

BEST

Selling Chapters

Advanced Level

Third Edition

E. L. Doctorow

Emily Brontë

Charles Dickens

Chaim Potok

Theodore Dreiser

Sinclair Lewis

Carson McCullers

William Golding

Joseph Heller

George Orwell

Mark Twain

John Steinbeck

Ragtime

Wuthering Heights

Great Expectations

The Chosen

An American Tragedy

Babbitt

The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter

Lord of the Flies

Catch-22

Animal Farm

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

The Grapes of Wrath

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To the Teacher

Introduction

The novels represented in *Best-Selling Chapters* are all classics of English literature. In addition to being good and interesting fiction, each selection has been carefully chosen to illustrate a basic element of literature to students.

The book begins with three chapters from E. L. Doctorow's novel *Ragtime*. The chapters illustrate how the author controls the setting of a piece of fiction. Charles Dickens is included in the collection because of his ability to create vivid and effective characters. *Great Expectations* is used to teach students about characterization in a novel.

William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* demonstrates the use of symbolism in a novel. *An American Tragedy* by Theodore Dreiser teaches plot development, and *The Chosen* by Chaim Potok is used to show how conflict moves along the plot of a novel.

Chapters from Carson McCullers's novel *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* show how an author carefully controls the tone and mood of a piece of writing. Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* demonstrates the ways in which a writer presents themes to the readers.

Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Alex Haley's *Roots* are both included in a lesson about point of view in writing. *Babbitt* by Sinclair Lewis introduces students to the author's use of figurative language.

Joseph Heller's famous novel *Catch-22* is used to teach humor and satire, while *Animal Farm* by George Orwell exemplifies allegory. The last novel in this collection, a chapter from John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, is presented to students for analysis and discussion.

The Contents of a Unit

The book is divided into twelve units. The following teaching elements accompany each selection and lesson.

1. Introduction to the Novel. The introduction that begins each unit prepares students to read with greater understanding by resolving in advance any problems that may exist with the plot, characters, or language in the novel. The information provided about the author's life and writing style helps students appreciate and understand each writer. It is important that students read the introductions because they will enhance students' understanding of both the stories and the lessons.

The second part of the introduction defines the literary concept that will be studied in the lesson.

The third part of the introduction consists of four questions intended to call students' attention to particular literary elements in the selection that are used to illustrate the major points discussed in the lesson. The students should keep these questions in mind and look for the answers to them as they read.

2. **The Novel.** All of the novels represented in this book were chosen both for their literary excellence and for their proven appeal to readers. Each novel is particularly suited to illustrate the literary concept taught in the accompanying lesson.
3. **The Literary Lesson.** The literary lesson in each unit provides basic information about one element of literature, such as setting, point of view, characterization, plot, and so on. Together the lessons form a good foundation for understanding literary forms, elements, and content.

It is best, although not necessary, to teach the chapters and lessons in the order in which they appear in the book. The lessons build on one another—each lesson unit encourages students to compare the literary elements they are working with to those elements they have studied in previous units.

The lesson units are divided into four parts, and each lesson part contains sample passages from the selection that illustrate a literary element. Following each lesson part, students are presented with another sample passage from the selection that demonstrates the same element. That passage is followed by two questions that allow students to practice what they have just learned.

4. **Skill-Oriented Comprehension Questions.** Twenty-five comprehension questions relating to the selection are included in each lesson unit. These questions are keyed to ten specific reading and reasoning skills. All twenty-five questions are labeled by skill. The ten skills are recalling specific facts, organizing facts, knowledge of word meanings, drawing a conclusion, making a judgment, making an inference, understanding characters, understanding main ideas, recognizing tone, and appreciation of literary forms.

These ten question types reflect those aspects of comprehension that can be adequately sampled. Because more than one skill is used in answering any one question, true comprehension cannot be conveniently separated into ten independent activities. Therefore, the labels on the questions represent the major or dominant skill used to arrive at a correct answer.

A Comprehension Skills Profile is provided at the back of the book so that you can keep track of the kinds of questions each student misses most often. There is also a Comprehension Scores Graph that can help you keep track of the overall progress in reading comprehension.

5. **Discussion Guide.** Each unit contains nine discussion questions that deal with three aspects of literary criticism: analysis of the literary element discussed in the lesson, interpretation of meanings and implications inherent in the selection, and analysis of the author's technique.
6. **The Writing Exercise.** The writing assignment is designed to give the student firsthand experience with the literary element discussed in the lesson. The reading selections broaden students' knowledge of writing techniques, and the writing exercises deepen the students' understanding and appreciation of the writing styles found in their reading.

