

Teacher Guide

Grades 3–4

Pedro's Journal

Pam Conrad

NOVEL UNITS[™]



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PEDRO'S JOURNAL

by
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Teacher Guide

Written by
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Note

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Please note: Parts of this novel deal with sensitive, mature issues. Please assess the appropriateness of this book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading and discussing it with them.

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Skills and Strategies

Comprehension

Creative thinking, identifying attributes, predicting, inferring, supporting judgments

Critical Thinking

Brainstorming, research, analysis, compare/contrast, fact/opinion

Literary Elements

Story mapping, characterization, setting, conflict, theme, author's purpose, point of view, cause and effect, figurative language

Vocabulary

Target words, definitions, synonyms and antonyms, parts of speech

Listening/Speaking

Discussions, debate, dramatizing, oral presentation

Writing

Creative writing, character journal, personal narrative, letter, poem, journalism

Across the Curriculum

Social Studies—culture, history, maps, time line; Science—nautical, navigation, compass, trade winds, Sargasso Sea, animals, archaeology; Math; Geography; Music; Art—design, illustration

Using Predictions

We all make predictions as we read—little guesses about what will happen next, how a conflict will be resolved, which details will be important to the plot, which details will help fill in our sense of a character. Students should be encouraged to predict, to make sensible guesses as they read the novel.

As students work on their predictions, these discussion questions can be used to guide them: What are some of the ways to predict? What is the process of a sophisticated reader's thinking and predicting? What clues does an author give to help us make predictions? Why are some predictions more likely to be accurate than others?

Create a chart for recording predictions. This could either be an individual or class activity. As each subsequent chapter is discussed, students can review and correct their previous predictions about plot and characters as necessary.

Use the clues and ideas the author gives.

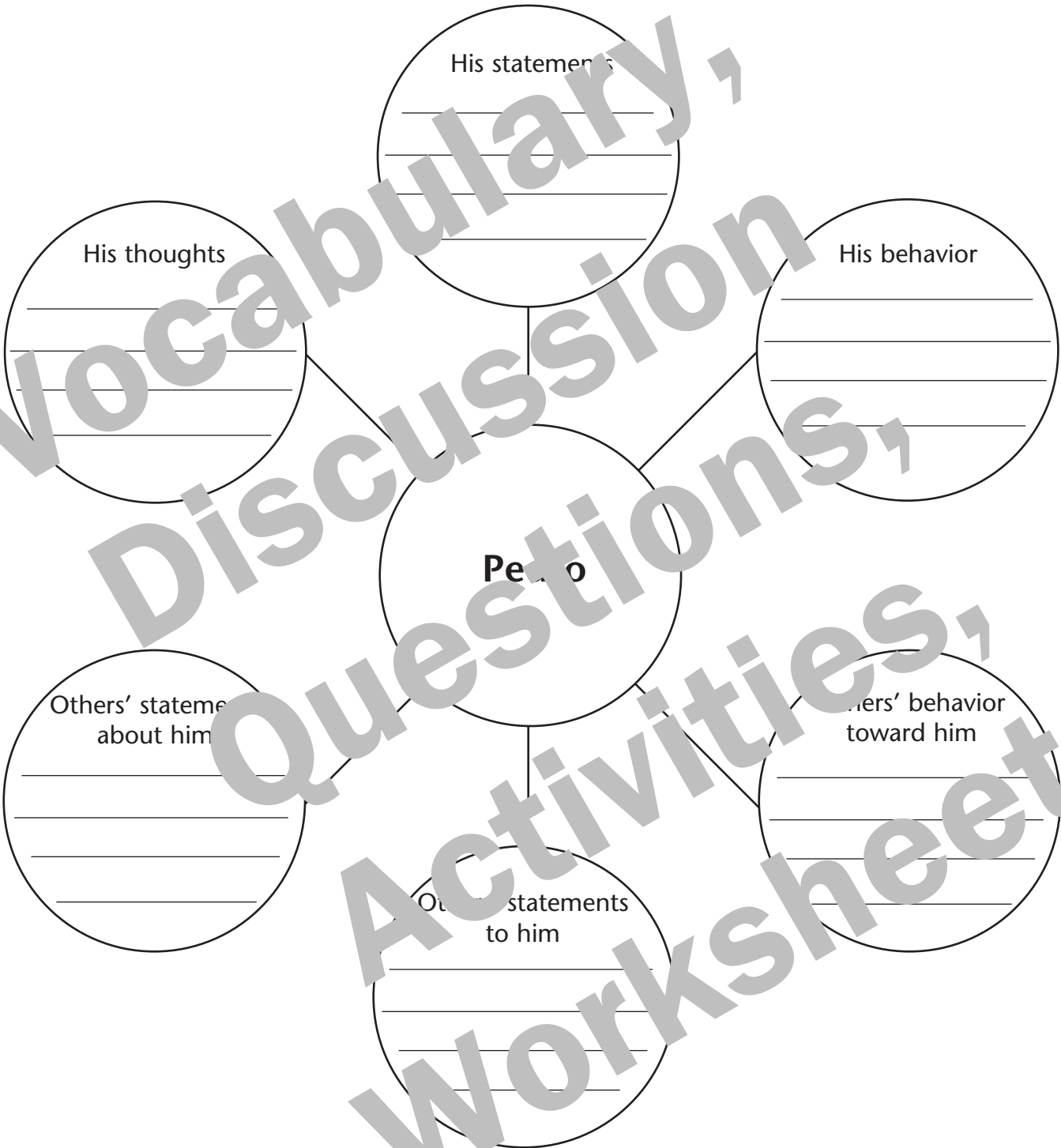
Use your own prior knowledge.

