

Reflections:

*A Student Response Journal for...*

# *The Red Badge of Courage*

*by Stephen Crane*

Copyright © 2001 by Prestwick House, Inc., P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938.  
1-800-932-4593. [www.prestwickhouse.com](http://www.prestwickhouse.com) Permission to copy this unit for  
classroom use is extended to purchaser for his or her personal use. *This material,  
in whole or part, may not be copied for resale.*

ISBN: 978-1-60389-631-3

Item No. 201713

---

*The Red Badge of Courage*

## **Chapter I**

1. Henry Fleming's mother disapproves of his going off to war. Write the dialogue you think would take place if you told one of your parents that you enlisted in the army during wartime without his or her permission?

**Me:** I just enlisted in the Marines.

**Dad or Mom:**

2. After months in his regiment, Henry still has not seen combat and finds Army life monotonous. Describe what a day in Henry's life in the regiment at that time would have been like. Can you remember an activity that you found monotonous? Try to describe the activity in detail and include whatever your feelings were at the time you had to do it.
3. In this chapter, Henry is preoccupied with the idea that he might find that he is a coward. Write him a letter telling him your thoughts about courage in his circumstances and about any experiences with courage you may have had or witnessed.

## **Chapter II**

4. Henry is described as "considering himself as separated from the others" and feels "vast pity for himself." He believes, "he was a mental outcast." Why do you suppose Henry has these feelings? Just about everyone has this feeling at times; try to describe a time you had similar feelings.

---

## *Response Journal*

5. The soldiers live, eat, and sleep outside throughout this novel. Relate a time when you spent a night outside; if you have not, describe a time you spent a long *day* in a natural environment.

### **Chapter III**

6. Henry's first battle is one of action and chaos. He sees dead soldiers and watches as some of his regiment flee, though he does not. Relate what you might have felt and done had you been in the battle that day.
7. Write an imaginary scene in which, years later, Henry tells his teenage son about the first battle of the war he was part of. How do you suppose this account might be different from the one that was portrayed in the novel?

### **Chapter IV**

8. As the battle goes on, the men begin fleeing in droves as their officers try to stop them. Write an imaginary headline and brief newspaper account of the soldiers' behavior during this battle.
9. Henry did not flee with the other soldiers. Why do you suppose he didn't; was it courage, fear, or stupidity that stopped him? Or maybe something else?

---

*The Red Badge of Courage*

## **Chapter V**

10. In the battle described in this chapter, Stephen Crane writes three things about Henry:
- “He suddenly lost concern for himself...”
  - “He became not a man but a member.”
  - “He was welded into a common personality...”

Write about a time that you felt that you were an important part of a group; how did it make you feel, and why do suppose you felt this way?

11. The color red is used symbolically throughout this novel to stand for other things (wounds, blood, war, rage, etc.) Write about other colors which you feel have symbolic associations. Can you relate any feelings that you have felt or experienced regarding colors? For example, many people feel irritable on “Blue Mondays” or wouldn’t like it if someone called them “yellow.” Explain any of your color associations.

## **Chapter VI**

12. This chapter begins with Henry feeling very satisfied with himself because he found that he was not a coward. In a letter to a friend, write about a time when, like Henry, you have felt proud of yourself.
13. Henry’s bravery is proven to be short-lived, and when the enemy charges again, he runs, as the novel says, displaying “the zeal of an insane sprinter.” If you can understand why Henry ran this time after not wanting to finish the battle, explain it to a friend who doesn’t get it.

## **Chapter VII**

14. In this chapter, Henry seems to be having a debate with himself, trying to justify his running away in battle. It seems to be part of Henry's nature to try to shift the blame to justify an action. Relate a time you experienced or witnessed when you or someone else tried to justify an action by shifting the blame.
15. When Henry saw the dead soldier with his back against the tree, he shrieked in fright. Describe a frightening experience you had or witnessed in real life or in the media.

## **Chapter VIII**

16. Though he had run away, Henry now decides to head back toward his comrades and the fighting. How do you suppose Henry would describe this action years later to a cousin who had also fought in the war and had not run away?
17. The tattered soldier is important to show Henry's true character. When the tattered soldier asks if he was wounded, Henry does not lie, nor does he tell the truth. Relate an experience you had or witnessed, in which you or someone else did not tell the absolute truth. In your narrative, try to include the speaker's motivation for not telling the whole truth.

---

*The Red Badge of Courage*

## **Chapter IX**

18. Shame is not a very comfortable feeling. Henry worried that the other soldiers could see his shame and guilt, even though these feelings are only inside him. If you were a reporter and you had been told that Henry had run away during part of the battle, what questions would you ask him to get to the truth? Complete the following dialogue.

**Reporter:** Henry, I understand that in the last battle you ran.

**Henry:**

19. As Henry, write a letter home in which you describe your own meeting with the tall soldier, Jim Conklin. Include your feelings about the meeting.
20. Jim Conklin dies from his wounds as Henry looks on. Write a letter that you suppose Henry might have written to Jim's parents telling them of being with Jim when he died.

## **Chapter X**

21. The tattered man does not cease questioning Henry about whether or not he has been wounded. Why do you suppose this makes Henry angry? If you can, describe an experience similar to Henry's that you had.
22. The tattered man's questions also make Henry feel that "he could not keep his crime concealed in his bosom." Considering how Henry feels as a friend, what advice would you give him at this point if you were his friend?