

Ethan Frome

Edith Wharton

Assessment Manual



THE EMC MASTERPIECE SERIES

Access Editions

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Notes to the Teacher

About *The EMC Masterpiece Series Access Editions*

The EMC Masterpiece Series Access Editions have been designed to make great works of literature accessible to all levels of students. Each Access Edition contains a complete literary masterpiece as well as a unique integrated study apparatus crafted to guide the student page by page through the entire work. This feature does away with the inconvenience of switching between a literary work and a study guide, since both are included in each Access Edition.

Each *EMC Masterpiece Series Access Edition* contains the following materials:

- The complete literary work
- A historical introduction including an explanation of literary or philosophical trends relevant to the work
- A biographical introduction with a time line of the author's life
- Art, including explanatory illustrations, maps, genealogies, and plot diagrams, as appropriate to the text
- Study apparatus for each chapter or section, including Guided Reading Questions; Words for Everyday Use entries for point-of-use vocabulary development; footnotes; Responding to the Selection questions; Reviewing the Selection questions (including Recalling, Interpreting, and Synthesizing questions to ensure that your students conduct a close and accessible reading of the text); and Understanding Literature questions
- Source materials used by the author of the work (where appropriate)
- A list of topics for creative writing, critical writing, and research projects
- A glossary of Words for Everyday Use
- A handbook of literary terms

Guided Reading Questions guide students through the work by raising important issues in key passages

Footnotes explain obscure references, unusual usages, and terms meant to enter students' passive vocabularies

Words for Everyday Use entries define and give pronunciations for difficult terms meant to enter students' active vocabularies

► What makes Ethan's house look especially forlorn?

boundaries lost under drifts; and above the fields, huddled against the white immensities of land and sky, one of those lonely New England farmhouses that make the landscape lonelier.

"That's my place," said Frome, with a sideways jerk of his lame elbow; and in the distress and oppression of the scene I did not know what to answer. The snow had ceased, and a flash of watery sunlight exposed the house on the slope above us in all its plaintive ugliness. The black wraith of a deciduous creeper flapped from the porch, and the thin wooden walls, under their worn coat of paint, seemed to shiver in the wind that had risen with the ceasing of the snow.

"The house was bigger in my father's time: I had to take down the 'L,' a while back," Frome continued, checking with a twitch of the left rein the bay's evident intention of turning in through the broken-down gate.

I saw then that the unusually forlorn and stunted look of the house was partly due to the loss of what is known in New England as the "L": that long deep-roofed adjunct²⁰ usually built at right angles to the main house, and connecting it, by way of store-rooms and toolhouse, with the woodshed and cow-barn. Whether because of its symbolic sense, the image it presents of a life linked with the soil, and enclosing in itself the chief sources of warmth and nourishment, or whether merely because of the consolatory thought that it enables the dwellers in that harsh climate to get to their morning's work without facing the weather, it

²⁰ adjunct. Addition of secondary importance

Words
For
Everyday
Use

con • so • la • to • ry (kan sá'lə tór'ē) *adj.*, comforting

Responding to the Selection

In a few words, describe your opinion of each of the following characters: Ethan Frome, Zeena Frome, and Mattie Silver. If you were taking a long trip and one of these characters was going to be your traveling companion, which would you choose? Why?

Reviewing the Selection

Recalling and Interpreting

1. **R:** Who is Mattie Silver? Why has she come to Starkfield?
2. **I:** What effect has Mattie Silver had on Ethan's life? In what way would his life change if she were to leave?
3. **R:** To Ethan, what seems to be written on every headstone of the Frome graves? What desire has vanished?
4. **I:** Why does Ethan feel mocked by the gravestones? Why have his feelings changed?
5. **R:** What difficulty do Mattie and Ethan have when they arrive home? Whom does Ethan see when he looks up? What effect does this sight have on him?
6. **I:** What does each woman, Mattie and Zeena, represent in Ethan's life?
7. **R:** Why is Zeena going away? How does Ethan feel about her departure? What excuse does Ethan make to avoid taking Zeena to the Flats?
8. **I:** What do you think will happen as a result of Zeena's absence? What do you think will happen as a result of Ethan's excuse?

Synthesizing

9. How does Zeena feel about Mattie? What does she know about the relationship between Ethan and Mattie? What does Zeena do to address the situation? Support your responses with evidence from the text.
10. In what way does young Ethan differ from the older Ethan who is depicted in the prologue? What characteristics are shown in both portraits of Ethan?

Understanding Literature (QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION)

Foreshadowing and Irony. **Foreshadowing** is the act of presenting materials that hint at events to occur later in a story. **Irony** is a difference between appearance and reality. Look at the passage in chapter 2 in which Mattie and Ethan discuss the near sledding accident. Ethan says, "I guess I can take you down all right!" and Mattie insists that "The elm is dangerous, though. It ought to be cut down." What might this near accident and the conversation of Mattie and Ethan foreshadow? Why is Ethan's statement ironic?

Responding to the Selection is a reader response activity designed to connect the students emotionally to the literature and allow them to relate the work to their own lives.

Reviewing the Selection takes students through the work step by step, building from their individual responses a complete interpretation of the work.

Recalling questions address comprehension of key facts from the selection.

Interpreting questions evoke interpretations based on evidence from the selection.

Synthesizing questions tie together interpretations of parts of the selection and prompt students to make informed generalizations that relate the selection to larger themes or literary trends.

Understanding Literature questions provide study of literary movements, genres, and techniques as they relate to the literary work.

How the Assessment Manual Is Organized

This Assessment Manual is divided into five parts: the **Access Edition answer key**, which provides answers to the Reviewing the Selection and Understanding Literature questions in the text; a selection of activities that allow students to use **graphic organizers** to further their comprehension of the work; a **vocabulary and literary terms review**, which tests students' knowledge of the Words for Everyday Use and literary terms defined in the work; the **exam masters**, which contain two full exams that test students' overall comprehension of the work through both objective and essay questions; and **evaluation forms** for self-, peer, and teacher assessment of creative writing, critical writing, and research projects.

How to Use the Access Edition Answer Key

The Access Edition answer key contains answers to the Reviewing the Selection and Understanding Literature questions included in the Access Edition. In some cases, where no specific answer is required, possible responses are given. You will notice that no answers are provided for the Guided Reading Questions found throughout the Access Edition. This is because the answers to the Guided Reading Questions can be easily found in the text in the passages marked by gray bars.

Notes to the Teacher

How to Use the Graphic Organizer Activities

Graphic organizers enable students to represent in a visual way information about the plot or characters in a book. The activities in the second section of this manual ask students to use graphic organizers, such as gradient scales, cluster charts, Venn diagrams, sequence charts, story maps, and Freytag's Pyramid, to examine certain aspects of the literary work.

You can use the graphic organizer activities in this book in a variety of ways to supplement your lesson plan. For your convenience, they are designed as blackline masters. They can be assigned for students to complete as they read the work as a way to promote active reading, after students have read the book as a way to explore the book in more depth, or as a study aid before the test as a way to review ideas presented in the book. These activities can also be incorporated into a midterm or final exam.

Vocabulary and Literary Terms Review

The vocabulary review tests students' comprehension of the Words for Everyday Use defined in the Access Edition. Because active vocabulary is learned most effectively in context, the vocabulary review is conducted contextually; the review exercise involves sentence completion that draws from the Words for Everyday Use. A vocabulary section is also included as part of each objective and essay test. The literary terms review tests students' comprehension of the literary terms defined in the Understanding Literature section of the Access edition. Students' understanding of these terms is also tested in the exam in the Matching section.

How to Use the Exam Masters

The exam masters section contains two exams, one which tests students' recall and interpretation of the prologue and chapters 1–4 of the book, and one which tests them on chapters 5–9 and the epilogue. These tests can be used respectively as a midterm and final exam, or they can be combined in any fashion you choose. You may decide to use multiple choice and/or matching as check tests in conjunction with discussion, for example. Or you may decide to incorporate graphic organizer activities and additional vocabulary questions into the exams.

Each test is worth 100 points and consists of objective questions in the form of multiple choice and matching, as well as quote identification, short essay, and long essay questions. Answers, or possible responses, are given for all exam questions. Note: You can use ScanTron answer sheets to correct the objective part of the test.

How to Use the Evaluation Forms

The Assessment Manual contains evaluation forms to help you assess student performance across the entire range of language arts skills. The forms include writing evaluation forms, a project evaluation form, and a revision and proofreading checklist that can be used for writing instruction.

Access Edition Answer Key

Answers for Reviewing the Selection, page 13

Recalling and Interpreting

1. **R:** The narrator finds Ethan Frome to be the most striking figure in Starkfield. Ethan is tall with a “careless powerful look . . . in spite of a lameness checking each step like the jerk of a chain.” His face is bleak and unapproachable. His figure is stiffened and grizzled. The narrator is surprised to learn that Ethan is only fifty-two years old.
2. **I:** Hard labor and poverty may have taken a toll on Ethan. He may also have been emotionally devastated by the accident.
3. **R:** Harmon says that “most of the smart ones get away” from the Starkfield winters. The speaker realizes that the loneliness and lifelessness of Starkfield in the winter must have been even more oppressive during Ethan’s childhood, since the village was more isolated then.
4. **I:** Too many winters of isolation can be disheartening and depressing. The loneliness of the situation might be emotionally difficult while the harsh climate makes it physically difficult to survive.
5. **R:** An epidemic in the local stables forces the narrator to seek transportation from Ethan Frome. The narrator notes resentment, or perhaps surprise and grievance at his own ignorance, in Ethan’s voice.
6. **I:** Both men have studied engineering and have traveled to Florida. The narrator is curious about Ethan, a curiosity that grows stronger when he notes a new sensibility within Ethan. Ethan may resent the narrator’s education, financial resources, and freedom. He, unlike the narrator, does not wish to build a relationship or create any kind of connection between the two of them.
7. **R:** Ethan suggests that the narrator should stay the night at his house. The narrator hears “a woman’s voice droning querulously.” The narrator claims to discover “the clue” to Ethan Frome that allowed him to put together the vision of Ethan’s story that the narrator is about to share.
8. **I:** The narrator will see how Ethan lives. By exploring the circumstances at the Frome farm, the narrator might learn more about Ethan than he would during the sleigh rides in which Ethan is largely incommunicative.

Synthesizing

9. The narrator is intrigued by the appearance of Ethan Frome and wants to uncover the reasons for his tragic look. He is also interested because he is only able to learn bits of the story from the people of Starkfield. The narrator’s outsider status creates in him an interest in a story that is not often discussed among the people of Starkfield. He also does not have the background of the story that the people of Starkfield have, and might see the story in a new way.
10. *Responses will vary. Possible responses are given.* The mood of the small community in the isolation of winter is portrayed in images such as this: “when the storms of February had pitched their white tents about the devoted village and the wild cavalry of March winds had charged down to their support; I began to understand why

Prologue (cont.)

Starkfield emerged from its six months' siege like a starved garrison capitulating without quarter." Frome's poverty is expressed in the following examples: "That Frome farm was always 'bout as bare's a milk pan when the cat's been round," "we came to an orchard of starved apple-trees writing over a hillside among outcroppings of slate that nuzzled up through the snow like animals pushing out their noses to breathe," "a flash of watery sunlight exposed the house on the slope above us in all its plaintive ugliness. The black wraith of a deciduous creeper flapped from the porch, and the thin wooden walls, under their worn coat of paint, seemed to shiver in the wind," and "I saw then that the unusually forlorn and stunted look of the house was partly due to the loss of what is known in New England as the 'L': that long deep-roofed adjunct usually build at right angles to the main house."

