



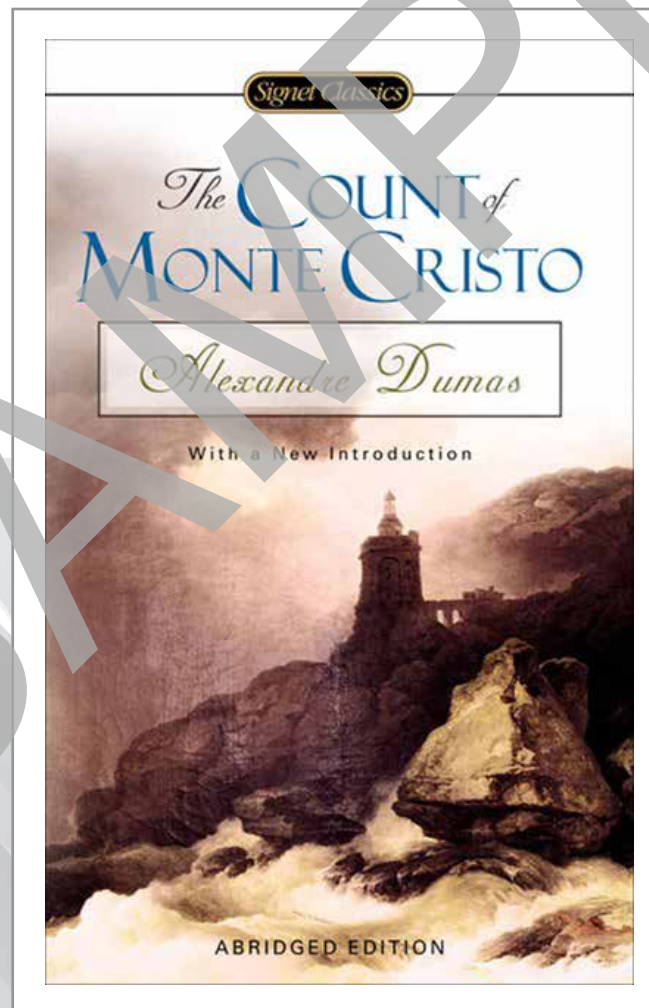
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 9-12

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

The Count of Monte Cristo

Alexandre Dumas



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

The Count of Monte Cristo

Alexandre Dumas

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

Comprehension

Predicting, cause/effect,
inference, time line

Writing

Poetry, prose, dialogue,
letter, sequel, ballad, précis

Thinking

Research, compare/contrast,
analysis, brainstorming,
critical thinking

Vocabulary

Target words, definitions,
application

Literary Elements

Characterization, symbolism,
irony, personification, simile,
metaphor, allusion, theme,
universality, foreshadowing,
conflict

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, oral reading,
poetry reading, film viewing,
music, drama

Across the Curriculum

Art—drawing, coat-of-arms,
collage; History—research,
maps

Genre: fiction

Point of View: third-person omniscient

Style: narrative

Setting: France, 1800s

Themes: vengeance, greed, love, power

Summary

A young French sailor, Edmond Dantès, is falsely accused of treason and imprisoned for fourteen years. After his miraculous escape, he finds hidden treasure and returns to France as the wealthy and prestigious Count of Monte Cristo. He implements plans for retribution on those who betrayed him, believing that he is God's instrument of vengeance. After he goes beyond the limits of rightful retaliation, he realizes that supreme power and wisdom are in God's hands alone.

Primary Characters

Edmond Dantès, the Count of Monte Cristo: protagonist; handsome, honest, humble young seaman who is wrongfully imprisoned; eventually escapes, finds hidden treasure, and returns to society as the rich, shrewd Count of Monte Cristo, intent on revenge against his enemies; other pseudonyms: English law clerk, Sinbad the Sailor, Lord Wilmore, Signor Giacomo Busoni

Louis Dantès: Edmond's father; impoverished; dies soon after Edmond's imprisonment

Abbé Faria: prisoner in Château d'If; becomes Dantès' friend and tells him about the treasure on the Isle of Monte Cristo

Monsieur Morrel: owner of the merchant ship *Pharaon*; Dantès' employer, true friend, and supporter

Maximilian and Julie Morrel; Emmanuel Herbaut: Morrel's children and son-in-law

Danglars: Dantès' jealous fellow seaman, villain who is directly responsible for Dantès' imprisonment; becomes a rich banker but loses all under vengeful hand of Count of Monte Cristo

