

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

A Day No Pigs Would Die

by Robert Newton Peck

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Item No. 201363

A Day No Pigs Would Die

Objectives

By the end of this unit, the student will be able to:

1. distinguish between an autobiography and an autobiographical novel.
2. recognize an episodic plot and discuss its merits and shortcomings.
3. list and discuss those points that prove that the novel has a coming-of-age theme.
4. write a character sketch for each of the two major characters that includes the following:
 - what the character is like;
 - how the character is revealed to the reader.
5. discuss whether the characters in this story are round or static
6. recognize and discuss the merits and problems of using dialect in a story.
7. define “style” and describe the kind of style that Robert Newton Peck uses in this novel.
8. define and cite examples from the text of the following literary terms:
 - coming of age
 - dialect
 - dynamic character
 - episodic novel
 - flashback
 - flat or static character
 - foreshadowing
 - irony
 - narrator
 - rounded character
 - simile
 - style
 - theme
9. relate the title to the plot.
10. note the way death is portrayed, both graphically and nobly.
11. recognize the emotional impact that death has on the main character and how it changes.

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Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. An autobiography is a true story of a person's life written by that person. An autobiographical novel is a story in which the author bases the novel on his or her life but may create incidents for the story or change some of the facts in order to make the story more dramatic. Do you think *A Day No Pigs Would Die* is an autobiography or an autobiographical novel? Give your reasons.
2. An adventure, mystery, or horror novel or any other tightly structured book is like a race car that jumps away at the starting line and barrels straight down to the finish line. An episodic novel, however, is more like a tourist, who will stop and spend three or four days in one place and then move on. In an episodic novel, the individual chapters seem to be able to stand by themselves. Do you think this novel is episodic or tightly structured? Supply reasons for your answers.
3. Write a paper of one page or more in which you prove the following statement by citing incidents or quoting from the story: This story is an excellent example of a coming-of-age novel.
4. In a novel, characters who change during the course of the book are said to be dynamic. Characters who do not change are said to be static. Identify the characters who are dynamic and indicate how they change.
5. In a story, we describe a character who has only one dimension as flat. For example, the heroes in many action-adventure movies are brave, handsome, and resourceful; in short, they are always heroic. In this type movie, the villain is usually evil, ruthless, and ugly.

Round characters, however, show us another side of their personality. A round hero may sometimes have doubts or may even act cowardly at times. Round characters seem more like real people because they do not always do everything right. Would you describe the characters in this novel as round or flat? Support your answer by referring to the story.

6. In an essay of at least one page, state to what extent you agree with the following comment on this book:

A Day No Pigs Would Die is "a small, rich, wise book full of pathos and an essential home-bred humanity...It lights up a way of life that is not so long past and shows... how much we have lost."

– Winston Graham

6. Why does the father say, "We're rich"?

7. Why does the boy feel as happy as he does?

8. What fate seems to hang over the head of the pig?

9. What seems to be the relationship between the boy and his father?

Chapter 9

Vocabulary

“birching” – dialect for “whipping”

nought – nothing

quern – a hand-turned grinder

snit – anger

1. Who is Widow Bascom, and what is the gossip about her? What are the differing opinions about what is happening at her house?

2. What good turn does the Widow Bascom do for Robert?

3. What can you infer from Robert's last statement of the chapter?

Chapter 14

Vocabulary

sober – very serious

1. When Robert says, “Oh, Papa! My heart’s broke,” what does his father say?

2. To the father, what does it mean to be a man?

3. Why does Robert kiss his father’s blood-smeared hand?

4. What do the last three lines of this chapter tell us?

5. Why do you suppose the author describes Pinky’s slaughtering in such gory detail?
