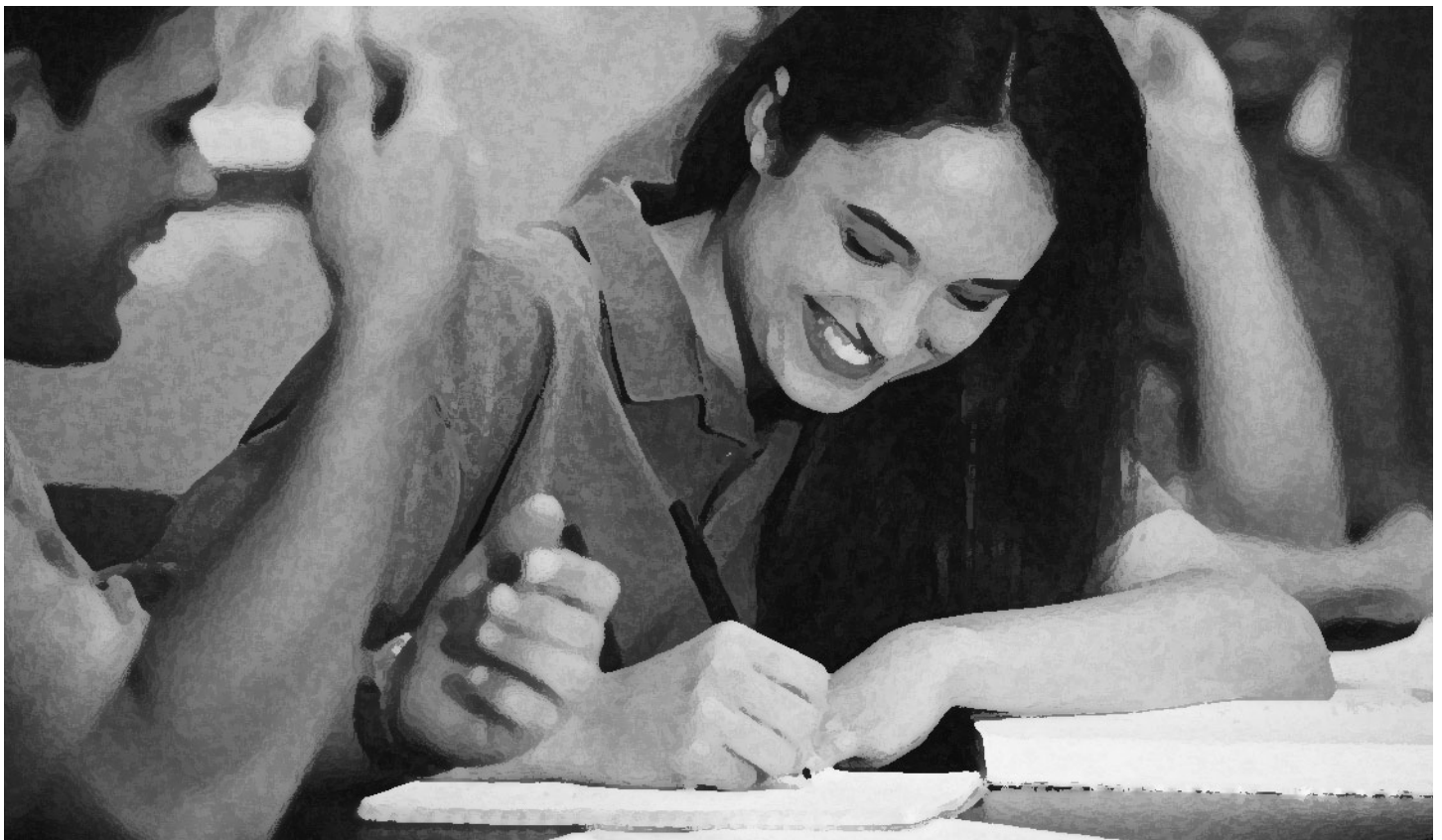


PRESTWICK HOUSE

Activity Pack

COLD SASSY TREE

BY OLIVE ANN BURNS



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Reorder No. 302811

Written by Rebecca Challman

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-reading**Narrative Essay**

Objective: Developing a personal narrative
Researching an event to put it in historical context
Organizing and writing a five-paragraph essay
Preparing to read a literary text

Activity

Author Olive Ann Burns acted as her family's historian. She grew up listening to her father's tales of his grandfather's experiences in Commerce, Georgia. She brought those tales to life in the form of *Cold Sassy Tree* and *Leaving Cold Sassy*. However, long before she embellished the facts to weave Will Tweedy's adventures, she researched the time and place (context) in which they occurred.

Think about an important event from your family's history. Perhaps your grandparents relate the tale at family gatherings. When, and under what circumstances, did it take place? Using the Internet or other appropriate reference material, research the date and location of the event. Use your findings to elaborate on the event, thus putting it into historical context.

Write a five-paragraph narrative essay about the event. Begin with an introductory paragraph built around your thesis statement. Follow with the body of the essay, which should consist of three paragraphs. Finally, write a concluding paragraph that summarizes the body and echoes the thesis statement. Remember to end each paragraph with a transitional sentence to encourage readers to move forward. It might be helpful to employ the inverted pyramid to outline your essay; all of your most exciting, vivid details should come first.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 1-5**Point of View**

Objective: Identifying point of view
Recognizing how an author's choice of point of view affects a story
Experimenting with point of view

Activity

Will Tweedy narrates the events in *Cold Sassy Tree* from his first person point of view. Will participates in the action of the story but can reveal information only about circumstances and feelings of which he has first-hand knowledge. A different point of view, like a different setting, would make this a completely different story.

