



PRESTWICK HOUSE

Activity Pack

BAD

BY JEAN FERRIS



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Written by: Rebecca Challman

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading**Questionnaire****Objective:** Preparing for a close reading of the text**Activity**

In the narrative you are about to read, Jean Ferris explores such issues as teen pregnancy, parental responsibility, juvenile crime and incarceration, bulimia, battered women's syndrome, racism, and drug and alcohol abuse. Through it all, her tone is non-judgmental. It is up to readers to bring their own thoughts and opinions to bear on the subject matter. To that end, contemplate and answer the following questions:

1. How do you think juvenile offenders should be treated?
2. What do you think it is like to be incarcerated?
3. If your parents say, "You live in my house; you must live by my rules," can you disregard those rules and still expect them to bail you out?
4. Where does parental responsibility end?
5. Under what circumstances do you blame someone else for your own actions?
6. What experiences have you had with peer pressure?
7. When do you think it is acceptable to use violence to solve conflict?
8. In what ways does your environment contribute to your personality?
9. How do you manage your anger?
10. Describe your best friend. In what ways are you alike; how are you different? Why are you friends?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters One—Five**Mock Trial**

Objective: Participating in a jury trial
Inferring ideas based on information from the text

Activity

Mr. Malverne Washington, the “ferocious” night watchman at the building across the street, catches Dallas holding up the Jiffy-Spot at gunpoint. The case against her seems straightforward. She even admits, “There was nothing to deny or explain; I’d been caught in the act...” (Pg. 11)

If Dallas were an adult, she would be entitled to a trial by a jury of her peers. As a class, divide into two groups and hold a mock trial for Dallas. Half of the class will develop the state’s case against Dallas, and the other half will work to defend her.

The People vs. Dallas Carpenter

Bailiff—swears in witnesses and enters evidence

Dallas Carpenter—

Dallas’s attorney (the defense)—presents an opening statement, examines witnesses for the defense, cross examines witnesses for the prosecution, and presents a closing statement

Judge—

Members of the Jury—several students

Prosecuting Attorney—presents an opening statement, examines the witnesses for the prosecution, cross-examines the witnesses for the defense, presents a closing statement

Witnesses for the Defense—Psychiatrist

Witnesses for the Prosecution—Mr. Malverne Washington, Jiffy-Spot clerk, first police officer on the scene

Mock Trial Procedure

- Bailiff calls case: “All rise. The Court of _____ is now in session. Honorable Judge _____ presiding.”
- Opening Statement: First, the prosecutor, then the defendant’s attorney, explains what their evidence will be and what they will try to prove.
- Prosecution’s Case: Witnesses are called to testify under direct examination and other physical evidence is introduced. Each witness called is cross-examined (questioned to weaken the story or to weaken belief in witness) by the defense.
- Defendant’s Case: Same as the third step except that defense calls witnesses for direct examination and cross-examination by prosecution.
- Closing Statements: Both attorneys review the evidence presented and ask for a decision in their favor.
- Jury Instructions: The Judge explains to the jury the rules of law that it must consider in weighing the evidence. The prosecution must meet the burden of proof in order to prevail.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters One—Five**Newspaper****Objective:** Writing a newspaper article**Activity**

Dallas's cohorts in crime congratulate themselves for scoping out an out-of-town convenience store to rob. The night before the robbery, Sonny and Ray create a distraction by knocking over a Super Bowl display at the Jiffy-Spot. Ray helps the clerk clean it up, while Sonny coats the store's security camera lens with Vaseline. Despite the precautions, a hungry security guard from across the street foils the robbery. Of course, Pam, Sonny, and Ray leave Dallas to take the blame.

Having read the text, you know the details behind the robbery. Imagine, however, that you are a local newspaper reporter. Who would you interview to get the best story? Remember, including what people say is critical to journalism. You must be able to quote reliable sources for your readers to trust you.

