



 Prestwick House

Activity Pack

THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE

BY STEPHEN CRANE



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Item No. 201417

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading**Reacting to Setting****Objective:** Reacting to the setting**Activity**

According to accounts of Crane's writing of *The Red Badge of Courage*, Crane was influenced by the photographs of Matthew Brady.

In small groups, examine the three photographs that follow. For each one, write a statement of the impression of the Civil War that the photograph gives you.

Groups should share their impressions of the photographs in a class discussion.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters I – IV**Impressionism**

Objective: Recognizing both visual and auditory images in impressionistic writing

Activity

Crane sometimes writes in an impressionistic style. He uses both colorful visual and clear auditory images to give the reader direct sensory information. At times, details of smell, taste, and tactile sensation are included in descriptions. The detail is so concrete and vivid that reading the description becomes an immediate sensory experience for the reader; it is like personally having the experience.

For each of the images quoted on the following sheet, complete the chart about the sensory detail.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters I – IV**Character Assertions**

Objective: Weighing the truth and/or significance of a character's assertions

Activity

In Chapter I, Crane tells the reader Henry's perspective on war. In the next chapters, while Henry is waiting to experience war, he continues to think about it.

In small groups, read and discuss the following quotations from the book about war. Under each, write Henry's ideas about war. Collaboratively, write your opinion about Henry's view of war in a two-paragraph essay. Explain the reasons the group has this opinion and support this view with references to Henry's thoughts in the text.

Each group should present an explanation of what their quote means and then relate it to Henry's actions and opinions about war in the first four chapters. Supporting evidence from the text should be used.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters V – X**Theme and Debate**

Objectives: Understanding thematic ideas
Interpreting and evaluating the values implied by a character's actions

Activity

In these chapters, Henry does two things that tradition says soldiers should not do. First, he runs from battle. Second, when Henry realizes the tattered man is in shock and perhaps close to death, Henry abandons him. The narrator says, "Turning at a distance he saw the tattered man wandering about helplessly in the field."

In small groups, discuss the following questions:

- Do you blame Henry for running?
- Do you blame Henry for his desertion of the tattered man?

For each question, list your reasons and supporting evidence.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters XI – XV**Descriptive Imagery**

Objectives: Understanding imagery
Visualizing descriptive imagery and inferring mood
Responding to the emotional effect created by literary text

Activity

In small groups, read and analyze the three excerpts on the next page. Mark the passages to indicate concrete words, effective adjectives, adverbs, and verbs, similes, metaphors, personification, and sensory details.

Complete the chart, **Crane's Use of Language Chart**, for the following three excerpts. Give some specific examples of each stylistic technique from the excerpts.

In the last two columns, write the mental picture you have after reading the section (What do you see in your mind?) and the effect this description has on you. (How do you feel after reading this excerpt?)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters XI – XV**Theme**

Objectives: Weighing the truth and/or significance of a character's assertions
Relating literature to life

Activity

In groups, discuss the statement you have been assigned and plan a short commentary to be presented to the class. Your commentary should include the following:

- Your responses to the statement. Is it true, partly true, understandable, or wrong?
- Your reasons for thinking as you do.
- Specific examples from the text or from your experience that support your group response.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters XVI – End**Theme II**

Objectives: Understanding thematic ideas
Relating literature to personal experience

Activity

Throughout the novel, the focus is on Henry's thoughts. He constructs explanations of reality; then he changes them. Often, he finds ways to think about reality, so he can adjust to his situation. At times, he constructs a new reality so that he can justify or accept his own actions. When he does, the reader should be aware of the contradiction and irony of his rationalizations. One glaring example of this is when Henry thinks about his desertion.

He remembered how some of the men had run from the battle. As he recalled their terror-struck faces he felt a scorn for them. They had surely been more fleet and more wild than was absolutely necessary. They were weak mortals. As for himself, he had fled with discretion and dignity.

To complicate Henry's struggle to make sense of reality and deal with his behavior, he is often unable to perceive reality accurately. His perceptions are skewed because he can see only a portion of what is happening. His judgments are clouded because his emotions often distort what is actually happening. The first illustration of this is when Henry panics and runs. The men around him are running, so he thinks the regiment is retreating. Emotionally, he is already distraught because he does not expect a second attack so soon. Critics point out that Crane uses the smoke to suggest how clouded and inaccurate human perceptions are. For instance:

The smoke fringes and flames blustered always. The youth, peering once through a sudden rift in a cloud, saw a brown mass of troops, interwoven and magnified until they appeared to be thousands. A fierce-hued flag flashed before his vision.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters XVI – End**Generalizations**

Objectives: Drawing generalizations about characters
Relating literature to life

Activity

Both Henry and Wilson perform well in battle. Imagine that both men receive awards from the general for their performance during the war.

Write an acceptance speech that you would give after this award was made. You should write one speech for Wilson and one for Henry. You can find some quotations at the end of Chapter XXI. Include what Henry and Wilson have accomplished that results in these awards.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters XVI – End**Inference I**

Objective: Inferring meaning from a character's behavior

Activity

During the second half of the novel, Henry becomes a model soldier. His focus changes from his internal world of doubt and fear to the external world of the battle.

Read the passages in the **Henry As a Successful Soldier Chart** that describe Henry's successful performance. For each one, list how he is able to perform as well as he does. We have answered the first one for you.