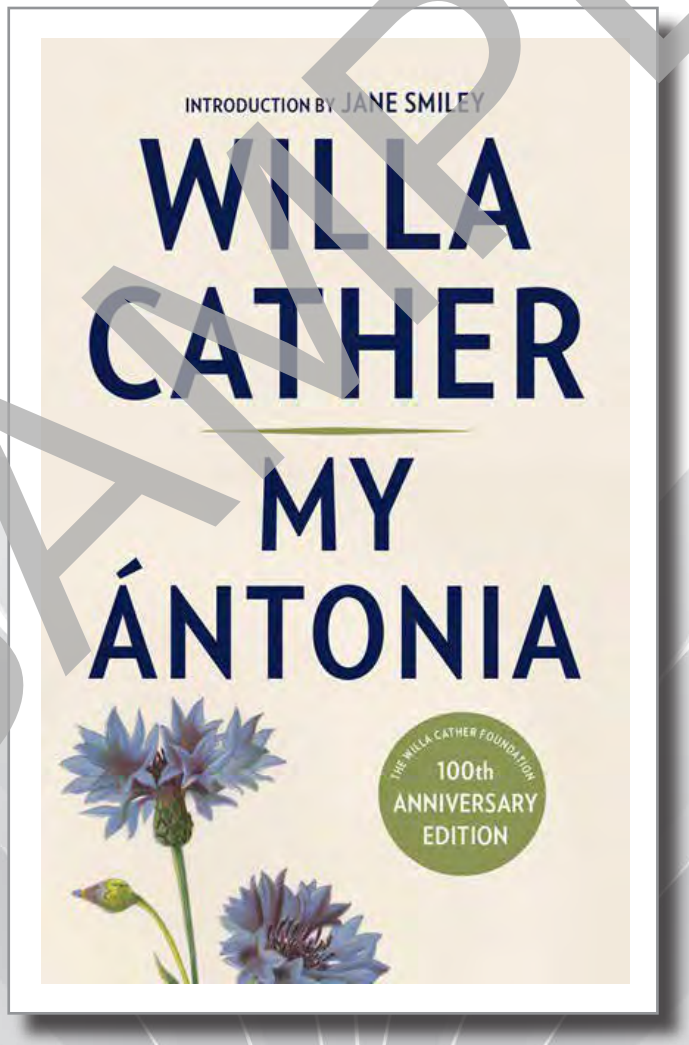
NOVELUNITS

STUDENT PACKET

GRADES 9-12

My Antonia

Willa Cather



SAMPLE

READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

My Antonia

Willa Cather

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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!

SAMPLE

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Directions: On separate paper, write a brief answer to each study question as you read the novel at home or in class. Use the questions for review before group discussions and before your final test. Starred questions have no "right" or "wrong" answers.

* = thought or opinion question
** = prediction

Book I, pages 27-53

1. Who do the author and Jim Burden discuss on the train and what is the result?
2. Where are Jim and Jake going at the beginning of the story?
3. How is Nebraska different from Virginia? How does Jim feel?
4. What words could you use to describe Jim's grandmother and grandfather?
5. How were the Shimerdas at a disadvantage when it came to financial dealings in their new country?
6. What strikes Jim most about Antonia's appearance?
7. What does Jim notice about Mr. Shimerda?
8. How does Antonia manage to communicate with Jim, even though she knows no English?

* 9. Why do you think Grandmother chooses not to harm the bull-snakes and badger?

** 10. What sort of relationship will develop between Antonia and Jim?

Book I, pages 54-80

1. Why is Mr. Shimerda so happy to have made the acquaintance of Peter and Pavel? How are Peter and Pavel different and alike?
2. What pictures remain in your mind after you read Chapter 5? Have you ever had a neighbor as jolly, entertaining, and generous as Peter?
3. How is Antonia feeling as she plays with the grasshopper and tells Jim about the old woman in Bohemia?
4. What does Jim later realize about the snake? Do you think he ever told Antonia?
5. How does the coming of winter change the landscape?
6. To what adventurers does Jim compare his family in the winter?
7. Why is Jim so fond of Otto?

* 8. What do you think is meant by "The old man's smile…was so full of sadness, of pity for things, that I never afterward forgot it" (p. 62)?

** 9. Jim is warm and well-fed at the Burden home. How is the Shimerda family faring this winter?

SAMPLE

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Directions: Choose the word from the list which matches the clues given. Make your own clue balloons for the remaining words.

