

Prestwick PowerPacks™

Practical Activities for Comprehension and Key Skills



The Witch of Blackbird Pond

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Name: _____

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Activity I: Connecting with Literature/Personal Choices**Pre-Reading****Part 1**

Kit Tyler, the main character in *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*, is forced by the death of her grandfather to leave her home on Barbados Island in the Caribbean and travel across the Atlantic Ocean to live with her aunt and uncle in Wethersfield, Connecticut. Kit is moving to a society in which the choices that she makes are restricted by religious and societal beliefs, beliefs that were not as prevalent in Barbados.

Individually, brainstorm the types of choices that you have in society today. Consider the choices that you have at school, at home, in your community, and in America. You might want to consider the way you dress; when, where, and what you eat; how you behave; your education; and your future.

Part 2

When you are finished, with two or three other students, compare your lists. Create a master list by combining all of the examples that your group has produced on the following **PERSONAL CHOICES CHART**. For each choice that you have brainstormed, answer the questions on the chart. The first one has been done for you as an example.

Part 3

After you have completed the chart, think about a time when you have made a personal choice. In a one-page journal response, discuss the choice that you made and what influenced your choice. Also, discuss what would have happened had you made a different choice. Would your actions have hurt anyone? Would there have been consequences for the choice that you made? Be sure to use complete sentences and follow proper paragraph structure.

Name: _____

Date: _____

PERSONAL CHOICES CHART

Choice	Restrictions--What and By Whom?	Restrictions--Why and For Whom?	Consequences
To value life by not harming selves or others	Laws prohibit people from causing harm to one another. Community, state, and federal governments create laws.	The restrictions are in place to benefit all and provide a safe environment.	Consequences of violation include condemnation and scorn by family, community, and government; and imprisonment.

Name: _____

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Activity I: Vocabulary Chapter 1

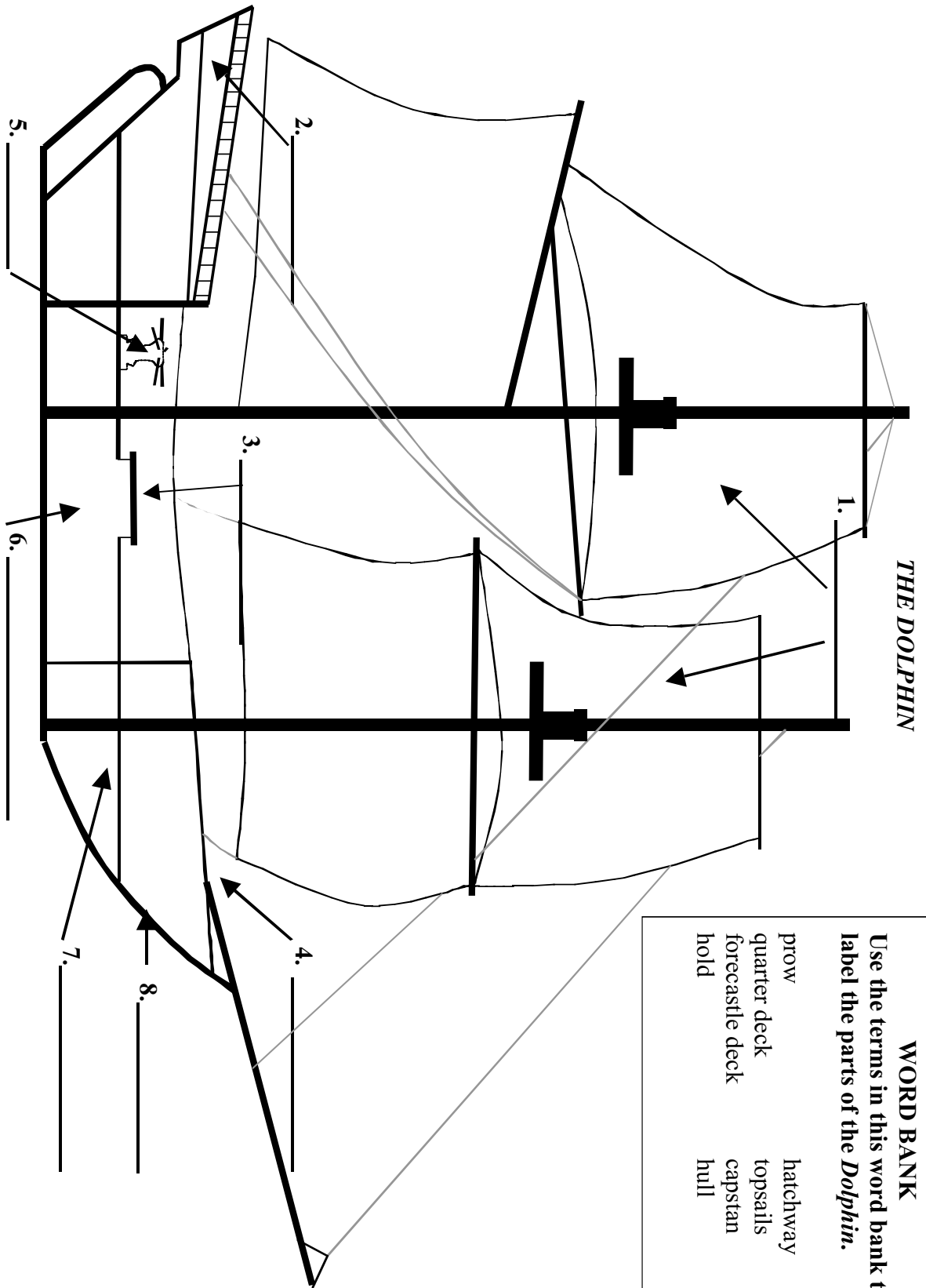
The Witch of Blackbird Pond begins on a ship sailing from Barbados to America. Because transportation and commerce were conducted mainly by sea in the 17th century, much of the terminology that you will encounter in the beginning chapters of the novel will be nautical. In order to get a better picture of what is happening in the story, you should define those nautical terms that you do not know, and then you will label several of them on the illustration of “the brigantine *Dolphin*.” (Pg. 7)

