



**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 9-12**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# **Cold Mountain**

Charles Frazier

**READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT**

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Charles Frazier

## 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

### Critical Thinking

Brainstorm, analyze,  
compare/contrast, research,  
predict, cause/effect

### Vocabulary

Target words, definitions,  
synonyms/antonyms,  
applications

### Writing

Essay, poetry, dialogue,  
alternate ending, journal,  
song lyrics

### Listening/Speaking

Discussions, oral reports,  
dramatic performance

### Comprehension

Plot development, inference,  
thematic development,  
decision making

### Literary Elements

Metaphors, similes, conflict,  
symbolism, foreshadowing,  
irony, characterization,  
setting, theme, sequence,  
analogy

### Across the Curriculum

Art—caricature, sketch,  
montage, collage;  
Music—music of the era;  
History—Civil War, Lowry War,  
war letters, Cherokee culture  
and symbolism

**Genre:** historical fiction (Civil War); survival, romance

**Setting:** Cold Mountain, North Carolina, and surrounding states/regions; 1864 with flashbacks to earlier dates

**Point of View:** third-person omniscient

**Themes:** survival, perseverance, love, war, good vs. evil, fate, death

**Conflict:** person vs. society, person vs. self, person vs. person, person vs. nature

**Style:** narrative

**Tone:** serious, reflective, solemn

**Date of First Publication:** 1997

## Summary

Inman, a wounded Confederate soldier, is disillusioned with the war and haunted by memories of the killing he has seen in battle. He furtively leaves the hospital and begins his journey back to Cold Mountain in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, and to Ada, the woman he loves. During his trek he encounters a myriad of characters, some good and some evil, as he struggles to elude the ruthless Home Guard troops who are searching for deserters. The story of his quest home interweaves with Ada's story. Refined and educated, her father's death leaves her penniless and isolated on Cold Mountain. With Ruby, a resilient young woman who comes to her aid, Ada works to restore her father's dilapidated farm. As the stories converge, both Ada and Inman reveal the depth of their character and learn to do things, both good and bad, that they once thought were beyond their ability. Amid a war-torn and uncertain South, Ada and Inman reunite and find the love and peace they have struggled for. Inman is killed shortly after their reunion, but Ada perseveres to build a peaceful life—one Inman would have been proud of.

## Characters

**Inman:** honorable, heroic, and reflective Confederate soldier who is tormented by horrible visions of battle; his quest for peace and stability leads him back to Cold Mountain and the woman he loves

**Ada:** educated, artistic daughter of a clergyman who has protected her from harsh realities of life; matures through adversity into a strong, capable woman who is secure in her ability to survive and thrive

**Ruby Thewes:** salt-of-the-earth, pragmatic young woman; uneducated but knowledgeable about the natural world; comes to live with Ada and helps restore the farm

**Monroe:** Ada's father; minister; seeks a balance between his preconceived spiritual traditions and nature

**Esco and Sally Swanger:** good-hearted neighbors who assist Ada after her father's death; send Ruby to help Ada

**Stobrod Thewes:** Ruby's father; neglected her as a child, repeatedly left her to fend for herself

**Veasey:** sleazy, uncouth preacher who attempts to murder a young girl he impregnated; later travels with Inman

**Junior, Lila, and their extended family:** violent, immoral, and possibly cannibalistic; betray Inman and Veasey to the Home Guard

**goatwoman:** kind, compassionate, wise, artistic recluse; tends Inman's injuries; gives him shelter, food, and advice

**Sara:** young widow with a baby; gives Inman food and refuge; Inman kills Union troops to save her from their pillaging and consequent starvation

**Teague:** brutal, cunning leader of the Home Guard of Cold Mountain; prefers to murder Confederate outliers rather than return them to Confederate troops

