



Selling Chapters

Middle Level

Second Edition

Bette Greene

Maya Angelou

Jean Craighead George

Harper Lee

Ellen Raskin

John Steinbeck

John Knowles

Anne Frank

J. R. R. Tolkien

Avi

Summer of My German Soldier

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

Julie of the Wolves

To Kill a Mockingbird

The Westing Game

Of Mice and Men

A Separate Peace

Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl

The Hobbit

The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle

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To the Teacher

Introduction

The new *Best-Selling Chapters*, Second Edition, has been revised to give your students more writing experience and more practice in critically discussing literature.

The popular format of *Best-Selling Chapters* has not changed, but you will find new features in this Second Edition—an expanded writing section within each unit and a writing process reference section. Every lesson helps students improve their writing skills by giving them insights into how an author uses theme, develops a character, creates a setting, or uses language. Seeing the novel through the author's eyes gives students a new awareness of just how a writer writes. In other words, students learn to read *and* to write from the writer's point of view.

The chapters from novels selected for *Best-Selling Chapters* have proven themselves favorites among young adults. The interactive lessons with each selection provide students with just enough challenge to demonstrate the obvious pleasures of familiarity with basic elements of literature. These interactive lessons not only allow students to prove to themselves that they can read with insight and understanding, but also teach students how they can apply an author's technique to their own writing.

The selections are all contemporary. Three were chosen from among the best of contemporary young adult novels: *The Westing Game*, *Julie of the Wolves*, and *Summer of My German Soldier*. Four other chapters are from classics that were not written for any special age group, but which have been taken to heart by middle and junior high readers as enduring favorites: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Of Mice and Men*, *A Separate Peace*, and *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

The last three selections introduce students to different genres. *The Hobbit* is a delightful book for teaching fantasy. *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* is an important document for our times and is so popular among teens and preteens that it is a good choice for introducing students to autobiography and biography. Avi's award-winning novel *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* deals with Charlotte's struggle to overcome her traditional views of social and economic class distinction and is one of the best ways of introducing the genre of historical fiction.

The Contents of a Unit

The book has ten units. Each unit contains the following:

1. **An illustration and discussion questions.** Each unit begins with a two-page illustration that depicts a key scene from the reading selection. This illustration enables visually oriented readers to place themselves easily in the story situation. The page that follows contains questions based on the illustration.

You will notice that the illustration serves as an introduction to the lesson as well as to the selection. The accompanying questions also direct the students' thinking to essential ideas they will encounter in the lesson. In discussing the questions, students will be previewing both the story and the lesson. This activity heightens students' anticipation of participating in the story (because they are anxious to know if their interpretations of the illustration are correct) and sharpens their perception of the literary concept that will be discussed in the lesson.

2. **Introduction to the selection.** Each unit contains a brief, four-part introduction. The first part, About the Novel, sets the scene and explains a bit about the characters and the story situation. Experiences that are alluded to in the story but may be beyond the knowledge of most young readers are explained. For example, the names of parts of a sailing ship are explained in the introduction to *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. This part of the introduction also provides information about the author and suggests other novels by the author that the students may want to read.

The second part of the introduction, About the Lesson, simply and concisely defines the literary concept to be studied in the lesson.

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

The fourth part of the introduction offers a variety of writing suggestions directly related to what will be discussed in the lesson. For example, if the lesson discusses character, students are asked to list ideas and suggestions for creating their own characters. Students will use their ideas for writing activities within each of the four lesson sections. Most of the writing exercises will take some time, so you may want to set aside a class period for students to

work on a writing project. You may want to discuss with your students the reference section *Using the Writing Process* at the end of the book. Remind students to refer to that section, beginning on page 439, and to the checklist when they begin a writing assignment.

3. **The reading selection.** With a few exceptions, the reading selections are unabridged, unadapted originals taken from the novels. The chapter from *The Hobbit* has been judiciously shortened since it was too long, when accompanied by a lesson, for students to handle comfortably. Representative selections were taken from *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*. Students of average reading ability in grades 6–8 will be able to complete their reading of a selection in a sitting or two.
4. **The literary lesson.** Each lesson begins with a general explanation of a major literary concept. Then four major elements of the concept are discussed individually, and each is illustrated with an appropriate passage from the selection. After the literary element is explained in relation to this passage, the students are presented with a second passage from the story that illustrates the same element. This passage is followed by two questions that allow the students to critically discuss what they have just learned.

Each of the four major elements discussed in the lesson is followed by *Writing on Your Own*, which helps students analyze a literary technique and apply that technique to their writing. For instance, within the four lesson sections that deal with setting, the students are asked to create a setting of their own. But first they build from basic elements of setting: the first exercise asks them to write about setting and the feelings it creates; the second, putting your reader into the story; the third, setting and how it reinforces ideas or themes; and finally, setting and the action.

Seven of the ten lessons deal with elements of literature: character, setting, theme, language, conflict, symbolism, and tone and mood. Three lessons serve as an introduction to genre: autobiography and biography, fantasy, and the historical novel.

5. **Reviewing and Interpreting the Chapter.** Sixteen comprehension and interpretation questions following each lesson provide a quick check of four major reading skills: remembering facts, following the order of events, understanding word choices, understanding important ideas; and four interpreting skills: understanding levels of meaning, understanding character, understanding

setting, understanding feelings. Each question is labeled according to the skill it tests. 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 overall progress in reading comprehension.

