



Prestwick House
Teaching Unit™

Sample

Prestwick House

Literature Teaching Unit

Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



Rebecca

by Daphne du Maurier

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



Click here
to learn more
about this
Teaching Unit!



Click here
to find more
Classroom Resources
for this title!



Prestwick House

More from Prestwick House

Literature

Literary Touchstone Classics
Literature Teaching Units

Grammar and Writing

College and Career Readiness: Writing
Grammar for Writing

Vocabulary

Vocabulary Power Plus
Vocabulary from Latin and Greek Roots

Reading

Reading Informational Texts
Reading Literature

Literature Teaching Unit

Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



Rebecca

by Daphne du Maurier

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

 **Prestwick House**

P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938
www.prestwickhouse.com
800.932.4593

ISBN: 978-1-58049-424-3

Copyright ©2017 by Prestwick House Inc.

All rights reserved. No portion may be reproduced without permission in writing from the publisher.

Item No: 300910

Rebecca

Notes

Written in 1938, *Rebecca* is an enduring classic example of romantic suspense that remains popular today. A young bride travels to her new husband's ancient family home, Manderley, where she must bravely unravel the mystery of her new husband's relationship with his first wife. She worries that her husband is still in love with his first wife and that she is not strong enough to be mistress of Manderley. Her innocence is shattered by the secrets surrounding the death of the first Mrs. de Winter and the truth about her husband's feelings. Despite its length, this novel is an exciting, fast paced suspense story with a moderate vocabulary level, making it appropriate for grades 7-12. Students may be interested to know that the famous director Alfred Hitchcock has made a classic movie based on this novel and another movie based on Daphne du Maurier's story, *The Birds*.

Romantic writers are interested in expressing themselves through emotional intensity which often includes extremes of rapture, nostalgia, horror, melancholy, the exotic, the macabre and irrational dreams or superstitions and legends. Romanticism is defined as the attitude that art and writing should be a freedom of individual self expression, sincerity, spontaneity, originality, emotional directness of personal experience, individual imagination, and free spirits expressing imaginative truths. These writers broke the bonds of modesty with powerful imaginations. As the students read the novel encourage them to look for elements of Romanticism in the novel.

All references come from the Avon Edition of *Rebecca*, copyright 1938.

Objectives

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

1. define vocabulary words from the text.
2. relate incidents from the story that illustrate the narrator's loss of innocence on her path to adult understanding.
3. cite incidents from the story that support the idea that this novel is an example of Romanticism.
4. point out how the limitations of first-person narration contributes to the suspense in the story.
5. cite incidents from the story to illustrate the theme that servants provide their best service only to those they consider to be socially superior.
6. discuss how the author uses descriptions of nature to represent characters, to establish the mood, and to foreshadow events.
7. identify incidents in which the narrator breaks away from the story to relate generalizations about life.
8. point out examples of irony, allusion, metaphor, and symbolism in the story.
9. discuss the significance of the fact that the narrator lacks a name.
10. discuss the following as possible symbols in the story: the sea, the rose garden, blindness, the fog, bluebells, and rhododendrons.
11. point out instances of the author's use of mood.
12. discuss the importance of the following items to the characters in the story: the handkerchief, the china cup, the cottage at the beach, Rebecca's note to Jack Favell, the hair brushes, the library, and the white azaleas.
13. identify the story's climax and the events (involving the narrator's innocence) that lead to this climax.
14. discuss the importance of the minor characters to the plot.

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. A coming-of-age novel is defined as a novel in which the main character or characters grow, mature, or understand the world in adult terms. A loss-of-innocence novel is one in which the child or young adult is living a blissfully happy life, innocent of any real evil or hardship. This innocence is shattered, however, by what the character observes or experiences; this experience changes the character. Which of the above definitions best describes the narrator's experiences in this story? Cite incidents from the novel to support your answer.
2. Discuss the importance of Manderley to the following characters in the story: Maxim, Rebecca, the narrator, the community.
3. What is the climax of the novel? In what way does the narrator change after this incident?
4. Discuss the narrator's relationship with the servants (except Mrs. Danvers) in the story. How does this relationship change as the novel progresses? State a theme for the novel based on this relationship.
5. Some critics believe that the author uses descriptions of nature to represent some of the characters in the story. Find a passage in the story illustrating the connection between the following natural elements and the characters:
 - Maxim and the rose garden
 - The narrator and blue bells
 - Rhododendrons and Rebecca
6. What evidence is there that Rebecca is an evil, cruel woman? How does her cruelty to Ben help clear Maxim of her murder?
7. In what sense is the name of Rebecca's boat ironic? Prophetic?
8. Point out the irony in the wedding present Beatrice gives the narrator.
9. Suspense is created and maintained in this novel in several ways. Find a passage in the novel or cite an incident to illustrate each of the following techniques:
 - The mood or tone of the description (usually of nature) helps to foreshadow future events. For example, if the mood is dark, then something fearful happens. Hint: Consider the descriptions of the fog, the woods, Happy Valley, etc.
 - The reader is curious to discover how a character will respond to a situation.
 - The reader knows more than the characters in the story and is curious to see how the characters discover the truth of certain situations.
10. List four items or props in the story that remind the narrator of Rebecca's powerful presence at Manderley.

Rebecca

Chapter One

VOCABULARY

insidious – characterized by treachery or slyness; crafty
inviolable – not violated; kept sacred or unbroken
mullioned – a window divided by a vertical strip or bar
sepulchre (sepulcher) – a vault for burial
spurious – not true or genuine; false; counterfeit
tenacious – holding firmly

1. The first line in the novel is one of the most famous lines in literature. “Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again.” In this first chapter the narrator gives the reader insight into her past through the telling of her dream about Manderley.

What is the tone of the narrator’s description of the woods surrounding Manderley?

2. What evidence is there that Manderley no longer exists?

3. In what way does the narrator’s dream about Manderley help her to deal with the “fear and suffering” that “lay buried in the ruins?”

Chapter Six

VOCABULARY

milieu – environment; social or cultural setting

1. Why does the narrator go to Maxim's room? What do you think she wants from him?

2. How does Maxim propose to the narrator? Why does she accept his proposal? In your opinion, does Maxim love the narrator? Why do you think he proposes?

3. Cite incidents from the story to support the following statement: Maxim cheats the narrator out of the joy of being a bride.

4. What evidence is there in this chapter that the narrator is insecure in her relationship with Maxim, even before their marriage? What action does she take to illustrate her insecurity over his relationship with Rebecca?

5. For what reasons does Mrs. Van Hopper believe the narrator is making a big mistake by marrying Maxim?

4. The narrator confides to Frank that she sometimes feels that the people in the community are comparing her to Rebecca and criticizing her because she lacks Rebecca's confidence, grace, beauty, intelligence, and wit. How does Frank respond to the narrator's insecurities?

5. One of the techniques of creating suspense is for the reader to know or suspect some hidden truth that the characters in the story have yet to unveil. What "truth" about Rebecca is hinted at in this chapter?

6. What might the following description of the rhododendrons foreshadow?

We were out of the dark wooded drive and into the light again. The rhododendrons were upon us. Their hour would soon be over. Already they looked a little over-blown, a little faded. Next month the petals would fall one by one from the great faces, and the gardeners would come and sweep them away. Theirs was a brief beauty. Not lasting very long.
