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Literature Teaching Unit

Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



The Pigman

by Paul Zindel

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



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The Pigman

Objectives

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

1. write an essay that explains and supports this statement: *The Pigman* is a good example of the “coming of age” genre.
2. identify and discuss the following themes in this novel by citing comments and incidents in the novel for support:
 - A. Life is what a person makes of it. Some people might have a difficult time, but they should not blame parents or anyone else for their lives.
 - B. Some older people have a child-like innocence that allows them to enjoy life a great deal more than (people who do not have this quality).
 - C. Some parents do not recognize that their children are people who feel a need to relate to others outside the family.
 - D. In our society, older people can become extremely lonely if they have no family or are ignored.
 - E. Compassion is one of the most important virtues to have.
 - F. If they are not careful as they grow older, people may lose their sense of wonder.
3. define the following terms and give examples from the novel to illustrate them:
 - A. Inference
 - B. Narrator
 - C. Plot
 - D. Narrator
 - E. Characterization
 - F. Theme
 - G. Sarcasm
4. write character descriptions of key persons in the novel. Support your descriptions with references from the text.
5. draw inferences about plot and characters.
6. list the major incidents in this plot and identify:
 - exposition
 - rising action
 - climax
 - falling action
 - resolution
7. understand how the narration and narrator change from one chapter to the next.

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Below are some ideas presented in the novel that we might infer that the author believes to be true. Which of these, from your experience, do you believe to be true?
 - A. Each person's life becomes what that person makes of it, e.g., a person who finds new experiences exciting will appreciate life more than someone who finds new things frightening.
 - B. People should never lose their child-like innocence.
 - C. Parents need to allow their children to associate with people other than family members.
 - D. Being an elderly person in today's society may lead to extreme loneliness.
 - E. Compassion for others is vital to personal fulfillment.
2. Explain why this novel is a good example of the "Coming of Age" theme. Support your answer by referring to comments and incidents from the novel.
3. Choose any chapter and rewrite a portion of it as if it had been written by the other narrator.
4. Write a short essay in which you explain how foreshadowing is used in this novel to build interest and suspense.
5. List the major incidents in the plot of this novel and identify those incidents that are part of the *exposition*, those that constitute *rising action*, that incident that is the *climax*, those that are part of the *falling action*, and that one which is the *resolution*.
6. Describe how Lorraine's mother interacts with Lorraine and offer what appears to you to be an explanation for the mother's behavior.
7. Some people view Mr. Pignati in a very sympathetic light while others do not. State your opinion of Mr. Pignati and refer to the text to illustrate your point.
8. Describe the way in which you see John. When you describe a feature of his character or personality, cite incidents or comments from the book to support your opinion.
9. Do the same for Lorraine.

The Pigman

“The Oath” & Chapter One

VOCABULARY

- avocation – hobby
- commemorative – honoring the memory of someone
- excruciatingly – painfully
- Gestapo – German secret police
- memorial – something written to celebrate and honor the memory of someone
- raunchiest – extremely vulgar

1. In “The Oath,” who do we learn will be the narrators in this story?

2. From Chapter I, what is your initial reaction to John?

3. What do the symbols @#\$\$ mean? Why are they in the memorial?

4. In what ways is John a typical or non-typical sophomore?

5. What makes this a first-person narration?

Chapter Five

VOCABULARY

demented – crazy
patron – financial supporter
subsidize – to give money to support

1. Who is Kenneth; from John’s comment, what may we infer is his feeling regarding Kenneth?

2. What is John’s opinion of his father and mother?

3. How typical do you think John’s family is?

4. What does John say that convinces Lorraine that they should go see Mr. Pignati?

5. What is your initial reaction to the Pigman?

6. What is Mr. Pignati’s most prized possession, and what explains the emotional attachment he has for it?

Chapter Thirteen

VOCABULARY

bellowed – yelled
curvature – a curving
frenzied – crazed, wild
mangy – shabby
momentum – speed

1. Why is Lorraine upset with Melissa Dumas for putting on the roller skates?

2. Why is it a bad sign when Lorraine and Helen put on Conchetta's dresses?

3. What damage occurs that is especially bad?

4. How does this chapter end?
