



PRESTWICK HOUSE

Activity Pack

THE POISONWOOD BIBLE

BY BARBARA KINGSOLVER



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Item No. 303049

Written by Rebecca Challman

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading**Creating an Overview**

Objectives: Organizing facts
Creating an overview

Activity

Use what you already know about *The Poisonwood Bible* to begin filling in the accompanying fact sheet. As you read each section of the novel, try to supply another missing fact, so that you have a complete overview by the time you are finished. *The Poisonwood Bible* Overview Activity is on the next page.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Book One: Genesis**Orleanna Price****Haiku Symbolism**

Objectives: Identifying symbolism in a literary text
Writing an original Haiku

Activity

As you shall see, Orleanna's encounter with the rare okapi serves the narrative framing, foreshadowing, and symbolism of the novel. Taken in the context of this section alone, however, it is a powerful symbol of elusiveness, freedom, and fear. It eloquently punctuates the fact that, like the okapi, Orleanna and her children are rather rare and exotic creatures who must tread cautiously, lest they be trapped and extinguished.

Write a Haiku, three lines of five, seven, and five syllables respectively, based on the symbol of the okapi or Orleanna's feelings about it.

Sample Haiku

Okapi twitches
He surrenders his surprise,
Looks away and drinks

Name: _____

Date: _____

Book One: Genesis**The Things We Carried: Adah Price****Character**

Objectives: Creating a poster about hemiplegia
Synthesizing information from a literary text

Activity

Hemiplegia, and the limp that stems from it, seems to define Adah. Though she is brilliant, the condition has made her silent, withdrawn, and bitter. She defines her partial brain paralysis this way, “Hemi is half, hemisphere, hemmed-in, hemlock, hem and haw. Plegia is the cessation of motion.” She also describes it as having been cannibalized by her sister Leah in the womb.

Do your own research on Hemiplegia, using the Internet and other appropriate reference material. Compile illustrations and text on the condition, its causes, and its treatment. Make sure your poster provides the following information:

- Definition of hemiplegia
- Percentage of people afflicted with hemiplegia
- Causes of hemiplegia (When does it happen? Why does it happen? Who does it happen to, and with what results?)
- Symptoms of hemiplegia
- Treatment of hemiplegia
- Recovery rate of people afflicted with hemiplegia
- Visuals

Name: _____

Date: _____

Book Two: The Revelation**The Things We Learned: Entire Section****Narrative Voice/Point of View**

Objectives: Recognizing how authors reveal information about characters
Understanding the subjectivity of point of view
Creating a narrative voice

Activity

Though Nathan Price is a major character and the reason his family is in Africa, he never narrates events. His wife and daughters speak of him and recount his various interchanges with people who visit the house or his makeshift church.

Summarize events from this entire section from the point of view of Nathan Price. Give him a distinct narrative voice by using some aspect of language that is unique to his character. Perhaps he cannot speak without alluding to the Bible, or maybe he speaks in clipped staccato sentences. Use the clues the family has provided about him to aid you in developing his narrative voice.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Book Two: The Revelation**The Things We Learned: Leah Price****Nonverbal Communication**

Objectives: Synthesizing information from a literary text
Communicating without language

Activity

Just a few months after their arrival in Kilanga, Ruth May has taught the children to play “Mother May I?” Somehow, smiling students and tiny teacher rise above the language barrier to communicate the rules of the game so that, in the end, the village children play better than Ruth’s sisters. Complaining that for the Congolese children the game isn’t even about manners, but just a series of steps they’ve memorized, Leah laments the irony of the situation, “This came as a strange letdown, to see how the game always went to those who knew the rules without understanding the lesson.”

In groups of five or six, select a game you all have played and are thoroughly familiar with. Then come up with a way to teach the game to others without using speech.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Book Three: The Judges**Orleanna Price****Setting**

Objectives: Understanding how setting informs the plot of a literary text
Comparing and contrasting settings by means of a Venn diagram

Activity

Orleanna muses that her childhood was a happy one despite having lost her mother when she was quite young and living in poverty. "Jackson, Mississippi, in the Great Depression," she reasons, "wasn't so different from the Congo thirty years later, except that in Jackson we knew of some that had plenty and I guess that did make us restless from time to time. In Kilanga, people knew nothing of things they might have had.... I believe they were satisfied with their lot."

Compare the place in which the Price girls find themselves with the place where you live and study. Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the two places.

In the center column, write the similarities. On the left side, write characteristics unique to Kilanga Village, and on the right side write characteristics unique to your hometown. Label one half of the diagram Kilanga, 1959 and the other half Your Town, Today

Name: _____

Date: _____

Book Three: The Judges**Leah****Character Letter Writing**

Objectives: Conveying what you know about a character
Writing a descriptive letter

Activity

Leah muses on all that has happened and all that she has learned about the Congo. She wishes she could correct the wrong ideas people back home harbor about Africa and its people. Her mother has been nagging the girls to write to their former classmates back home, but Leah admits that none of them have, because they wouldn't know where to begin. For, while Americans may have crazy, outlandish ideas about the people in Africa, they could never imagine or comprehend the parasites, diseases, and other day-to-day challenges the villagers must face in order to survive: no running water, no medical services, no transportation except their own feet, and no food unless they grow it or kill it themselves. Leah sums it up thusly, "You wouldn't even get as far as breakfast before running out of paper."

Rise to the challenge. Imagine you are one of the Prices and write a letter to one of your friends back home describing all that you have encountered in Africa. Remember to write your letter in the narrative voice of whatever character you choose.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Book Four: Bel and the Serpent**Orleanna****Character/Plot**

Objectives: Examining characterization in relation to plot
Synthesizing information from a literary text

Activity

In *Book Four*, Kingsolver skillfully uses Orleanna Price's narrative to sum up the political injustices perpetrated against an honorable man who ruled a ripe, rich country. Each lost its life blood at the hands of greedy white men, in the name of democracy, and the country has been in turmoil ever since.

In her narrative about the Americans and Belgians having Patrice Lumumba forcefully removed from his elected office and eventually beaten to death, she mentions a South African mercenary pilot who owns a radio and responds to the code words, "The Rabbit has escaped." The pilot is Eeben Axelroot; and he serves as a great example of how Kingsolver seamlessly weaves the lives of her characters into the tapestry of Congolese history.

Imagine you are an author, and you want to create a work of historical fiction. What time period would you choose. How many years would you cover? What historical figures would you choose to mingle with your fictional characters?

Draw up a one-page outline for your proposed saga. Include possible titles, characters, historical events, genre (thriller, mystery, romance, political allegory, etc.), essential plot points, settings (locations, time period, etc.), and your target audience or demographic (teens, single young women, professional men, etc.). Also, make sure you include a paragraph detailing why this new book will be a best-seller.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Book Four: Bel and the Serpent**What We Lost: Leah****Character/Plot**

Objectives: Understanding how characters are used to move the plot forward
Writing a persuasive letter

Activity

The village is facing starvation after the ant invasion and the drought. The men plan a hunt which involves burning the grasses on grazing land so the animals flee into the sights of the waiting hunters. Leah insists on participating; thanks to Nelson, she has become proficient with a bow. She defies her father, and risks the wrath of many men in the village, in order to get meat for her family. Her actions may have set into motion a catastrophic chain of events, but she has taken an important step on her journey toward autonomy from her father.

Imagine you are Leah, and you want to explain yourself to your distant father. You want to tell him how you admired and practically worshipped him until recently. You want him to know how and why that is changing. But mostly, you want to persuade him to see things your way, and to see the rightness of your latest decision. Write a heartfelt persuasive letter to Nathan.