

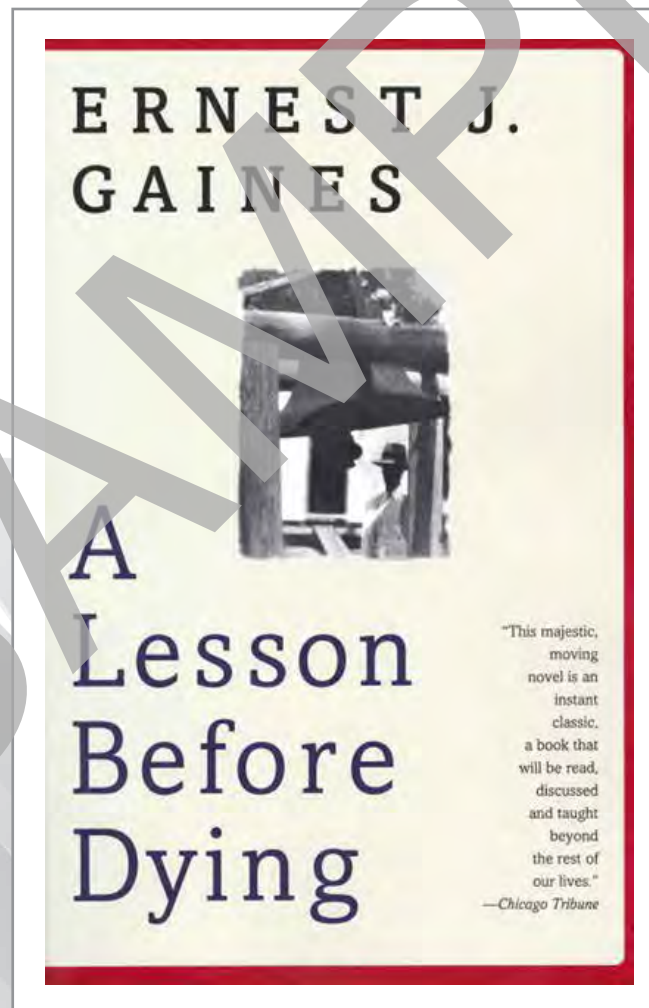


STUDENT PACKET

GRADES 9-12

# A Lesson Before Dying

Ernest J. Gaines



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

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**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 \_\_\_\_\_

*A Lesson Before Dying*  
Activity #3 • Vocabulary  
Chapters 1–8

godmother (3)  
illegible (11)  
parish (25)  
innate (41)  
mulatto (62)

conspiracy (7)  
plantation (12)  
ashy (33)  
cynicism (43)  
Creole (64)

modicum (7)  
parain (12)  
tyrant (38)  
agitated (44)

quarter (10)  
antebellum (17)  
stealth (41)  
humanitarianism (56)

**Directions:** Write the correct vocabulary word for each definition.

1. \_\_\_\_\_: person who uses his power cruelly or unjustly
2. \_\_\_\_\_: a small quantity
3. \_\_\_\_\_: godfather
4. \_\_\_\_\_: descendant of early French or Spanish settlers in Louisiana
5. \_\_\_\_\_: doubting the sincerity and goodness of others
6. \_\_\_\_\_: secret plan to do something unlawful or wrong
7. \_\_\_\_\_: pale as ashes
8. \_\_\_\_\_: principles that indicate helpfulness to humanity
9. \_\_\_\_\_: a woman who sponsors a child when it is baptized
10. \_\_\_\_\_: a county in Louisiana
11. \_\_\_\_\_: existing naturally in anything; inherent
12. \_\_\_\_\_: a section, district, or certain part of a community
13. \_\_\_\_\_: a secret or sly action
14. \_\_\_\_\_: very hard or impossible to read
15. \_\_\_\_\_: person of mixed white and black descent
16. \_\_\_\_\_: before the Civil War
17. \_\_\_\_\_: large farm or estate on which cotton, tobacco, or other crops are grown with work done by laborers who live there
18. \_\_\_\_\_: disturbed or excited

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper. Starred questions indicate thought or opinion questions or an activity. Use your answers in class discussions, for writing assignments, and to review for tests.

### Patterns for poems in activities

**Name poem:** Place the letters of the name vertically on the paper. Write a descriptive word or phrase beginning with each letter.

**Metaphor:** Line 1: noun, the title; Lines 2-4: write something about the subject, each line saying something different and giving an idea of what the subject is like; Line 5: a metaphor that begins with the title

**Diamente:** Line 1: one word (a noun, the subject); Line 2: two words (adjectives that describe line 1); Line 3: three words ("-ing" or "-ed" words that relate to line 1); Line 4: four nouns (first two relate to line 1; second two relate to line 7); Line 5: three words ("-ing" or "-ed" words that relate to line 7); Line 6: two words (adjectives that describe line 7); Line 7: one word (noun that is the opposite of line 1)

**Limerick:** a nonsense poem of five lines. The first, second, and fifth lines rhyme and have three stresses. The third and fourth lines rhyme and have two stresses.

