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Activity Pack
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The Metamorphosis
BY FRANZ KAFKA



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Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading

Group Research Project

Objectives: Understanding existentialism through the study of major existentialist philosophers.
Presenting information to classmates.

Activity:

In this activity, you will work in a group and research a prominent, existentialist philosopher. You will take notes about your philosopher, make an informative poster about him or her, and present your findings to the rest of the class.

Take the following steps to complete this project:

1. Assign roles within your group. Each group must have
 - A. a leader who will keep the group on task and ensure that the project is completed successfully.
 - B. a creative director who will determine what will be included on the poster and how it will be designed.
 - C. a researcher (or several researchers) who will gather information about the philosopher and convey that information to group members before the question and answer session.
 - D. an editor who will ensure that all information presented on the poster is correct in both grammar and content. The editor will also give input on the final visual design of the poster.

If there are three members in your group, eliminate the editor's role and work together to edit your project. Your entire group is responsible for making sure all the information is properly recorded and adequately presented to your audience.

2. Use library resources to research your philosopher, and then record relevant and interesting facts into the "Group Note-Taking Guide". This will help you construct your poster and determine what you will include when you present your research.
3. During your research, take notes about your philosopher. Summarize what you have read, and do not copy directly from your sources.
4. While doing your research, look for pictures that you can include on your poster. This will help you present your information and make your more project interesting to the readers.
5. Prepare a final presentation between five and ten minutes in length. You should also allot time for two or three of your classmates to ask your group questions about your philosopher or presentation. Each group member must either speak during the presentation or answer questions in the question and answer period.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading and During Reading**Comparison of Kafka and Gregor**

Objectives: Reading Kafka's "Letters to My Father"
Comparing Kafka's feelings for his father to Gregor's

Activity:

For years, scholars have debated whether *The Metamorphosis* is autobiographical, and if Gregor's character is modeled after Franz Kafka. During his life, Kafka wrote a long letter to his father and tried to explain the relationship between them. There are striking similarities between this letter and the novel.

For this activity you will read excerpts from the letter and make connections between it and the novel. The connections could relate to events, characters, feelings, or any other aspect of Kafka and Gregor's lives are significant. The excerpts of the letter do not have to match up perfectly with events in the novel; instead, consider the letter to be a thematically similar piece of literature.

In the chart on the following page, paraphrase each excerpt. As you read the novel, explain in your own words the connections you can see between the novel and the letter.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter I**Advice Column**

Objective: Identifying conflict in the play

Activity:

Write a letter and a response to an advice columnist.

The conflict is introduced in the first sentence of Chapter I: Gregor has woken up and discovered that he is no longer human, but instead, some type of “gargantuan pest.” This development not only affects Gregor’s ability to live a normal life, it also changes the economic status of the family.

Pretend to be one of Gregor’s family members and write a letter to an advice columnist. What should you and your family do next? Should Gregor be allowed to stay in the house? Should you include him in your everyday activities or keep him isolated in his bedroom? What do you tell your friends and neighbors when they ask where Gregor is?

After completing your letter, write the columnist’s response. What advice do you think he or she would give you?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter I

Point of View

Objective: Recognizing the impact of the point of view of the novel

Activity:

Rewrite a portion of Chapter I from Mrs. Samsa's perspective.

The author's choice of point of view influences the way a reader interprets a work of literature. *The Metamorphosis* is written in the first person point of view and through Gregor's perspective. How would the story be different if told by another character?

When the novel begins, Gregor is alone in his room and discovers that he is an insect. While he struggles to get up, his family nags him from the other side of the door. Imagine that the novel begins when Mrs. Samsa tries to wake up her son so he won't be late for work. Choose any two pages from the point when Mrs. Samsa says, "Gregor, it's quarter to seven" to when she collapses. You will have to use your imagination because no one knows what Gregor is doing in his room, and Gregor is the only one aware of his condition. If you chose to write it through Mrs. Samsa's eyes, you might start with something like this:

"Gregor," I called through the door, "it's quarter to seven. Don't you want to be on your way?" I waited for him to reply. He had never been late to work. Was he sick?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter II**Plot**

Objective: Understanding plot

Activity:

Take the events from Chapter II and, describe them in outline form.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter III

Using Figurative Language in Poetry

Objective: Using figurative language in poetry
 Using repetition in poetry
 Rewriting prose into poetry

Activity:

Kafka's writing is straightforward and often stark. The reader must infer the emotional states of characters in the novel, whereas in poetry, emotion is more noticeable. Several small sections of Chapter III could be rewritten as poems. Write a poem in which you

- discuss the jobs the Samsas have taken
- convey Gregor's anger about his family's neglect of him
- describe the three renters
- recount Grete's violin performance
- explain Grete's frustration with Gregor
- describe Gregor's death
- elaborate on the family's plans for the future

Sometimes poets repeat a phrase throughout the poem to unify it. In your poem, write four stanzas, and begin each with the same phrase. Be sure your poem includes at least one simile, one metaphor, one use of personification, and two examples of onomatopoeia. Feel free to use phrases from the novel. Finally, give your poem a unique, creative title.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Wrap-up**Rewriting the Ending**

Objective: Extending the story by rewriting the ending
Adopting the author's style

Activity:

In the end of *The Metamorphosis*, Grete, who attempted to care for Gregor after his transformation, has reached the end of her patience and gives up. She even tells her parents to “try to banish the thought that it’s Gregor.” At this point, Gregor retreats to his room, is ignored by the rest of his family, and dies. Many readers are dissatisfied with this ending.

Rewrite the final two paragraphs of the novel, but in your new version, have Grete and her family accept Gregor’s new state. How could they accommodate Gregor and include him in their home and daily, family activities? How could they arrange his care? How would everyone’s life change?