

Prestwick PowerPacks™

Practical Activities for Comprehension and Key Skills



From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler

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Name: _____

Date: _____

Activity I: Connecting with Literature/Persuasion**Pre-Reading**

Imagine that you have the privilege of embarking on an adventure. You may choose only one person to accompany you. You may take only two bags of equipment and supplies, no more than you can carry. Whom would you take with you? What supplies would you take? How long will you be gone? How do you plan to survive?

Before you can answer these questions, you must decide what kind of place you will visit. Will you stay in a forest, by a lake, on a beach, on a glacier, in a foreign country, in a shopping mall, in an amusement park, or someplace completely different? Choose your destination and think about what you must know and bring with you to survive.

First, you must convince your chosen partner to accompany you on your trip. A grand adventure requires careful advance planning, and your partner will ask many questions about how you will survive safely. You will be more persuasive if you anticipate your partner's questions and prepare thoughtful answers in advance. Your partner will probably ask questions like those on the **SURVIVAL CHART**. Fill in your responses to help you prepare for your partner's questions. Then, add and answer two more questions that you think your partner might ask.

Student's Page

Name: _____

Date: _____

SURVIVAL CHART

Questions	Answers
What destination will you visit?	
How long will your visit last before you return home?	
When will you leave on your journey?	
How will you get to your destination?	
What kinds of dangers will you meet?	
How will you protect yourself?	
What equipment and supplies will you take?	
How will you get food?	
How much money do you have for the trip?	
How will you deal with loneliness?	
How will you maintain a good relationship with your partner?	
Do you have any special skills or knowledge that will help you? (For example, can you make a fire or build a shelter?)	

Name: _____

Date: _____

Activity I: Plot**Chapters 1-2**

The plot of a novel is the sequence of events that take place within it, beginning with the introduction and ending with the resolution. The plot of a novel is divided into these sections:

- A. **Introduction:** the setting and the characters' background information—names and personalities; may be either descriptive or brief
- B. **Conflict:** the big problem that the characters spend most of the book trying to solve
- C. **Rising Action:** smaller problems that the characters experience as they try to solve the larger conflict
- D. **Climax:** the turning point; the most exciting, most suspenseful point in the novel
- E. **Falling Action:** the calming action and decrease in tension following the climax
- F. **Resolution:** the conclusion of the story; the outcome

At this point in the novel, you have discovered the introduction, conflict, and part of the rising action. In small groups, complete as much of the **PLOT BOOKMARK** as possible. Since you have not reached the climax yet, you will leave some of the bookmark blank. You will rejoin your group and add to your bookmark after reading more of the novel.

Student's Page

Name: _____

Date: _____

PLOT BOOKMARK	
Introduction:	
Conflict:	
Rising Action:	
Climax:	
Falling Action:	
Resolution:	

Name: _____

Date: _____

Activity II: Motivation/Characterization**Chapters 1-2**

Claudia and Jamie each run away for different reasons, and each has a very different personality. Claudia is older and acts as the planner; Jamie is younger and is the financier. Still, they are both excited about running away from home. Pretend you are either Claudia or Jamie. Write a journal entry that answers the following questions:

1. Why are you running away?
2. Where are you going, and is this where you really want to go?
3. What are your ultimate plans, and what do you hope to learn from this experience?
4. How do you feel about your sibling?
5. What are your biggest fears about running away?
6. How will this experience change your life?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Activity III: Figurative Language **Chapters 1-2**

Figurative language is a tool that authors use to create interesting, detailed descriptions. Instead of saying something like “the star was very bright,” a creative author might use a metaphor, such as “the star was a gleaming diamond in the sky.” Figurative language helps keep readers interested in the story and allows readers to use their imagination. Three common forms of figurative language include similes, metaphors, and onomatopoeia.

Part 1

Look at the **FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE CHART**. Identify the type of figurative language used in each quotation. Then, describe the picture it creates in your mind. One example has been provided for you.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE CHART

Quotation	Type of Figurative Language	Picture/Idea It Creates
“Using the tips of her forefinger and thumb like a pair of forceps, she pulled at it and discovered a ten ride pass...” (Pg. 9)	simile	Readers imagine Claudia using her fingers like forceps, or tweezers.
“From a litter of lipstick kisses, Claudia had plucked a free ride.” (Pg. 10)		
“He looked like a miniature, clean-shaven Neanderthal man.” (Pg. 13)		
“She clamped her mouth shut and let out twin whiffs of air through her nostrils; had she done it any harder or any louder, it would have been called a snort.” (Pg. 15)		
“The bus bounced along like an empty cracker box on wheels—almost empty.” (Pg. 21)		
“How come all your money is in change? It rattles.” (Pg. 22)		

Name: _____

Date: _____

Activity I: Context Clues **Chapters 3-4**

Context clues are a useful tool to help you determine the meaning of new words. These clues can be descriptions, actions and reactions, opinions, and direct definitions. They often appear in the same sentence as the unfamiliar word or within two sentences before or after it. In the example below, we want to know the meaning of the word “perilous.” We need to look for clues, such as descriptions, in the sentence:

“Manning their stations’ meant climbing back into the booths and waiting during the perilous time when the museum was open to the staff but not to visitors.” (Pg. 45)

Claudia and Jamie are hiding in the bathroom, trying not to be discovered. We can imagine they are nervous and worried about being caught. They have to hide while the “museum is open to staff but not to visitors,” and we can assume this is a period of time, such as thirty minutes or an hour. (Pg. 45) How would you feel if you were hiding, trying not to be discovered? It is very possible that “perilous” means dangerous.

Any time you cannot define a word using context clues, you should look it up in the dictionary.

Part 1

Use the context clues provided in the novel to write a definition for each word. The page number has been provided for you. Then, compare your definitions to the dictionary’s definitions to check their accuracy. Correct any of your definitions that are incorrect.

1. fatigue (Pg. 29): _____

2. inconspicuous (Pg. 30): _____

3. chauffeur (Pg. 31): _____

4. matinee (Pg. 31): _____

5. deficiency (Pg. 41): _____