Answers for Understanding Literature, page 14

- 1. Narrator.** *Responses will vary.* The narrator cannot have gathered a comprehensive or consistent story, since he only gets limited information from people like Harmon Gow, Mrs. Ned Hale, and Ethan himself. The narrator has, instead, only fragments and his own conjectures to create what he calls "this vision" of the story. We cannot rely on the narrator to have all the facts in the case and to tell a completely accurate account of what happened, and for this reason, students may say that he is unreliable. At the same time, students might say that since the narrator is an outsider to the town, he is more likely to be an objective and thus reliable interpreter of Ethan's story. He has nothing to gain or lose by manipulating the facts, and is not biased by any close personal relationships with the people involved. Furthermore, the narrator's interest, keen observation, and sensitivity, which come through in his telling of the story, make him an insightful commentator.
- 2. Setting and Symbol.** *Ethan Frome* is set in the New England village of Starkfield during the winter. The name of the town is symbolic because it suggests a bleak existence. It creates a grim mood and suggests that Ethan's life is bleak and barren. The season is similarly symbolic because winter is a season of death and scarcity.

Answers for Reviewing the Selection, page 37

Recalling and Interpreting

1. **R:** Mattie Silver is Zeena’s cousin. Mattie’s parents have died and she has no money on which to live. Zeena takes Mattie because she needs someone to help with the housework.
2. **I:** *Responses will vary. Possible responses are given.* In Mattie, Ethan has someone who shares his wonder at the beauty of nature and who is fascinated by the things he teaches her. She makes Ethan feel clever and strong. He dreams of being with Mattie. If she were to leave, Ethan would probably be devastated; he would feel as though all the happiness had gone from his life. He would also experience the sense of restlessness and desire for change that he felt before she came.
3. **R:** “We never got away—how should you?” seems to be written on each headstone. Ethan’s desire for change and freedom has vanished; he no longer wants to leave Starkfield.
4. **I:** The gravestones served as a reminder to Ethan that he would not escape Starkfield; that he would live and die there as his ancestors had. Now the gravestones seem to represent stability. Since Mattie has come, Ethan feels less trapped in Starkfield and thinks he would be happy to live his whole life there with her by his side.
5. **R:** Mattie and Ethan are locked out and cannot find the key Zeena usually leaves for them. Ethan sees his wife, Zeena. The sight of Zeena breaks the “rosy haze” of enchantment Ethan has experienced with Mattie and brings him back to reality. He also feels that he has never before really seen what Zeena looks like. He sees her as if for the first time: angular, old, and haggard, almost like a vision from a nightmare.
6. **I:** Mattie represents Ethan’s love of life and his hopes for the future. Zeena represents his obligations and trials in life.
7. **R:** Zeena is going to see a new doctor. Ethan is excited about Zeena’s departure because it means he will spend the night alone with Mattie. Ethan says he cannot take Zeena to the Flats because he has to collect a cash payment for a delivery.
8. **I:** *Responses will vary. Possible responses are given.* With Zeena absent, Ethan and Mattie may have a chance to share their feelings for one another. Zeena may, as Ethan fears, feel justified in spending a great deal of money on a new “cure,” since she believes Ethan is going to have money on hand. She will also be angry or suspicious if she learns that Ethan lied to her.

Synthesizing

Responses will vary. Possible responses are given.

9. Zeena does not like Mattie. She may be jealous of Mattie’s health and of her relationship with Ethan. Zeena seems to understand that Ethan and Mattie have feelings for one another. She notices that since Mattie’s arrival Ethan has shaved every day, and probably catches many other subtle signs between the two. Zeena does not

Chapters 1–3 (cont.)

address the situation directly; she often pretends not to notice things, but will comment on them well after they happen. She also mentions Mattie's departure, which suggests she may be looking forward to replacing her.

10. The younger Ethan does not have the physical problems of the older Ethan. Although the younger Ethan is already dissatisfied with his lot in life, he does not yet have the traumatized look that will characterize him in his later years. In both cases Ethan is reticent and unable to express himself well. Ethan's sense of responsibility shows in both cases, as when he is younger he cares for the farm and for his mother, and when he is older he comes even in the bad storm to drive the narrator to his meeting.

Answers for Understanding Literature, page 38

- 1. Foreshadowing and Irony.** The near accident and Ethan and Mattie's discussion of it might foreshadow the bad "smash-up" that causes Ethan's injuries. At this point in their reading, students might say that Ethan's statement, with its careless bravado, is ironic if something happens so that Ethan is not able to "take her down all right."
- 2. Simile and Motif.** The dead cucumber vine is compared to "the crape streamer tied to the door for a death." Other examples of death imagery include the name Starkfield, which suggests a barren, dead atmosphere; the lifelessness of winter, the "mocking" Frome gravestones; the giant elm, which threatens to cause a fatal crash for coasters on the hill; and the numerous deaths that have brought Ethan, Zeena, and Mattie together.

Answers for Reviewing the Selection, page 60

Recalling and Interpreting

- R:** Zeena came to Ethan's house to nurse his sick mother. Ethan asked Zeena to marry him because he feared being left alone on the farm. Zeena had restored Ethan's sanity when she came to care for the old Mrs. Frome; her efficiency had been a relief and the sound of her voice was "like music" after the silence he had suffered while alone with his mother. Ethan thinks that the fact that his mother died in the winter affected his decision, that if it had been summertime he might not have been so desperate when he saw Zeena preparing to leave.
- I:** Both Zeena and Mattie came to Starkfield to help during a time of illness. Zeena comes to nurse Ethan's mother and Mattie comes to help the sick Zeena. Both women have a similar effect on Ethan, who is pleased to have somebody to break the silence and to interact with.
- R:** Mattie has put a ribbon in her hair and has used a special pickle dish that Zeena never uses. Mattie is upset when the dish is broken because she knows that Zeena treasures the dish. Zeena and will be angry that it has been broken and will demand to know why it was used at all.
- I:** The dish represents the shattering of their hopes for a perfect evening. It reminds them that their time without Zeena is short, and that their fantasy of being a married couple will soon be shattered as well. Zeena is likely to be extremely angry with Mattie, whom she already dislikes. She may use the broken dish as a reason to send Mattie away.
- R:** The sense of conformity and order associated with the household, and the implicit presence of Zeena in the room, create distance between Ethan and Mattie. The two are reminded of the absent Zeena when the cat jumps into her chair and sets it rocking. Ethan touches and presses to his lips the cloth Mattie is working with. Ethan remembers that he had not even touched Mattie.
- I:** The mention of Zeena's name throws a chill between them. The broken pickle dish reminds them of her wrath. They are both uncomfortable when Mattie sits in Zeena's chair. Later, when the cat causes Zeena's chair to rock, they are reminded that Zeena will soon return. Ethan's actions suggest that he lives in his dreams and that he does not often act on them. He is distanced from his desire. He touches the cloth, but never touches Mattie, although he spent considerable time thinking about their evening alone together.
- R:** An accident with one of the horses, bad weather, and difficulty in locating the glue at the shop keep Ethan from getting the glue in time. The fact that Jotham will not stay for dinner strikes Ethan as ominous.
- I:** The mood during Zeena's absence is merry and hopeful. There is a sense of harmony, warmth, and well-being. The mood on the evening Zeena returns is tense and foreboding. Things go wrong, the weather is cold and rainy, and there is a sense of uneasiness and urgency. On the first night the pickle dish represents something out of the ordinary—the special quality of the night—and the hopes Ethan

Chapters 4–6 (cont.)

and Mattie have for their time alone. On the night of Zeena's return the pickle dish serves as a reminder of the disappointments of the night before and of the threat of trouble to come.

Synthesizing

Responses will vary. Possible responses are given.

9. Mattie and Ethan postpone going sledding so that they can spend the evening alone as Ethan has imagined. Also, it is too dark outside, a perilous night for sledding. Again they speak of the dangers of the elm tree. In their last conversation Mattie insisted that the elm was dangerous and Ethan assured her that he could get her by it safely. This time Ethan expresses fear and Mattie insists that she would feel safe with him. The possible danger of sledding makes the scene between Mattie and Ethan more cozy.
10. In imagining the evening he and Mattie will spend alone during Zeena's absence, Ethan thinks of them sitting together like a married couple. When they actually sit near the fire, he at first cannot see Mattie, they both become uncomfortable when she sits in Zeena's chair, and then the cat sets Zeena's chair rocking, reminding them that she will return the next day. Their commonplace conversation causes Ethan to imagine that they have always sat together as a couple by the fire and will always do so. In fact, this is the first time they have had such an opportunity, and they likely will not have many more such nights, since Zeena is a reality in their lives. Ethan had imagined that his mention of Ned and Ruth kissing would create an opening for him to have physical contact with Mattie. Instead the moment is awkward and serves to separate them more.

Answers for Understanding Literature, page 61

1. **Motif.** The first time Ethan is locked out, Ethan and Mattie stand outside the threshold while Zeena is on the inside. The outside represents freedom from Zeena's demands; a place beyond the strict order of home and marriage where he is more free to pursue his love for Mattie. Inside represents Zeena and the constraints she places on Ethan's life. The second time Ethan is locked out, Mattie is inside the threshold, representing Ethan's hopes for the evening and dreams of future happiness. The locked door, in this case, bars him from this happiness.
2. **Characterization and Motivation.** Direct description is used to portray Zeena. She is good at nursing, efficient, and a good housekeeper. She looks down on the people of Starkfield, yet needs the attention she receives in a small town. Zeena may invent or exaggerate her illnesses in order to get the attention she craves. Zeena has been characterized as sullen, whiny, and vindictive. Her unhappiness at living on an isolated farm and her need for attention from the distant and silent Ethan are suggested as her motivations.

Answers for Reviewing the Selection, page 95

Recalling and Interpreting

1. **R:** Zeena discovers the broken pickle dish. Zeena’s disapproval of Mattie as a poor housekeeper changes to outright condemnation of her as a “bad” person when she discovers Mattie is to blame. Zeena carries the broken dish as if it were a dead body.
2. **I:** Zeena’s reaction suggests that she hoards her possessions and does not have a generous spirit. The pickle dish had symbolized broken hopes; now it symbolizes the death of Ethan’s relationship with both women. The comparison is significant because it shows the irony that Zeena is upset about the broken pickle dish, when what is really broken and dead is her relationship with Ethan. It is also another example of the death imagery that is found throughout the work.
3. **R:** Ethan decides to leave Zeena and set out for the west with Mattie. He realizes that Zeena will not be able to support herself without him, even if she sells the farm. He also realizes that not only does he not have the money to start anew in the west, he does not even have enough money to get there. He finally abandons his plan after realizing that in order to carry it out, he would have to borrow money under false pretenses.
4. **I:** Ethan feels a responsibility toward Zeena. Although he does not want to stay with her, he cannot leave her without a means of making a living. Because he has no way of helping her if he leaves, he feels unable to change his situation.
5. **R:** They stop by the lake, where they had been at a picnic last summer. Ethan had found Mattie’s missing locket. Ethan wants to touch Mattie’s hair and tell her that it smells of the woods. He has never learned to do and say such things.
6. **I:** In neither case does Mattie or Ethan say what they mean. Both situations are rather awkward. Their interaction suggests that they do not know each other well and are not comfortable with each other. They are not as close as Ethan would like to think they are.
7. **R:** Mattie asks Ethan to take her down again, and this time, to aim for the elm tree, so that they both will die. She wants to go down and not come up again because she does not want to live a life separated from Ethan. When Ethan thinks of Zeena’s face, he instinctively tries to brush the thought aside, causing the sled to swerve. They crash into the tree. Ethan’s last thought is that he should feed the horse.
8. **I:** Mattie and Ethan cannot stand the idea of being separated, nor can they find any other way out of their situation. Ethan’s last thought is surprising because he is thinking of the horse while he should be thinking of his own well-being and that of Mattie as they are both seriously injured.