6. **Discussion Guides.** Through nine discussion questions in each unit, students are asked to consider three aspects of the chapter: the literary concept emphasized in the lesson, general ideas and implications of the chapter, and the author's technique or special relationship to the story situation. These questions encourage students to critically think about their reading and give them practice in critically discussing literature.
7. **Writing Exercise.** The writing exercises have always been one of the most popular elements in both *Best-Selling Chapters* and *Best Short Stories*. You will find that the expanded exercises within the lessons and the final writing exercise in each unit are directly related to what has been presented in the lesson and will encourage students to apply ideas and literary concepts to their own work. This exercise asks students to pull together all the elements they have discussed and written about in Writing on Your Own to create their own stories.

How to Use This Book

Best-Selling Chapters, Second Edition, has four major objectives:

- ◆ To help readers understand basic structure and the elements of literature
- ◆ To sharpen reading comprehension skills
- ◆ To encourage critical reading
- ◆ To give readers an opportunity to make a conscious effort to introduce elements of literary style into their own writing

Here are suggestions for ways to use the various parts of each unit:

1. **Discuss the illustration.** Ask the students to look carefully at the illustration. On the page following the illustration there are a key question and supporting questions. Read the key question aloud.

You can have the students respond spontaneously or ask them to hold their opinions until they have discussed the supporting questions.

Have either an open class discussion or small group discussions of the supporting questions. Then return to the key question and ask the students to respond to it in light of the answers they have arrived at in their discussions. Emphasize the importance of supporting or clarifying their opinions and conclusions by pointing out supporting details in the illustration.

These questions help students focus on both the selection they will read and the lesson that follows. Read the story and lesson first yourself so that you can direct the discussion of the illustration to assure that it is a good preview of the selection and lesson.

- 2. Have students read the introduction to the novel.** You may wish to add information to the introduction from your own experience with the novel or the author. Point out that the author has written other works that they may want to read. Some of these works are mentioned in the introduction.

Call attention to the four questions that conclude each introduction. The students should keep those questions in mind as they read the selection. Point out how each of the questions is related to the definition of the literary concept given in About the Lesson. Discuss what the students should look for in the reading selection in order to be able to answer the questions. The questions guide the students, as they read, toward an awareness of the literary concept discussed in the lesson.

The introduction is followed by a writing exercise in which students list story ideas related to the literary concept discussed. You may want to provide time for the students to discuss their ideas before they make their lists.

- 3. Have 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 the selection *critically*.

To keep the students' attention focused on the literary concept discussed in the lesson, you may want to have them keep a copy of the questions from the introduction beside them as they read, or write the questions on the chalkboard. Also, remind the students that they will have to answer comprehension questions in Reviewing and Interpreting the Chapter—another reason for reading critically.

- 4. Explain the literary lesson.** Each lesson is divided into five

parts. It begins with a general introduction to the literary concept that will be covered. After the students have read the introduction, discuss it with them to make sure they have a general understanding of the concept. Then have the students read and study the other four sections of the lesson, one at a time. Each explains a different element of the major literary concept on which the lesson is focused. The students should also complete the exercise at the end of each section. After they finish each section, pause for a discussion of the lesson so that the students can find out whether their answers or opinions to the questions are right or wrong, and why. Because many of the questions ask the students to draw their own conclusions or give their own opinions, it is important to explain that the Answer Key gives *suggested* answers.

5. Have students discuss Writing on Your Own. Each of the four lesson sections is followed by a writing exercise that focuses on the separate literary element discussed in that section. Provide time for students to discuss their ideas with classmates before they begin Writing on Your Own. These prewriting exercises help students prepare for the final writing exercise in the unit.

6. Have students answer the questions in Reviewing and Interpreting the Chapter. 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. They should answer without looking back at the chapter. The comprehension and interpreting questions focus on eight important reading skills:

Remembering Facts

Following the Order of Events

Understanding Word Choices

Understanding Important Ideas

Understanding Levels of Meaning

Understanding Character

Understanding Setting

Understanding Feelings

7. Have students correct their answers. Students can check their answers to the Reviewing and Interpreting the Chapter questions by using the Answer Key that starts on page 451. 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.

8. Have students record their progress. Students should plot the

number of *correct* answers they got for each story on the Comprehension Scores Graph on page 462. Instructions for how to use the graph are given on the page with the graph. When students plot their scores, a visual record of their progress quickly emerges.

Students should mark the number of *wrong* answers they got in each comprehension skill area (there are two questions related to each of the eight skills) on the Comprehension Skills Profile on page 463. This shows 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. Seeing visual proof of improvement in scores invariably provides the incentive to strive for even more improvement. You should also monitor the students' progress so that you can recognize any problems and deal with them early.

9. **Spend time on discussion.** There are three kinds of discussion questions for each selection—nine questions in all. The first three focus on the literary concept studied in the lesson. These 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 apply themes in the selection to their own experiences. Finally, the last three questions deal with the author's experience and technique, and focus attention on the subjective aspects of literature.
10. **Have students do the Writing Exercise.** The writing exercise at the end of each unit allows 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. If the students have not done the four Writing on Your Own exercises within the lesson, you may want them to go back and do them now. To make use of the truism that we learn to write by reading, encourage students to imitate the authors of the novels, if they wish. But an individual, freewheeling style may also be encouraged, especially among the better writers in a class.
11. **Using the Writing Process.** This reference section, beginning on page 439, is an extended lesson on what a writing process is and how to use it. The lesson helps students with the writing assignments they will encounter in the book. It explains the three major parts of the writing process: prewriting, writing, and

revising. The reference is followed by a checklist of the major points. Students should refer to this checklist each time they begin a writing exercise.

Before students begin the first writing exercise in the book, you will probably want to review Using the Writing Process with them. Read each section with the students and discuss and illustrate the main points. Make sure they understand that the three steps in the writing process are not strictly sequential. Point out that good writers move back and forth from one to another, focusing more on prewriting at the beginning and revising toward the end of the project. You may want to spend several class periods discussing and experimenting with the various stages.