

 Prestwick House

Instant Short Story Pack



Each pack contains:

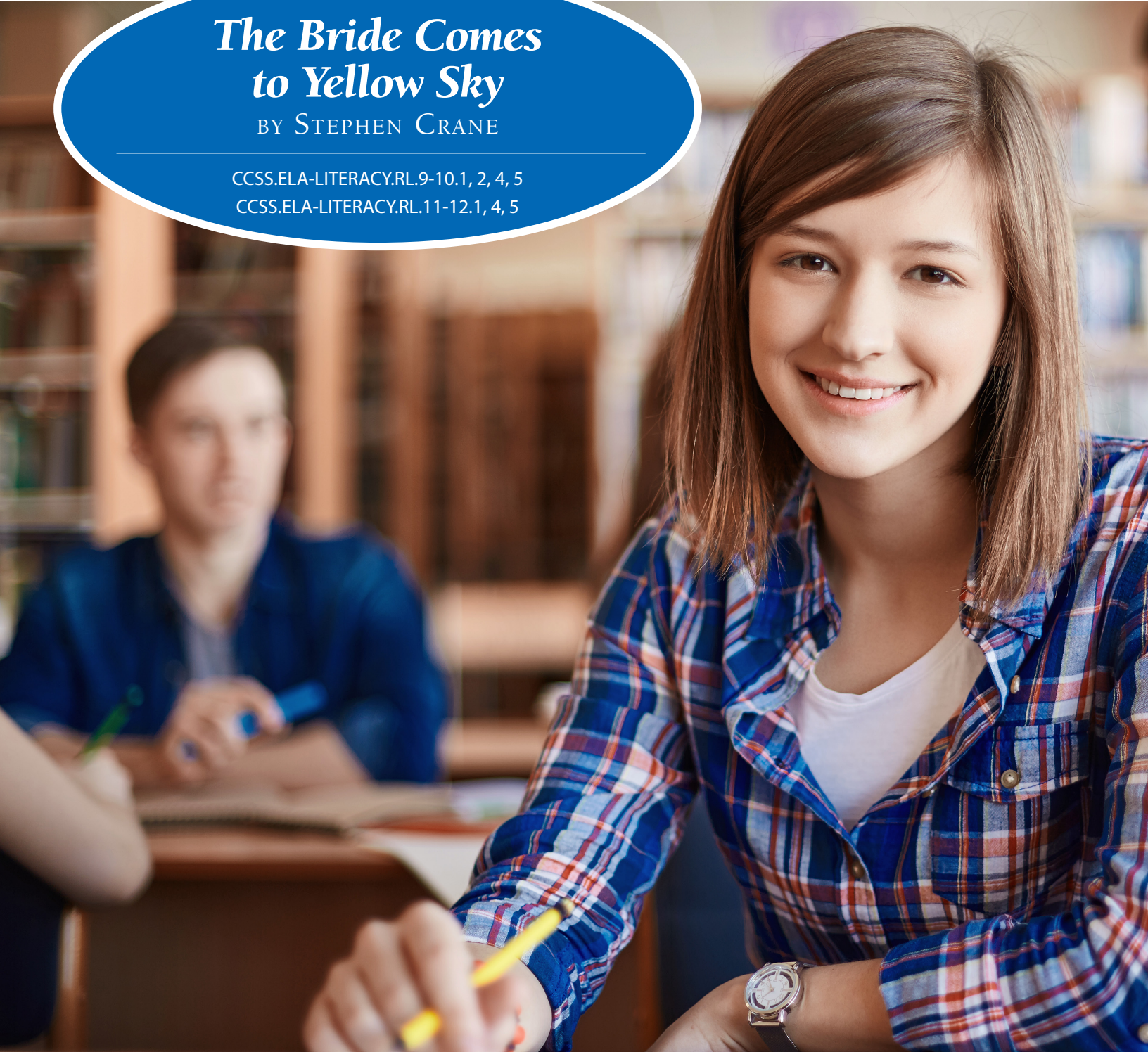
- Objectives
- Full Text of Story
- Student Questions
- Activities and Graphic Organizers
- Teacher Answer Guide

The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky

BY STEPHEN CRANE

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, 2, 4, 5

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1, 4, 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 as well as inferences drawn from the text (RL.9-10.1; 11-12.1),
- analyze in detail the development of the theme or central idea of a story over the course of the text, including how it is shaped and refined by specific details (RL.9-10.2),
- determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings (RL.9-10.4; 11-12.4), and
- analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (RL.9-10.4; 11-12.4), and
- analyze how an author's choices concerning how to order events within a text create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise (RL.9-10.5; 11-12.5).

Time:

1-3 class periods

Materials:

✓ 1 copy of each handout per student:

- **Handout #1** (3 pages) – Purpose-setting and Motivational Activities
- **Handout #2** (12 pages) – Text of Story
- **Handout #3** (1 page) – Student Questions
- **Handout #4** (9 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 Crane (approximately 10 minutes).
 - Read and discuss the information about Crane'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**.
4. Give students time to read the questions (approximately 5 minutes).
5. Review with students what each question is asking for and what type of information is required for a thorough answer (e.g., references to prior knowledge, quotations from the story, additional reading or research, etc.).