Synthesizing

Responses will vary. Possible responses are given.

9. Mattie and Ethan choose suicide rather than life apart. The plan is not effective because they both survive the crash and have a life of more misery because of the accident.

Chapters 7–9 (cont.)

This decision, like the decision to marry Zeena, is made with little forethought or consideration of the consequences. Both decisions bring Ethan unhappiness.

10. Some students may say that the “vision” does not thoroughly show why Ethan appears so aged and unhappy and that the only reason it gives is the physical trauma. Others may say that life with Zeena offers reason for Ethan’s pained expressions. The guilt Ethan feels for hurting Mattie in the crash may also be a reason for his sorrowful appearance.

Answers for Understanding Literature, page 96

1. **Simile.** The simile used in chapter 7 is: “Their thoughts seemed to dart at each other like serpents shooting venom.” Serpents are often symbolic of evil and their venom may symbolize death. A sinister, threatening mood is created.
2. **Crisis and Climax.** The crisis occurs when Zeena decides to send Mattie away. Ethan’s decision not to ask for money from the Hales can also be seen as a crisis. The climax occurs when Ethan and Mattie decide to kill themselves by hitting the tree as they sled down the hill.
3. **Irony.** Mrs. Hale expresses sympathy for Ethan in his situation, saying that he has a hard lot. Ethan is about to ask the Hales for money. Mrs. Hale’s expression of her feelings should have given Ethan hope that he would receive the help he needed. Ironically, Ethan feels unable to ask for the help of the Hales because he would be deceiving people who care about him.

Answers for Reviewing the Selection, page 101

Responding and Interpreting

- R:** The narrator sees a tall, bony woman who pays him little attention as she tends to getting supper ready. She is dressed in a “slatternly calico wrapper” and has gray, wispy, untidy hair. Her eyes are opaque and her face is sallow. The other woman is smaller and slighter. She moves her head and not her body, which is explained by the fact that she has “disease of the spine”—she is paralyzed. Her hair is gray, her face shriveled and bloodless, and her eyes are bright and “witch-like.” When the smaller woman begins to speak, the narrator realizes that she had been speaking in a “querulous drone” before he entered the room.
- I:** The narrator may be surprised to see such a difference in Mattie from the bright, vibrant girl he had imagined. He may also be surprised to see Zeena taking care of things instead of being cared for. On the other hand, having seen the effects of the smash-up and the past twenty-five years on Ethan, he may have expected such a sight.
- R:** No stranger has entered the house in many years; in fact, the Fromes have had few visitors even among the people they do know. Mrs. Hale and old Mrs. Varnum want to know the narrator’s impressions of what he saw and heard. The narrator says very little; he uses their curiosity to break down their reserve, hoping that, in trying to find out what he knows, they will give him more information.
- I:** The narrator still wants to know more about Ethan Frome. His interest in learning more may reveal that the narrator wants to make sure that he has gotten the story right. It might also reveal that he is dissatisfied and that he does not think he has discovered the entire truth behind Ethan’s story.
- R:** Mrs. Hale says the residents of Starkfield learned that Zeena had sent Mattie away suddenly. Nobody knows why Ethan and Mattie were sledding when they should have been on their way to the train station, nor do they know Zeena’s thoughts on the event. Zeena came immediately to tend to Ethan and when the doctors said Mattie could be moved, Zeena had her brought to the Frome house.
- I:** Ethan is as hopeless as he was shortly before the accident. He has been worn down by the physical difficulties of his life and by the unpleasant situation of living with Mattie and Zeena, both of whom constantly whine and squabble with each other. Mattie has become a miserable, complaining invalid. Zeena is less troubled by her own sickness now and has taken on the role of nurse. Mattie and Ethan had wanted to be together and now they are, though not under the circumstances they imagined.
- R:** If Mattie had died, Ethan might have lived. Mrs. Hale says that the life the Fromes and Mattie lead is like death, and that the only difference between the living at the Frome farm and those in the Frome graves is that in the graveyard the women have to hold their tongues.

Epilogue (cont.)

8. **I:** *Responses will vary. Possible responses are given.* Ethan would probably have suffered a great deal of guilt for Mattie's death. Zeena may have been angry or suspicious about the circumstances of Mattie's death and it is likely she would not have let Ethan forget his role in the tragedy. Zeena would have continued to suffer illnesses. Although Mrs. Hale thinks Mattie's death would have been for the best, it might not have made the situation much better. Mrs. Hale seems to blame the women in Ethan's life for his problems. She thinks they squabble and complain too much.

Synthesizing

9. Some people might have less sympathy for Ethan if they knew why he and Mattie were sledding that night. Others might have more negative feelings toward Zeena for driving him to such an end.
10. Wharton tries to show the harshness and bleakness of life in a small New England town, as well as its beauty. She felt that many writers idealized New England life, to the extent that they ignored its substance, its hard reality, or "granite" as she calls it in her introduction to the novella. *Responses will vary. Possible responses are given.* The granite might symbolize the bedrock or foundation of New England as it truly is. In *Ethan Frome*, the "outcropping granite" refers to the protagonists of the story, typical rural New Englanders who are inarticulate and have difficulty revealing themselves. They cannot communicate their emotions in a complicated or elaborate way; they are not "flowery" people, but rather solid, stark figures, more like granite. The central example in the novel is Ethan himself, a hardened man who is unable to show his feelings and act on them, and who, like the granite, is only partially revealed and understood.

Answers for Understanding Literature, page 102

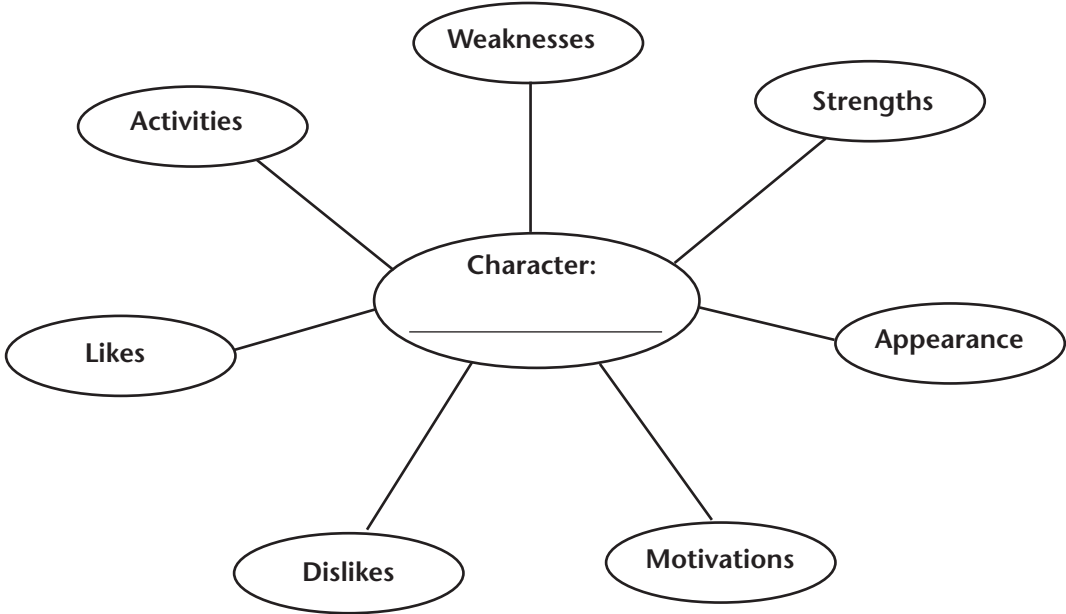
- 1. Frame Tale.** The frame allows Wharton the means to show the two different time periods in the story and to contrast Ethan's life before and after the "smash-up." It also provides her with a specific narrator, one who is sophisticated enough to understand the story and to articulate what Ethan himself, a reticent man who has never learned to express his feelings, might not be able to explain in words. Also, as Edith Wharton points out in her introduction to the novel, the frame allows her to create a fuller, more realistic picture of Ethan Frome by offering the perspectives of very different people such as Harmon Gow and Mrs. Ned Hale. *Responses will vary.* Students should state whether they think the structure is effective or not, and explain why.
- 2. Symbol and Theme.** Winter is symbolic of barrenness and death. The name Starkfield suggests a bleak and grim existence. These symbols reflect the theme of isolation in the life of Ethan Frome. Ethan is never close to his wife nor to Mattie, whom he claims to love. At the same time, he seems frozen and unable to act upon his feelings for Mattie. All of the resulting outcomes underscore the fact that Ethan never got away from Starkfield and has become a tragic figure within his environment.

Graphic Organizers

Graphic Organizer

Cluster Chart

Choose one of the three main characters of *Ethan Frome*—Ethan, Zeena, or Mattie—and expand the cluster chart below to explore his or her personality. In the center circle, write the character’s name. Then, branching out from the respective categories, add circles and write in them information about the character’s likes, dislikes, strengths, weaknesses, activities, and appearance. Think of at least two items for each category.

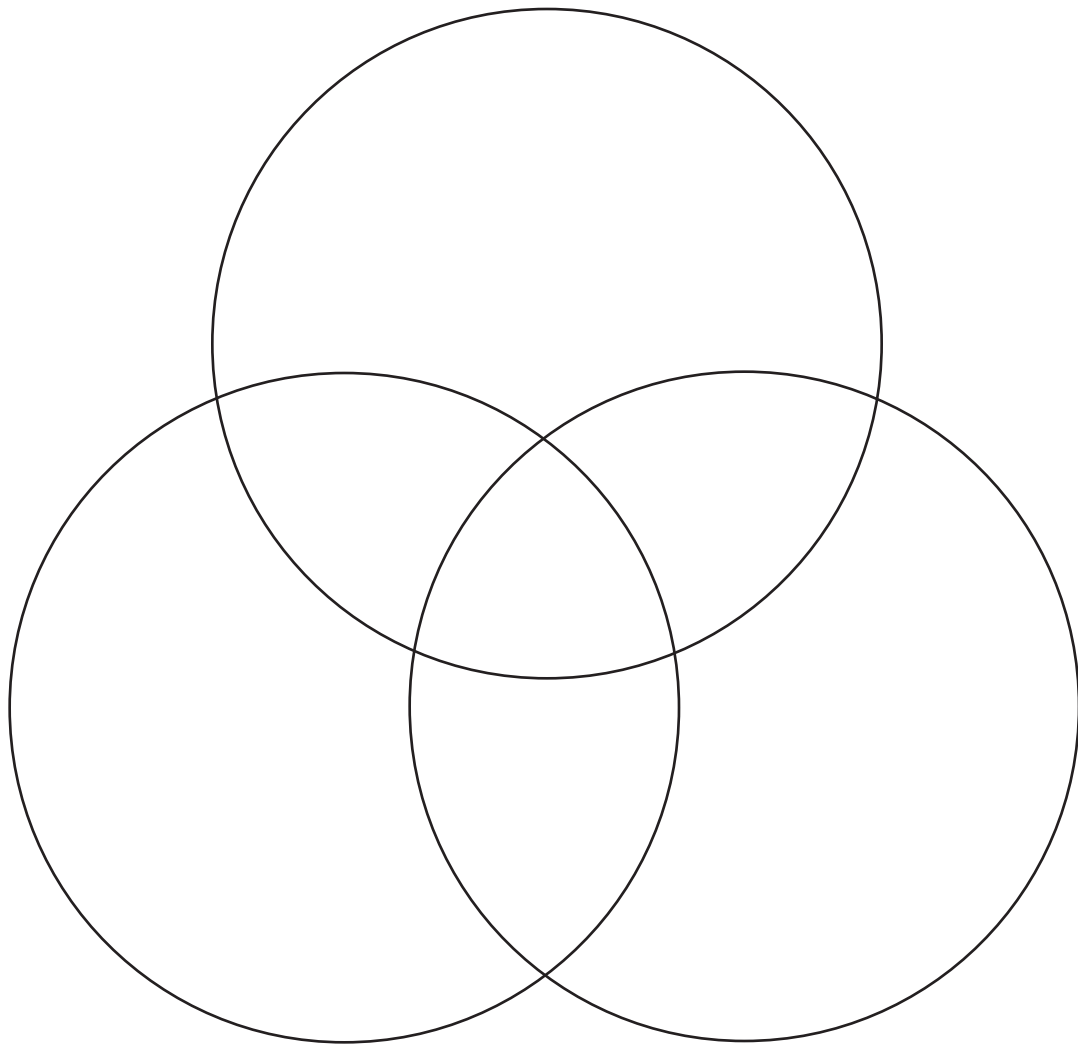


Graphic Organizer

Venn Diagram

Fill in the three-way Venn diagram below in order to compare and contrast Ethan, Zeena, and Mattie. Consider such aspects as their personality traits, their motivations, and their situations in life. Where the circles overlap, write in the things the characters have in common; in the outer part of each circle, list their differences.

