

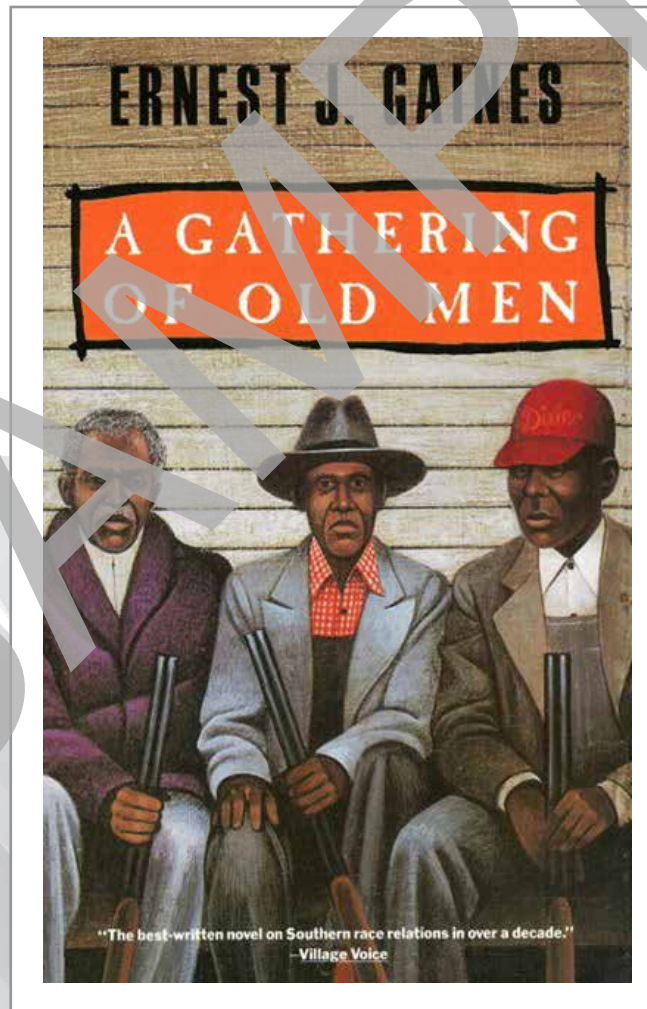


**STUDENT PACKET**

**GRADES 9-12**

# **A Gathering of Old Men**

Ernest J. Gaines



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

# A Gathering of Old Men

Ernest J. Gaines

## STUDENT PACKET

**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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Name \_\_\_\_\_

lateral (61)  
jowls (69)  
seersucker (74)  
exasperation (79)  
militant (86)  
white trash (101)

pathetic (61)  
ash-colored (71)  
panama hat (74)  
pawn (81)  
palm-of-Christians (91)  
platoon (104)

bayou (65)  
harboring (73)  
deacon (78)  
divining rods (81)  
gall (95)  
chifforobe (104)

twitch (67)  
coroner (74)  
tactic (78)  
brutal (84)  
derrick (96)  
bootlicker (105)

**Directions:** Circle the word that does not belong in each list. Briefly explain why that word does not belong.

1. lateral                      sidelong                      oblique                      horizontal

\_\_\_\_\_

2. pathetic                      ruthless                      pitiful                      poignant

\_\_\_\_\_

3. bayou                      lagoon                      terra firma                      estuary

\_\_\_\_\_

4. twitch                      rigid                      jerk                      quiver

\_\_\_\_\_

5. jowls                      jaw                      mandible                      ears

\_\_\_\_\_

6. ash-colored                      colorful                      pallid                      colorless

\_\_\_\_\_

7. harboring                      disclosure                      concealing                      obscuring

\_\_\_\_\_

8. coroner                      officer                      actor                      examiner

\_\_\_\_\_

9. seersucker                      leach                      fabric                      ruffles

\_\_\_\_\_

10. panama hat                      straw                      lightweight                      wool

\_\_\_\_\_

11. deacon                      church                      jailer                      elder

\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper. Starred questions indicate thought or opinion.

### **Pages 3-13**

1. \*What does Toddy know about Snookum? How does he use his information against Snookum? Have you ever had a similar experience? If so, how did you handle it?
2. \*What does Candy send Snookum to do? Why do you think she is so urgent?
3. \*Explain what Snookum sees at Mathu's house. Why is this significant?
4. What is revealed about Mathu that contrasts to Candy?
5. Why doesn't Janey call the Major or Miss Bea? Who does she decide to call and why?
6. What indicates Miss Merle's concern?
7. Begin concisely identifying the steps of plot development using the plot graph on page 19 of this guide. Continue to add throughout the novel.
8. Prediction: Who is Fix and why is he coming to the plantation?

### **Pages 14-26**

1. What two things does Candy tell Merle she can do? What is Candy's plan? How can Merle help?
2. What is Janey's role to be?
3. Who is Clatoo? Why does he hate Fix?
4. Begin a chart on which you list the black men and their grievances against Fix Boutan and other white men. Continue the list as you read the novel.

