

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

The Pigman

by Paul Zindel

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The Pigman

Objectives

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

1. write an essay that explains and supports this statement: *The Pigman* is a good example of the “coming of age” genre.
2. identify and discuss the following themes in this novel by citing comments and incidents in the novel for support:
 - A. Life is what a person makes of it. Some people might have a difficult time, but they should not blame parents or anyone else for their lives.
 - B. Some older people have a child-like innocence that allows them to enjoy life a great deal more than (people who do not have this quality).
 - C. Some parents do not recognize that their children are people who feel a need to relate to others outside the family.
 - D. In our society, older people can become extremely lonely if they have no family or are ignored.
 - E. Compassion is one of the most important virtues to have.
 - F. If they are not careful as they grow older, people may lose their sense of wonder.
3. define the following terms and give examples from the novel to illustrate them:
 - A. Inference
 - B. Narrator
 - C. Plot
 - D. Narrator
 - E. Characterization
 - F. Theme
 - G. Sarcasm
4. write character descriptions of key persons in the novel. Support your descriptions with references from the text.
5. draw inferences about plot and characters.
6. list the major incidents in this plot and identify:
 - exposition
 - rising action
 - climax
 - falling action
 - resolution
7. understand how the narration and narrator change from one chapter to the next.

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Below are some ideas presented in the novel that we might infer that the author believes to be true. Which of these, from your experience, do you believe to be true?
 - A. Each person's life becomes what that person makes of it, e.g., a person who finds new experiences exciting will appreciate life more than someone who finds new things frightening.
 - B. People should never lose their child-like innocence.
 - C. Parents need to allow their children to associate with people other than family members.
 - D. Being an elderly person in today's society may lead to extreme loneliness.
 - E. Compassion for others is vital to personal fulfillment.
2. Explain why this novel is a good example of the "Coming of Age" theme. Support your answer by referring to comments and incidents from the novel.
3. Choose any chapter and rewrite a portion of it as if it had been written by the other narrator.
4. Write a short essay in which you explain how foreshadowing is used in this novel to build interest and suspense.
5. List the major incidents in the plot of this novel and identify those incidents that are part of the *exposition*, those that constitute *rising action*, that incident that is the *climax*, those that are part of the *falling action*, and that one which is the *resolution*.
6. Describe how Lorraine's mother interacts with Lorraine and offer what appears to you to be an explanation for the mother's behavior.
7. Some people view Mr. Pignati in a very sympathetic light while others do not. State your opinion of Mr. Pignati and refer to the text to illustrate your point.
8. Describe the way in which you see John. When you describe a feature of his character or personality, cite incidents or comments from the book to support your opinion.
9. Do the same for Lorraine.

Chapter Two

VOCABULARY

abominable – very ugly; unpleasant
archaeologist – someone who studies past civilizations
assert – to state forcefully
paranoia – unreasonable fear; abnormal mistrust and suspicion of others
sclerosis – disease; abnormal thickening of human tissue
subliminally – below the conscious level
thrombosis – dangerous blood clot

1. What does Lorraine tell us about John?

2. What does Lorraine see as the one big personality difference between herself and John?

3. Of what is Lorraine’s mother always reminding her? How do you think Lorraine feels about her mother’s comments?

Chapter Six

VOCABULARY

antagonistic – hostile

contraption – a gadget; something mechanical

intensive – great; exceptionally strong

psychoanalysis – a method of treating mental disorders

1. How does Lorraine's mother treat her? What does Lorraine think of her mother? In what way is Lorraine understanding?

2. Lorraine tells us that she has to be careful about what she says and how she speaks to her mother. She tells us that even one word could set her mother off. Have you ever had that happen to you? Explain your reaction to a person with whom you must always guard your comments.

3. Find an example of Lorraine as an unreliable narrator during the zoo excursion and explain how her narration fits the definition.

4. When Mr. Pignati arrives at the zoo, Lorraine explains that she feels sorry for him because of his smile. What does she say about his smile?

5. What is your opinion of Mr. Pignati's behavior? Does he seem less than rational to you?

Chapter Eleven

VOCABULARY

blurted – said quickly
congealing – becoming solid
gladiola – a flower
loathe – hate

1. What one request does Mr. Pignati ask of John and Lorraine, and what does he offer them?

2. What happens in this chapter that makes a change in the relationship that John and Lorraine have. Explain what happens when they are in their “disguises.”
