



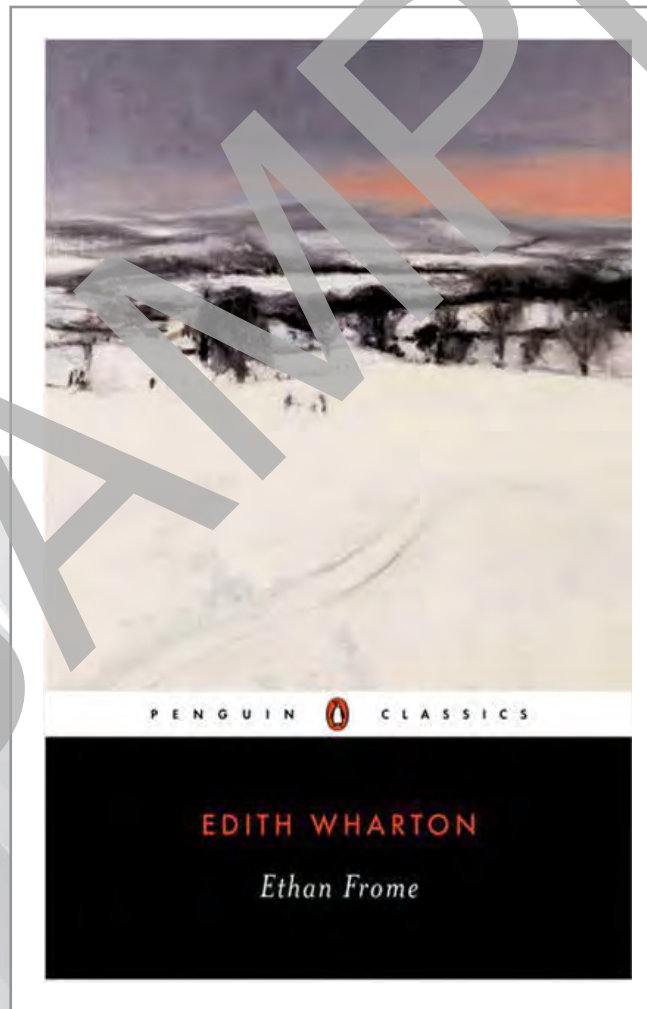
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 9-12

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Ethan Frome

Edith Wharton



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Ethan Frome

Edith Wharton

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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NOVEL UNITS: RATIONALE

How do you ensure that the needs of individual students are met in a heterogeneous classroom? How do you challenge students of all abilities without losing some to confusion and others to boredom?

With the push toward “untracking” our schools, there are questions that more and more educators need to examine. As any teacher of “gifted” or “remedial” students can attest, even “homogeneous” classrooms contain students with a range of abilities and interests. Here are some of the strategies research suggests:

- cooperative learning
- differentiated assignments
- questioning strategies that tap several levels of thinking
- flexible grouping within the class
- cross-curriculum integration
- process writing
- portfolio evaluation

Novel Units Teacher’s Guides and *Student Packets* are designed with these seven facets in mind. Discussion questions, projects, and activities are framed to span all of the levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy. Graphic organizers are provided to enhance critical thinking and comprehension. Tests and quizzes (included in the Student Packets) have been developed at two levels of difficulty (Level 1=lower; Level 2=higher). While most of the activities in the Teacher’s Guides and Student Packets could be completed individually, many are ideal vehicles for collaborative effort.

Throughout the guides, there is an emphasis on collaboration: students helping other students to generate ideas, students working together to actualize those ideas, and students sharing their products with other students. Extension activities link literature with other areas of the curriculum—including writing, art, music, science, history, geography, and current events—and provide a basis for portfolio evaluation.

Finally, teachers are encouraged to adapt the guides to meet the needs of individual classes and students. The open-ended nature of many of the activities makes them useful for most any level.

You know your students best; we are offering you some tools for working with them. On the following page are some of the “nuts and bolts” for using these “tools”: a glossary of some of the terms used above that will facilitate your use of the guides.

VOCABULARY, DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

WRITING IDEAS, ACTIVITIES

Narrator's Introduction

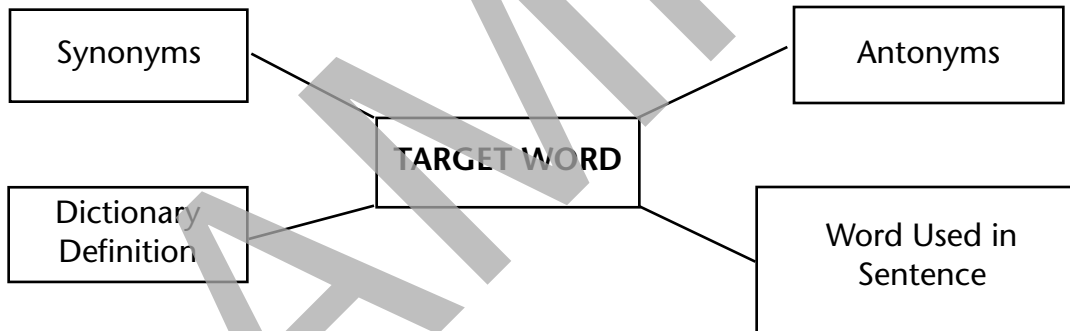
pages 3-19

Vocabulary

colonnade 3	mien 4	taciturnity 4	sardonically 6
degenerate 6	garrison 7	capitulating 7	beleaguered 7
colloquially 7	portico 8	wan 8	innocuous 8
reticent 8	provocation 9	livery 9	arid 10
incarnation 11	sentient 11	inertia 13	allusion 13
exanimate 14	plaintive 15	wraith 15	deciduous 15
consolatory 16	floundered 18	querulously 18	droning 18

