

 Prestwick House

Instant Short Story Pack



Each pack contains:

- Objectives
- Full Text of Story
- Student Questions
- Activities and Graphic Organizers
- Teacher Answer Guide

The Blind Man

BY D. H. LAWRENCE

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, 2, 5
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1, 2, 3, 5



Objectives:

After completing the activities in this packet, the student will be able to:

- cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly (RL.9-10.1; 11-12.1),
- cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain (RL.9-10.1; 11-12.1),
- determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex narrative (RL.9-10.2; 11-12.2),
- analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding where a story is set (RL.11-12.3),
- analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how characters are introduced and developed (RL.11-12.3),
- analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how the action is ordered (RL.11-12.3), and
- analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text contribute to its overall structure and meaning (RL.9-10.5; 11-12.5).

Time:

1-2 class periods

Materials:

✓ 1 copy of each handout per student:

- **Handout #1** (3 pages) – Purpose-setting and Motivational Activities
- **Handout #2** (20 pages) – Text of Story
- **Handout #3** (1 page) – Student Questions
- **Handout #4** (10 pages) – Activities and Graphic Organizers

✓ Teacher Answer Guide

Procedure:

1. Reproduce all handouts.
2. Distribute **Handouts #1** and **#2**.
 - Allow students to read the short biography of Lawrence (approximately 10 minutes).
 - Read and discuss the information about Lawrence's work and ideas (approximately 20 minutes).
 - Assign the story to be read for homework OR
 - Allow students to read the story in class and perform the two **As you read...** activities.
3. Distribute **Handout #3**.

D. H. Lawrence

The Blind Man

“The Blind Man” was first published in July 1920 in the *English Review*. Lawrence later included it in his ten-story collection *England, My England*, which was published in the United States in 1922 and England in 1924. It did not attract much critical or popular attention, and even today, it remains one of Lawrence’s lesser-known stories. It is significant mostly because it illustrates Lawrence’s fascination with what he called “blood consciousness.”

In his works, and especially in letters to fellow writers and philosophers, Lawrence used the terms “mental consciousness” and “blood consciousness” to distinguish between *rational thought* and *instinct*, between *what one sees and hears* and *how one perceives it*. In a 1913 letter, he wrote, “my great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood feels and believes and says, is always true” (*The Letters of D. H. Lawrence: Volume 1, September 1901 May 1913*, p.503).

This distinction is apparent in this story’s many contrasts—Maurice and Bertie, the house and the barn, light and dark, sight and blindness, and polite superficiality and brutal intimacy. For Lawrence, it is this almost savage unconscious experience that makes a person human. In some of his other stories and novels, his exploration of this aspect of human nature is often derided as vulgar. The life-changing encounter between Maurice and Bertie in “The Blind Man” may have troubled some readers, but it did not cause the outrage that some of the rest of his work did.

Before you read:

Know something about the life of the author:

David Herbert Lawrence was born on September 11, 1885, in Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, England. His father was a barely literate coal miner. His mother had been preparing to be a teacher, but her family’s financial problems forced her to take work in a lace factory. Lawrence spent much of his childhood and youth wandering in the countryside beyond his dreary mining town.

D. H. Lawrence

The Blind Man

Lexile Measure: 710L

ISABEL PERVIN WAS listening for two sounds—for the sound of wheels on the drive outside and for the noise of her husband's footsteps in the hall. Her dearest and oldest friend, a man who seemed almost indispensable to her living, would drive up in the rainy dusk of the closing November day. The trap had gone to fetch him from the station. And her husband, who had been blinded in Flanders, and who had a disfiguring mark on his brow, would be coming in from the outhouses.

He had been home for a year now. He was totally blind. Yet they had been very happy. The Grange was Maurice's own place. The back was a farmstead, and the Wernhams, who occupied the rear premises, acted as farmers. Isabel lived with her husband in the handsome rooms in front. She and he had been almost entirely alone together since he was wounded. They talked and sang and read together in a wonderful and unspeakable intimacy. Then she reviewed books for a Scottish newspaper, carrying on her old interest, and he occupied himself a good deal with the farm. Sightless, he could still discuss everything with Wernham, and he could also do a good deal of work about the place—menial work, it is true, but it gave him satisfaction. He milked the cows, carried in the pails, turned the separator, attended to the pigs and horses. Life was still very full and strangely serene for the blind man, peaceful with the almost incomprehensible peace of immediate contact in darkness. With his wife he had a whole world, rich and real and invisible.

They were newly and remotely happy. He did not even regret the loss of his sight in these times of dark, palpable joy. A certain exultance swelled his soul.

D. H. Lawrence

The Blind Man

STUDENT QUESTIONS:

1. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3) The primary action of this story is divided between two locations, the Pervin house and the farm. Explain the role each setting plays in the development and revelation of the characters. How does the setting contribute to the overall impact of the story?
2. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3) The plot action includes two trips from the house to the farm and two personal exchanges between a character and Maurice. Explain how the second encounter achieves the climax of the story. How does the first lay the foundation for this climactic second?
3. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2; 11-12.2) Since its initial publication, “The Blind Man” has been subject to a variety of opposing evaluations and interpretations. Determine two or three central ideas explored by Lawrence and analyze how they are developed by the story’s plot, characters, and setting. Explain how each idea contributes to the overall meaning of the story.
4. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1 11-12.1) Consider the narrator’s description of Maurice’s background: “He came of a good old country family—the Grange was not a very great distance from Oxford.” Explain what this sentence means if it were read strictly literally. What would it suggest if it were read as a metaphor?
5. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1; 11-12.1) The narrator twice describes Isabel and Maurice’s relationship as a “wonderful and unspeakable intimacy.” Despite these claims, what does the text suggest is the true nature of the couple’s marriage?
6. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5; 11-12.5) What does Lawrence achieve by placing these characters in this relationship and situation? Given the possible social and/or philosophical points Lawrence intended to establish, what role does each of the primary characters play?

Question 1 continued:

Contribution to Overall Impact and Meaning	
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Farm							
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Pervin House							
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Characters and Elements	Maurice	Isabel	Bertie	Light and Darkness	Feminine and Masculine	Civilized and Primitive	Intellect and Passion
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