



 Prestwick House

Activity Pack

THE PEARL

BY JOHN STEINBECK



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Written by Lori White

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading

Research and Oral Presentation

Objective: Understanding the roots of the storytelling tradition

Activity

The art of storytelling has historically taken many forms. Only recently, in fact, has storytelling taken a written form. In most cultures, storytelling began as an oral tradition. Homer's epics, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, for example, were passed down by word of mouth, as were many other legends and tales. In *The Sea of Cortez*, Steinbeck relates the story of how he was inspired to write *The Pearl*, which was essentially hearing and becoming captivated by the tale of a great pearl and a foolish young man.

Research oral storytelling traditions from different cultures, such as Native American, ancient Greek, French, Anglo-Saxon, Appalachian, and Mexican. Find one popular tale from a culture and recite it to the class. Use storytelling techniques appropriate for your chosen culture, for instance, sweeping gestures, musical accompaniment, or strong verbal expression.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading

Game

Objective: Introducing and relating to novel concepts through brainstorming

Activity

One of the key issues that Kino copes with is what money can and cannot buy. Think for a moment of the things that are important to you. Which of these things can be purchased with money and which cannot?

Use the **Brainbuster Handout** to create a list of things that money can and cannot buy. The groups will have ten minutes to work. When time is up, select a group recorder to list the items on the board. You will receive one point for each item on the board, but, as each group comes forward, you will have to strike through any duplicate responses. For example, if Group 1 and Group 2 each list “love” as a thing that money cannot purchase, neither group will receive a point. The group with the highest number of remaining responses wins. The key to winning this game is originality.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 1

Characterization

Objective: Using information from a literary work to evaluate characters

Activity

The reader learns a great deal about the main characters in the first chapter of *The Pearl* in both direct and indirect ways.

Using the chart below, examine the passages indicated for each character and paraphrase or explain the information narrated in each. You may also refer to the novel for additional contextual information. In the final column, write what each passage reveals about the character. An example is provided. After evaluating the passages provided, find your own passage to explain.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 2

Research and Creative Design

Objective: Linking literature to other content areas

Activity

Kino is fortunate to discover a sizable pearl as he is diving for pearls. Pearl diving is a fairly common occupation for the men in Kino's tribe, although few divers ever discover a pearl of great value. The narrator describes the process of a pearl's birth briefly, stating:

An accident could happen to these oysters, a grain of sand could lie in the folds of muscle and irritate the flesh until in self-protection the flesh coated the grain with a layer of smooth cement. But once started, the flesh continued to coat the foreign body until it fell free in some tidal flurry or until the oyster was destroyed. (Pg. 16)

Using the internet or an encyclopedia database, research how a pearl is created. Create a poster that details the process using pictures and text. Pictures may be hand-drawn, computer-designed, or printed from the sources that you use. Text should clearly explain the pictures and process clearly in your own words. Ideas could be connected in a flow chart fashion, numbered, or ordered in some other manner, but the movement from the first step to the last step should be easy to follow. On the back of the poster, affix a "works cited" page that lists all of your sources.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 3

Creative Writing and Figurative Language

Objective: Experimenting with figurative language

Activity

The first paragraph on page 21 pays tribute to Steinbeck's use of figurative language, the simile in particular, and in this section, also personification. Steinbeck's simile, the town is compared to an animal. The town "is a thing like a colonial animal. A town has a nervous system and a head and shoulders and feet. A town is a thing separate from all other towns, so that there are no two towns alike. And a town has a whole emotion. How news travels through a town is a mystery not easily to be solved." Steinbeck carries this characterization of Kino's town throughout the novel, making it seem alive and with its own personality.

Characterize your town in a poem, song, or narrative. Use Steinbeck's description as an example, but extend your description further. You do not have an entire novel with which to show your town, only one written activity. Begin with some form of figurative language. You may use a simile, as Steinbeck did, or a metaphor or personification.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 3 – 4**Vocabulary and Inference****Objective:** Defining vocabulary words through context**Activity**

Look up the following vocabulary words on the pages indicated to complete the chart on the next page. In your own words, define word based on context clues from the sentence and surrounding sentences. Context clues refer to the parts of a written passage surrounding a word or phrase that help you to determine that word or phrase's meaning. After writing your own contextual definition, look the word up in a dictionary and the accuracy of your definition. Write a revised definition, if necessary, in the Revised Definition column. An example has been done for you.

Example:

judicious – “And when it was made plain who Kino was, the doctor grew stern and judicious at the same time.” (Page 22)

Contextual Definition: The context of this sentence is how the doctor's opinion of Kino changes after he finds out that Kino will be wealthy. He puts on a “stern and *judicious*” manner, and claims him as his patient. I might infer that *judicious* means something similar to “stern,” such as “parental” or “wise.”

Revised Definition: After looking up *judicious* in the dictionary, I can see that my contextual definition is a bit inaccurate. I would revise the definition “having sound judgment.”

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 5 – 6**Mock Trial****Objective:** Applying thematic concepts to a trial situation**Activity**

When Kino first discovered his pearl, he was relieved that he would be able to pay a doctor to treat his child. Soon, however, came the understanding that he could have virtually anything he had ever dreamed of—a rifle, a real marriage, and an education for his son. Kino is not the only character driven by imagined wealth. Kino is attacked and forced to defend himself repeatedly over the course of the novel. Although Juana begs him to give up the pearl, Kino fails to heed her. He ultimately kills a man in his quest to retain and realize his dreams. Has Kino's preoccupation with dreams blinded him to the things that really matter, such as his family's safety? With your classmates, explore this idea by holding a mock trial. You may choose to do this in one of two ways:

- Pretend that Kino has been caught in his flight from his murder. He is being prosecuted for the death of his attacker, and claims self-defense.

OR

- Pretend that Kino finds and brings to trial the person who shot Coyotito. This individual is bringing a countersuit against Kino, claiming that Coyotito's death is due to Kino's negligence by putting him in that situation.

The prosecution should meet with their attorney, as should the defendant. Jurors should meet with the judge to determine appropriate procedures. The two attorneys and their clients should establish a list of questions and rebuttals. Be ready to begin the trial when your teacher tells you.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 1 – 6**Journal Writing and Characterization****Objective:** Identifying with a character**Activity**

There may be things that you believe Kino or Juana should have done differently. Sometimes it is easier, in hindsight, to recognize the “right” path.

Look back through the novel and jot down events that are key in shaping the way that things turn out for Kino and Juana. Choose either Kino or Juana’s perspective and write a series of diary entries that chronicle your character’s decisions and regrets throughout the novel. These entries should reflect events that are significant to your character, and his or her thoughts, feelings, and impressions. Also include justifications for choices made and questions or issues that he or she may have. Diary entries should be in the order that events occur in the novel. Use the following chart to help you outline your diary entries.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Wrap-Up

Essay

Objective: Analyzing a literary work through writing

Activity

In a well-written essay, answer one of the following questions. The essay should include an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Also, be sure to provide a thesis statement.

- What hazards are inherent in possessing great wealth? Develop your response to this question with Kino's example.
- Using evidence from the novel, either support or refute this statement: Like most of Steinbeck's works, *The Pearl* can be interpreted as a social criticism.
- At the end of *The Pearl*, are Kino and Juana figures of defeat or victory? Choose one to defend with evidence from the novel.
- To what extent is Kino responsible for his own downfall? To what extent is destiny, or fate, responsible? Explain how fate and choice interact in Kino's story, focusing on the choices that Kino makes and the choices that are made for him.