Vocabulary Activity

Word mapping is an activity that lends itself to any vocabulary list. For words that have no antonyms, students provide a picture or symbol that captures the word meaning.



Discussion Questions

1. What are your impressions of the narrator? How does he happen to be in Starkfield? (He seems to be a sensitive sort who enjoys people-watching. He is an engineer who was hired to do a job in a nearby town. A carpenters' strike delayed work, so he had to spend the winter.)
2. What do you learn about Ethan Frome? From where does this information come? How do you imagine him, in your mind's eye? (From Harmon Gow and others, the narrator learns that Frome's facial disfigurement and limp were caused by a "smash-up" and that Frome is now poor. The narrator describes him as tall, stiffened, and having a bleak expression.)

Chapter 3

pages 42-49

Vocabulary

scintillating 42
indentured 43
merino 46
precedent 46
imprudence 48

perceptible 43
pot-pourri 44
undulations 46
commemorated 47

audible 43
stenography 44
valise 46
preclude 47

gales 43
obstinate 45
sedentary 46
pretext 48

Discussion Questions

1. What does Ethan think about the morning after he walks Mattie home from the dance? Why do you suppose he didn't kiss Mattie? (He thinks about how his wife went silently to sleep, how lovely Mattie is, how he wished he had kissed Mattie.)
2. In what sense was Mattie "indentured" to the Fromes? Was she at all bitter about having to stay with them? (She didn't have much choice about coming for this non-paying job because her father had died leaving her with practically nothing; she doesn't seem bitter, though.)
3. What skills does Mattie have? Why didn't she stay at her department store job? (She can trim a hat, make molasses candy, recite poems, play a couple of songs on the piano, do a little stenography and bookkeeping; her health had broken down.)
4. What impression do you have of Mattie's extended family? Why did the "clan" suggest that Zeena have Mattie help her? (They are not concerned about her welfare, but enjoy seeing her "pay" for what her father did; it was her father who lost their savings in some shady scheme.)
5. How does Mattie change after several months on the farm? Do you think she is happy? Why doesn't she talk back to Zeena when Zeena finds fault with her? Would you? (She grows healthier, seems happy, and is unwilling to "rock the boat.")
6. Why does Ethan drive the lumber over to Andrew Hale's himself? Why does he change his mind about his plans? (He is worried that Zeena has it in for Mattie and is about to do something vengeful, so he puts off facing Zeena; then he has a vision of Mattie and decides that he wants to be there if there is trouble.)
7. Why is Zeena going to Bettsbridge? Why would the announcement of this trip usually bother Ethan? Why doesn't it bother him now? (She is going to see a new doctor; usually Ethan would worry about the cost, but now he is only too glad to be rid of Zeena so that he can be alone with Mattie.)

-
8. How old is Zeena? How old is Ethan? Why does the narrator say that Zeena is “already an old woman”? (p. 48) (Zeena is 35 and Ethan is 28; she acts crotchety and looks old, complains constantly about her illnesses.)
 9. What excuse does Ethan make for not driving Zeena to the station himself? Why does he make an excuse? Why does he regret making it? (He wants to have more time to spend with Mattie, so says that he is collecting money from Ned Hale; he regrets saying so because Hale has not promised any money and now Zeena may spend more.)
 10. **Prediction:** What do you think will happen now that Mattie and Ethan are alone together?

Writing Activity: You are Zeena. Write a letter to your sister. Tell her how you are feeling and how things are working out with Mattie.

Literary Analysis: Point of View

Point of view is the method used by the novelist to tell the story. When the first-person point of view is used, a main or minor character tells the story. When the omniscient point of view is chosen, the story is told by an all-knowing observer who can see into the hearts and minds of all the characters. In the omniscient third person, the narrator is all-knowing, but his observations are limited primarily to what one of the characters could know.

Which point of view did Edith Wharton choose?

(First-person—the narrator tells us his vision of Ethan Frome, Mattie, and Zeena, based on what he has learned from Mrs. Hale, Harmon Gow, and personal observation.)

Chapter 4

pages 50-64

Vocabulary

spruce 50

volubility 52

forebodings 54

contracted 57

epitaph 59

sociability 51

transplanting 53

unconstrained 55

conjoined 57

barricade 59

inarticulate 51

pathological 53

opulence 55

discomfiture 58

insatiable 62

convivial 51

retort 54

spangled 57

larches 58

implored 63