

Oak Meadow American Literature Teacher Manual

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Lesson 1: The Red Badge of Courage

Vocabulary

- **epithet:** v. a descriptive name, particularly a disparaging or abusive word or phrase. *Sometimes his anger reached an acute stage, and he grumbled and shouted epithets about the camp like a veteran.*
- **perambulate:** v. to walk about or stroll. *Once, when the command had first come to the field, some perambulating veterans, noting the length of the column, had accosted them.*
- **vociferous:** adj. making a loud outcry; shouting noisily. *Loud and vociferous congratulations were showered upon the maiden, who stood panting and regarding the troops with defiance.*
- **harangue:** v. or n. a ranting speech characterized by vehement expression. *He thought he must break from the ranks and harangue his comrades.*
- **pilfer:** v. to steal. *A rather fat soldier attempted to pilfer a horse from a dooryard.*
- **confidant:** n. one to whom secrets are entrusted. *His wife was his confidant, so he told her everything.*
- **stolid:** adj. having or expressing little or no emotion; impassive. *Many remained stolid despite the ravages of battle.*
- **commiserate:** v. to feel or express sorrow or compassion for. *There wasn't any time to commiserate about the ones they lost.*

Comprehension

1. They're dissatisfied because they have been camped for months without seeing action. The monotony of drills and such drives Henry crazy.
2. Henry's mother discourages her son from going to war. Her conviction on this matter is strong. She tells Henry a number of things before he leaves—not to do anything she would be ashamed to know about, to watch the company he keeps, and never to shirk his duties on her account.
3. Some of his schoolmates surround him with awe and admiration; one girl makes fun of his “martial spirit,” and one girl grows sad at the sight of him.
4. The tall soldier says they're going to battle tomorrow, while the loud private says it's a lie. They argue about whether or not the regiment will fight the next day. The tall soldier is mistaken.
5. In Chapter 1: “He had grown to regard himself merely as part of a vast blue demonstration. His province was to look out, as far as he could, for his personal comfort.” Since the Union soldiers wear blue, and since they're not doing much of anything, they're a “blue demonstration.”

6. A girl fights the soldier off. The troops take her side and cheer in her favor.
7. The loud soldier's name is Wilson. He is very enthusiastic about the impending battle; he is very proud; he gets insulted when Henry suggests that he's not the bravest man in the world.
8. Some of the soldiers dig little hills of rocks and sticks to protect themselves; others believe they should fight straight ahead, like "duelists."
9. Henry remembers a circus parade in the spring.
10. The man who runs from the battle is pummeled by the lieutenant and is driven back to the ranks.

Critical Thinking

NOTE: In their critical thinking responses, students should provide specific examples and direct quotes as support. All responses will vary based on the student's interpretation of the material.

1. Students should highlight the contrast between the natural landscape and what's happening on the battlefield: "It was surprising that Nature had gone tranquilly on with her golden process in the midst of so much devilment." The fact that nature keeps going on is important. Also, there are instances of nature's symbolic quality. The natural descriptions add a great deal of mood as well.
2. Crane's description of the corpse is straightforward, with a poetic edge that can be noticed in the description of the dead man's beard. Crane also highlights the soles of the dead man's shoes. Henry regards the dead body with a sense of mystery and awe, wondering what happens when we're dead, as signified by "the Question." This is different from the rest of the soldiers, who move around the body indifferently and view it as just another part of their job.
3.
 - a. Before Henry enlists, he sees the world in almost purely romantic terms. What he fears most is that he will turn out to be a coward and run from battle. This shows us how unstable Henry really is; it can also be said that he is obsessed with himself—his image of himself. He is unsure of himself. He sees himself as a "mental outcast" because he thinks he's the only one considering all these things.
 - b. Yes, it can be said that Henry experiences something of this change in the first battle, when he feels a sense of brotherhood with the regiment.
4. The student's creative responses will vary.
5. The basic cause of the Civil War was the South's secession from the Union. The issue was slavery in the New Territories, but not the abolition of slavery, as many students suppose. It was not until the Civil War began that Lincoln assumed the authority to sign the Emancipation Proclamation.

From Grolier's Multimedia Encyclopedia:

Politics became inextricably mixed with the SLAVERY issue in the years after the MISSOURI COMPROMISE (1820–21), by which Maine entered the Union as a free state and Missouri as a slave state but slavery was forbidden in the rest of the Louisiana Purchase territory north of 36° 30'N latitude. Southern leaders feared their power in the House of Representatives would dwindle as new free states were created. They resisted in the Senate by calling for a Southern slave state to balance every Northern free one, and by upholding the ideas of state sovereignty and the sanctity of private property—even slaves.