Apply any new information (i.e., from class discussion) that may cause you to change your mind.

Predictions

Character Web

Directions: Complete the attribute web below by filling in information specific to Pedro.



old. To make a leather-like cover, apply overlapping one-inch strips of masking tape to a report folder. Paint over the tape with brown shoe polish.

4. Social Studies: Record Christopher Columbus' voyage on a world map (see page 13 of this guide). Label the places Columbus hoped to reach and those where he actually went.
5. Art: Some of the sailors warn Pedro about sea monsters, mermaids, and the edge of the world (pp. 7, 11). Draw a nautical chart that shows the sea as these sailors believe it looks.

September 10–September 25, pp. 11–21

The crew is nervous and doesn't trust Columbus as they sail into uncharted waters. Finding part of a wrecked ship and seeing a star fall into the ocean adds to their fears. Columbus tries to keep the men's spirits up by giving false facts to misrepresent the distance they have traveled. He convinces Pedro to overcome his fear of swimming and to jump into the ocean with the sailors.

Vocabulary	
helmman (13)	
mermaidis (13)	
sullenly (13)	
devour (15)	
omen (15)	
portended (15)	
harmless (16)	
billowing (16)	
soundings (16)	
fathom (16)	
gunwale (19)	
cleat (20)	
emerging (21)	
transformed (21)	

Discussion Questions

1. How does the crew react to sailing away from land? (*They seem crazy, don't do their job well, fear they won't ever see land again, and some are sick.* p. 13)
2. Why isn't the Captain accurately recording the distance traveled in the official log? (*Columbus wants the crew to think they are closer to home than they are.* p. 13) [Note: Some experts believe the two logs represent Columbus' conversions between miles and leagues. Both measurements used by Columbus vary from today's standard.]
3. Why is the compass heading of the North Star off? (*The crew believes the compass no longer works because they are in dangerous, uncharted seas. Columbus says that the North Star moved.* p. 14) [Note: Latitude and longitude affect compass readings as do various influences from the Earth's magnetic field. Magnetic compasses do not point precisely to true north but toward magnetic north. The North Star is not directly above true north. Today, the North Star is about one degree off true north. In Columbus' time, the difference was over three degrees.]
4. How does Pedro react to the large mast floating in the water? (*He wonders what happened to the wrecked ship and questions sailing through waters that devour ships.* p. 15)
5. What does the Captain tell the men about the falling star? What does he write in his journal? (*Columbus tells the men that falling stars foretell blessings and grace. He writes that he has never seen a meteorite fall so close to a ship before.* p. 15)
6. What does the Captain say when he sees a sea? What does he order the crew to do? (*Columbus thinks they are near land. He asks the men to take soundings to check the depth of the ocean.* p. 16)
7. Why does the fleet sail through the seaweed? (*Searching for a way around might take them off course.* pp. 18–19)

8. Why is Columbus able to convince Pedro to jump into the water? (*Columbus tells him that scribes and readers are good swimmers. Answers will vary but should include that Columbus gives Pedro positive encouragement. p. 20*)
9. **Prediction:** Who will be the first person to spot land and win the reward?

Supplementary Activities

1. Math: Christopher Columbus keeps two logs recording the distance traveled (p. 13). He thought the distance from the Canary Islands to Japan was 2,000 miles, but it's actually 12,000 miles. The distance between the Canary Islands and San Salvador is 4,800 miles. Columbus didn't sail in a straight line, and the miles logged each day varied. But for this math problem, assume that for 32 days Columbus sailed in a straight line. Each day, he recorded 180 miles in Log 1 and 144 miles in Log 2. Determine which log is more accurate. ($180 \times 32 = 5,760$; $144 \times 32 = 4,608$; Log 2 is closer to actual.)

2. Science: (This activity requires teacher or parental supervision.) Christopher Columbus used a magnetic compass to determine in which direction he was sailing. His compass was in a wooden bowl which was placed inside a box to hold it still on a rolling ship.

Make your own water compass. You will need:

- needle (straightened paper clip)
- small piece of Styrofoam
- pie pan filled with water
- magnet

Rub the needle and the magnet together for several minutes. Push the needle into the Styrofoam, and then place the Styrofoam in the water. The magnetized needle will slowly align with Earth's magnetic field. It will point north.

3. Science: Research the Sargasso Sea. Find out what it is, where it is, and what animals live there. Find out why it is also called the Sea of No Return. Share your information in class and discuss what is fact and what is fiction.
4. Science: Research trade winds in the northern Atlantic Ocean. Write a paragraph about what would have happened if Columbus had sailed directly west from Spain instead of west from the Canary Islands. Include a diagram that shows the direction of the winds.