### **Pages 27-40**

1. \*How do Chimley and Mat react to the news? Why is this significant?
2. \*Give the ages of Chimley and Mat. How effective do you think they will be at Mathu's? Relate their ages to the title of the book.
3. \*What does Mat mean when he tells Chimley, "This can be my last chance"?
4. Explain Mat's grievances against various white people.
5. Describe Ella and explain the conflict between her and Mat.
6. Identify and describe Clatoo and Cherry Bello. Explain how Chimley got his name.

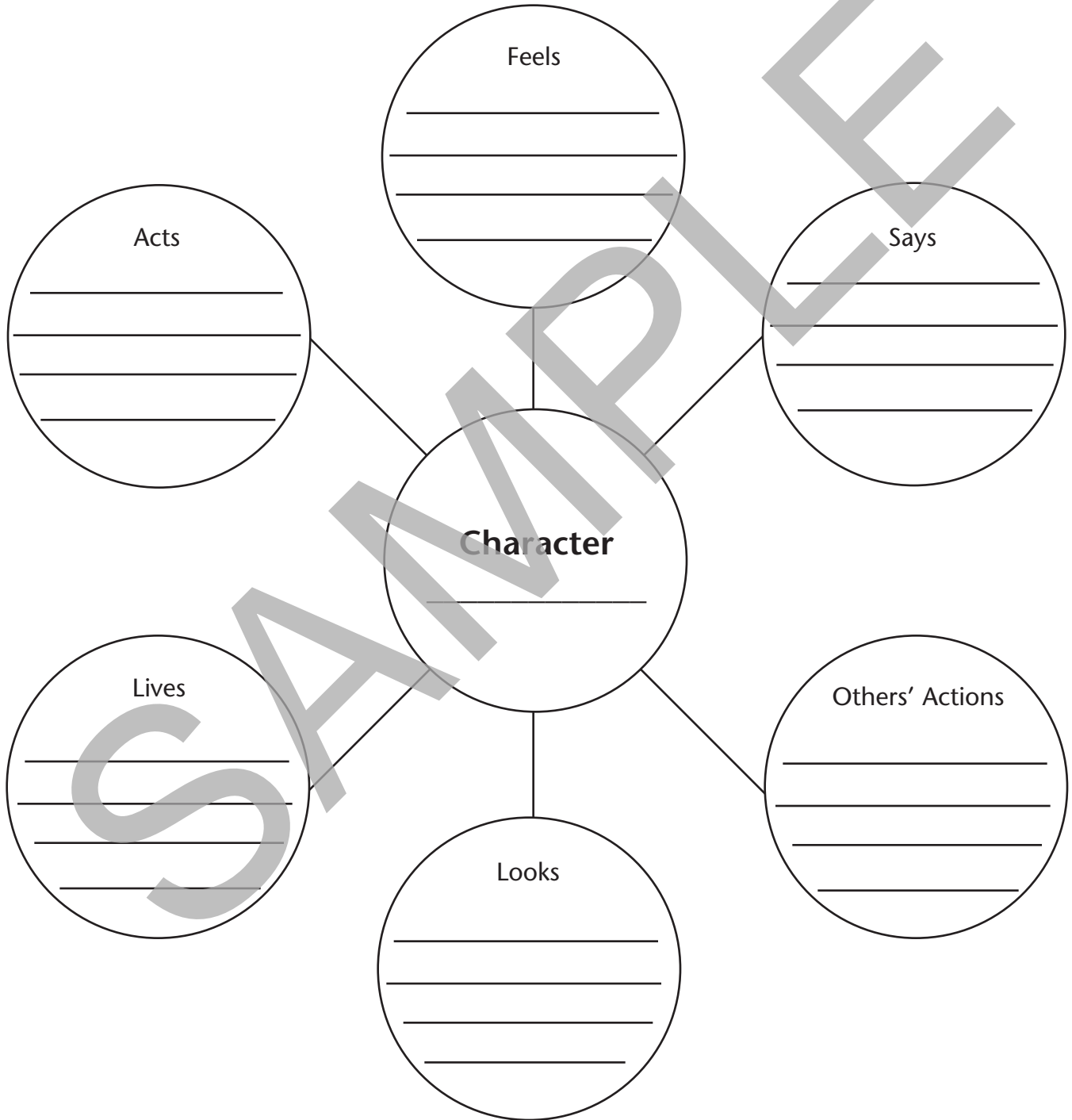
### **Pages 41-57**

1. Describe Yank and Dirty Red.
2. Why is Billy the brunt of teasing and shaming by the other men?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Attribute Web

**Direction:** Place Candy's name in the center oval, then create an attribute web for her.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Cause/Effect Chart

**Directions:** Make a flow chart that shows decisions characters made, the decisions characters could have made, and the results from each. Use your imagination to speculate on the results of decisions a character could have made.