Lesson 2: The Red Badge of Courage

Vocabulary

- **blanch:** v. to make ashen or pale. *He blanched like one who has come to the edge of a cliff at midnight and is suddenly made aware.*
- **marshal:** v. to place in proper order or position. *He marshaled all his strength as he sprang up and went careening off through some bushes.*
- **imprecation:** n. curse or invocation of evil. *His body vibrated from the weight and force of his imprecations.*
- **laggard:** n. one who lags, a dawdler. *There was no time to be a laggard after the cavalry began to advance.*
- **sinuous:** adj. of a serpentine or wavy form; winding. *Avoiding the obstructions gave the forward-going column the sinuous movement of a serpent.*
- **fracas:** n. a brawl. *Before long, their minor disagreement turned into a major fracas.*
- **remonstrance:** n. forcefully reproachful protest. *The sight of the dead was enough remonstrance against the war.*
- **ague:** n. an attack of fever marked by chills or shivering. *Then he was shaken by a prolonged ague.*

Comprehension/Critical Thinking

Note: Student responses will vary, but should provide specific examples and direct quotes to add support to each response.

1.
 - a. Just when they think they've won the battle, the enemy approaches again, stunning Henry's regiment. Henry retreats because he was convinced they were being beaten, and he sees other soldiers running. In the description there is nothing to suggest that Henry is being cowardly.
 - b. Initially, Henry feels no shame in his retreat; he feels it's justified. As he watches another battery in action, he feels pity for them, thinking them fools. He begins to feel anger and shame when he finds out that his regiment held the Confederates back after all. He thought he had fled for good reason, that he was superior to those who had stayed. Then he dreads going back to the men and seeing their reactions. He tries to reconcile himself by seeing that it is natural to run: he throws a pine cone at a squirrel and it runs.

2.
 - a. Jim, who has been shot, asks Henry to take him out of the road so that he doesn't get run over by the artillery wagons. He runs frantically away from the road, towards a clump of bushes. Jim lurches, and then towards death, goes into more violent kicking and strangulation until he falls to the ground. Henry is deeply shaken, unable to let Jim go, yet unable to face him.
 - b. Crane has a detached, yet passionate tone that describes things in exacting detail. The narrator himself doesn't seem emotional, but the descriptions bring the reader close to the eeriness and panic.
 - c. The tattered man starts calling Henry Tom Jamison. He also suggests Henry might be injured. Henry can't handle the questions and the proximity to another dying and delirious soldier, so he runs away. Whether it's a selfish act or not is up to the reader to decide.
3. Henry's concept of honor comes from romantic visions of war, Greek-like affairs. He sees honor in not running, in becoming a fearless battle soldier, in being wounded, and even dead. But he sees it as a particularly individual affair, one that the other more experienced soldiers don't seem to exhibit. Thus far, Henry has not been able to live up to his standards, especially after he runs.
4.
 - a. Henry gets hurt when he stops a running soldier, asking him desperate questions. When Henry doesn't let go, the soldier strikes him across the head with his rifle, opening a bloody wound on his skull. Crane described the wound in gory terms several times.
 - b. Henry behaves so wildly because he's lost, he has run from battle, and has witnessed the death of his friend.
5.
 - a. Crane is suggesting that nature has its own rhythms and life that are independent of the drama of the human battle and suffering. There is order and beauty to nature that lifts Henry's spirits.
 - b. The squirrel episode gives Henry hope that by running he was wise. There are many examples of Henry looking upon beauty and seeing how it is not affected by war. This gives him solace.
 - c. Student will copy and decorate an excerpt.
6.
 - a. Henry lies and says he was shot and separated from his regiment, where he saw lots of fighting.
 - b. Wilson has become humble, wise, and caring, with a quiet self-assuredness. He regards himself as a fool in his earlier days.
 - c. The weapon is in the envelope with the letter that Wilson, thinking he would be killed, had given to Henry. Henry does give it to Wilson, who asks for it, though he doesn't want to at first, and feels power over his friend.

Lesson 7: To Be a Slave

Vocabulary

- **galley:** n. a ship or boat propelled solely or chiefly by oars. *Once on board, the slaves were taken below the deck and chained together in what was called the slave galley.*
- **segregation:** n. the separation or isolation of a race, class, or ethnic group from the rest of society. *No one questioned the segregation of the races.*
- **Whig:** n. a member or supporter of an American political party formed about 1834 in opposition to the Democratic party. *He was a Whig who owned slaves, but he was against slavery.*
- **insurrection:** n. an act of open revolt against civil authority or an established government. *No slave owner allowed his slaves to attend church by themselves, fearing that they would use the opportunity to plan an insurrection rather than thank God that they had such “good” masters.*
- **coffle:** n. a group of slaves or animals fastened or chained together. *They could not escape because they were locked together in a coffle.*
- **emancipation:** n. the act or process of freeing from restraint, oppression, or bondage. *The Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 only applied to those areas of the South under Union control, which was not much at the time.*
- **sharecropper:** n. a tenant farmer who is provided with credit for seed, tools, living quarters, and food, who works the land and receives an agreed share of the crops. *Many of the landowners had sharecroppers work their land after slavery was abolished.*
- **succession:** n. a group of persons or things sharing a specified characteristic and following one after the other. *Even after the succession, many blacks remained in the southern states.*

Questions

NOTE: Students should provide specific examples and direct quotes to add support to their critical thinking responses.