Stephen Crane

The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky

The story you are about to read is actually very funny. One of the most common mistakes made is taking the literature taught in school too seriously. Stephen Crane was something of a social rebel, but he had a sense of humor. By the time he made his first trip west, the states of Missouri, Nebraska, and Texas were a great deal tamer than the Wild West stories he'd heard as a child had led him to believe. The difference between what he expected and what he found is the basis for the humor in this story about a sheriff, his new bride, and the gun-happy town drunk who simply cannot understand the ways his world is changing.

"The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" was written in 1898 while Crane was living in England. Although it has emerged as one of Crane's well-known stories, it represents something of a departure from the main body of his work. The story is a parody. It might be said to depict the reality of the American West as contrasted with the common misconception of the Wild West, but it relies on clichés and stereotypes to communicate that reality.

To tell his story, Crane also uses a few techniques that were brand new at the time, especially his use of parallel time. As you read, notice how cleverly Crane allows the reader to realize that certain events are happening in different settings but at the same time. Today, it is a common storytelling technique in television programs and films, as well as in literature.

Of course, we need to examine things like the structure of the story, Crane's use of color and other sensory details, word choice, and so on. But do not let your attention to these elements distract you from the simple fun of the story. After all, that is what made it popular in the first place.

Before you read:

Know something about the life of the author:

Stephen Crane was born in Newark, New Jersey, on November 1, 1871. He was the fourteenth (and last) child born to his parents. Five of his older siblings had already died before their first birthdays. He was named after his great-great-grandfather, who had represented New Jersey in the First Continental Congress and then distinguished himself in the Revolutionary War. Crane's father was a minister and his mother a strong advocate of the Women's Christian Temperance Movement. The family moved to Port Jervis, New York, in 1878.

Stephen Crane

The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky

Lexile Measure: 940L

I

THE GREAT PULLMAN was whirling onward with such dignity of motion that a glance from the window seemed simply to prove that the plains of Texas were pouring eastward. Vast flats of green grass, dull-hued spaces of mesquite and cactus, little groups of frame houses, woods of light and tender trees, all were sweeping into the east, sweeping over the horizon, a precipice.

A newly-married pair had boarded this train at San Antonio. The man's face was reddened from many days in the wind and sun, and a direct result of his new black clothes was that his brick-colored hands were constantly performing in a most conscious fashion. From time to time he looked down respectfully at his attire. He sat with a hand on each knee, like a man waiting in a barber's shop. The glances he devoted to other passengers were furtive and shy.

The bride was not pretty, nor was she very young.

She wore a dress of blue cashmere, with small reservations of velvet here and there, and with steel buttons abounding. She continually twisted her head to regard her puff-sleeves, very stiff, straight, and high. They embarrassed her. It was quite apparent that she had cooked, and that she expected to cook, dutifully. The blushes caused by the careless scrutiny of some passengers as she had entered the car were strange to see upon this plain, under-class countenance, which was drawn in placid, almost emotionless lines.

They were evidently very happy. "Ever been in a parlor-car before?" he asked, smiling with delight.

"No," she answered; "I never was. It's fine, ain't it?"

"Great. And then, after a while, we'll go forward to the diner, and get a big lay-out. Finest meal in the world. Charge, a dollar."

Stephen Crane

The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky

STUDENT QUESTIONS:

1. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1;11-12.1) What can we infer from the couple's reactions to their wedding clothes in section I? What other textual evidence does Crane provide in those paragraphs to support that inference?
2. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5; 11-12.5) What effects does Crane achieve by his use of parallel time in the first three sections?
3. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4; 11-12.4) Examine the words and phrases Crane uses to create an image of the West in his reader's mind. How do unexpected combinations and surprising similes help him create this image?
4. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4; 11-12.4) Examine Crane's use of figurative devices (e.g., simile—"He sat...like a man waiting in a barber's shop"; metaphor—"Potter's mouth seemed to be merely a grave for his tongue"; and personification—"the winter wind attacks a prairie cabin in the north"), and explain how they help convey Crane's attitude toward his characters and their situation.
5. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2) List the clues Stephen Crane provides throughout the story to alert the reader that "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" is a parody of the Western story.

ACTIVITIES AND GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS:

Stephen Crane, *The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky*

Question 1: What can we infer from the couple’s reactions to their wedding clothes in section I? What other textual evidence does Crane provide in those paragraphs to support that inference?

STEP 1: Any inference you make about the couple and their situation must be based on a careful examination of the text. The following chart will help you examine both the descriptions of the characters and the broader context that will support your inference.

| Reaction | Context | Significance | Inference |
|--|--|--|-----------|
| “...and a direct result of his new black clothes was that his brick-colored hands were constantly performing in a most conscious fashion.” | “The man’s face was reddened from many days in the wind and sun.” | Jack Potter has the skin of a man who spends a lot of time outdoors. His fidgeting suggests he is uncomfortable in his new suit. | |
| “From time to time he looked down respectfully at his attire.” | | | |
| “He sat with a hand on each knee...” | “like a man waiting in a barber’s shop” | | |
| “She continually twisted her head to regard her puff-sleeves.” | | | |
| “[Her sleeves] embarrassed her.” | “It was quite apparent that she had cooked, and that she expected to cook, dutifully.” | | |
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