Ethan Frome



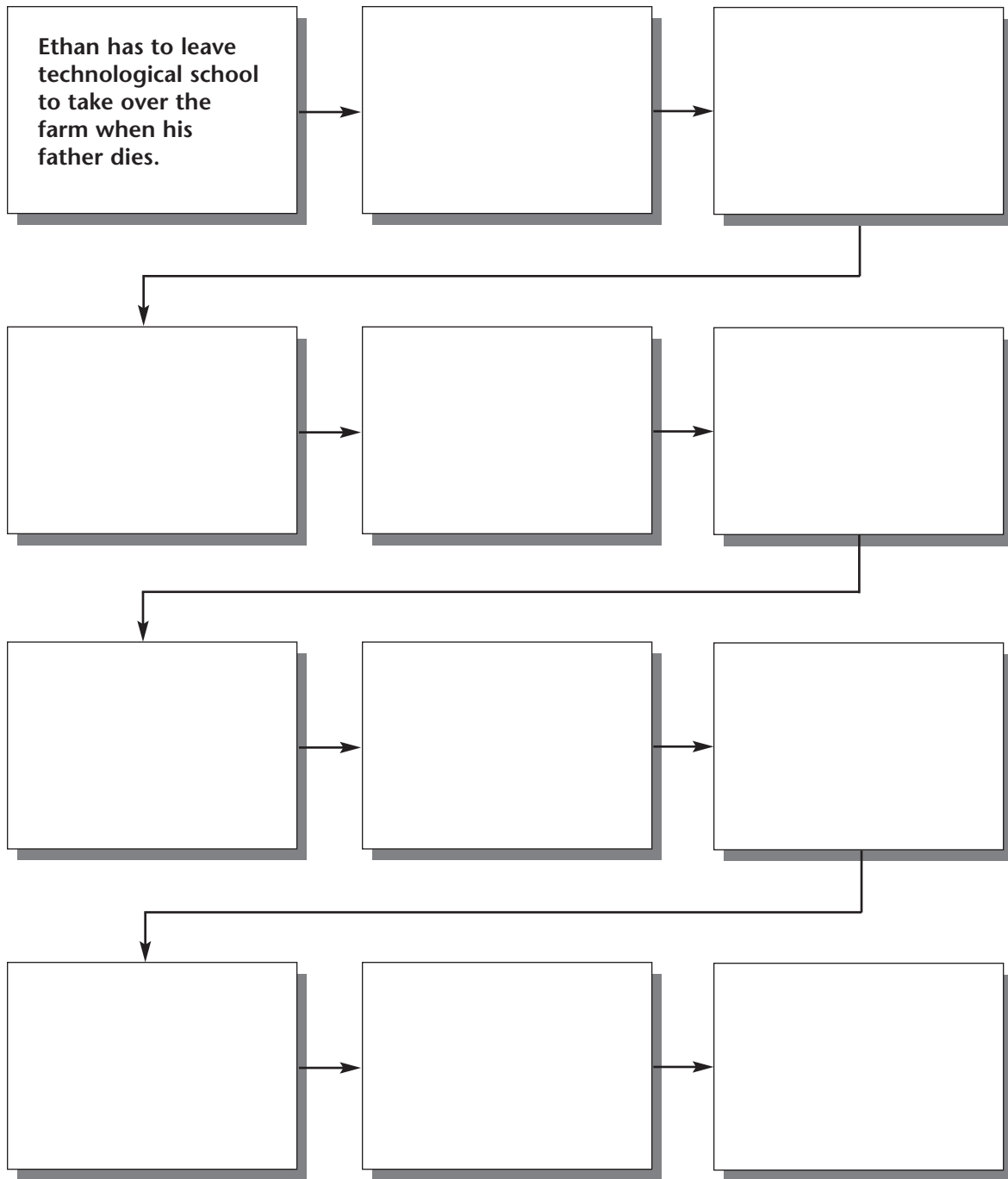
Zeena Frome

Mattie Silver

Graphic Organizer

Sequence Chart

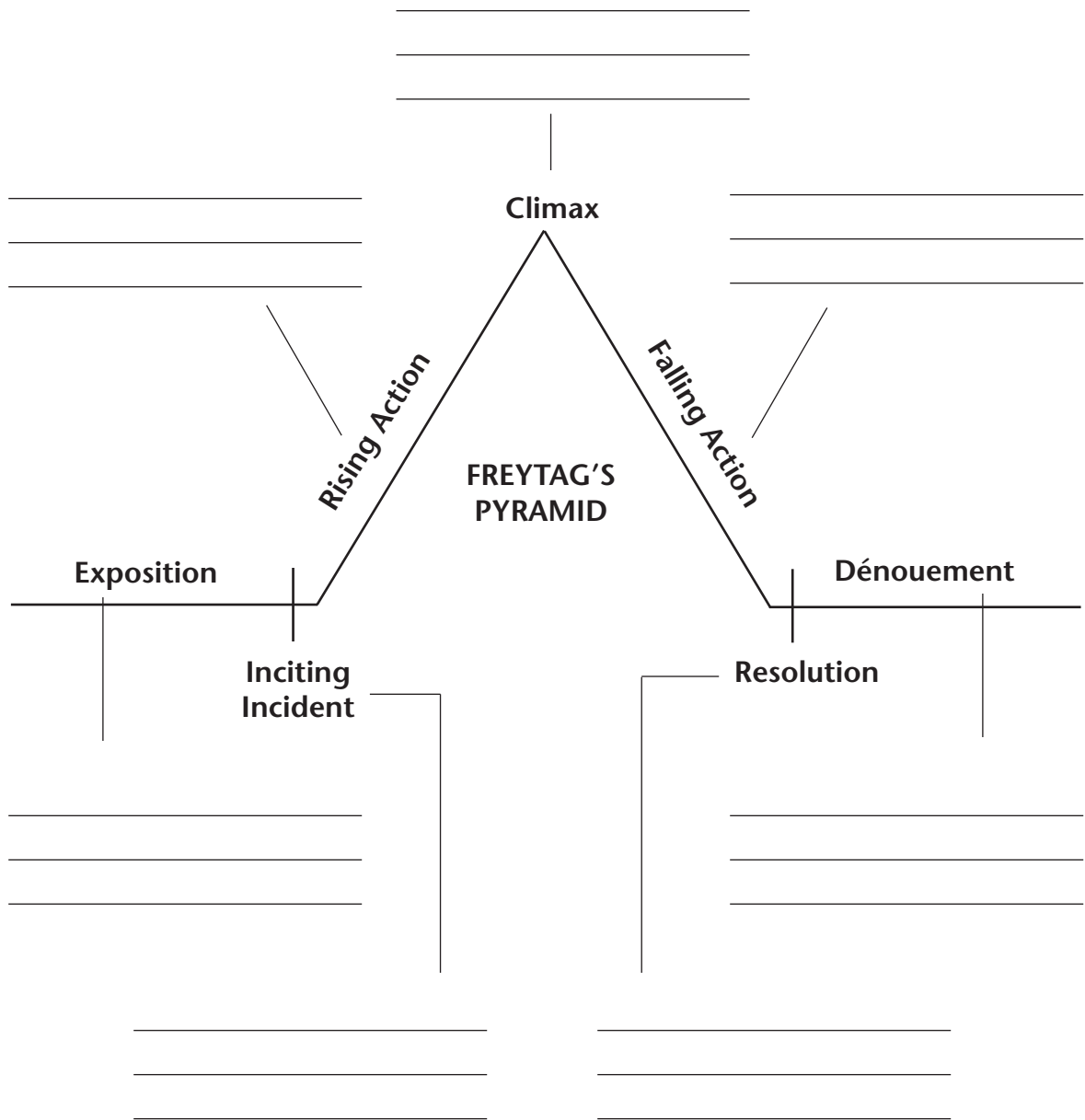
In the sequence chart below, place in chronological order the major events in Ethan Frome's life. Add more boxes if you need them. An example has been done for you. When you have completed the chart, select one of the events and, on a separate sheet of paper, write a paragraph about what effect it had on Ethan.



Graphic Organizer

Plot Diagram

Using the Freytag's Pyramid plot diagram below, chart the plot of *Ethan Frome*. Briefly describe in the spaces provided elements such as the exposition, inciting incident, rising and falling action, climax, resolution, and dénouement. Be sure to include in the rising action the key events that build toward the climax of the novel.



Graphic Organizers Answer Key

Cluster Chart

Responses will vary. Possible responses are given. Ethan's weaknesses include the following: he is inarticulate, tends to act impulsively, is too resigned to circumstances, and is an inept farmer. His strengths include the following: he can endure much, he is honorable, responsible, is curious about learning and about the world, has an adventuresome heart, and is hopeful. Ethan's appearance as an older man can be described as follows: he appears exhausted, stiff and grizzled, and looks old for his age, yet has an carelessly powerful look about him; he is very tall and lanky, and has a lame leg and a scar on his forehead. Not much description is given of him as a young man, except that he is clean-shaven. Ethan's motivations include the following: wanted to be an engineer, live in a city, and have a "smart" wife; wanted to avoid being alone; wants the companionship and love of Mattie. Ethan's dislikes include the shame of poverty and of having to borrow money, Zeena's cold silences, Zeena's complaining about things he cannot fix. The things Ethan likes include spending time with Mattie, teaching Mattie things and the pride of commanding her, science and learning, and steering logs to his mill (which is described as giving him "a thrilling sense of mastery"). His activities include farming, running a sawmill, selling lumber, taking the narrator to the train station, helping Mattie with odd household chores, driving Mattie to and from town, shopping for medicines, caretaking for his mother before she died, and caring for Zeena now.