The following vocabulary list contains nautical words that are used to describe the setting at the beginning of the novel. Use context clues or the dictionary to define the terms and then label the parts on the following illustration of the *Dolphin*. Once you have defined and labeled the terms, you may want to refer to the following illustration as you continue to read the novel.

- 1. **brigantine:** _____
(Pg. 7) _____
- 2. **forecastle deck:** _____
(Pg. 7) _____
- 3. **rigging:** _____
(Pg. 7) _____
- 4. **deadlights:** _____
(Pg. 9) _____
- 5. **topsails:** _____
(Pg. 9) _____
- 6. **capstan:** _____
(Pg. 9) _____
- 7. **quarterdeck:** _____
(Pg. 9) _____
- 8. **longboat:** _____
(Pg. 9) _____
- 9. **hull:** _____
(Pg. 11) _____
- 10. **prow:** _____
(Pg. 11) _____
- 11. **hawser:** _____
(Pg. 11) _____
- 12. **aft :** _____
(Pg. 12) _____
- 13. **mooring:** _____
(Pg. 12) _____
- 14. **hatchway:** _____
(Pg. 21) _____
- 15. **hold:** _____
(Pg. 25) _____

Name: _____

Date: _____



WORD BANK

Use the terms in this word bank to label the parts of the *Dolphin*.

prow	hatchway
quarter deck	topsails
forecastle deck	capstan
hold	hull

Name: _____

Date: _____

Activity II: Characterization**Chapter 1**

Characterization is how the author reveals a character's personality. Instead of explaining a character using long, boring descriptions, the author sometimes gives you clues and hints about the character's personality. The author usually uses the following three methods to tell you about a character:

- the narrator's description of a character
- the character's own thoughts, actions, and words
- other characters' opinions of and actions toward the character

As you read, you should look for evidence in these clues that helps you decide whether a character is smart, generous, stubborn, selfish, etc.

