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Prestwick House
Literature
Teaching Unit
Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



A Day No Pigs
Would Die

by Robert Newton Peck

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



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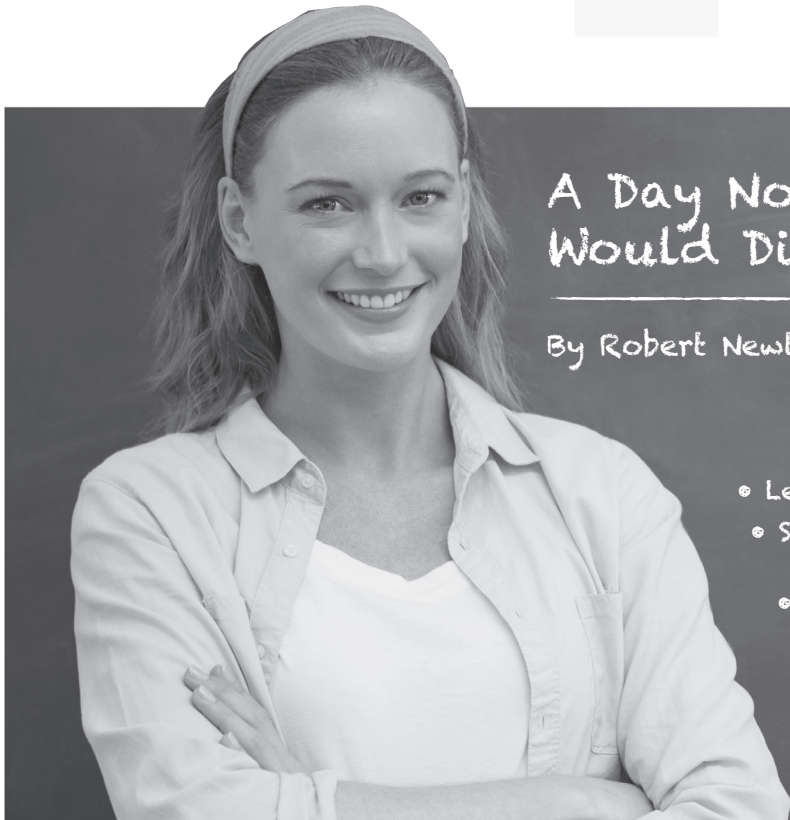
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A Day No Pigs Would Die

Objectives

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

1. distinguish between an autobiography and an autobiographical novel.
2. recognize an episodic plot and discuss its merits and shortcomings.
3. list and discuss those points that prove that the novel has a coming-of-age theme.
4. write a character sketch for each of the two major characters that includes the following:
 - what the character is like;
 - how the character is revealed to the reader.
5. discuss whether the characters in this story are round or static
6. recognize and discuss the merits and problems of using dialect in a story.
7. define “style” and describe the kind of style that Robert Newton Peck uses in this novel.
8. define and cite examples from the text of the following literary terms:
 - coming of age
 - dialect
 - dynamic character
 - episodic novel
 - flashback
 - flat or static character
 - foreshadowing
 - irony
 - narrator
 - rounded character
 - simile
 - style
 - theme
9. relate the title to the plot.
10. note the way death is portrayed, both graphically and nobly.
11. recognize the emotional impact that death has on the main character and how it changes.

A Day No Pigs Would Die

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. An autobiography is a true story of a person's life written by that person. An autobiographical novel is a story in which the author bases the novel on his or her life but may create incidents for the story or change some of the facts in order to make the story more dramatic. Do you think *A Day No Pigs Would Die* is an autobiography or an autobiographical novel? Give your reasons.
2. An adventure, mystery, or horror novel or any other tightly structured book is like a race car that jumps away at the starting line and barrels straight down to the finish line. An episodic novel, however, is more like a tourist, who will stop and spend three or four days in one place and then move on. In an episodic novel, the individual chapters seem to be able to stand by themselves. Do you think this novel is episodic or tightly structured? Supply reasons for your answers.
3. Write a paper of one page or more in which you prove the following statement by citing incidents or quoting from the story: This story is an excellent example of a coming-of-age novel.
4. In a novel, characters who change during the course of the book are said to be dynamic. Characters who do not change are said to be static. Identify the characters who are dynamic and indicate how they change.
5. In a story, we describe a character who has only one dimension as flat. For example, the heroes in many action-adventure movies are brave, handsome, and resourceful; in short, they are always heroic. In this type movie, the villain is usually evil, ruthless, and ugly.

Round characters, however, show us another side of their personality. A round hero may sometimes have doubts or may even act cowardly at times. Round characters seem more like real people because they do not always do everything right. Would you describe the characters in this novel as round or flat? Support your answer by referring to the story.

6. In an essay of at least one page, state to what extent you agree with the following comment on this book:

A Day No Pigs Would Die is "a small, rich, wise book full of pathos and an essential home-bred humanity...It lights up a way of life that is not so long past and shows... how much we have lost."

– Winston Graham

A Day No Pigs Would Die

Chapter 1

Vocabulary

dreadful – fearful
“hunkered” – squatted down
purchase – a place to grab
rump – buttock
Shakers – members of a religious group

1. Why is the narrator not in school?

2. Who is the narrator?

3. What is wrong with the cow?

4. Why does the boy take off his pants?

5. What is the second problem the cow has?

6. After the boy grabs the ball in her throat, what does the cow do?

Chapter 4

Vocabulary

capstan – a device similar to a pulley

nigh – almost

plumb – at a right angle

stone – fourteen pounds

1. Who is Aunt Carrie and why does she live with the Pecks?

2. Who does Robert think Ethan Allen is? Who was the real Ethan Allen?

3. How old is Robert's father at this point in the story?

4. How do we know this story is being narrated through a flashback? How old is the narrator as he recollects this story?

5. Why is the father unable to vote?

5. Why is this story entitled *A Day No Pigs Would Die*?

6. All the attention paid to his father proves what point to Robert that his father had spoken on numerous occasions?

7. How do the following characters acknowledge the fact that Robert has come into his manhood: Mr. and Mrs. Tanner and Robert's mother?

8. Why is the food they eat "all winter... [not] easy to swallow"?

9. How does Robert acknowledge coming into his manhood?