Mattie's weaknesses include the following: she is poor and alone in the world, has no job skills and becomes sick when she attempts to work in an office or department store; she has little physical strength, is forgetful and dreamy, an inept housekeeper, and lacks confidence in herself. Her strengths include the following: she is quick to learn, youthful, energetic, bright and happy, does not complain, and has a pleasant manner. Her appearance can be described as follows: she is very pretty, has dark, curly hair, expressive eyes, fluttering eyelashes, rosy cheeks, and a petite build. Her motivations include a desire to please as maid and caretaker; a need for security and a home, since she has no family; and a desire to please Ethan. Mattie dislikes working in an office or department store, incurring disapproval, and the thought of having to leave the Frome farm. The things Mattie likes include Ethan's concern and warmth, learning things from Ethan, natural landscapes, beautiful things like ribbons and colorful dishes, dancing, sledding, and adventure. Her typical activities include caring for Zeena, cooking, cleaning, churning butter, talking to Ethan, and socializing in Starkfield.

Zeena's weaknesses include the following: she is a hypochondriac, often complaining of nonspecific ailments; she is snobbish, looking down on Starkfield; she is demanding, irritable, and harsh. Her strengths are that she was a good caregiver to Ethan's mother and a skilled matron of the house; she is smart, efficient, and decisive. Zeena's appearance can be described as follows: she is aging, wrinkled, tall, and angular; she has a high-boned face, and tends to look drawn and pale. Zeena's motivations are to gain recognition and attention from others, especially Ethan; to get a capable hand to help her with housework; and possibly to get rid of Mattie. Zeena dislikes living on an isolated farm, but would also dislike living in a city larger than Starkfield, where she might be looked down upon; she dislikes irresponsible behavior, poor housekeeping, Ethan not listening to her, and any expense—besides those incurred in buying medicine for her. Zeena likes to devote herself to treating her "illnesses" and to gain attention and sympathy by playing them up; she likes to have Ethan and Mattie serve her; and she seems to like criticizing others because it makes her feel more important. Her typical activities

include: complaining about and treating her “illnesses,” consulting with doctors, talking to people in town, doing tasks around the house, and supervising Mattie’s household duties.

Venn Diagram

Responses will vary. Possible responses are given. In their charts, students can include such things as personality traits, motivations, activities of the character, or the character’s situation and state of mind. The idea is to get students thinking freely. As an extension of this activity, you may have students use the ideas in their diagram to write an essay comparing and contrasting two of the characters.

Ethan differs from the other characters in that he wants to be an engineer and live in a city, and feels imprisoned on the farm. He has dreams in life and places he wants to go, but he does not act. Later in life he is exhausted, crippled, and defeated. Zeena differs from the others in that she is aging, obsessed with her own “illnesses,” complains constantly, is demanding, critical, and unhappy with Mattie. She suffers from Ethan’s silence and longs for him to listen to her. Mattie differs from the others in her youth, innocence, and bright, cheerful perspective; she is pretty; wants to please; is an inept housekeeper; lacks job skills; is alone in the world with no relatives to help her; and dotes on Ethan.

Mattie and Ethan are similar in that they are both hopeful about life; they love the beauty of nature; they are both in love; both are desperate when they find Mattie must leave. Both feel frustrated by their inability to act on their love; they are trapped in a hopeless situation. Zeena and Ethan are similar in that they are trapped in a loveless relationship and are unfulfilled as a result. Both are extremely proud and neither can communicate directly what he or she needs. Zeena and Mattie are similar in that they are intruding on each other’s lives; they both want the attention and love of the same man.

All three characters are hopelessly trapped in the circumstances of poverty, unfulfilled desires, and frustrated love.

Sequence Chart

Responses will vary. Possible responses are given. Zenobia Pierce comes to help Ethan care for his mother when she becomes ill; when Ethan’s mother dies, Ethan asks Zeena to marry him; Zeena becomes sickly and sour; Mattie Silver comes to live with the Fromes; Ethan walks Mattie home and they talk about sledding; Ethan is enamored of Mattie and Zeena finds more things to criticize about her work; Ethan and Mattie spend the evening together and the pickle dish breaks; Zeena finds the broken dish and plans to replace Mattie; on the way to the train station Ethan and Mattie express their feelings to each other, then take the tragic sled ride into the giant elm.

Plot Diagram

For possible responses to this exercise, please see pages 103–104 of the Access Edition.

**Vocabulary
and
Literary Terms
Review**

Vocabulary Review

Prologue and Chapters 1–4

abrupt, 34	exact, 32	malice, 47	reticent, 5
acquirement, 8	excursion, 35	mastery, 49	retort, 41
aggrieved, 8	extinguish, 39	melancholy, 7	revelry, 18
allusion, 8	familiarity, 40	mien, 2	sardonically, 18
apparition, 9	feign, 47	mute, 7	scintillating, 31
apprehension, 22	flank, 16	negation, 3	scrupulously, 42
arid, 6	fleecy, 44	nimbly, 24	sedentary, 34
assent, 30	genially, 43	nuzzle, 9	segregation, 23
audible, 31	glorify, 46	oblique, 20	self-effacement, 21
balm, 27	grave, 2	obscurity, 12	sensibility, 5
barricade, 46	grizzled, 1	oppressive, 22	sentient, 7
beleaguered, 4	grotesquely, 23	opulence, 42	serviceable, 18
cessation, 40	imprudence, 42	outcropping, 9	sheepish, 25
chafe, 3	impudent, 17	pang, 28	sinister, 4
chaotically, 11	inarticulate, 39	panorama, 19	sluggish, 4
chronicle, 1	incalculable, 26	pathological, 41	spangle, 44
communion, 18	incarnation, 7	penetrating, 33	stifled, 27
conceive, 22	incisively, 21	perceptible, 31	streaming, 33
consolatory, 10	incredulous, 24	perpendicular, 34	stricken, 42
conspicuously, 2	induce, 32	pine, 42	striking, 1
conspire, 28	inertia, 8	plaintive, 21	subdue, 49
contagion, 47	inference, 3	pledge, 11	subsequent, 3
contract, 44	inflection, 7	poignant, 8	supplement, 32
convivial, 40	ingenious, 25	precedent, 34	suppleness, 17
degenerate, 3	initiation, 5	precision, 46	taciturnity, 2
demur, 18	innocuous, 5	preclude, 34	tangible, 33
detachment, 5	insatiable, 47	premature, 15	tempered, 2
diffusion, 11	insinuation, 21	prolongation, 28	tenuous, 15
discern, 23	insubstantial, 22	prominence, 29	therapeutic, 35
disclosure, 32	insurmountable, 5	provocation, 6	unconstrained, 42
discomfiture, 44	intangible, 20	puckered, 29	undulation, 15
disquieting, 20	intervene, 15	quaver, 28	unfounded, 41
dormant, 20	irresolutely, 24	querulously, 12	vault, 30
dwindling, 44	kindled, 47	rapture, 25	venture, 7
effrontery, 17	lank, 1	rejoin, 48	void, 24
elapse, 49	latent, 20	reminiscent, 1	wan, 4
elasticity, 33	loitering, 40	rent, 45	waver, 24
entranced, 19	loom, 9	repugnant, 30	writhe, 9
evoke, 19	loutish, 23	retarding, 4	

Chapters 5–9 and Epilogue

abhor, 67	discursively, 89	injunction, 77	repine, 80
abreast, 90	divine, 98	intimacy, 51	replenish, 50
adjure, 87	dread, 53	intoxicating, 51	resolute, 63
adrift, 51	ebullition, 79	irretrievable, 64	reverently, 71
affability, 70	elaborate, 65	languidly, 54	rigidity, 62
alimony, 74	embodied, 92	leaden, 75	rouse, 89
anguish, 73	emit, 66	lineament, 94	rupture, 66
animosity, 69	equivalent, 69	loath, 58	sacrilege, 72
antipathy, 67	erratic, 89	luster, 76	sallow, 71
aromatic, 85	evasion, 65	maneuver, 82	scant, 56
audacity, 90	evokation, 72	maternally, 79	sinew, 67
austere, 99	exaltation, 90	medley, 57	slatternly, 97
aver, 57	expedition, 63	ministration, 57	solace, 56
averted, 83	exultantly, 90	mottling, 85	somber, 92
avow, 86	facetious, 86	mounting, 88	spasm, 72
avowal, 92, 100	felicitous, 62	muse, 56	squalid, 58
banishment, 78	foist, 64	obliterate, 50	stammer, 87
benevolence, 79	fragment, 71	obscure, 89	stoicism, 58
coax, 82	gaily, 84	passively, 89	stolid, 58
combatant, 65	gaunt, 50	penetrate, 98	swarthy, 97
composure, 67	grievance, 59	perfunctory, 57	swath, 92
comprehension, 56	heed, 93	peril, 98	tendril, 55
compulsion, 99	humble, 67	preceding, 85	tentatively, 99
compunction, 68	imminent, 66	prestige, 63	tremor, 54
conformity, 52	immobility, 97	pretense, 80	uncouth, 86
conical, 85	implication, 52	prevail, 62	uninhabitable, 73
conjecture, 99	imploring, 83	protuberance, 74	unperturbed, 78
consecrated, 62	import, 62	querulous, 73	untenanted, 73
contemptuously, 90	impulse, 78	quest, 69	vacancy, 65
countenance, 50	incessant, 75	quiver, 82	vehemence, 66
cover, 93	inclination, 86	rapture, 91	venom, 64
crest, 89	indignantly, 83	recrimination, 64	vulgar, 52
delirious, 93	induce, 79	reel, 68	wrath, 63
desolately, 71	ineffectual, 57	refuge, 73	wring, 69
destitute, 80	inexorable, 66	regale, 70	
detaining, 82	infinitely, 52	relic, 97	
devious, 86	ingratiatingly, 70	repercussion, 53	

Vocabulary Worksheet

Prologue and Chapters 1–4

Exercise: Sentence Completion

Complete the sentences by filling in each blank with a word from the list below.

- | | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| cessation | dwindling | insatiable | pang |
| demur | effrontery | loutish | plaintive |
| disclosure | elasticity | oppressive | spangle |
| dormant | feign | opulence | tenuous |

EX. My grandmother’s tulip bulbs, which had lain dormant in the earth all winter, sprouted gorgeous blooms in the spring.

1. As Mike ran the last stretch of the marathon, he could feel his energy _____ rapidly.
2. The stern disapproval of my father was _____; it made me feel as though I couldn’t do anything right.
3. Because Louise didn’t want Marvin to see how hurt she was by his comment, she tried to _____ indifference.
4. As Janet’s puppy grew, its appetite became _____; it never seemed to get full.
5. The peace agreement called for an immediate _____ of bombings.
6. The _____ of the expensive hotel took my breath away.
7. The day Ken graduated, he looked back on his school years and felt a(n) _____ of nostalgia.
8. The few _____ doubts Susan had about going to college were swept away in a whirlwind of excitement on the day she got her acceptance letter.
9. When Alan boldly proclaimed that the meal was terrible, everyone at the dinner table was shocked at his _____.
10. The kitten gave a(n) _____ meow when its owner refused to let it outside.

Vocabulary Worksheet

Chapters 5–9 and Epilogue

Exercise: Sentence Completion

Complete the sentences by filling in each blank with a word from the list below.

abhor	destitute	incessant	repine
aromatic	exultantly	induce	sallow
avowal	gaunt	languidly	swarthy
cower	imminent	regale	uncouth

EX. The Dust Bowl of the 1930s was a drought that left many farm families destitute.

