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Literature Teaching Unit

Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



Treasure Island

by Robert Louis Stevenson

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



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Objectives

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

1. infer information about characters and events when the meanings are not explicitly stated.
2. identify examples of foreshadowing and recognize how this literary device adds suspense and interest to the story.
3. define the following vocabulary from the story:
 - nautical terms
 - pirate jargon (lubber, skulk, gentlemen of fortune, etc.)
 - general vocabulary using context clues to help determine the correct meaning.
4. cite examples of action in the story, and comment on how the author's concise style of writing contributes to the reader's enjoyment of these adventures.
5. locate examples of idiomatic expressions in the story.
6. discuss the idea of fate or luck as a driving force in the protagonist's survival, and comment on how this luck affects the success of the voyage.
7. define "first-person narration," and discuss its advantages and disadvantages for this story.
8. comment on the presence of both good and evil in the actions of the pirates, specifically Long John Silver, Bill, and Black Dog.
9. define a legend and comment on whether the infamous Captain Flint, in the context of the story, meets this definition.
10. write a description of a stereotypical pirate based on the characters described in this story.
11. point out how characters with a flawed sense of morality are also described as being physically flawed.
12. discuss the pirates' code of behavior, including the meaning of the black spot, and a pirate's fear of spirits.
13. identify examples of simile and metaphor in the text and understand how they enhance the story.

Questions for Discussion and Essay

1. Define the following nautical terms: ebb tide, yaw, berth, billows, sea gully, long nine, jib, schooner, and coracle.
2. Define the meaning of the following pirate terms or phrases: black spot, dead-lights, lubber, shiver me timbers, gentlemen of fortune, Jolly Roger, pieces of eight.
3. Define an idiom. What is the meaning of the idiom “*Care killed the cat*”? What other idioms can you recognize in the story?
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of a story written in first-person narration? Does this type of narration help or hinder the reader’s understanding of Long John Silver’s motivations?
5. Write a brief character sketch of a typical pirate as described in the story. How well does the character of Long John Silver conform to your definition?
6. Briefly describe the following characters, and explain why you think Stevenson gives each of them a physical flaw: Black Dog, Captain Bill, Long John Silver, and Pew.
7. Identify an example of foreshadowing in each of the first four chapters of the novel. Where is the most probable location of the foreshadowing: at the beginning, middle, or end of the chapter?
8. Analyze *Chapter XXVI - Israel Hands*. List the many adventures Jim experiences in this short chapter. How does the author’s style of writing contribute to the reader’s enjoyment of this chapter?
9. Cite incidents from the story in which Jim, through luck or fate, is key to the success of the treasure hunt.
10. Trace Jim’s changing opinion of Long John Silver throughout the story. Why do you think his attitude toward Silver is so mercurial?
11. In what ways can the pirate Captain Flint be called a legend?
12. Speculate on the outcome of the story if Jim (while hiding in the apple barrel) had not overheard Silver’s plans.

Treasure Island

Part I - The Old Buccaneer

Chapter I - The Old Sea Dog at the "Admiral Benbow"

VOCABULARY

abominable – horrible, cursed
assizes – civil or criminal court cases
barrow – wheelbarrow
bearings – locations
berth – a bed on a ship
clasp-knife – a pocketknife
coltish – lively, frisky
connoisseur – an expert, usually with regard to food or drink
dear – costly
diabolical – devilish, wicked, evil
hamlet – a village, town
handspike – a stick or bar used as a lever
incivility – rudeness, disrespect
livid – pale, ashen
magistrate – a judge
mought – [dialect] might
rheumatics – discomfort felt in the muscles or joints; rheumatism
ruffian – a thug, hoodlum
sabre – a heavy sword
sittyated – [dialect] situated
tarry – black; the color of tar
trundled – moved, transported
tyrannized – dictated, bullied
weather eye – the ability to know what the weather will be

1. Why does Jim Hawkins decide to keep the location of Treasure Island a secret from the reader? What does this decision tell the reader about the outcome of the story?

Chapter V - The Last of the Blind Man

VOCABULARY

aloft – to go upward, or to climb up the mast of a ship; the word is usually used as an adjective, but here it is a verb.
broom – a plant with yellow flowers
deplore – to worry, complain about
dingle – a valley
ere – before
formidable – threatening
irresolute – doubtful, uncertain
lugger – a small sailing vessel
malingering – faking a sickness to avoid working; wasting time
miscreant – a criminal, villain
pluck – the nerve
report – a gunshot noise
shirking – slacking
skulk – a coward
spurned – rejected strongly
squalling – whining, yelling
weevil – an insect that is notorious for infesting grain and flour
wrest – to take

1. Define “lubber” and “glim” in the context in which they appear in this chapter. What is the meaning of the whistling Jim hears from the hillside?

3. Give reasons why Long John Silver and his men do not take over the ship right away.

4. What does Silver plan to do with the squire, the doctor, and their men after he takes over the ship?

5. What does Jim surmise about Mr. Arrow's death, and how does he figure it out?

6. What is significant about the following line from the story? "Not another man of them'll jine."