**Pangle:** kind-hearted, dim-witted man who attaches himself to Stobrod; musically talented; killed by Teague's men

**Birch:** white-haired young man in Teague's cadre of sadistic Home Guard; kills Inman

**Reid (boy from Georgia):** young man who seeks refuge at Ada's farm; later marries Ruby

**Odell:** peddler; searching for his lost love, a slave-girl his family sold

**Swimmer:** young Native American who was childhood friends with Inman; represents Inman's peaceful, spiritual side

## About the Author

Charles Frazier was born November 4, 1950, in Asheville, North Carolina, and grew up in the Blue Ridge Mountains of his home state. He graduated from the University of North Carolina (1973), received an M.A. from Appalachian State University (mid-1970s), and earned his Ph.D. in English from the University of South Carolina (1986). He presently raises horses on a farm near Raleigh, North Carolina, where he lives with his wife, Katherine, and their daughter, Annie. While teaching literature part time, Frazier became interested in the history of W.P. Inman, his great-great-uncle. Inman's Civil War journey back to his home in the mountains of North Carolina provided the inspiration for Frazier's first novel, *Cold Mountain*. In an interview, Frazier stated that his information about Inman consisted of a paragraph of facts he gleaned from his father, war records, and state archives. He developed the plot from this information, which included details of Inman's family, his war service, and his return home. Frazier dedicated almost seven years of his life to writing *Cold Mountain*. The novel won the 1997 National Book Award and was adapted into a film of the same name in 2003. Directed by Anthony Minghella, the film features Jude Law as Inman, Nicole Kidman as Ada, and Renée Zellweger as Ruby. It is rated R for violence and sexuality and is 154 minutes long. Random House published Frazier's second novel, *Thirteen Moons*, in 2006.

## Background Information

1. Cold Mountain, North Carolina, is located 35 miles from Asheville. It is part of the Shining Rock Wilderness and Pisgah National Forest in the Blue Ridge Mountains.
2. The Civil War (a.k.a. War Between the States, War of Secession) began on April 12, 1861, when Southern troops fired on Fort Sumter, a U.S. military post in Charleston, South Carolina. The war ended on April 9, 1865, when Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia.

## Vocabulary

ague  
juddering  
riddling  
traversing  
irritably  
cadres  
floriferous  
swale  
epoch  
idylls  
stolid  
deputation  
demerits

2. Compare and contrast Inman's expectations when he reaches Ada's farm with the reality of the circumstances.  
*(Expectations: He has dreamed of this day and envisions Ada dressed in fine clothes, recognizing him, and running to meet him. They will hold each other, and he will ask her to marry him. To him, Ada symbolizes faith and hope that will help him overcome his fear and hate. Reality: He sees smoke from a fire, but no one answers his knock on the door. The boy finally appears and tells him that Ada and Ruby have gone to find the bodies of Stobrod and Pangle. Inman is unable to control his breathing and thoughts. He resolves to find Ada and begins to track the fading footsteps, eventually having to sleep on the ground again. Falling snow eradicates the footsteps, and he loses the trail. Hopeless, he thinks he will lie down and let the snow cover him.)*
3. What is Stobrod's condition, and how does Ruby help in his recovery? *(He has a hacking cough and high fever. Ruby uses her medicinal skills to make a poultice for his chest. She packs the deep hole in his chest with spider web and root shavings and uses herbs that Ada finds. His fever goes up and down, and he rambles incoherently. He has a strong will to live and gradually gains strength and becomes rational. Ruby decides he will live but wonders what she will do with him. Ada tells her that they will take him to the farm and care for him.)*
4. What happens when Ada and Inman finally meet again? What does Ada's response cause Inman to do? *(Inman starts toward Ada, who points her gun at him. He recognizes Ada and calls her name. When she doesn't recognize him, he begins to question his own ability to separate reality from fantasy. Ada is confused and thinks Inman is a beggar. He says to her what he had said in his dream at the gypsy camp, "I've been coming to you on a hard road and I'm not letting you go" but makes no move toward her. Still unrecognized, Inman begins to walk away, but turns back to her and says he doesn't know where to go. Suddenly, Ada recognizes him and sees the yearning for food, warmth, and kindness in his eyes. Inman, almost in a stupor, goes to her when she calls him.)*
5. What condition is Inman in, and how do Ada and Ruby respond to him? *(He is exhausted, ravenously hungry, and indecisive, but his need for sleep supersedes anything else. When he wakes, it takes him a few minutes to realize where he is. After giving Stobrod water, he goes to the other cabin to see Ada, where her beauty and her loving touch overcome him. Initially, neither can think of anything to say. Ruby, fearful of losing her place at the farm, says they can do without him. Ada responds that she does not need him but may want him.)*
6. What does the Indian village represent to Ada and Inman? *(It is a place of refuge, peace and healing. Here, they can communicate openly and love each other completely without fear of censure. The arrow they find in the village symbolizes the continuity of life and marks the spot to which they plan to someday bring their own children. Their discussion of the Indians' fears and the realization that the world found them there and destroyed them foreshadows that Inman will be found.)*
7. What does it mean when Inman says, "any wound might heal on the skin side but keep on burrowing inward to a man's core until it ate him up" (p. 412)? How does Inman hope to deal with his grief? *(Just as a physical wound can heal on the outside but become a seething bed of infection inside, Inman fears that he can never be healed inwardly from the memories of the war. Ada believes he can. He realizes that a person must not grieve indefinitely, and he must choose whether or not to go on. He knows he will carry scars but can find "redemption" in Ada's love.)*