- Mindy began to look so _____ that her friends were concerned she had an eating disorder.
- The patchouli incense was wonderfully _____.
- Bill loves to _____ his friends with jokes and goofy stories.
- Try as we might, we could not _____ Carla to try bungee jumping.
- Julieta regretted having moved in next door to a musician when she found could not think because of his _____ drumming.
- In movies, eerie music usually foreshadows _____ danger for the character.
- After he spent the day sunbathing at the beach, Mario's complexion looked very _____.
- When the giant was angry, all the townspeople would _____ fearfully in their homes.
- Rather than look on the bright side of things, Doug tended to _____ endlessly the difficult things in his life.
- "I got an A! I got an A!" Omar shrieked _____ when he got his physics exam back from the teacher.

Vocabulary Review

Cumulative Exam

Exercise: Sentence Completion

Complete the sentences by filling in each blank with a word from the list below.

- | | | | |
|-------------|------------|------------|---------|
| audible | crest | effrontery | medley |
| avowal | demur | induce | pang |
| chaotically | destitute | languidly | regale |
| conjecture | ebullition | malice | squalid |

- EX. The vandals had no real reason for wanting to deface the building; they did it out of pure malice.
1. After sharing his predictions on the matter, the analyst told his audience, "Remember, this is only a(n) _____: we won't be able to tell for sure until all the facts are in."
 2. The _____ conditions of the slums outside of São Paulo promote the spreading of cholera and other diseases.
 3. On Saturday, Miguel did nothing but curl up _____ on the couch in his pajamas.
 4. When we reached the _____ of the hill, a wonderful view of the valley awaited us.
 5. Karen will _____ at first, but if you pester her enough, she will go out on the dance floor.
 6. When Sergei saw all the injustice that occurred in the criminal courts, he felt a(n) _____ of anger in his chest.
 7. At the party, the hosts will _____ their guests with delicious food and swinging music.
 8. Helena did not like the painting because the bright colors and designs in it seemed to clash _____.
 9. The audience clapped upon hearing the politician's _____ that she would abolish property taxes.
 10. Every time Louis watched a basketball game, he felt a(n) _____ of regret that he hadn't tried out for the school team.

characterization, 61
climax, 96
crisis, 96
foreshadowing, 38
frame tale, 102
irony, 38, 96
motif, 38, 61
motivation, 61
narrator, 14
setting, 14
simile, 38, 96
symbol, 14, 102
theme, 102

Literary Terms Worksheet

Prologue and Chapters 1–4

Exercise: Sentence Completion

Complete the sentences by filling in each blank with a word from the list below. Do not use any word more than once.

foreshadowing
irony
motif
narrator

setting
simile
symbol

EX. A New England village in the wintertime is the setting for *Ethan Frome*.

1. An example of a(n) _____ is the passage which compares a dead cucumber vine with a funeral streamer.
2. A(n) _____ is any element that recurs in one or more works of literature or art.
3. An example of _____ is the conversation in which Ethan says, "I guess I can take you down all right!"
4. _____ is the difference between appearance and reality.
5. The name Starkfield is an example of a(n) _____.

Literary Terms Worksheet**Chapters 5–9 and Epilogue**

Exercise: Sentence Completion

Complete the sentences by filling in each blank with a word from the list below. Do not use any word more than once.

characterization

climax

crisis

frame tale

irony

motif

motivation

simile

ex. The image of a threshold is a recurring motif in *Ethan Frome*.

1. The _____ of the story comes when Zeena decides to send Mattie away.
2. The complex structure of *Ethan Frome*, which consists of a story within a story, is an example of a(n) _____.
3. When Mattie and Ethan take one last ride down the coast at the Corbury road, we reach the _____ of the plot.
4. One _____ for Zeena's constant complaining about her "illnesses" is her need for attention.
5. Direct description is a type of _____.

Answer Key

Vocabulary and Literary Terms

Vocabulary Worksheet, Prologue and Chapters 1–4

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. dwindling | 6. opulence |
| 2. oppressive | 7. pang |
| 3. feign | 8. tenuous |
| 4. insatiable | 9. effrontery |
| 5. cessation | 10. plaintive |

Vocabulary Worksheet, Chapters 5-9 and Epilogue

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1. gaunt | 6. imminent |
| 2. aromatic | 7. swarthy |
| 3. regale | 8. cower |
| 4. induce | 9. repine |
| 5. incessant | 10. exultantly |

Cumulative Vocabulary Exam

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. conjecture | 6. ebullition |
| 2. squalid | 7. regale |
| 3. languidly | 8. chaotically |
| 4. crest | 9. avowal |
| 5. demur | 10. pang |

Literary Terms Worksheet, Prologue and Chapters 1–4

1. simile
2. motif
3. foreshadowing
4. Irony
5. symbol

Literary Terms Worksheet, Chapters 5-9 and Epilogue

1. crisis
2. frame tale
3. climax
4. motivation
5. characterization

Exam Masters

Exam

Ethan Frome, Prologue and Chapters 1–4

Multiple Choice: (25 points total)

On the line provided, write the letter of the best answer.

- _____ 1. Ethan Frome's striking appearance is due to _____.
- his penetrating eyes
 - his smile
 - the powerful look he has
 - all of the above
- _____ 2. The "smash-up" occurred _____.
- 24 years ago
 - 18 years ago
 - 12 years ago
 - 6 years ago
- _____ 3. Ethan has never left Starkfield because _____.
- he has always had to take care of his family
 - he loves the land
 - he is too poor
 - he has few skills but farming
- _____ 4. The winters in Starkfield are like _____.
- a magical dream
 - a six-month siege
 - a debilitating illness
 - a persistent pest
- _____ 5. During the first week Ethan drives the narrator to and from Corbury Flats, the narrator decides that Ethan _____.
- has no morals
 - is as frustrated as an entrapped beast
 - has been in Starkfield too many winters
 - still retains the hope of a child
- _____ 6. An important part of the Frome dwelling that Ethan had to remove some time ago was _____.
- the front porch
 - the dining room
 - the "L" of the house
 - the loft
- _____ 7. The narrator finally learns the clue to Ethan Frome's suffering when _____.
- he rides with him in his carriage
 - he is forced to stay at the Frome farm because of a snowstorm
 - he listens to Mrs. Hale's story about Ethan
 - none of the above

Ethan Frome, Prologue and Chapters 1–4

- _____ 8. During their trips to and from Corbury Flats, the narrator finds that Ethan shares his interest in _____.
- architecture
 - music
 - Shakespeare
 - science
- _____ 9. The effect of the railroad passing through Starkfield to the Flats was that _____.
- it brought prosperity
 - it caused a loneliness because people stopped coming by on the road past the Frome farm
 - it provided more variety and entertainment from the guests that would stay at the local hotel
 - all of the above
- _____ 10. Ethan stopped his studies at the technological college because _____.
- his father died
 - his mother was sick
 - his interest changed to farming
 - he did not do well in school
- _____ 11. Throughout chapter one, Ethan is _____.
- having a dream about Mattie
 - remembering an evening with Mattie
 - looking through the church window and watching Mattie dance
 - reading a book
- _____ 12. During Ethan's walks at night with Mattie, Ethan feels _____.
- a sense of shared wonder and enjoyment
 - a horrid wish that his wife would die
 - shame that he has feelings for another woman
 - all of the above
- _____ 13. According to Zeena, Mattie will probably leave the Fromes because _____.
- she will marry Denis Eady
 - she will find a better-paying situation
 - she hates Zeena
 - Ethan will send her away
- _____ 14. Ethan is startled early one morning when his wife comments that _____.
- he has spoken in his sleep
 - Mattie is engaged to Denis Eady
 - she has noticed that he shaves every morning
 - he never speaks to her

Exam***Ethan Frome, Prologue and Chapters 1–4***

- _____ 15. As Ethan hesitates in the shadows after the church dance, _____.
- Ethan's feet freeze
 - Mattie accepts a ride with Denis
 - Mattie kisses Denis then refuses a ride when she sees Ethan
 - Mattie refuses a ride with Denis Eady in his father's cutter
- _____ 16. On two occasions Ethan says to Mattie, "Come along," which for him is an expression of _____.
- his authority as her employer
 - the wonder and the rapture of her presence
 - impatience with her slow gait
 - anger that she makes him wait so long for her
- _____ 17. Mattie tells Ethan of a sledding scene she observed which involved _____.
- a child who was killed when his sled broke through the ice on the river
 - her sister, who flipped over on a sled and broke her arm
 - Denis Eady and Ruth Varnum being hit by another sled
 - Ruth Varnum and Ned Hale nearly hitting a big tree at the bottom of a hill
 - none of the above
- _____ 18. To Ethan, the Frome gravestones mean _____.
- that death is ever near
 - the comfort of knowing he will be buried near his ancestors
 - that he will never escape from Starkfield, but will live and die there
 - a and b are true
- _____ 19. The reason Mattie's relatives have sent her to Zeena Frome is _____.
- to exact compensation from Mattie for her father's misuse of their savings
 - that none had room for her
 - Mattie needed training in domestic affairs to prepare for marriage
 - Zeena was sick and needed someone to help her
 - a and d are true
- _____ 20. When Zeena announces she is going to spend the night with her aunt Martha Pierce so that she can visit a new doctor, Ethan _____.
- argues that the trip may be harmful to her
 - worries it will cost too much
 - imagines a night without her in the presence of Mattie
 - says he will drive her there
- _____ 21. Ethan imagines the night without Zeena to be _____.
- lonely
 - a sweet, cozy evening
 - a relief from the burden of caring for Zeena
 - awkward and strange, since he will be alone with Mattie

Ethan Frome, Prologue and Chapters 1–4

- _____ 22. Ethan asked Zeena to marry him because _____.
- he didn't want to be alone in the winter after his mother died
 - he had loved her since childhood
 - she had the money necessary to keep the farm in operation
 - it was expected of him by the community
- _____ 23. Ethan's dreams have included all but the following: _____.
- to become an engineer
 - to expand his father's farm
 - to have a "smart" wife
 - to live in a city
- _____ 24. The reason Zeena was a good nurse to Ethan's mother was that _____.
- she had cared for her own ailing mother
 - she is a trained nurse
 - she is absorbed in her own illnesses
 - she cares about people
- _____ 25. Mattie is especially upset over the broken pickle dish because _____.
- it belonged to her mother
 - it was very expensive
 - it was a wedding present to Zeena that she kept out of reach and never used
 - Zeena will know that Mattie used it especially for Ethan
 - c and d are true

Matching (10 points total)

On the line provided, write the letter of the best answer.

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| _____ 1. Harmon Gow | a. Well-to-do man who buys wood from Ethan |
| _____ 2. Ethan Frome | b. Young man romantically interested in Mattie Silver |
| _____ 3. Starkfield | c. Man from whom the narrator gets information about Ethan |
| _____ 4. Varnum place | d. Man who walks with a limp |
| _____ 5. Corbury Flats | e. Person who helps Zeena with housework |
| _____ 6. Mattie Silver | f. Place whose name indicates the nature of the place |
| _____ 7. simile | g. Thing that stands for both itself and something else |
| _____ 8. Andrew Hale | h. Place where the narrator goes to catch his train |
| _____ 9. Denis Eady | i. Place where a giant elm grows at the bottom of a hill |
| _____ 10. symbol | j. Comparison using <i>like</i> or <i>as</i> |

Exam

Ethan Frome, Prologue and Chapters 1–4

Quote Identification (2 points each)

For each quotation below, identify the speaker, and give a brief explanation of the significance of the passage.

1. "That Frome farm was always 'bout as bare as a milk pan when the cat's been round.... Sickness and trouble: that's what Ethan's had his plate full up with, ever since the very first helping."

2. "That's Orion down yonder; the big fellow to the right is Aldebaran, and the bunch of little ones—like bees swarming—they're the Pleiades..."

