



 Prestwick House

# Activity Pack

## THE METAMORPHOSIS

BY FRANZ KAFKA



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Item No. 303192  
Written by Kathryn Mitchell

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

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

**Chapter I****Expanding on A Theme**

**Objective:** Identifying and expanding on a main idea or theme of the novel through poetry

**Activity:**

Write a poem based on one of the words from Chapter I listed below that reveals to the reader either your feelings about what has happened in the novel so far or how the plot relates to some broader, universal concept. For example: You could take the word “pest” and write a poem about how some creatures are less valued than others and considered obnoxious just because of their species. Be creative!

Your poem should be at least twelve lines long and contain at least one simile or metaphor, one example of personification, and one example of onomatopoeia.

Choose from the following words:

- melancholy
- debt
- backbone
- traveler
- pain
- anxious
- condemned
- humanity
- invisible
- individual

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**Chapter II****Characterization****Objective:** Making inferences about characters**Activity:**

The ability to make inferences is important. An inference is an educated guess: You take what you know, apply it to the information in the text, and draw a conclusion. Making inferences allows for a deeper understanding of what you read.

For this activity, complete the chart on the following page in three steps. First, read the question in the far left column. Go through the text of Chapter II and record any words, phrases, or sentences that relate to the question in the second column. Next, write your reaction to those words, phrases, and sentences in the third column. How does the information make you feel? Does it remind you of anything you have experienced? In the final step, re-read the information in the second and third columns. Put it all together and see if you can answer the question. Your answer goes in the fourth column.

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

### Chapter III

#### Analyzing Poetry

**Objectives:** Recognizing similarities between the novel and selected poems

**Activity:**

Identify connections between *The Metamorphosis* and various poems.

Poets throughout history have examined the universal themes of loneliness, emptiness, and isolation. In this activity, read the three poems below. Then, complete the analysis chart by writing a few sentences that connect each poem to a part of Chapter III. Does the poem remind you of a particular event in the chapter, an emotion expressed by one of the characters, or a character trait? Be sure to refer specifically to the text of the poems and write your ideas in complete sentences.

#### The Poems

##### **Riches I Hold in Light Esteem**

By Emily Bronte

Riches I hold in light esteem  
And Love I laugh to scorn  
And lust of Fame was but a dream  
That vanished with the morn—

And if I pray, the only prayer  
That moves my lips for me  
Is—"Leave the heart that now I bear  
And give me liberty."

Yes, as my swift days near their goal  
'Tis all that I implore  
Through life and death, a chainless soul  
With courage to endure!

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**Chapters I - III****Identifying Figurative Language**

**Objectives:** Identifying litotes  
Rewriting litotes to omit negative words

**Activity:**

An interesting feature of *The Metamorphosis* is Kafka's frequent use of litotes. Litotes is a form of speech in which an understatement expresses the something close to the opposite of the literal meaning of a phrase. For example, the statement "I don't mind having a little money," is an example of litotes.

As you read the novel, look for uses of litotes. Record examples you find in the chart on the following page and then rewrite them so they express the same idea without using litotes. We have done the first one for you.

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

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

**Chapters I – III****Examination of Motif**

**Objective:** Using the text to find examples of major motifs of the novel

**Activity:**

The plot of *The Metamorphosis* is undoubtedly strange: A man wakes up to find that he has turned into a bug, and this change plunges his family into financial ruin. The novel concludes with his death, and no one ever asks why the metamorphosis took place.

However absurd this novel may be, it does contain motifs that are ordinary and which allow the reader to relate to the story. These are family duty, freedom, emptiness, and isolation. In this activity, find three examples in the text that support each of these motifs. Quote directly from the novel and write the excerpts in the chart on the following page. We have done the first one for you.

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

**Wrap-up****Designing a Book Cover**

**Objective:** Responding to the novel  
Creating a visual representation of theme

**Activity:**

Design a new book cover for the novel.

1. Fold one sheet of drawing or construction paper in half. On the front, draw or cut and paste pictures obtained from any source to design the cover. Be sure your cover reflects the central ideas of the novel.
2. On the back, write a brief review of the story. Include these elements:
  - a quoted excerpt from the novel that reveals a theme
  - a summary of no more than one hundred words or fewer
  - a personal review of the story

Be careful not to give away the ending of the novel. Your review should entice others to read it.

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**Wrap-up****Rewriting the Ending**

**Objective:** Extending the story by rewriting the ending  
Adopting the author's style

**Activity:**

In the end of *The Metamorphosis*, Grete, who attempted to care for Gregor after his transformation, has reached the end of her patience and gives up. She even tells her parents to “try to banish the thought that it’s Gregor.” At this point, Gregor retreats to his room, is ignored by the rest of his family, and dies. Many readers are dissatisfied with this ending.

Rewrite the final two paragraphs of the novel, but in your new version, have Grete and her family accept Gregor’s new state. How could they accommodate Gregor and include him in their home and daily, family activities? How could they arrange his care? How would everyone’s life change?



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

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

### Wrap-up

#### Drafting a Last Will and Testament

**Objective:** Synthesizing character traits by adopting a persona from the novel

**Activity:**

A Last Will and Testament is a legal document in which individuals list the recipients of their belongings after their death. Assume the identity of a character in *The Metamorphosis* and write your Last Will & Testament. Follow the format of the example below.

“I, Sally Smith, do hereby bequeath all my earthly possessions to the following people:

- To my daughter, Emily, I leave my wedding band and engagement ring. May you and your future husband know the happiness your father and I shared.
- To my son, Peter, I leave my grand piano and collection of music. I hope music will remain a vital part of your life.
- To my best friend, Margaret—what would I have done without you all these years? Because you have brought color to my life, I leave to you my favorite painting.
- To my dear husband, James: You’ve made me the happiest woman in the world. To you, I leave everything else in my possession and a lifetime of warm memories.

Choose to write the Last Will and Testament for any of the main characters. You must leave at least three items to three different people mentioned in the novel. You may have to guess what each character possesses.

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

**Wrap-up****Casting Call**

**Objective:** Analyzing characters in order to make the book into a film

**Activity:**

Not many directors and producers have adapted *The Metamorphosis* for film. Pretend that a production company has asked you to turn *The Metamorphosis* into a movie. Which actors will you cast for the parts of Gregor, Grete, Mr. Samsa, Mrs. Samsa, the housekeeper, and the three boarders?

Follow these steps to complete this assignment:

1. Make a list of which actor will play each part.
2. Draw or cut out pictures of each actor from a magazine.
3. Compile a small “cast book” to showcase each actor. Under each actor’s picture, write his or her name and tell which character in the novel the actor will play. Then, write a short explanation of your choice: Why would this actor be good in this role? Have you seen this actor in other films? Is he or she an Oscar winner? Provide a detailed explanation.
4. At the end of your explanation, include a quotation from the character in the novel that indicates his or her personality.