Write a newspaper article about the robbery at the Jiffy-Spot. Remember to answer who, what, when, where, how, and why. Use the facts provided in the text. Keep in mind, however, that opinions may be inserted in quotes. For example, "I feel so bad for her family; they're good community-minded people," said Mayor Dixon. You may elaborate on any necessary details and invent quotes from witnesses, but stay true to Ferris's intent. For instance, ask yourself what Dallas's father would say based on what you already know about his character. Try to find a unique angle from which to approach the story.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters Six—Ten

Speech

Objective: Engaging in public speaking

Activity

From responding to the six-thirty buzzer, to Dahlia and Sylviana enacting vigilante justice against Mary Alice, this section of *BAD* introduces many controversial topics. In sex-ed, Soledad offers the girls the long-term birth control implant, Norplant. During an anger management session, Nolan argues that the girls' actions are a result of choice, not a necessary consequence of who they are. One day during physical education, the girls recount their drug and alcohol stories. A probation officer mercilessly abuses two girls to the breaking point. Later, Dallas has to find the courage to speak up on behalf of the probation officer.

All of these events offer an opportunity to research a topic, formulate an opinion, and share it with the class in an oral presentation. Choose one of the following ideas and to create an oral presentation:

- the use of bells to condition response in state-run institutions for juveniles (e.g., public schools, detention facilities, etc.)
- the state offering birth control to adolescents
- choice in a negative environment (e.g., abusive homes, impoverished homes, drug-infested neighborhoods, etc.)
- drug and alcohol abuse among teens
- abuse of power by those charged with caring for juveniles in state-run facilities
- vigilante justice
- silence in the face of wrongdoing

Speech Guidelines

Your three to five-minute speech must be one of the following types:

- Informative explain your point.
- Persuasive convey and convince; prove your point.
- Narrative tell a story; expand an idea or central theme.

Remember to apply the rules of public speaking:

- make eye contact with your audience
- use hand gestures
- modulate (change the tone of your voice)
- avoid word whiskers (e.g., “uh,” “you know,” “um,” etc.)
- dress appropriately

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters Six—Ten

Writing

Objective: Writing a how-to article

Activity

After Kate uses writing assignments to help the girls at GRC understand themselves better, writing soon becomes therapy for Dallas. When told to write about her best friend, she decides that her best friend is no longer Pam, but her bed. It is “a place where I could go to forget about everything bad,” she says. (Pg. 48) Dallas is fast becoming an expert at surviving in a place she doesn't want to be by concentrating on mindless chores, reading, and the music they play at bedtime. She learns to take things as they come.

Think about what you would do in Dallas's shoes. What is the worst place you can imagine having to live for six months? How would you survive? Write a how-to magazine article expounding upon your methods for keeping your sanity in a horrible place.

How-to Tips

Traditionally, how-to articles consist of dry, step-by-step instructions. Increasingly, however, magazine writers are sharing how they cope with all sorts of emotionally challenging issues. Topics such as how to deal with grief, a broken relationship, or a lifelong illness require empathy, compassion, and style. A how-to article of this type demands a catchy headline and lead paragraph. Grab your readers' attention by letting them know right away how you are going to help them. Use your lead, or introductory paragraph, to tell them the problem you will help them solve. Then, guide them through the steps of how to solve it. Be creative, and let your personal style come through.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters Eleven—Fifteen

Letter

Objective: Writing an effective letter

Activity

Dallas has been at the Girl's Rehabilitation Center for three months. She has not once written to her father and when he visits her, it is awkward between them. Nevertheless, he asks her if she wants him to visit again. Feeling that he is uncomfortable, she asks him why he would want to, and he responds, "I'm your father." (Pg. 96) Dallas, of course, feels hurt by his answer. Mr. Carpenter does not understand what she wants from him, which is for him to tell her that he loves her. Thus, he simply tells her to take care of herself, and he leaves. Once again, they fail to communicate what they really mean.