3. "It looks just as if it was painted!"

4. "I just felt so mean I couldn't sleep."

5. "We never got away—how should you?"

Ethan Frome, Prologue and Chapters 1–4**Vocabulary (5 points each)**

Complete the sentences by filling in each blank with a word from the list below.

chafe	exact	oblique	spangle
dormant	feign	scintillating	tenuous

EX. Tom did not care for his grandmother’s jello salad, but to avoid hurting her feelings, he had to feign that he loved it.

1. Shuja had tied the canoe securely to his truck, but he worried that the _____ rope might break during the trip up north.
2. The singer’s gold-sequined outfit was _____ under the stage lights.
3. The children _____ the Christmas tree with their favorite ornaments.
4. It is difficult to guess Bob’s feelings; his comments are always so _____.
5. Chun May resented her household chores and would _____ when her mother reminded her to do them.

Short Essay (10 points each)

On a separate sheet of paper, write a brief essay answering **two** of the following questions.

1. Define *foreshadowing* and cite a passage from *Ethan Frome* which uses this technique. Explain what event the passage might foreshadow.
2. Explain how the setting of *Ethan Frome* helps to create the atmosphere of the novel. (Recall that the setting includes the season as well as the time and place.)
3. The image of a woman standing in the doorway, lifted lamp in hand, occurs twice in the novella, once when Ethan brings Mattie home late from the church social and Zeena comes to the door, and the other when Ethan returns from town and is greeted by Mattie. Briefly describe the effect of each image on Ethan.

Long Essay (30 points each)

On a separate sheet of paper, write an essay answering **one** of the following questions.

1. Define *narrator* and describe what you know about the narrator of *Ethan Frome*. How does he gather his information? Then comment on whether you think him a reliable source. Do you trust him to tell the story accurately? Why, or why not?
2. The death motif occurs throughout *Ethan Frome*. Define *motif* and give at least four examples of events, objects, and/or elements of the setting which support this motif of death. Explain why each works as a death motif.
3. In many ways, Ethan Frome is governed by circumstances over which he has no control. Explain why Ethan feels trapped, describing the events and circumstances that have taken away his hopes and dreams.

Exam Answer Key

Ethan Frome, Prologue and Chapters 1–4

Multiple Choice (25 points total)

- | | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. c | 6. c | 11. c | 16. b | 21. b |
| 2. a | 7. b | 12. a | 17. d | 22. a |
| 3. a | 8. d | 13. a | 18. c | 23. b |
| 4. b | 9. b | 14. c | 19. e | 24. c |
| 5. c | 10. a | 15. d | 20. c | 25. e |

Matching (10 points total)

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. c | 3. f | 5. h | 7. j | 9. b |
| 2. d | 4. i | 6. e | 8. a | 10. g |

Quote Identification (2 points each)

1. The speaker is Harmon Gow. He is telling the narrator what he knows of the poverty and hardship of Ethan’s life. This passage gives the reader insight into Ethan’s suffering from the perspective of an average towns person.
2. The speaker is Ethan; he is talking to Mattie about the stars in the sky as they walk home from Starkfield one night. Ethan likes to teach Mattie things, and she both admires his learning and feels a sense of wonder at what he has to teach her.
3. The speaker is Mattie. She exclaims this as she and Ethan admire a beautiful landscape. Ethan feels this is a perfect definition and that her words “utter his secret soul.” The passage shows how Ethan and Mattie share a bond of admiration for nature and a sense of awe for the beauty in the world.
4. The speaker is Zeena. She says this when she opens the door as Ethan brings Mattie home late from a dance in Starkfield. The passage is an example of how Zeena complains about her many nonspecific “illnesses” in an attempt to gain attention.
5. The speakers are the Frome gravestones, which seem to mock Ethan and his dreams of leaving Starkfield. They remind Ethan that, like his ancestors, he will live and die on the Frome place.

Vocabulary (10 points total)

- | | | |
|------------------|------------|----------|
| 1. tenuous | 3. spangle | 5. chafe |
| 2. scintillating | 4. oblique | |

Short Essay (10 points each)

1. *Foreshadowing* is the act of presenting materials that hint at events to occur later in the story. *Responses will vary.* One example of foreshadowing is the conversation in chapter 2 in which Mattie tells Ethan about Ruth and Ned’s near-collision with the giant elm. Mattie comments that the tree is dangerous and should be cut down. This conversation may foreshadow an accident involving the tree.
2. The novella is set in Starkfield, a town whose name echoes the stark, bleak atmosphere of Ethan Frome’s story. The long, harsh winters also echo this mood, with their “stretches of sunless cold” and their storms and winds that beleaguer Starkfield like a “six-months’ siege.” The winters reflect the isolation, depression, and deadness of Ethan’s spirit.

Ethan Frome, Prologue and Chapters 1–4

3. When Ethan sees Zeena standing before him at the threshold, she seems an eerie, fantastic figure, like something out of a “last dream before waking.” She is all darkness and foreboding. The lamplight falling on her deepens the hollows and wrinkles of her face. Ethan feels he has never known what she looked like before. When Mattie comes to the door, however, she is the picture of light and warmth. She seems very homelike; Ethan dreams of coming home to her instead of Zeena. The light brings out Mattie’s beauty: it highlights her “slim young throat,” “[throws] a lustrous fleck on her lips, [edges] her eyes with velvet shade, and [lays] a milky whiteness above the black curve of her brows.”

Long Essay (30 points each)

1. The narrator is an educated man who is on an assignment connected with the power house in Corbury Junction. Since his project has been delayed, he is staying in Starkfield, where he boards at the home of Mrs. Ned Hale. The narrator gains information about Ethan from Mrs. Hale, Harmon Gow, and other members of the community; from his own observations; and from brief words with Ethan himself as Ethan drives him regularly to the train station. The narrator’s overnight stay at the Frome place gives him his special insight. *Responses will vary. Possible responses are given.* Students may say that the narrator’s interest, keen observation, and sensitivity, which come through in his telling of the story, make him an insightful commentator. He seems to sense from the beginning that something uncommon and tragic has happened. They may also point out that as an outsider to the town, the narrator is more likely to be an objective and thus reliable interpreter of Ethan’s story. He has nothing to gain or lose by manipulating the facts of the story, and is not biased by any personal relationship with the people involved. On the other hand, students might say they cannot trust the narrator, since what he knows about the story is limited and has for the most part come to him secondhand, not from Ethan himself.
2. A *motif* is any element that recurs in one or more works of literature or art. Students may list any of the following as examples of the death motif: the name Starkfield, which implies a barren, dead atmosphere; the Frome graveyard, an ever-present reminder to Ethan that he will die without leaving the farm; the long winter, which deadens life in Starkfield; the giant elm, which invites a fatal crash for coasters on the hill; and a dead cucumber vine, which reminds Ethan of a funeral streamer.
3. *Responses will vary. Possible responses are given.* Ethan went to a technological school for a year, but had to quit when his father died. He was forced to take over his father’s farm and the sawmill, although he dreamed of furthering his studies and experiencing city life. Then, Ethan’s mother grew sick and he had to stay on the farm to care for her. When she died, he married Zeena, his mother’s nurse. He thought that with a “smart” wife like Zeena, he could finally sell the farm and sawmill, move to a larger town, and fulfill his dream of becoming an engineer. With her support, he felt he could make his place in the world. However, within a year Zeena became sickly and sour. Ethan saw that she did not want to move to larger town, because she needed the attention she got in a small community. He began to fear he would die without ever leaving Starkfield or the Frome place.

Ethan’s only happiness comes from the time he spends with Mattie, but he is not free to love her. The fact that his home is out in the country and isolated from the world outside—a world Ethan longs to explore and be a part of—further emphasizes his feelings of imprisonment.

Exam

Ethan Frome, Chapters 5–9 and Epilogue

Multiple Choice (25 points total)

On the line provided, write the letter of the best answer.

- _____ 1. The comfort and bliss of the evening Mattie and Ethan spend together is interrupted by all of the following *except* _____.
- the mention of Zeena's name
 - Ethan seeing Zeena's face transposed on Mattie as she sits in Zeena's rocking chair
 - Mattie wears Zeena's robe
 - the shattering of the pickle dish
 - the cat nudging the empty rocking chair, making it rock as though Zeena were sitting in it
- _____ 2. On the night Zeena is away, when Ethan remembers that he and Mattie had planned to go sledding, he decides that _____.
- he is comfortable alone with her by the fire
 - Mattie will never go sledding with him
 - it is too dark and dangerous to go anyway
 - a and c are true
 - all of the above
- _____ 3. When Ethan mentions to Mattie that he saw Ruth and Ned kissing under the Varnum spruces, _____.
- she suddenly seems embarrassed and farther away from him
 - she looks at him longingly
 - he quickly retreats and becomes shy and withdrawn
 - all of the above
- _____ 4. After he and Mattie say goodnight, Ethan realizes that _____.
- he has made a fool of himself by showing affection to Mattie
 - Zeena is ever present in his life
 - he has not even touched Mattie's hand
 - Mattie is in love with him
- _____ 5. Ethan fails to repair the pickle dish before Zeena's return for all of the following reasons *except* _____.
- one of the horses slips on the ice and cuts its knee
 - the sleet makes the logs slippery and difficult to load
 - Denis Eady does not have the glue in stock
 - Zeena takes an earlier train

Ethan Frome, Chapters 5–9 and Epilogue

- _____ 6. After Zeena's visit to the new doctor, she reports that her health is much worse than anyone else's because she has _____.
- "troubles"
 - "complications"
 - "ague"
 - "conditions"
- _____ 7. According to Zeena, the doctor's recommendation is that _____.
- she hire a servant girl to relieve her of all household duties
 - she take a vacation in a warm climate
 - she have a costly operation
 - a and b are true
- _____ 8. Zeena blames her poor health on _____.
- the winter cold
 - having had to care for Ethan's mother until she died
 - Ethan's unwillingness to pay for treatment
 - all of the above
 - b and c are true
- _____ 9. The reason Ethan gives for not hiring a servant girl is _____.
- he does not know of a good one
 - he feels it is a wife's duty to keep the house
 - he does not have the money
 - all of the above
- _____ 10. Ethan's reason for keeping Mattie is that _____.
- she works for nothing
 - she is Zeena's kin
 - she has no place to go
 - all of the above
 - b and c are true
- _____ 11. When Zeena says in response to what the neighbors will say about her sending Mattie away, "I know well enough what they say of my having kep' her here so long as I have," she might be implying that _____.
- the neighbors have been gossiping about Mattie and Ethan
 - the neighbors feel she has done more than her family duty
 - Mattie is a poor worker and an added burden to Zeena
 - all of the above
- _____ 12. For Ethan, Zeena comes to represent _____.
- a drain on his finances
 - a jealous woman who is trying to destroy Mattie
 - an evil person who has taken everything he has dreamed of in life
 - all of the above

