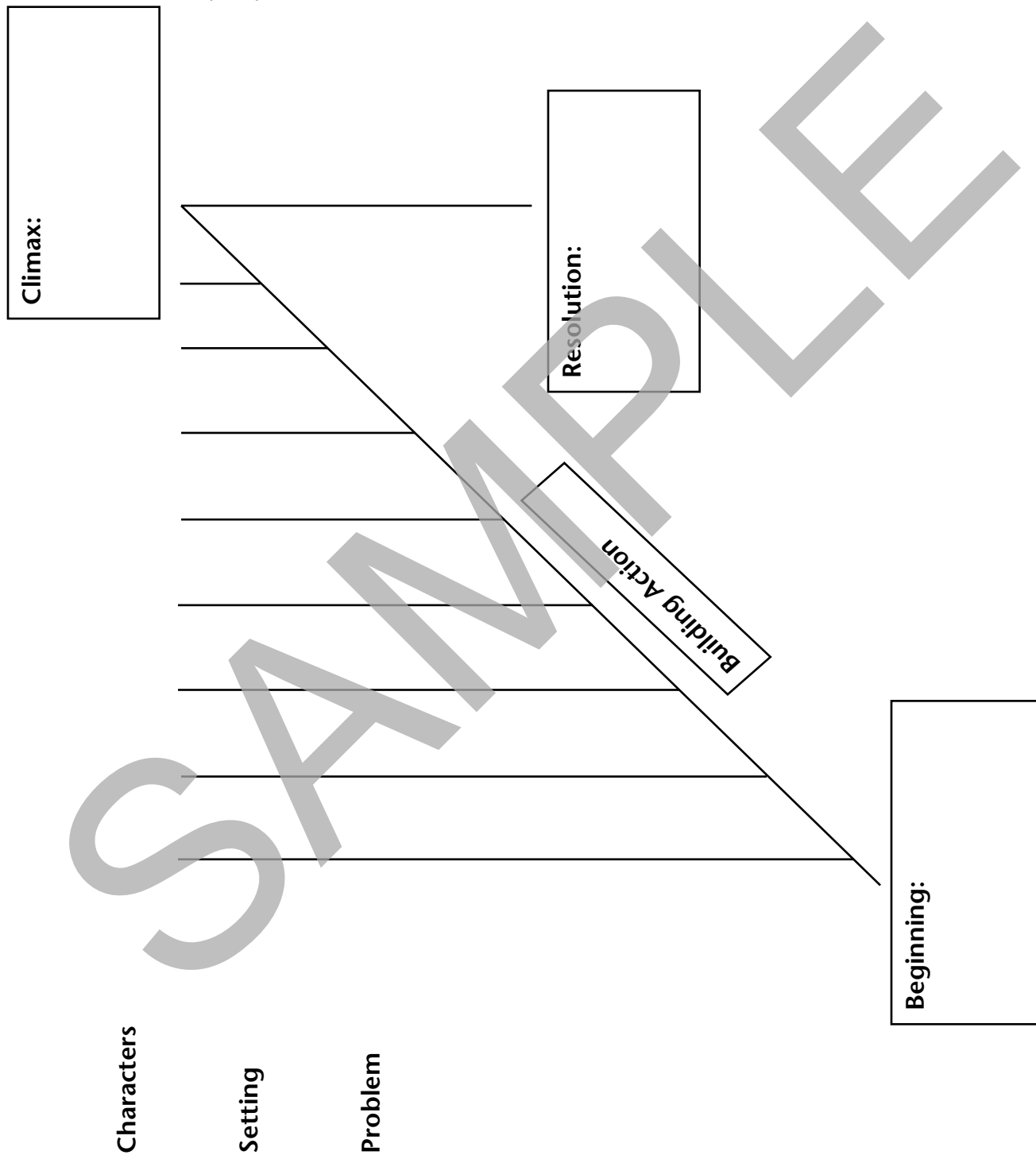
Loyd Peregrina: An Apache Indian with whom Codi was briefly involved as a teenager. He never knew about the child he fathered that Codi lost through a miscarriage. He and Codi fall in love.

Emelina Domingos: Codi's high-school friend who helps her "find herself" when she returns to Grace.

Viola, Dona Althea, Uda Dell: Three of the "fifty mothers" who watched over Codi and Hallie when they were children and who play an important role in Codi's resolution of the past.

Graphing Plot Lines

Directions: Before beginning the novel, create a plot line like the one below. Then record the major elements of the story as you read.



Chapter-by-Chapter

Chapter 1, pp. 3-4

This chapter reflects on an incident from Hallie and Codi's childhood. Doc Homer recalls the "Day of All Souls" and alludes to a hidden family heritage, the death of his wife, and what the children have lost.

Discussion Question

Identify Cosima, Halimeda, and Dr. Homer Noline. Why does Doc Homer decide the children will no longer be allowed to participate in the Day of All Souls? (*Cosima – Codi – is the older and is protective of Halimeda – Hallie; Doc Homer is their father. He feels there are too many skeletons, literally and figuratively, in the cemetery.*)

Supplementary Activities

1. Analyze and discuss the statement, "A great-grandmother who isn't their business" (page 4). To whom does this refer and why isn't it their business? (*Responses will vary. Refer back to this statement when Codi discovers who Dona Althea really is.*)
2. **Literary devices:** (Note: Kingsolver's writing is rich with similes and metaphors. Have students keep a list of the literary devices they find in the novel; examples are given at the end of each chapter.)
Simile: (p. 3) ... girls curled together like animals ...
Allusion: (p. 3) Day of All Souls (see information in Introductory Activities section, page 5 of this guide).

Chapter 2, pp. 7-16

Codi identifies herself as the narrator. She reveals that Hallie has left her for the first time, to go to Nicaragua, and Codi is bound for their childhood home, Grace, Arizona. She has left behind in Tucson Carlo, her lover of ten years, whom she met in medical school. The reader discovers that Codi does not practice medicine and her career is on a downward trend, that Doc Homer is ill, and that Codi has taken a job as a high-school biology teacher. She feels estranged from her father and the town.

Vocabulary

conjoined (8)

divergent (8)

imperious (8)

prestigious (12)

Discussion Questions

1. How does Codi reveal Hallie's involvement in the war in Nicaragua? What has this led Codi to do? Whom does she leave behind in Tucson? (*She states, "I am the sister who didn't go to war," and then proceeds to explain where and why Hallie has gone. Codi heads for Grace, Arizona. She leaves Carlo, her lover of ten years.*)
2. Why does Codi refer to Hallie as "our center of gravity?" (*Hallie is the one who has kept things going; Codi, Carlo, and the house plants withered when Hallie left.*)