8. During Inman's journey, he killed on instinct to survive. Why does Inman hesitate as he finishes off Teague's men? Contrast Inman's view of killing with that of the boy who kills him. (*Inman's killer instincts have already softened because of Ada's love. After he kills off Teague and most of the Home Guard, he tries to negotiate a way out of killing Birch. Inman wants Birch to surrender and says, "I'm not one of you-all" [p. 443], because he is no longer a killer. Inman says he will kill though, if only so he doesn't have to look over his shoulder the rest of his life in fear of Birch. The boy makes light of the situation and, almost without realizing it, shoots and kills Inman. Ada hears the gunshots and rushes back to Inman. She cradles him in her lap as he dies.*)
9. What is hidden in the symbolism of "the spirits of crows"? (*Answers will vary, but as Inman is dying, he drifts in and out of dreams of home and crows. His vision of the spirits of crows symbolizes his death and harkens back to when he wished he could think himself into becoming a crow and fly away. Crows played a prominent role in Inman's life throughout his journey.*)
10. Discuss what the epilogue reveals about life in Black Cove. (*Ten years have passed since Inman's death. Ruby is married to Reid, the boy from Georgia, and they have three children. Stobrod lives at the farm, helps with the chores, and delights everyone with his fiddle playing. It is implied by the age of Ada's daughter that the girl is Inman's, and she is the remaining legacy of her mother and father's love.*)

### Supplementary Activities

1. Working with a partner, write and perform a short one-act play in which Ada tells her daughter about Inman.
2. Write a two-page short story about what happens to Birch after he shoots Inman. Where does he go? What does he do? How does he feel about his time in the Home Guard?
3. Examples: **Similes**—"night...black as the inside of a cold stove" (p. 392); "(the snow) came down soft...like ground cornmeal" (p. 423)

## Word Map

**Directions:** Use the example below to complete a word map for at least five of the following words: emanated, cadres, stolid, jocular, feral, effigy, maudlin, impervious, fallow, fastidious. Each member of the group should complete one branch of the map for each word.

The diagram is a word map template. It consists of a central square box labeled "WORD" with a horizontal line below it. Four other square boxes are connected to the central box by lines extending from its corners. The top-left box is labeled "Synonyms" and contains three horizontal lines. The top-right box is labeled "Antonyms" and contains three horizontal lines. The bottom-left box is labeled "Definition in your own words" and contains three horizontal lines. The bottom-right box is labeled "Used in a sentence" and contains three horizontal lines.