**Five-senses:** Line 1: color of the emotion; Line 2: sound of the emotion; Line 3: taste of the emotion; Line 4: smell of the emotion; Line 5: sight (what the emotion looks like); Line 6: feeling evoked by the emotion

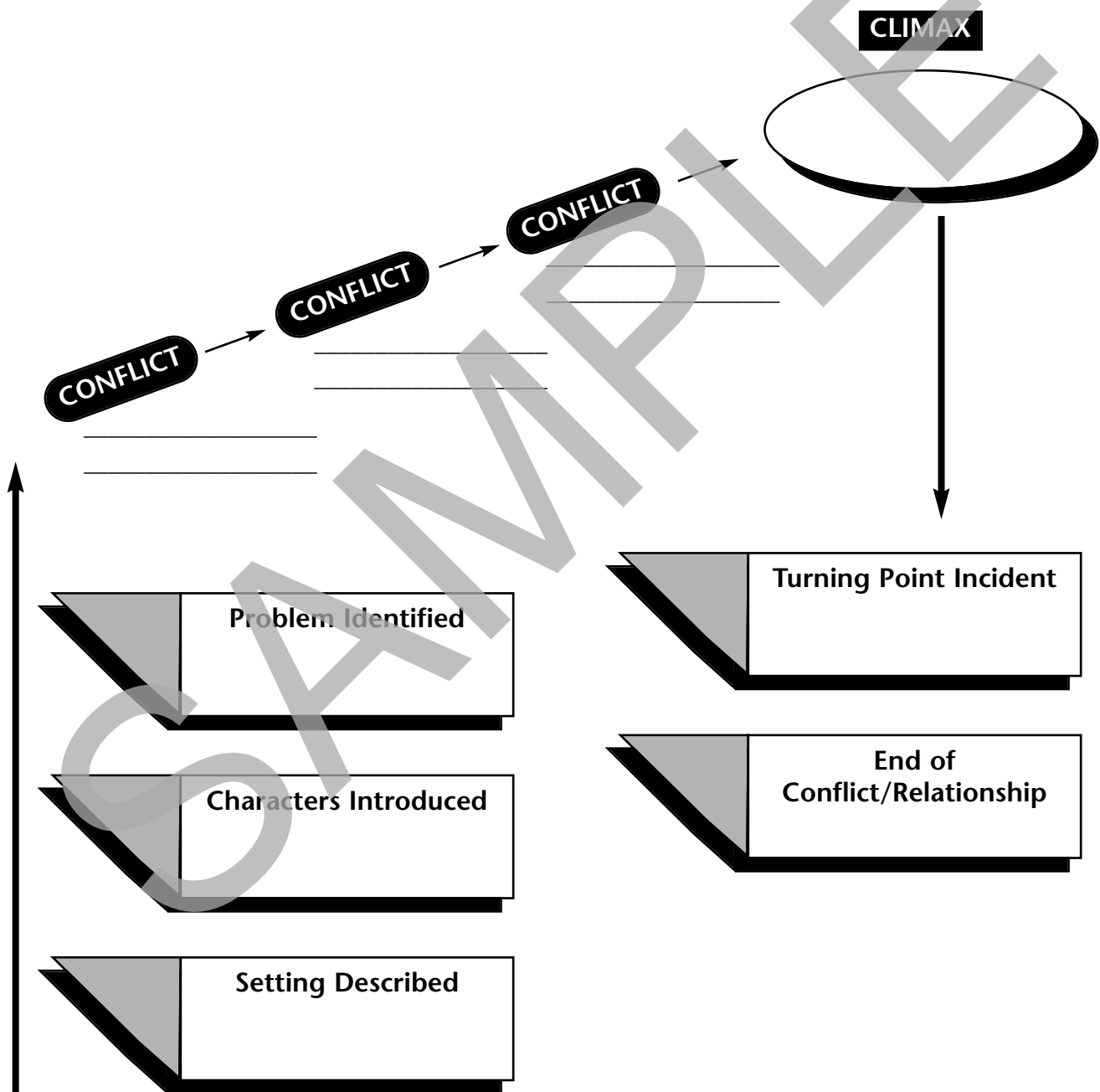
### Chapters 1–2, pp. 3-15

1. Identify: Jefferson, Grant, Brother, Bear, Alcee Gropé, Miss Emma, Reverend Mose Ambrose, and Tante Lou.
2. \*Why is the defendant on trial? What is the defendant's story? What is the prosecutor's version of the events? What do you think is the most damaging evidence? What is the verdict? What is the sentence?
3. \*Explain how you would vote if you were on the jury and why you would do so.
4. What do you learn about the narrator? What does Miss Emma ask him to do? Why? How does he feel about his ability to help?
5. \*Why is Henri Pichot important to Miss Emma?
6. Prediction: What will happen at the Pichot Plantation?
7. \*Activity: Write a five-senses poem about Jefferson's emotions at the trial (e.g., Hopelessness, Despair).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Story Map

**Directions:** Record the setting, characters, and problem first. Then follow the arrow to the plot line to record the incidents leading to the turning point. Identify the resolution.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Cause and Effect

**Directions:** Determine what event sparked the conflict at the beginning of *A Lesson Before Dying*. Trace how that event (cause) led to other effects and causes throughout the book's sequence of events. Then determine the final outcome, or effect, of the novel.