When he passes, remove your hat.
He's not a peasant, but an

_____.

I'm tired of your ho-hum attitude.
Keep your clichés and your

_____.

If it seems to clash or feel absurd, you might call it this four-syllable word:

_____

If you tried to form a union in a non-union shop, you might be

_____.

Niobrara
enfeebled
revelation
moribund
aristocrat
seizure
menial
chivalry
platitudes
blacklisted
incongruous
irrelevant
tarried
veneration

If you suddenly need no explanation,
You may have had a

_____

If it's not the wide Missouri
But looks somewhat the same
And you're somewhere in Nebraska

_____
Could be its name.

It is known that Julius Caesar
Was very prone to _____
But the thing that caused his end
Was the treachery of friends.

SAMPLE

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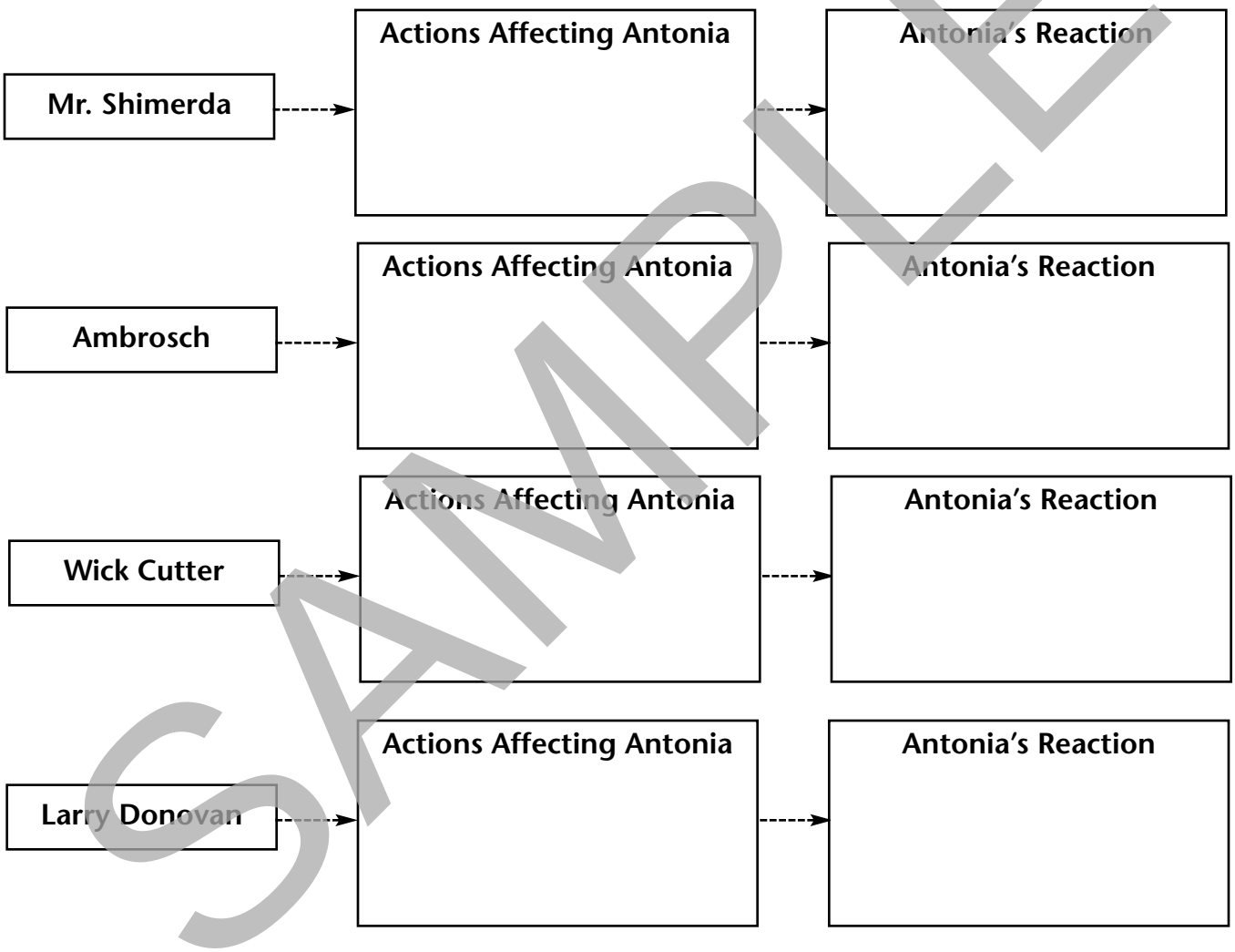
Directions: At the end of Book One, Antonia told Jim she thought life would be easy for him, but hard for the Shimerdas. Was she right? Listed below are some people who have affected Antonia's life since her arrival in America. Fill in the graphic, indicating how each person has changed Antonia's life and how Antonia deals with each change.



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Choose either (a) the character you believe had the **most positive** effect or (b) the **most negative** effect on Antonia. On the back of this paper, write a paragraph explaining why you chose this character. Cite specific examples.

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