Because Ferris has employed the first-person point of view in *BAD*, you know Dallas's most intimate thoughts. Imagine you are Dallas, and you finally want to share some of those thoughts with your father. Where do you begin? What words do you use to communicate your loneliness, your frustration, your resentment, and your love?

Write a letter to Mr. Carpenter from Dallas. Include the following:

- a summary of events since your arrival at GRC
- a persuasive paragraph
- an argumentative paragraph

Name: _____

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Chapters Eleven—Fifteen

Characterization

Objective: Understanding the effect of gender choice as it relates to characterization
Rewriting portions of the text to reflect a change in the gender of main characters

Activity

BAD's female protagonist, Dallas Carpenter, winds up in the Girls' Rehabilitation Center. Therefore, the most important characters in the narrative are female. In fact, the only male character at the center is Nolan, the anger management counselor. During one of his sessions, Valencia laments having been born a girl, "If I get another life, I want to be a man. A woman's worth nothing in this world." (Pg. 89) Her remark is understandable, considering much of the trouble the girls suffer comes from the opposite sex.

Rewrite the following portion of text from this section of *BAD*, reversing the gender of all of the characters. Keep in mind that when you reverse the gender, you must correct any references to matters that are strictly female. Use whatever means are necessary to do this, but do not stray from Ferris's intent. When you are through, share your rewrites with the class. Note the differences in character names and details. Are there any glaring differences between how male and female classmates approached the rewrite? Discuss what would happen in the story if this gender reversal was maintained throughout.

"How about going without a man?" Nolan suggested.

"Then who'll take care of us?" Damaris asked.

"Are these guys that you want doing such a great job of taking care of you?"

"At least then you only have to worry about one man," she said. "Not a whole train."

"How about forgetting about men for a while and helping each other?" Nolan asked. "How about depending on other women?"

"You crazy, man," Andrette said. She had three dots tattooed on the vee of her thumb and first finger that Valencia had told me stood for *Mi Vida Loca*. My crazy life. "You can't count on other women. They always comin' at you sideways. They steal your man. They talk about you behind your back. They tell your secrets. Women can't help you."

"Well, if you can't count on men, or depend on women," Nolan said, "who can you trust to help you when you need it?"

"Family," Valencia said, and Toozdae gave her a bleak look. I was on Toozdae's side on that one." (Pg. 91)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters Sixteen—Twenty**Chart****Objective:** Creating a pie chart**Activity**

As Dallas considers what it means to be a menace to society, she begins to play the blame game. Like many other inmates at the Girls' Rehabilitation Center, she blames negligent parents and abusive boy-friends. Then, she hears Nolan's voice in her head asking her, "Could we really get away with blaming what we did on what our parents or our homies had done?" (Pg. 153)

In groups, think about all of the people and circumstances that contributed to Dallas's incarceration at GRC. List them all, and assign them a percentage of responsibility out of 100%. Create a pie chart reflecting how the group divides the responsibility.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters Sixteen—Twenty

World Histories

Objective: Considering the origin of words and creating new words

Activity

Early in the text, we learn that Ray coined the term “skating” for the group’s exploits. (Pg. 4) Skating actually means sliding on the surface, as in ice-skating. The group adopts the word, however, to refer to the act of committing petty crimes.

In this section of the text, Connie shares an invented word with Dallas. “Majigney-foofoo...It’s a word my sister and I made up. It means...oh, inner strength, I suppose. Intestinal fortitude. My sister and I had to have plenty of it, the way we grew up, but inner strength sounded so serious and pretentious, and all we wanted was something to keep us going, something that sounded like we could do it. Majigney-foofoo was perfect.” (Pg. 148)

In small groups, think about words you, your family, friends, or classmates have adopted to mean something entirely different from their traditional meanings. This is a type of slang. Make a list of as many words as you can. Define each word with its dictionary definition and then with its slang definition.

Invent at least five new words and write them on a piece of paper. On the back of each one, write the corresponding invented definition. Each group should share and compare their lists of new words. Then, each group should circulate their words so everyone has a chance to guess what the invented terms mean.