



 Prestwick House

# Activity Pack

## CRY, THE BELOVED COUNTRY

BY ALAN PATON



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Written by Marie Y. Smith

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Pre-Reading

### Historical Background

**Objective:** Understanding the historical events used as a basis for fiction

#### Activity

Authors of fictional books often use historical figures, events, and laws as the background for their stories, and as readers, it is helpful to understand these events. In *Cry, the Beloved Country*, Alan Paton refers to the following events in South African history and culture. In your group, use the Internet and library resources to research the topic your teacher assigns you. Prepare a short presentation for your class.

- Boer War
- Apartheid
- Pass laws
- Afrikaner Nationalist Party
- Nelson Mandela
- People of South Africa—Afrikaans, blacks, whites, colored—and the percentage of each
- Gold mining
- Religion

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**As You Read****Chapter Titles**

**Objective:** Identifying the main idea of each chapter and naming the chapter appropriately

**Activity**

Some books have titles that prepare the reader for what is to come in the chapter by using a quotation from or a reference to something in the chapter. Sometimes authors have quotes from other books as titles for chapters. *Cry, the Beloved Country* uses only numbers. Imagine yourself as Alan Paton's editor, who has decided to give titles of each chapter names. Keep in mind that chapter titles frequently give an overview of a chapter's content, are a short quotation from the chapter, or point toward a significant event within the chapter.

Make up titles for all the chapters in the book and list them in the second column on the chart that follows. In the third column, give a short reason why you chose that specific title. The first one has been done for you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter 4****Point of View****Objective:** Understanding another person's point of view**Activity**

When Stephan Kumalo first arrives in Johannesburg, he is confused about where he should be going. A young man befriends him, takes him to the bus station and offers to purchase Kumalo's bus ticket to Sophiatown. However, when Kumalo gives him money for the ticket, the young man takes the money and leaves. This story is told from Kumalo's point of view. In your group, rewrite the scene from the perspective of the young man.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter 8****Letter Writing****Objective:** Writing a personal letter**Activity**

Stephen knows that his wife is at home worrying about his safety and the success of his search for their son. Assume the role of Stephen, and write a letter to your wife describing your progress. Remember that you want to be honest, but you don't want to make her more worried.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter 11****Perspective****Objective:** Comparing dialogue and narrative writing**Activity**

This chapter gives a newspaper account of Arthur Jarvis' murder. It is very factual and unemotional. In your groups, use the information in the newspaper article to rewrite the incident as if you were the character assigned by your teacher.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter 15****Symbolism****Objective:** Understanding the significance of an analogy**Activity**

When writing about a complex topic, an author often uses a simple story as a symbol to help make the point. The story most often uses familiar situations, events, and terminology to explain the topic. According to Alan Paton, Zulu people often used symbolic language to illustrate a point, as in the following quotations:

There is a man sleeping in the grass, said Kumalo. And over him is gathering the greatest storm of all his days. Such lightning and thunder will come there as have never been seen before, bringing death and destruction. People hurry home past him, to places safe from danger. And whether they do not see him there in the grass, or whether they fear to halt even a moment, but they do not wake him, they let him be. (Pg. 139)

When the storm threatens, a man is afraid for his house, said Father Vincent in that symbolic language that is like the Zulu tongue. But when the house is destroyed, there is something to do. About a storm he can do nothing, but he can rebuild a house. (Pg. 140)

Select one of these quotations, and write a paragraph explaining the meaning of the quotation and how it relates to both Absalom's and Stephen's situations.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter 20****Tone and Style****Objective:** Writing in another person's style**Activity**

All people have different styles when they are writing. Prior to his death, Arthur Jarvis was writing a pamphlet entitled, "The Truth of Native Crime." Due to the burglary at his home, he never finished his writing. Assume the role of Arthur, and complete his essay beginning with his last three words—"It is time..." (Pg. 179) You may want to spend time reviewing the beginning of his essay to identify different elements of his style, such as sentence structure, use of imagery, degree of formality, etc. You should use reference materials, particularly information about Abraham Lincoln, to develop recommendations that you think Arthur would offer in the writing.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter 23****Newspaper Writing****Activity 1**

**Objective:** Identifying dramatic moments and relating them in a news article  
Writing editorial columns  
Understanding the use of satire in editorial cartoons

The high level of interest about the trial of Arthur Jarvis' accused murderers is evident in the newspapers and conversations around Johannesburg. However, right before the trial started, gold was discovered at Odendaalsrust. Write a front-page newspaper article describing the facts around and results from the discovery of gold. Write the story in the factual, detached, unbiased style required for newspaper reporters. Keep in mind that many people skim only the headlines and first paragraphs of the front-page articles, so be sure to use an interesting headline and include the basic information—who, what, where, why, when— so that a reader who has time to read only the first paragraph learns what happened. Your subsequent paragraphs should add factual details and substance to the story for the readers who want more information.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 26

### Designing Legal Documents

**Objective:** Understanding the impact of legal requirements

#### Activity

During apartheid, all black citizens of South Africa were required to carry a specific identification document called a “pass.” Legally they were supposed to have this pass in their possession at all times, but particularly when they entered neighborhoods or sections of the cities designated as white areas. Even if they worked for someone in a white area, blacks had to apply for a pass to get permission to travel into the area for work and had to leave before the evening. If people were caught without a pass, they were arrested and put in jail.

Imagine that you are required to carry a pass everywhere you go. Decide what information the police would require on the pass to prove who you are and where you are allowed to be, and design a pass that contains the necessary information: a physical description, age, residence, purpose of a specific visit or travel. Keep in mind that you will need to carry the pass at all times, so it should not be too bulky or too fragile.