



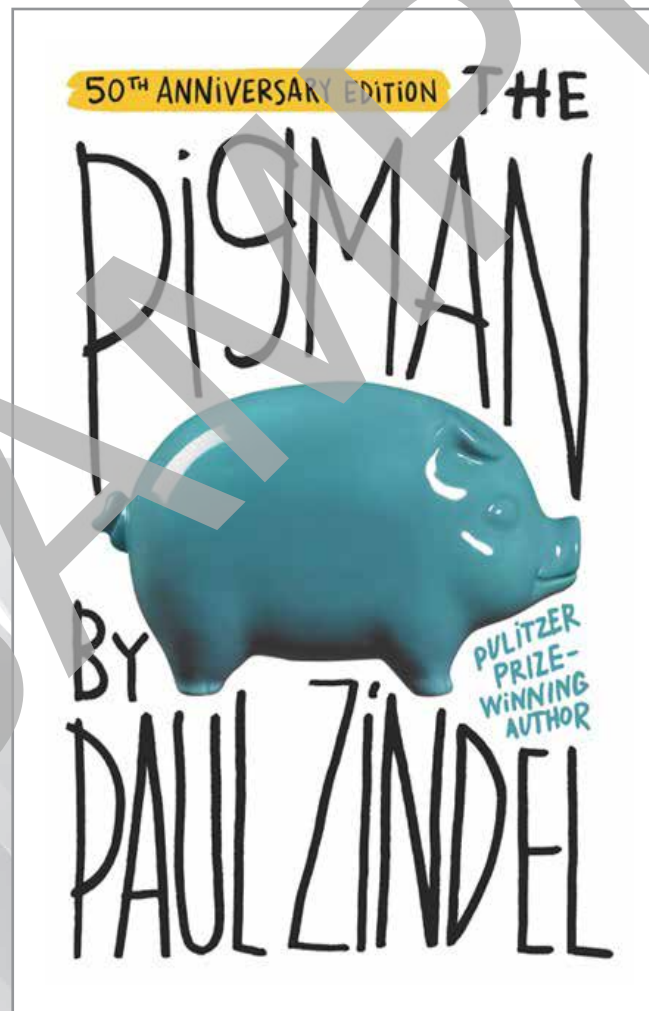
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 9-12**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# The Pigman

Paul Zindel



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

# The Pigman

Paul Zindel

## 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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## Skills and Strategies

### Thinking

Brainstorming, classifying  
and categorizing, evaluating,  
analyzing details, comparing  
and contrasting

### Literary Elements

First person narration, irony,  
realism vs. fantasy, theme,  
mood, climax

### Vocabulary

Synonyms, analogies,  
context clues

### Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing,  
cause/effect, inference

### Writing

Dialogue, dialogue journal,  
narrative, descriptive, letter,  
poem, newspaper report

### Listening/Speaking

Participation in Reader's  
Theatre, role play, participate  
in discussion and  
cooperative groups

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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, these 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® literature guide* are designed with these seven facets in mind. Discussion questions and projects are framed to span all of the levels of Bloom’s taxonomy. Graphic organizers are provided to enhance critical thinking. Tests have been developed at two levels of difficulty (Level 1=lower; Level 2=higher). While most activities 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. You know your students best; we are offering you some tools for working with them. Here 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.

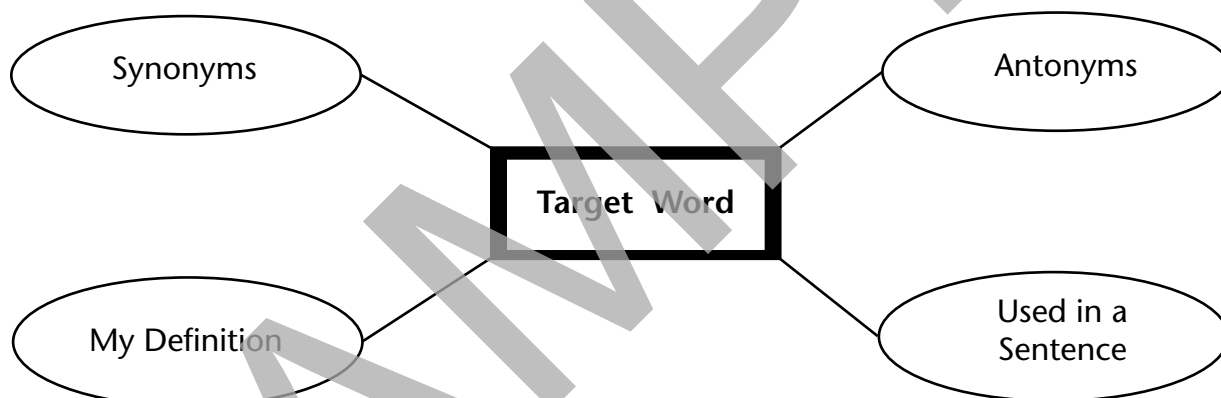
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## "The Oath" and Chapters 1-2, Pages 1-13

### Vocabulary

memorial epic ("The Oath")	avocation (2)	gestapo (2)	innocent (2)
recessed (2)	phony (2)	incandescent (3)	commemorative (3)
opinionated (4)	subliminally (6)	thrombosis (6)	repress (6)
infantile (7)	destructive (7)	filet (7)	distorts (8)
compassion (8)	abominable (9)	compulsive (10)	impressionable (10)
sclerosis (10)	paranoia (12)		

**Vocabulary Activity:** Word mapping is an activity that lends itself to any vocabulary list. For words that have clear antonyms, the following framework is suitable:



Students might enjoy coming up with variations on this framework. For example, instead of listing antonyms, students could provide line drawings to illustrate the target word.

