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Literature Teaching Unit

Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



Robinson Crusoe

by Daniel Defoe

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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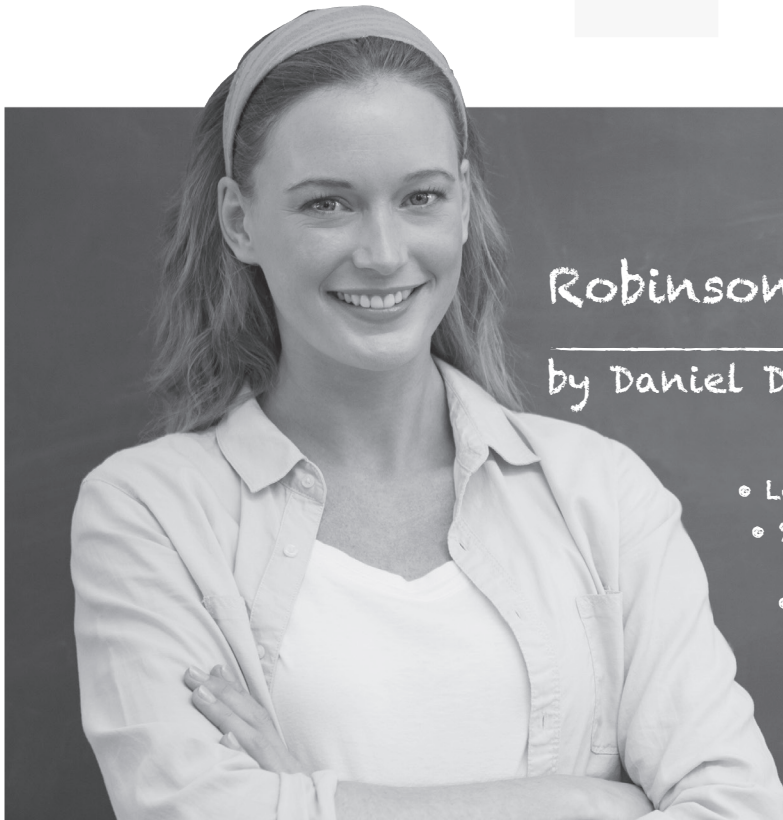
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Robinson Crusoe

Objectives

All references come from the Dover Thrift Edition of *Robinson Crusoe*, copyright 1998.

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

1. discuss the author's writing style, including his use of the following:
 - foreshadowing
 - allusion
 - irony
 - personification
 - simile
2. identify and discuss the following themes in this novel and cite incidents in the novel for support:
 - Mastery is necessary for human survival.
 - The necessity of repentance.
 - Life is unnecessarily complicated.
 - Happiness requires constant self-awareness and reflection.
3. explain Robinson Crusoe's moral quandary over the cannibals.
4. identify and explain symbols in the novel.
5. cite examples that reveal Robinson Crusoe's change in philosophy regarding friendship and gratitude.
6. explain how Defoe's story depicts social accuracies of the time period.
7. explain how Robinson Crusoe's thoughts are sometimes beyond his time.
8. identify the religious allusions in Robinson Crusoe's narrative.
9. cite examples of Robinson Crusoe's inclination to control.
10. characterize Robinson Crusoe throughout his spiritual development.

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Explain how Robinson Crusoe's life experience contributes to his survival on the island.
2. Why is this novel universally appealing?
3. Discuss the development of Robinson's spirituality.
4. Discuss the transformation of Robinson Crusoe as an individual and identify the turning point for him.
5. Why are people fascinated with characters that are involuntarily removed from civilization? What elements of this type of story create the most curiosity?
6. Discuss whether Crusoe is truly capable of having the father-son relationship that he claims to have with Friday. Cite incidents that either prove or disprove your theories.
7. Evaluate Robinson Crusoe's readiness to judge his guests and prisoners on the island.
8. Discuss the aspects of the novel that reflect the life of Daniel Defoe.
9. Define and find examples of these various literary elements:
 - foreshadowing
 - personification
 - irony
 - allusion
10. Discuss whether Crusoe is an unwise man or an unlucky man.
11. Prove that the novel contains the following themes:
 - Mastery is essential to human survival.
 - Acceptance is a requirement for happiness.
 - A complicated life only distracts from living.
 - True happiness can only be experienced after true misery.
12. Explain whether Robinson Crusoe is a hero or not. What events make him a hero? What does he lack to be a hero?
13. Discuss how Robinson might be different in this novel if he is denied the opportunity to salvage items from his ship and must begin his secluded life with nothing.
14. Explain why Robinson Crusoe is either an optimist or a pessimist.
15. Robinson Crusoe has an apparent dislike for the Catholic Church. Discuss his reasons for this attitude and whether you think that his dislike changes or remains the same throughout the story.

Robinson Crusoe

Section 1 – Robinson Crusoe’s Early Life

VOCABULARY

diligence – constant, careful effort
discourse – conversation
elopement – an escape
entreaties – earnest requests
expostulating – reasonably objecting
gout – a disease causing swelling and severe pain
propension – favorable inclination; bias
vicissitudes – unpredictable changes; variations

1. Describe the initial setting of the story.

2. In what field is Robinson’s education? What does he want to do for a living?

3. Describe Robinson’s father and his beliefs. Why does the father feel that Robinson should not travel to raise a fortune by “application and industry?”

4. According to Robinson’s father, what are the faults of lower or upper class life? Use quotations from the text to support your answer.

Section 7 – Island Life

VOCABULARY

adze – an ax-like tool for trimming and smoothing wood

contrivance – an invention or plan

despondency – a loss of courage or hope

egress – an exit

1. Robinson decides that his first shelter is inadequate. What four factors, according to him, should apply to the new shelter?

2. Why does Crusoe suddenly worry about the way in which he stores his gunpowder?

3. When Crusoe feels depressed about his misfortune, what thought cheers him up? Interpret Robinson's quote, "All evils are to be considered with the good that is in them, and with what worse attends them."

4. What purpose does the large post serve? Describe the post. What is the significance of the shape?

5. List the items that Crusoe wishes he had on the island.

5. What damage does Crusoe fear that the savages might inflict, even if they do not find him?

6. Explain the irony of Crusoe's fear that other people might be on the island. Use quotes from the text to support your answer. After your explanation, identify what symbolizes his fears.

7. What comforts Robinson in the midst of his fear?

8. Robinson reasons that the footprint is neither from the devil nor a man. What is Robinson's third explanation for the footprint?

9. How long does Crusoe stay in his cave after finding the footprint?

10. Describe the "ridiculous resolution" that Robinson makes when he realizes that the footprint cannot be his own.

11. According to Robinson, what is more terrifying than danger itself?