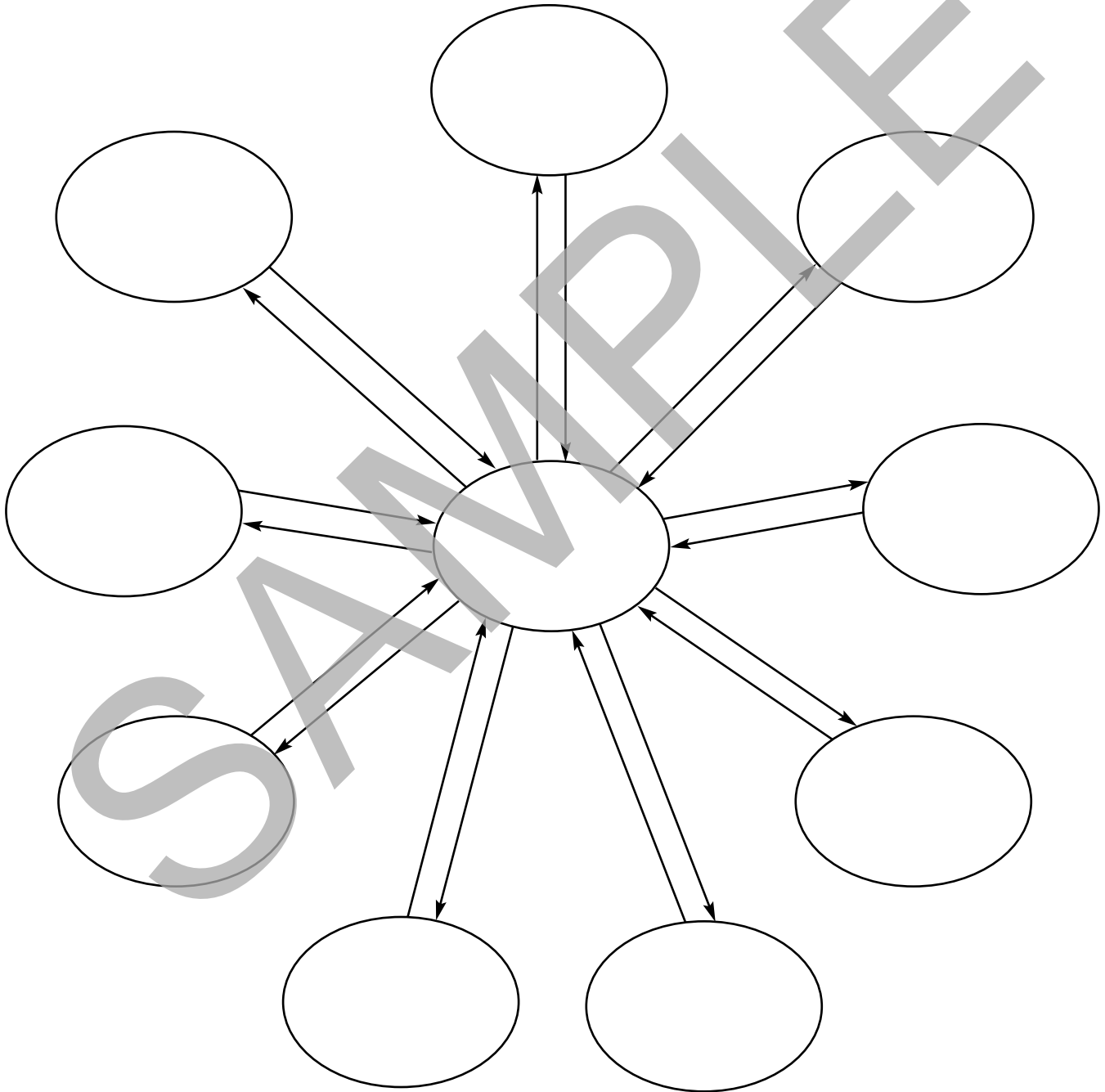
Mme. Danglars: Danglars' wife

Eugénie Danglars: Danglars' daughter

Louise D'Armilly: Eugénie's friend and music teacher

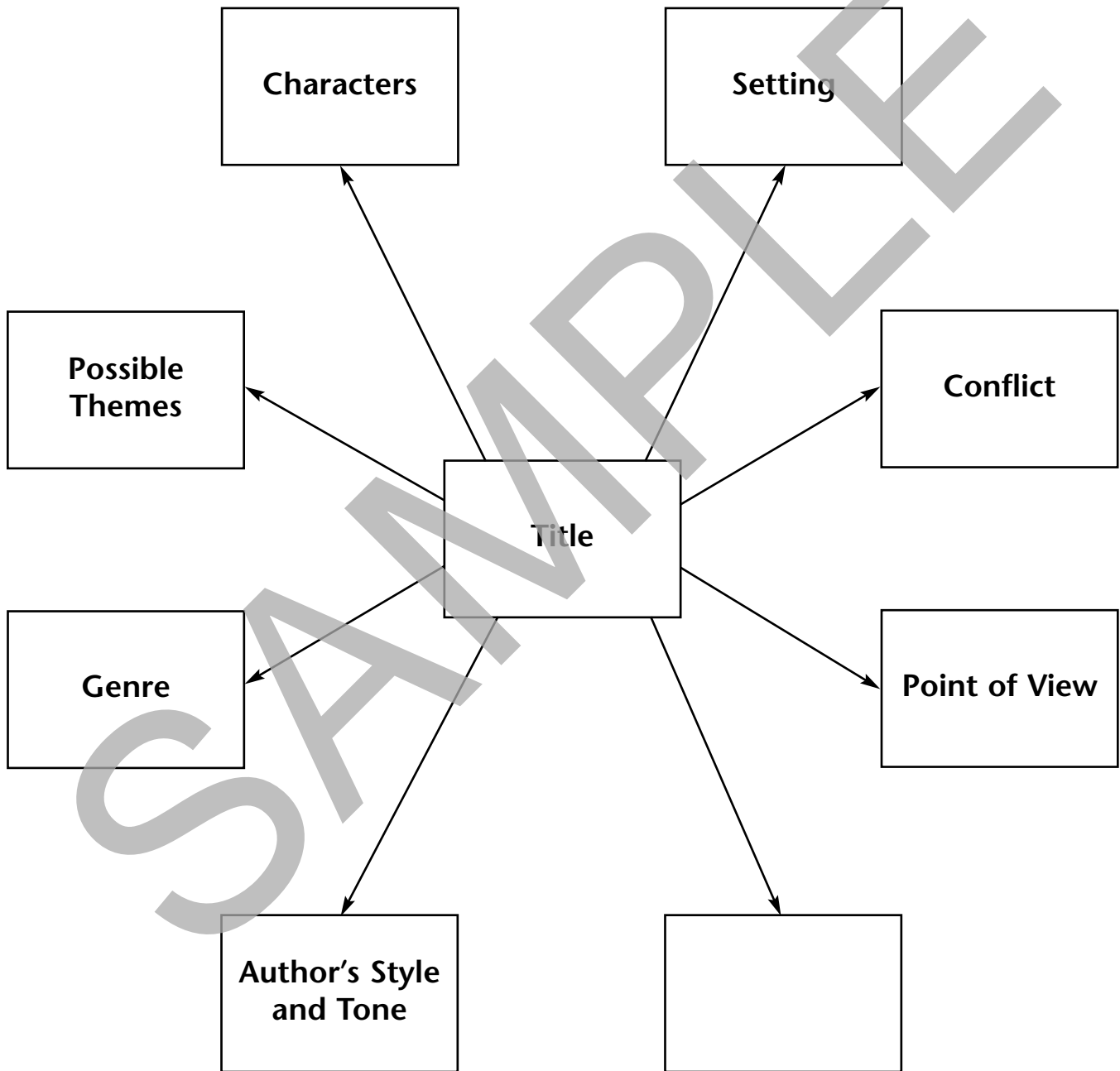
Sociogram

Directions: Complete the sociogram below by adding major and minor characters to the blank ovals. On the arrows, write a word or words to describe the relationship between the central character and the other characters. Remember, relationships go both ways, so each line requires a descriptive word. Find examples from the text to justify your answers and refer to page numbers.



Story Map

Directions: Use the diagram below with a partner or small group to free associate thoughts about the novel after you have finished reading it. Jot down your thoughts in a similar format on a large piece of paper.



Chapters 1-4, pp. 1-29

Edmond Dantès, a sailor aboard the ship *Pharaon*, returns to France. He is to be named captain of the ship and plans to marry his fiancée, Mercédès. Some of his enemies conspire against him, causing him to be falsely arrested.

Vocabulary

melancholy (1)
imperious (17)

imperceptibly (3)

obsequious (3)

vexation (15)

