



 Prestwick House

Activity Pack

ORDINARY PEOPLE

BY JUDITH GUEST



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Written by Ashley Brown

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading

What Do You Know?

Objective: Determining existing knowledge of depression

Activity

Although *Ordinary People* is a fictional story, it deals with an issue that has seen an increase in public awareness over the years—depression. Form small groups to discuss the topic of depression. Then, complete the following chart with what your group already knows about depression and what you want to learn while reading the book. Leave the third column blank to finish after you have completed the book. We have provided an example to get you started.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW CHART

What do you know?	What do you want to learn?	What did you learn?
A person of any age can experience depression.	What events in a person's life can lead to depression?	

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 1

Crafting Mobile Messages

Objective: Creating thought-provoking messages with few words

Activity

This chapter introduces Conrad Jarrett and his desire to have a guiding principle for his life, which he equates to messages on bumper stickers. These messages are often humorous, religious, political, philosophical, or supportive of an organization. They naturally reflect a belief held by the owner of the vehicle.

Using information from the text that you find important, write a bumper sticker message that models a guiding principle appropriate for Conrad.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 4

Travel Brochure

Objective: Understanding methods of effective persuasion

Activity

Beth attempts to persuade Calvin to have a Christmas getaway in London. She informs him of the few remaining vacancies and the urgency with which they need to act to take advantage of the opportunity. She reminds him that a Dickens Christmas in London is something they've never done. Essentially, Beth adopts the role of a savvy travel agent.

Create a travel brochure that would help Beth persuade Calvin to agree to a Christmas in London. Remember that logos, pathos, and ethos are essential to effective persuasion, but decide what would best convince Calvin. Use the Internet or print sources to find pictures and information about London—attractions, climate, accommodations, etc. to use in your brochure. To get started, you may want to list the type of information you may include and how it could be used persuasively.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 6**Found Poem**

Objectives: Extracting information from the text
Writing a poem

Activity

A “found” poem is a poem made up entirely of phrases, sentences, or quotations found in the text. Review Chapter 6, and create a found poem of your own. The poem could tell the reader something about the emotional state of one of the characters, but this is not necessary; it may be totally unrelated to the action of the story, which is one of the best parts of writing a found poem.

Your poem should be at least ten lines long. The lines do not need to rhyme, but they certainly may. You can arrange the phrases in any way you like and change the punctuation, but do not deviate from Guest's actual words. Give the poem a title, which may or may not come from the book. The following is an example taken from Chapter 1:

Deface the Walls

Plagued
Connected at once to sanity
Too many details
You're okay.
All cured, nobody panic
Putting his life in order
The Anxious Failure
Hacked it up badly
Be

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 13

Family Traditions

Objective: Comparing character traditions with personal traditions

Activity

Many families have a certain routine they adhere to for specific events. Many times, this repetition leads to the formation of a tradition. For some, holidays are when family members come together and enact certain traditions, whether it is a particular dinner, gift exchange, a yearly trip, or any other meaningful event or custom.

The Jarrett family is preparing to celebrate Christmas at home this year. To get into the Christmas spirit, Cal and Calvin have picked out a Christmas tree to be decorated later. Using the images offered in Chapter 13, draw a picture showing the type of Christmas that Conrad envisions for his family. Next, choose any holiday or event that your family celebrates together, and draw a picture of it.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 15

Resolving Inner Conflict

Objective: Relating to a character's problems practicing problem-solving skills

Activity

Imagine that you are Calvin and are disappointed with Conrad's reaction over his Christmas present. You want to be a good father and make your son happy, but you also don't want what your wife considers to be too much worry over him to cause problems in your marriage. How will you find a compromise? Make a list of your concerns and then write a plan to resolve them.

Name: _____

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Chapter 18

Test-Taking Strategies

Objective: Discussing and exchanging test-taking strategies

Activity

Conrad experiences a bit of test anxiety during his English exam. He is tense and has trouble concentrating. How well did Conrad prepare for his exam? (Look back to previous chapters for references to his studying habits.) What could he have done to better prepare himself? Many times, test anxiety can be avoided if proper study skills are utilized.

How do you prepare for a test? Write a list of helpful hints that could have reduced Conrad's test anxiety. Consider what could have been done before the day of the exam and what could have been done on exam day.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 20

Character Horoscopes

Objective: Analyzing character relationships by using astrology

Activity

Astrology is the study of celestial bodies and their influence over natural behaviors, particularly human behaviors. The most common extension of astrology is horoscopes. Have you ever read the horoscope section of a newspaper, magazine, or website? While some people read horoscopes purely for entertainment, others rely on them for daily guidance. Additionally, certain astrological signs, also known as zodiac signs, are said to be more compatible than others—suggesting relationship patterns.

Research Conrad's and Jeannine's astrological signs. (Conrad is a Capricorn, and Jeannine is a Gemini.) Then, write the following horoscopes that Conrad and Jeannine would each read in the paper the morning before their first date:

- a description of the characteristics of Capricorns and a prediction for the day
- a description of the characteristics of Geminis and a prediction for the day.
- an assessment of the compatibility of the two signs

Name: _____

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Chapter 22

Debate

Objective: Preparing arguments and participating in a debate

Activity

A formal debate consists of two individuals or teams presenting opposing views on one subject. Each side is given a chance to state its opinion as well as respond to the other side's opinion. The issue of violence, both upon oneself and towards others, is of importance in *Ordinary People*. Form teams, and prepare an argument that either supports or opposes Conrad's use of violence in Chapter 22.

In constructing your argument, you should use examples from the text to support your specific points. You may conduct research on your topic by using the library, the Internet, or other available sources. If you feel you can build a strong enough argument by appealing to your audience purely on an emotional or logical level, you may take that approach. Be sure to consider the opposing side's possible approach, and prepare a response.