

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

**Far From the Madding Crowd**

by Thomas Hardy

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All references come from the Penguin Classics edition of *Far From the Madding Crowd*,  
published 2000.

# Far From the Madding Crowd

## Objectives

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

1. understand the use of the pastoral setting in relation to
  - plot development.
  - character development.
2. define vocabulary words from the text.
3. point out instances of foreshadowing and irony in the story.
4. identify the effect that third person point of view has on the story.
5. discuss the role of rustics in the story, particularly in relation to comic relief.
6. understand and identify examples of character foils.
7. recognize how characters' names function as a form of symbolism.
8. cite incidents in the novel that illustrate how Bathsheba Everdene's character changes over the course of the story, paying particular attention to the ideas of vanity, responsibility, and maturity.
9. discuss how the three main male characters of the story—Gabriel, Boldwood, and Troy—are similar to and different from each other, citing examples of each; and what effect comparing or contrasting the characters has on the overall story.
10. discuss man's relationship to nature in the story, and how nature plays a role in plot development.
11. identify the protagonist and antagonists of the novel, the climax and resolution of the plot, and the roles of the protagonist and antagonists.
12. cite incidents in the novel to illustrate the following theme: true love can overcome any obstacle.
13. understand allusion as a literary device, and identify incidents in the novel of classical, literary, and biblical allusions.

# Far From the Madding Crowd

## Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Gabriel Oak, Sergeant Troy, and Farmer Boldwood are all three men in love with Bathsheba Everdene. What characteristics do they have in common? In what ways are they different?
2. Which character do you consider to be the hero, and why?
3. One of the themes in this story is that true love can endure time and tragedy. What are the characteristics of true love? Discuss instances in the novel where relationships are not based on true love. Discuss which relationship in this novel is based on true love, and the circumstances around which it was finally embraced.
4. Gabriel Oak accepts Bathsheba Everdene as his wife, even after she has rejected him numerous times. In your opinion, did he make the right decision?
5. What evidence is there that Hardy believed life was ruled by fate, or sheer luck? Cite instances where luck, fate and/or coincidence played a strong role in the story.
6. What role do the rustics in this novel play? How are they important plot development?
7. In your opinion, why did Hardy choose to write the rustic's dialogue in native vernacular? What effect does it have on them as characters?
8. If Fanny Robin had not been a character in this novel, how would it be different? In your opinion, do you believe Bathsheba and Troy's relationship still would have come to an end? Why or why not?
9. What kinds of statements are made in this novel about social class?
10. Both Gabriel and Bathsheba's names allude to Biblical history. To what do their names allude? How are these names appropriate for their characters?
11. What statement does this novel make about sexuality? How do the attitudes and responsibilities connected to sexuality differ, depending on the gender of the character?
12. Why is the pastoral landscape of this novel important? Why could this novel not have taken place in a different setting?
13. How is Gabriel Oak connected to nature? Cite instances in the novel where he shows his deep connection with nature. Discuss how this connection works to his benefit, and how it benefits or hurts those around him.

# Far From the Madding Crowd

## Chapter One

### Vocabulary

**apex** – the top or peak  
**piqued** – annoyed  
**rudimentary** – simple or basic  
**vestal** – a chaste woman

1. Contrast Gabriel Oak with the young woman in the wagon.

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2. What displays Gabriel as a good judge of character?

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## Chapter Sixteen

### Vocabulary

**chevron** – an insignia  
**egress** – an exit  
**expostulated** – voiced an opinion  
**nave** – the main interior part of a church

“They were about to disperse, when a smart footstep, entering the porch and coming up the central passage, arrested their attention.”

1. What literary term is used in the quotation above?

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2. Describe Frank’s attitude as he leaves the church and meets the woman.

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3. How does the chapter end?

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## Chapter Twenty-Four

### Vocabulary

**aggrandizement** – exaggeration

**encumbrance** – burden

**perdition** – destruction; loss

**superfluity** – excess

**vicissitude** – a favorable or unfavorable event that occurs by chance

1. Describe Sergeant Troy's character.

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2. How does Gabriel serve as a foil to Troy?

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### Chapter Forty-Two

#### Vocabulary

**imperious** – superior; arrogant  
**volition** – choice; decision

1. Bathsheba asks Liddy if the towns people are talking about Fanny, and Liddy reports something that Mary-ann said. What is the gossip about Fanny, and how does Bathsheba react?

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2. How does Troy’s treatment of the deceased Fanny contrast with his treatment of Bathsheba?

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### Chapter Forty-Three

#### Vocabulary

**countrified** – rural; pastoral  
**fulsome** – excessive  
**pestilences** – plagues

1. Where does Bathsheba go to escape her pain?

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2. What does the sunrise symbolize for Bathsheba?

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