Discussion Questions

1. Examine events aboard the *Pharaon* prior to and as it arrives in France. Discuss the importance of Dantès, Danglars, and Morrel in the opening chapter. Note the foreshadowing alluding to the Isle of Elba. (*The captain of the ship died and was buried at sea. Morrel, the owner of the ship, quizzes the young seaman Dantès. He tells Morrel about the captain's death and assures him that the cargo is safe. Danglars, the purser, is jealous of Dantès and subtly accuses him of delaying the ship by going ashore at the Isle of Elba and alludes to a letter the captain gave Dantès. Morrel plans to name Dantès as the ship's new captain. Dantès reveals existing tension between himself and Danglars. Foreshadowing: Napoleon Bonaparte, exiled self-appointed Emperor of France, retreated to and became ruler of the tiny Isle of Elba after his abdication in 1814. He returned to France in 1815 and briefly regained the monarchy but was defeated at Waterloo and was exiled to the island of St. Helene. pp. 1-9*)
2. Discuss Dantès' immediate actions after the ship lands and what this reveals. (*Dantès goes to see his father first and discovers that he has lived in poverty for many weeks because of payment of Dantès' debt to Caderousse, a tailor and neighbor. Dantès leaves his father for a joyful reunion with his fiancée, Mercédès. Prior to Dantès arrival, Mercédès' cousin Fernand proclaims his love for her and his desire to marry her. She rebuffs his proposal and vows her undying love for Dantès. pp. 9-16*)
3. Examine the interaction between Caderousse, Danglars, and Fernand. Analyze the role of each of the men in the conspiracy against Dantès. (*Dantès acts coldly toward Caderousse because of his mistreatment of Dantès' father, Danglars is jealous and bitter over Dantès' appointment as ship captain, and Dantès recognizes Fernand as an enemy because of Fernand's jealousy and bitterness over Mercédès' love for Dantès. Caderousse and Danglars meet outside Dantès' apartment and exchange words reflecting their mutual interest in Dantès' affairs. They contrive to meet Fernand after his angry departure from Mercédès and Dantès and manipulate him with flattery and arouse his jealousy. The three men form a conspiracy against Dantès. Each one is present at the betrothal feast and their actions allude to this conspiracy. Danglars' conversation with Morrel undermines Dantès' loyalty. pp. 13-14, 17-29*)
4. Analyze the implications of Dantès' arrest as a Bonapartist agent. Elicit student response to terms such as traitor, spy, conspiracy, and betrayal. (*Present information about Napoleon Bonaparte. This is found in the introductory material of this guide and at the beginning of Chapter 5. Tensions were high in 1815, following Napoleon's abdication as Emperor of France in 1814, and anyone thought to be associated with Napoleon would be suspected of conspiring*)

against King Louis XVIII. If convicted of being a Bonapartist agent, Dantès will face death or imprisonment for life. pp. 25-29)

5. **Prediction:** What will happen to Dantès? to Dantès' father? to Mercédès?

Supplementary Activities

1. Display a map of France and the surrounding countries. Have students trace the path of the *Pharaon*: Smyrna, Trieste, Naples, and Marseilles (p. 1) and locate the Isle of Elba. Continue locating other places while reading the book.
2. Have students bring to class current newspaper or magazine articles involving alleged and/or convicted spies and their punishment under national law.
3. Note the following similes: Mercédès' hair...as black as jet and eyes of velvety softness of the gazelle (p. 15); Fernand recoiled like a wayfarer at the sight of a snake (p. 16); Fernand's hatred...like a powerless though furious wave (p. 17); Fernand...running like one demented (p. 17); two lovers went on their way like two of the elect on their way to Heaven (p. 21).

Chapters 5-7, pp. 29-49

Dantès is taken before Villefort on charges of treason. Villefort realizes that the Paris-bound letter Dantès received on Elba is addressed to Noirtier, Villefort's own Bonapartist father. Villefort has Dantès imprisoned in the Château d'If.

Vocabulary

usurpers (29)

royalists (30)

plebeian (31)

imprudence (39)

presentiment (44)

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss Villefort and his father and examine their relationship. (*Villefort is deputy magistrate, 27 years old, loyal to King Louis XVIII, and engaged to a beautiful, wealthy girl. His father, Noirtier, is a Bonapartist who had been a senator under Napoleon. Villefort has distanced himself from his father and discarded the name Noirtier. Villefort must watch his own actions carefully because of the suspicions surrounding his father. pp. 29-34*)
2. Analyze Villefort's inquisition of Dantès and why he sends him to prison. (*Villefort is impressed with Dantès' answers to his questions and believes Dantès has been falsely accused because of jealousy but is loyal to the King. When he learns that the letter Dantès received on the Isle of Elba is addressed to Noirtier, Villefort realizes the precariousness of his position. Terror of losing his position and being accused of Bonapartist sympathies cause Villefort to burn the letter and send Dantès to prison. pp. 35-45*)
3. Discuss the Château d'If and its effect on Dantès. (*Only important political defendants are sent to the prison. Its name brings terror to those who are condemned to go there. Dantès tries hopelessly to hurl himself into the sea. His initial cell is a damp underground room, and he cannot eat or sleep. His repeated demands to see the governor cause him to be transferred to the dungeon where madmen are placed. pp. 45-49*)