Rewrite each of the following events from a different point of view.

- Loma and Mary Willis react to news of their father's engagement
- Mattie Lou's death
- The parade

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 1-10**Setting**

Objective: Understanding how content helps determine the time of a work of fiction
Identifying elements that date a work

Activity

Cold Sassy Tree opens in 1906, and the author gives the reader that information directly on the first page. The author then details the story with reminders of the period when the action takes place, which gives the reader an understanding of the era and the circumstances of living in 1906.

Complete the chart below to cite incidents, products, or conversations that emphasize the period of the story. One example is given as a guide; you should be able to find 1-3 examples from each chapter.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 11-17**Dialect/Dialogue**

Objective: Recognizing diction as an element of style
Understanding how use of dialect gives honesty to dialogue

Activity

Burns writes very effective, convincing dialogue because she writes the way Cold Sassy residents speak. In a moment of insight, Will connects his local dialect with who he is and the fact that pronunciation can determine how a person is perceived by others: "Well, I know that how we speak is part of what we are. I sure don't want Cold Sassy folks to sound like a bunch of Yankees. But I don't want us to sound ignorant, either, and pronunciations like *sump'm* and *id'n* sound ignorant."

Rewrite the passages on the following page from this section correcting grammar and punctuation.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 12-13

Writing

Objective: Synthesizing information from the text
 Writing an effective lede
 Writing an effective headline
 Differentiating between fact and opinion

Activity

Will Tweedy's encounter with a passing train shakes up the whole town. Toddy Hughes, a stringer, or freelance reporter, for the *Atlanta Constitution Tri-Weekly*, is eager to share Will's harrowing adventures with his readers.

Imagine you are a reporter for a metropolitan newspaper, and your take on Will Tweedy's story could win you a Pulitzer, or at the very least get you hired full-time. Write a newspaper article in which you answer **who**, **what**, **when**, **where**, **why**, and **how** in a reader-friendly manner. Remember, you must report the facts. However, you may interject opinions in the form of quotes, which you attribute to characters involved in the incident. Perhaps Lightfoot or Loomis can interject some more drama.

The most important elements of your article, the headline and the lead paragraph, should reach out and grab the readers' attention. Thus, all of your best dramatic detail, or exciting action, comes first.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 21-23**Character Collage**

Objective: Extracting ideas from the text
 Creating a collage
 Recognizing characterization

Activity

In this section, Burns introduces a new conflict in the form of a swaggering cowboy. Clayton McAllister has come to town to reclaim Miss Love Simpson, and he begins by kissing her. Of course, Rucker's nosy neighbor witnesses the kiss, and once again, the whole town entertains itself gossiping about Rucker's bride.

Create a collage for one of the characters that play a critical role in *Cold Sassy Tree*. A character's role is important if it aids the progression of the plot, embodies an idea, or lends believability to the story. You may use pictures from magazines, from online sources, or draw them yourself.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 31-40**Advice Column**

Objective: Extracting ideas from the text
 Writing an advice column

Activity

Will Tweedy struggles when his thoughts and feelings contradict what his family has taught him. Subconsciously, he knows that his family is wrong for discriminating against Mill Town residents, but his ties to his family and the traditions of the town keep him from acting on what is right. This troubles him so much, that when he and Lightfoot share a kiss in the cemetery, he thinks he hears the voice of God in the form of Miss Alice Ann.

Family ties and tradition play a role in everyone's development. At some point, an individual must determine what family values and ideas to keep and which ones to throw away.

Imagine you are an advice columnist, and Will has asked you what he should do. If he asks Lightfoot to go out with him, the two of them will be happy, but his parents will be very angry. If he ignores what he feels for Lightfoot because she is a Mill Town girl, the town and his folks will respect him, but he will not like himself. What should he do?

Respond to his letter in your column.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 31-40**Advertisement**

Objective: Synthesizing information from the text
 Applying creative thinking
 Cooperating with a group

Activity

Hoyt Tweedy excites his wife and the residents of Cold Sassy by buying the town's first automobile. His shiny new Cadillac inspires Rucker and Miss Love to purchase a car and open a dealership. They have many plans to get people to "make everybody want a car." These plans will need some improvement because selling cars to people who think of them as a luxury—if not a passing fad—proves difficult.

Imagine you are in Rucker's shoes, selling cars to people with little imagination and even less money. How do you do it?

In small groups, create an advertising campaign that includes a radio spot, a newspaper ad, a poster, a slogan, and a gimmick to attract attention to your cars. Do not include any of the actual plans that are in the book, like free driving lessons.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 41-50**Discussing and Writing About Death**

Objective: Exploring feelings about death
Analyzing an area's funeral customs and how they relate to death

Activity

Two important and very different deaths occur in Chapters 41-50. First, Campbell Williams dies; his suicide tests the hospitality of the family and the town. Then Grandpa dies after an illness during which the town showed its abundant affection for him.

This activity has two parts: a directed discussion using the questions below and writing an obituary for one of the characters.

Discuss these two deaths, including the following questions:

- If Uncle Camp had died in an accident, do you think that he would have had the same kind of funeral?
- How did Grandpa's importance affect the funeral plans for Uncle Camp?
- How did the family's handling of the suicide affect people's reactions?
- Did the community respond to Grandpa's death differently than to Uncle Camp's death?

After discussing the deaths, have students write an obituary for either Campbell Williams or E. Rucker Blakeslee. An obituary typically includes a list of relatives, a summary of community involvement and career achievements, and a summary of the person's life.