For example, on page 11, Nat helps both his mother and Kit off of the ship as it approaches America for the first time: "As the prow scraped the landing piles, Nat leaped ashore and caught the hawser. He reached to help his mother, then stretched a sure hand to swing Kit over the boat's edge." (Pg. 11)

Because Nat helps both his mother and Kit, you know that he is a gentleman. Because his movements are described as being accomplished with a "sure hand," we also know that he is coordinated and somewhat athletic, as he is able to jump from a boat and help two women at the same time. (Pg. 11) Someone who is not a gentleman would probably not help the other women before helping himself, and someone who is unsure of himself on the water would have been described as being clumsy.

In *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*, you learn a lot about Kit's personality within the first chapter—personality traits that will surely be important later in the novel. Using only Chapter One, look for textual examples for the personality characteristics that have been listed for Kit. Write them in the following **CHARACTERIZATION CHART FOR KIT**, with the page numbers where each passage can be found. The first one has been done for you as an example.

As you continue reading the novel, add more examples illustrating Kit's personality characteristics. You may also need to add personality traits as Kit develops throughout the novel.

Student's Page

Name: _____

Date: _____

Characterization Chart for Kit

Personality Trait	Example from the Story
Proud	“She must look a sight! No gloves, no cover for her hair, and her face rough and red from weeks of salt wind...No one on the island had ever presumed to stare like that at Sir Francis Tyler’s granddaughter.” (Pg. 11)
Athletic	
Independent	
Impulsive	
Easily Angered	

Student's Page

Name: _____

Date: _____

Activity I: Setting (Comparison/Contrast) Chapters 1-3

Part 1

In the opening chapter of the book, Kit often thinks about her old home. She compares her home in Barbados to her first glimpses of America. As you look back over Chapter One and continue to read Chapters Two and Three, list details about Barbados and Connecticut and Kit's reactions and emotions associated with each place.

BARBADOS

CONNECTICUT

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Name: _____

Date: _____

Part 2

Now that you have compiled a list of descriptions of Barbados and Connecticut, you should begin to think about *why* the author has chosen these two places as the setting for her novel. Answer the following questions.

Describe Kit's feelings about Barbados. How do you know that she feels the way she does?

Describe Kit's first impression of Connecticut. How does Kit feel about arriving in America?

Often, authors choose two different places in their novels to highlight differences in society and/or characters. Based on what you have read about Kit and her first impressions of America, respond to the following question prompts in a well-written paragraph. You may want to refer back to the personality characteristics that you identified in **Activity II** for **Chapter One**.

Question: Compare and contrast Barbados and Connecticut. Using examples from the story, in which of the two places does Kit seem to fit in better and why?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Activity II: Writing**Chapters 1-3**

When Kit comes to Wethersfield, Captain Eaton is surprised that Kit's aunt and uncle are not waiting at the wharf to meet her upon her arrival. Kit explains to the captain that her aunt and uncle are unaware that she is coming. When Kit arrives at the doorstep of the Wood family, she explains to her aunt and uncle that she was afraid that, if she had written to them to warn them of her arrival, they would not have allowed her to come.

“I did not dare to write,’ she said. ‘I was afraid that you might not tell me to come, and I had to come.’” (Pg. 37)

Place yourself in Kit's shoes and write the letter that she should have written to explain to her aunt and uncle that she is coming to America to live with them. As you write your letter, keep in mind Kit's personality, but also keep in mind the fact that she has never met her aunt and uncle. In your letter, tell the Wood family what has happened in Barbados and why you must come and live with them. In addition, be sure to tell the Wood family a little bit about yourself, so they know what to expect. Use the **FRIENDLY LETTER MODEL** to help you format your letter properly.

FRIENDLY LETTER MODEL

	Your street address
	Your City, State Zip Code
	Date
Dear Name,	
Begin your letter here. Use complete sentences to form clearly organized paragraphs. Begin a new paragraph when you finish discussing one topic and want to move on to another topic. Indent the first word of each new paragraph.	
The purpose of a friendly letter is to share news with friends, family, and other people you know well.	
Your friend, sign your name	