**Cooperative Learning Activity:** You may want to have all students examine examples of word maps for all target vocabulary words, even when the list is too lengthy to expect one student to map all words. One way to circumvent the problem is to assign small groups responsibility for several words; each group selects a reporter who describes the group's word maps to the large group, using an overhead projector.

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## Using Character Attribute Webs

Attribute webs are simply a visual representation of a character's traits. They provide a systematic way for students to organize and recap the information they have about that particular character. Attribute webs may be used after reading the story or completed gradually as information unfolds—done individually, or finished as a group project.

One type of character web uses these categories:

- How a character acts and feels (What do his/her statements reveal about feelings? What does his/her behavior show you about him/her? In a play—what do the character's gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice tell you about his/her emotions?)
- How a character looks (What do clothing and physique tell you about this character?)
- Where a character lives (In what country, state, neighborhood, does this character live? During what time period?)
- How others feel about the character (What do others' statements and actions show about their attitude toward the character?)

In group discussion about the student attribute webs for specific characters, the teacher can ask for supportive evidence from the story.

Attribute webs need not be confined to characters. They can also be used to organize information about a concept, object, or place.

Attribute webs are a kind of semantic mapping. Students can move on from attribute webs to other creative kinds of mapping. They can be encouraged to modify attribute webs—use sub-divisions, add divisions, change connections—in whatever ways are useful to them personally.

It is important to emphasize that attribute webs are just a graphic way to record ideas. They provide students with a tool for helping them generate ideas and think about relationships among them.

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## Attribute Web

The attribute web below will help you gather clues the author provides about a character in the novel. Fill in the blanks with words and phrases which tell how the character acts and looks, as well as what the character says and what others say about him or her.

**Acts**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Feels**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Looks**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Says**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Chapters 3-4, Pages 14-25

### Vocabulary

sanitarium (15)	marathon (16)	disinfectant (16)	fanatic (16)
hideous (17)	philanthropy (20)	glaring (21)	prevarications (22)
compensation (22)	syndrome (22)	donation (24)	subconscious (25)
schizophrenic (25)			

### Discussion Questions

1. Would you say that John is conceited? (He says he is really very handsome and has fabulous eyes, but some students may point out that he is saying these things humorously—and/or that he may brag about his looks, while feeling less satisfied with other aspects of himself.)
2. Does John put the Pigman down for calling John and Lorraine “delightful”? Did you find that surprising? (No, he actually likes the old-fashioned word because it shows that Mr. Pignati isn’t trying to be “hip.”)
3. Lorraine says that she differs from John because he has compassion (p. 8). How does John say they differ? Which would you rather be like? (p. 15: “Lorraine remembers the big words and I remember the action.”)
4. How does a telephone marathon work? Would you enter a telephone marathon if your friends suggested one? Why can’t John’s phone be used? (Callers pick random numbers and see how long the people will talk on the phone; his father put a lock on the phone because John was on too long. John retaliated by putting glue in the lock.)
5. In what tone of voice do you imagine John saying, on p. 18, “Maybe we speeded things up a little, but you really can’t say we murdered him”? What do you think he means? (He probably shows a peevish mixture of protest and self-questioning; he seems to be admitting that he and Lorraine hastened Mr. Pignati’s death somehow—but refusing to say that they caused it.)
6. What are Lorraine’s impressions of Dennis and Norton? Do you think she is an accurate reporter? (She describes Norton as an ugly social outcast and Dennis as equally disturbed.)

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7. According to Lorraine, why did Mr. Pignati stay on the line? (He was lonely.)
  8. What is Lorraine's explanation for why John "prevaricates"? Do you think she's right? Does her explanation cover most liars you know? What lies are mentioned in this section? Which ones do you think are the worst? Do you think he would lie if his parents didn't? (p. 22 "His own life is so boring when measured against his daydreams so he makes up things to pretend it's exciting." He lies to Mr. Pignati about representing a charity, he accepts an A for a book report without having read the book, he lies to his parents about hearing voices, his parents lie on insurance claims.)
  10. Why did John get interested in Mr. Pignati? (He offered to donate \$10 to the L&J fund.)

**PREDICTION:** Lorraine says she could tell what was going to happen when John took the receiver. What do you think will happen? Will Lorraine and John end up taking money from Mr. Pignati?

**Writing Activity:** Suppose the author had asked you to write a paragraph about how Dennis made a prank call that succeeded in keeping someone on the phone for over an hour. Write the paragraph that might be used to replace the last paragraph on p. 17.

## Chapter 5, Pages 26-39

### Vocabulary

demented (26)	patron (27)	grating (27)	subsidize (27)
attaché case (27)	juvenile delinquent (29)	hypertension (29)	misdirected (30)
phenomenal (31)	dismember (32)		

1. Why didn't John want Norton to know about the L&J Fund? (If he knew, he'd try to get in on the deal.)
2. What statement by John foreshadows (gives a clue about what lies ahead in the story) that Norton is involved in the death of the Pigman? (p. 26 "If Lorraine felt like saying one of us murdered Mr. Pignati, she should have blamed Norton. He's the one who finally caused all the trouble.") What sort of trouble do you think he caused?
3. What do you know about John's relationship with his parents? Do you think there is anything John could do to improve that relationship, or should the initiative come from his parents? (He talks back to them, and refers to them as the Old Lady and Bore, resents their comparison of him with his successful older brother.)