How to Use This Book

This book has four major objectives:

- To help readers understand the basic structure and the elements of the novel form
- To sharpen reading comprehension skills
- To encourage critical reading
- To give readers an opportunity to introduce elements of literary style into their own writing

The following list suggests ways to use the various parts of each unit:

1. **Have the students read the introduction to the novel.** You may wish to give additional information from your own experience with the novel or the author. Point out that the author has written other works that students may want to read. Some of the works are mentioned in the introduction.
2. **Have the students read the selection.** Tell the students that you want them to enjoy the selection for its own sake, but point out that you also want them to read carefully. You may want to use the word *critically* and explain what critical reading is.

To keep the students' attention focused on the literary concept they will study in the lesson, you may want to have them keep a copy of the questions from the introduction beside them as they read. If the students are reading the selection in class, write the questions on the chalkboard. Remind the students that they will have to answer comprehension questions about the selection—another reason for reading carefully.
3. **Explain the lesson.** Each lesson is divided into five parts. It begins with a general introduction to the literary concept that will be studied. After the students have read the introduction, discuss the lesson to assure that they have a general understanding of the concept. Then have students read and study

the other four sections of the lesson. Each section explains a different element of the major literary concept on which the lesson focuses. The students should also complete the exercises at the end of each section. After they have finished each section, pause for a discussion of the lesson so that the students can find out why their answers are right or wrong.

4. Have students answer the comprehension questions. In classes in which reading comprehension is the primary concern, you may want to have the students answer these questions immediately after reading the selection. The comprehension questions focus on ten important reading skills:

- Recalling Specific Facts
- Organizing Facts
- Knowledge of Word Meanings
- Drawing a Conclusion
- Making a Judgment
- Making an Inference
- Understanding Characters
- Understanding Main Ideas
- Recognizing Tone
- Appreciation of Literary Forms

5. Have students correct their answers. Students can check their answers to the comprehension questions by using the Answer Key at the back of the book. Students should be encouraged to correct wrong answers and to consider why one answer is wrong and another right. Have students count the number of *each kind* of question they get wrong and record these numbers in the spaces provided at the end of the comprehension questions.

6. Have students record their progress. Students should plot the number of *correct* answers they got for each selection on the Comprehension Scores Graph at the back of the book. Instructions are given on the page with the graph. When students use the graph, a visual record of their progress quickly emerges.

Students should plot *wrong* answers on the Comprehension Skills Profile at the end of the book. The Profile will show at a glance which skills a student needs to work on. Students usually enjoy keeping track of their progress, especially when they are allowed to manage this task themselves. You should also monitor the students' progress so that you can recognize and deal with any problems the students may have.

7. Spend time on discussion. There are three kinds of discussion questions for each unit—nine questions in all. The first three questions focus on the literary concept studied in the lesson. Those questions give students a chance to

demonstrate their new skills and allow you to expand upon the lesson if you wish. Questions four through six are more general and allow students to use their imaginations and to apply themes in the novel to their own experiences. Finally, the last three questions deal with the author's experience and technique and focus on the subjective aspects of literature.

- 8. Have the students do the writing exercise.** The writing exercises at the end of each unit are designed to allow students to improve their writing through imitation. Each writing exercise asks students to apply what they have learned about the literary element discussed in the lesson. Encourage students to imitate the authors of the novels if they wish. You may want to encourage an individual style among the better writers in a class.

• To the Student •

The chapters you are about to read are from some of the most famous novels in the world. The authors of these novels have entertained countless readers, and the novels themselves have served as models for many aspiring writers. As you read the chapters, you will be asked to think about writing both as entertainment and as art.

Like other arts, such as music, painting, sculpture, and architecture, writing has definable elements that you can see, feel, think about, and discuss. In music, for example, you can identify the tempo that distinguishes a waltz from a march, rock from jazz, and blues from swing, even though the various forms share similarities. Horns, strings, and drums give music different characteristics that, in turn, inspire different moods and feelings in you. You can discuss what the composer or songwriter has done to make the piece of music different from others you have heard. You can say why you enjoyed the music or why you did not.

When you read a novel, you soon know whether it is a mystery, science fiction, adventure, or romance. Each novel can be identified by its content and given a label. Each novel has a form defined by its characteristics—plot, characters, tone and mood, setting, or point of view. As you read, think about how an author combines all the elements to create a novel and how the novel makes you feel.

In addition to a chapter or chapters from novels, each unit in the text contains a lesson that discusses one special aspect of the art of writing fiction. By the time you finish the book, you will have a good basic knowledge of all the major elements that make up a well-written and enjoyable novel. Each unit is followed by exercises that will help you realize how much you have learned about the elements of fiction and how well you have understood how authors use those elements in their writing.



UNIT
One

Unit One

INTRODUCTION What the Novel Is About
 What the Lesson Is About

NOVEL ***Ragtime***
 by E. L. Doctorow

LESSON ***Setting***

ACTIVITIES Comprehension Questions
 Discussion Guide
 Writing Exercise