1. This summary should highlight the origins of the slave trade, beginning in the early 17th century, including the Colonists’ need for labor, the failed attempts to use poor whites and Indians, and the subsequent turn towards Africa.
2. The slaves were taken to the galleys below the decks and chained together. Many died from suffocation, disease, and starvation.

3. Slaves were sometimes simply captured, often with the help of warring tribal chiefs. Some slaves were tricked, others were sold by chiefs.
4. Answers to a, b, and c will vary, but students should reflect on how the portrayal of slavery on TV and films differs from what they've read so far in the book.
5. The story of Charley Williams is one example of a slave who lived in his master's home and was sorry when slavery ended.
6. Slave owners, especially in Virginia, bred slaves for profit, often securing the women who could bear many children. Some mothers killed their newborns rather than have them sold and then raised into slavery.
7. The slave trader made his money like a merchant in that he viewed the slaves as items and tried to maximize his profits. When Lincoln was elected, fear of war and emancipation made the value of slaves drop, like a stock market.
8. The slave coffle was a line of chained slaves being moved from one area to another after being sold. Many slaves died from the torturous movement. Slave jails were buildings where the slave trader put the coffle while he secured more slaves.
9.
 - a. On the auction block, slaves were treated like objects for sale. They were made to look healthy so that they would gain the highest bid. There were no laws determining where they were sold.
 - b. Responses will vary as the student's emotional response to the passages.
 - c. Student will write a creative response describing what it would be like to be sold away from his or her family.

Lesson 17: Abraham Lincoln

Vocabulary

- **consecrate:** v. to make or declare sacred; to dedicate to some service or goal. *The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract.*
- **engross:** v. to take or engage the whole attention of; occupy completely. *The reading was thoroughly engrossing.*
- **hallow:** v. to make holy; to honor or revere. *We cannot hallow this ground.*
- **attribute:** n. or v. an inherent characteristic; an innate quality. *He went on to describe the attributes of the nation's peoples.*
- **insurgent:** n. or adj. rising in revolt against civil or governmental authority. *Insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy the Union without war.*
- **malice:** n. ill will; desire to cause pain or harm. *With malice toward none, they struggled to finish their work.*
- **inaugural:** adj. of or relating to a ceremonial induction into office. *The inaugural address was devoted to saving the Union without war.*
- **scourge:** n. an instrument of punishment. *Fondly do we hope that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away.*

Questions

NOTE: Students should provide specific examples and direct quotes to add support to their responses. The responses should each be at least one page in length.

1. The following words could be used to describe the tone of Lincoln's speech: *austere, passionate, humble, sad, elevated, religious, sacred, mournful, intense*. There appears to be no blame in his voice, nor bitterness. It can be said there is mourning. Answers will vary regarding the length and effectiveness of the speech.
2. The soldiers fought to keep the Union together, to prevent the South from seceding. The "last full measure of devotion" is death.

3.

- a. The Gettysburg Address begins by returning to the foundations of the United States, moving to the present Civil War, and then the battlefield, and finally the consecration. This is where Lincoln honors the dead and calls upon the living to make the deaths not in vain, shifting the emphasis back to the cause of the war.

In “The Second Inaugural” Lincoln begins by reviewing his position in the First Inaugural, comparing it to the dire circumstances of the Civil War. He covers the causes of the war, the insurgence, and the need to keep the Union together. Then he moves to the spiritual, human issues involved—framing the war in terms of God and history.

In both speeches it can be said that Lincoln moves from the past to the present and then to the universal. They appear logical and well-supported.

- b. The flavor of both speeches is similar; the words are similar in their austerity. Most students would suggest that these are not typical speeches of a president, but more of a religious figure, but answers will vary.
- 4. One might detect a tinge of blame towards the South in the Second Inaugural Address. Otherwise, neither speech is used overtly for political maneuvering. There is definitely a sense that the Southerners are also children of God, and are suffering.
 - 5. Lincoln defers to God’s will in regards to the war. He suggests that the war may be punishment for the institution of slavery. He puts God as an all-knowing, just ruler whose historical machinations are unquestionable.
 - 6. The cause of the war in the Second Inaugural Address is stated simply: that the Confederates were trying to divide the Union and would not stop, even if it meant war. It appears that the conflict could not be solved without bloodshed, according to Lincoln.

Lesson 27: Travel Writing

The student will follow the guidelines suggested in the syllabus to complete the assignments. He or she will first read travel writing that includes newspaper and magazine articles and book-length accounts of journeys. Typically, the student can find tourist-oriented writing in the Sunday editions of many metropolitan newspapers as well as magazines dedicated to travel. Many firsthand accounts of travel adventures are available in bookshops, the library, and on the Internet (a very good place to research available titles). Encourage your student to consider what he or she likes about the writer's style of writing.

After various types of writing have been studied, the student will write an original piece (three pages minimum) that reflects his or her experience of a particular place that is cherished.