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



Great American Short Stories

(Ed.) Paul Negri

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



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 **Prestwick House**

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

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Great American Short Stories

Objectives

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

1. compare and contrast two or more stories through an examination of content.
2. comment on themes in American short stories.
3. define all of the vocabulary words listed in the study guide.
4. identify the following figures of speech and point out examples of each in the text:
 - metaphor
 - simile
 - irony
 - allusion
 - imagery
 - personification
 - narrator
 - theme
 - tone
5. infer details not explicitly stated in the text.
6. understand the difference between the writer and the narrator of the story.
7. examine use of dialect and its effect in stories.
8. discuss the use of symbolism.
9. discuss the meaning of the titles of the stories.
10. compare and contrast stories with similar settings.

Great American Short Stories

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Discuss the significance of the names of Goodman and Faith from the story, *Young Goodman Brown*.
2. Discuss the meaning of the following quotation from *Young Goodman Brown*: “What if a wretched old woman do choose to go to the Devil when I thought she was going to heaven; is that any reason why I should quit my dear Faith and go after her?”
3. Discuss the effect of guilt and paranoia on the speaker of *The Tell-Tale Heart*.
4. Discuss the difference between “You will not?” and “I prefer not” of *Bartleby*.
5. Discuss why Scratchy would not fight Potter just because he was married in *The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky*.
6. Compare and contrast the approach to feminism between *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *A Pair of Silk Stockings*.
7. Discuss why Mrs. Sommers, from *A Pair of Silk Stockings*, would want the cable car to go on forever.
8. Compare the story of *A Pair of Silk Stockings* with the temptation of sin.
9. Discuss the significance of the title, *The Tell-Tale Heart*.
10. Discuss the connotation of the title, *A New England Nun*.
11. Consider the following quotation from *The Private History of a Campaign that Failed*: “This thing that I have done does not end with him; it falls upon *them* too.” Discuss the meaning of this statement in relation to this story as well as to life in general.
12. Before you started reading *The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky*, what were your expectations? What did the title lead you to expect?
13. Discuss the importance of following instincts using the dog from *To Build a Fire* as a main source.
14. Discuss the issue of peer pressure as seen in *Bernice Bobs Her Hair*.
15. Describe the similarities between *Bartleby* and his job previous to working for the speaker.
16. Choose your favorite short story from the anthology and discuss why it appeals to you both formally and thematically. Use specific examples from the story to explain how it works for you.

Great American Short Stories

“Young Goodman Brown”

Vocabulary

anathema – a ban or curse

benignantly – favorably

cinquefoil – a plant of the rose family

cognizance – acknowledgement

demoniac – one possessed by a demon

ecclesiastical – relating to a church

lurid – shining with a glow

pious – marked by or showing reverence for God and devotion to divine worship

proselytes – new converts

visages – faces or appearances

zenith – the lightest point

1. Where is Young Goodman Brown going?

2. Why does Faith not want him to go on his journey?

3. Describe the imagery of the road Goodman Brown took.

4. What does Goodman Brown say kept him from being on time and what could that symbolize?

10. What causes the “I” to finally take action and kill the old man?

11. How does the narrator kill the old man and then take care of him?

12. Who comes to the old man’s house and what do they find?

13. How is the narrator’s crime discovered?

“The Private History of a Campaign That Failed”

Vocabulary

excrescences – outgrowths or enlargements
fagged – tired by strenuous activity
fathom – six feet
intrepidity – fearlessness
limpid – pale
palliation – making better
philology – the study of literature and language
purling – swirling
windlass – a machine for hoisting or hauling

1. According to Twain, who deserves a voice?

2. Were Twain and his friend adamantly loyal to the war?

3. According to Twain, who were the Marion Rangers?

4. Did the members of the Marion Rangers take their job seriously?

“The Real Thing”

Vocabulary

circumlocution – unnecessarily wordy language
compendium – a short, complete summary
copious – plentiful
desultory – disconnected; random
divan – a couch or sofa
draughtsman – draftsman: a man who makes drawings, plans, or sketches
elucidation – explanation
expiation – atonement
fatuity – utter foolishness
insipidly – dull
intonations – recitations in musical or prolonged tones
jocosely – humorously
portmanteaux – a large leather suitcase
simper – a silly smile

1. Describe the couple.

2. Why are they shy when they meet the artist?

3. What is ironic about their looks?