Exam

Ethan Frome, Chapters 5–9 and Epilogue

- _____ 13. The aftermath of Ethan’s argument with Zeena over Mattie’s dismissal is that _____.
- a. he hugs and kisses Mattie
 - b. he threatens Zeena’s life
 - c. he asks Mattie to run away with him
 - d. all of the above
 - e. a and b are true
- _____ 14. When Zeena discovers the broken pickle dish, _____.
- a. Ethan blames the cat
 - b. Mattie takes the blame
 - c. Zeena accuses Mattie of being “bad” just like her father
 - d. all of the above
- _____ 15. According to Ethan, Zeena has one pleasure left in life: _____.
- a. to inflict pain on him
 - b. to go to the doctor
 - c. to make Mattie’s life miserable
 - d. her needlework
- _____ 16. When Ethan dreams of running away with Mattie to the west, he finally gives up the idea because _____.
- a. he does not have enough money to take her there
 - b. Zeena would be helpless without him
 - c. he cannot leave while he owes people money
 - d. all of the above
- _____ 17. Ethan thinks for a moment that he could ask Andrew Hale again for an advance of fifty dollars, but _____.
- a. he knows Hale will not give it to him
 - b. he feels it is wrong to request money under false pretenses
 - c. fifty dollars would not be enough
 - d. all of the above
 - e. a and b are true
- _____ 18. On the way to the train station, Ethan stops at the place where _____.
- a. he and Mattie sat on a fallen tree limb at a picnic the previous summer
 - b. he saw Ned and Ruth kissing
 - c. he observed Denis Eady flirting with Mattie
 - d. none of the above
- _____ 19. Mattie’s future appears hopeless because _____.
- a. working in a store would be bad for her health
 - b. she has no kin she is willing to ask for help
 - c. Ethan cannot do anything to help her
 - d. all of the above

Ethan Frome, Chapters 5–9 and Epilogue

- _____ 20. When Mattie realizes, after reading Ethan’s letter she finds in his “study,” that he wanted to run away with her, she _____.
- confesses she has thought of it many times
 - says that she does not dare to think such thoughts
 - says that she loves him, but he is a married man
 - b and c are true
- _____ 21. When Ethan thinks of Mattie marrying someone else, he says “I’d a’most rather have you dead than that,” to which Mattie replies, _____.
- “You mustn’t think like that”
 - “Oh, Ethan, I’ll always love you”
 - “Oh, I wish I was, I wish I was”
 - “The only man I’ll ever marry is you”
- _____ 22. The intent of Ethan and Mattie on their tragic descent into the elm tree is _____.
- to flirt with danger by coming as close to the elm as possible, then swerving off
 - to enjoy a moment together that they can remember when they are apart
 - to kill themselves
 - a and b are true
- _____ 23. The reason Ethan gives Mattie for wanting to sit in front on the sled is that _____.
- he wants to feel Mattie holding him
 - if they don’t both die, he would rather that Mattie live
 - he can steer better in front
 - a and c are true
- _____ 24. The results of the “smash-up” include all of the following *except* _____.
- Mattie suffers a spinal injury that confines her to a chair
 - Ethan has a halting lameness that impedes his movement
 - Zeena becomes the caretaker of Mattie
 - Mrs. Hale comes in daily to help with Mattie and bring supplies
- _____ 25. According to Mrs. Hale, the one who ultimately suffers most from the “smash-up” is _____.
- Zeena
 - Mattie
 - Ethan
 - all of them equally

Exam

Ethan Frome, Chapters 5–9 and Epilogue

Matching (10 points total)

On the line provided, write the letter of the best answer.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| _____ 1. motif | a. Cannot find the glue Ethan needs |
| _____ 2. Mrs. Andrew Hale | b. Has to go to Stamford by train |
| _____ 3. simile | c. Recurring element in one or more works of literature |
| _____ 4. geranium | d. Zeena decides to send Mattie away |
| _____ 5. motivation | e. "Their thoughts seemed to dart at each other like serpents shooting venom" |
| _____ 6. climax | f. Zeena's desire to get rid of Mattie |
| _____ 7. Daniel Byrne | g. Expresses sympathy for Ethan's situation |
| _____ 8. Mattie Silver | h. Mattie and Ethan sled down the Corbury road |
| _____ 9. Denis Eady | i. Will "pine away when [not] cared for" |
| _____ 10. crisis | |

Quote Identification (2 points each)

For each quotation below, identify the speaker, and give a brief explanation of the significance of the passage.

1. "That's an ugly corner down by the big elm. If a fellow didn't keep his eyes open, he'd go plumb into it."

2. "I tried to keep my things where you couldn't get at 'em—and now you've took from me the one I cared for most of all—"

3. "Don't trouble, Ethan."

Ethan Frome, Chapters 5–9 and Epilogue

4. “We can fetch it; I know we can fetch it—”

5. “I don’t see there’s much difference between the Fromes up at the farm and the Fromes down in the graveyard, ’cept that down there they’re all quiet, and the women have got to hold their tongues.”

Vocabulary (5 points each)

Complete the sentences by filling in each blank with a word from the list below.

- | | | | |
|----------|--------------|----------|-------------|
| abhor | discursively | genially | perfunctory |
| audacity | gaunt | obscure | uncouth |

EX. The man was so gaunt that he looked as though a strong wind might carry him away.

1. After working so hard on my project, I was hurt when my teacher gave it only a(n) _____ glance.
2. You will absolutely _____ this movie; it is very offensive.
3. When another driver cut in front of her and stole her parking space, Shalonda was shocked by his _____.
4. The criminal’s motives were so _____ that even he did not understand why he had committed the crime.
5. “Let me help you push your car out of that snowbank,” my neighbor said _____.

Exam***Ethan Frome*, Chapters 5–9 and Epilogue**

Short Essay (10 points each)

On a separate sheet of paper, write a brief essay answering **two** of the following questions.

1. Give the definition of a *frame tale* and explain how this structure is used in *Ethan Frome*. Based on your reading of Edith Wharton’s introduction to her novel and on your impression of the book as a whole, why do you think Wharton chose to use this structure? What did it allow her to do that another structure would not?
2. Zeena’s rocking chair takes on a special significance the night Ethan and Mattie are alone. Explain how the incidents surrounding the chair reveal Ethan and Mattie’s circumstances and feelings.
3. In Edith’s Wharton’s introduction to the novel, she writes that the characters in *Ethan Frome* are “granite outcroppings...but half-emerged from the soil, and scarcely more articulate.” Explain how this statement might apply to the character of Ethan Frome. In what ways is he like a “granite outcropping”?

Long Essay (30 points each)

On a separate sheet of paper, write an essay answering **one** of the following questions.

1. Regarding the broken pickle dish, Zeena says to Mattie, “and now you’ve took from me the one I cared for most of all.” She then gathers up the broken glass and leaves the room “as if she carried a dead body.” Explain how her words are an example of *irony*, making sure to define the term in your essay. Next, define *symbol* and explain what the broken dish might symbolize.
2. The references to coasting down the Corbury road not only foreshadow the fate of Ethan and Mattie, but also serve as a symbol for their various states of mind. Define *symbol* and explain what the idea of coasting might symbolize. Then analyze the conversations Ethan and Mattie have about coasting and explain how their attitudes toward it reflect their states of mind at different points in the novella.
3. As the narrator converses with Mrs. Ned Hale in the epilogue, she says to him about Mattie, “And I say, if she’d ha’ died, Ethan might ha’ lived.” Explain what she means by this. Refer to the relationship between Ethan and Mattie, their dream, and their present circumstances to support your comments.

Ethan Frome, Chapters 5–9 and Epilogue

Multiple Choice (25 points total)

- | | | | | | | |
|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. c | 5. d | 9. c | 13. a | 17. b | 21. c | 25. c |
| 2. d | 6. b | 10. e | 14. d | 18. a | 22. c | |
| 3. a | 7. a | 11. d | 15. a | 19. d | 23. a | |
| 4. c | 8. b | 12. c | 16. a | 20. a | 24. d | |

Matching (10 points total)

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. c | 3. e | 5. f | 7. j | 9. a |
| 2. g | 4. i | 6. h | 8. b | 10. d |

Quote Identification (2 points total)

- The speaker is Ethan. He says this to Mattie on the night they are alone together. The two of them planned to go sledding, but since there is no moon, it is too dark and dangerous to go. They decide to stay comfortable inside by the fire.
- The speaker is Zeena. She has just found out that Mattie broke her prized pickle dish and says that Mattie is “a bad girl” and that she wishes she had sent her away long ago. She is planning to send Mattie away, and now that she has found the broken dish, it is clear she will not change her mind.
- The speaker is Mattie. She writes these words in a short note to Ethan after she finds out that Zeena is going to send her away. She wants to let Ethan know he doesn’t need to worry about her or try to convince Zeena to let her stay. The passage shows she is unselfish and cares about Ethan.
- The speaker is Ethan. He chants this phrase on his and Mattie’s suicide run down the hill. He means that he thinks they can succeed in hitting the tree, and thus, killing themselves.
- The speaker is Mrs. Ned Hale. She makes this comment in the epilogue while talking to the narrator. Her comment echoes the idea that Ethan, Zeena, and Mattie, who are living without happiness or love, without having fulfilled any of their dreams, are as good as dead. They are crippled both emotionally and physically, and except for the constant bickering and complaining of the women, their life has been drained out of them.

Vocabulary (10 points total)

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. perfunctory | 3. audacity | 5. genially |
| 2. abhor | 4. obscure | |

Short Essay (10 points each)

- A frame tale is a story that itself provides a vehicle for the telling of other stories. In *Ethan Frome*, the story of the narrator, an outsider who is laid up in Starkfield for the winter and becomes intrigued by the mystery of Ethan Frome, serves as a frame for the telling of Ethan’s story. The story of the narrator “frames” the main story in that it both introduces and concludes it. In the introduction, or prologue, to *Ethan Frome*, we learn how the narrator gathered his information about Ethan, and learn the perspectives of Mrs. Ned Hale and Harmon Gow; then, in the conclusion, or epilogue, we learn the present state of Ethan Frome as the narrator discusses it with Mrs. Ned Hale. Together they make their final observations on the tragic life of Ethan Frome.

The frame allows Wharton the means to show the two different time periods in the story and to contrast Ethan’s life before and after the “smash-up.” It also provides her with a specific narrator, one who is sophisticated enough to understand the story and to articulate what Ethan himself, a reticent man who has never

Ethan Frome, Chapters 5–9 and Epilogue

learned to express his feelings, might not be able to explain in words. Also, as Edith Wharton points out in her introduction to the novel, the frame allows her to create a fuller, more realistic picture of Ethan Frome by offering the perspectives of very different people such as Harmon Gow and Mrs. Ned Hale.

2. The rocking chair is the place Zeena habitually sits in the evenings. When Mattie sits in it, Ethan sees Zeena's face transposed on hers. Later, at the moment when Ethan and Mattie are feeling most intimate, the cat causes it to rock. Seeing the chair rock reminds them that Zeena is ever present in their lives and that she prevents their relationship from growing.
3. *Responses will vary. Possible responses are given.* Ethan Frome is unable to show his feelings and thus, like the granite, is only partially revealed or understood. In this way, he is typical of rural New Englanders, who, according to Wharton, are inarticulate and have difficulty revealing themselves to others. Ethan cannot communicate his emotions in an elaborate or complicated way; he is not "flowery," but rather a stiff, stark figure, like granite. By the end of the novel, Ethan has become hardened by his situation and resembles even more the granite outcroppings Wharton describes.

Essay (30 points)

1. *Responses will vary. Possible responses are given.* Irony is the difference between appearance and reality. The words are ironic in that Zeena, while scolding Mattie for the broken dish, does not realize that in reality Mattie has not only broken a simple pickle dish, but Zeena's relationship with Ethan as well. Zeena treats the breaking of a dish as a great tragedy, while the real tragedy is that her marriage is dead. That irony is made apparent when Zeena refers to a pickle dish as "the one I cared for most of all," using words that could refer to her husband. Mattie, in her attempt to please Ethan, has ventured into Zeena's private domain and destroyed something sacred to her. A symbol is something that stands for both itself and something else. The broken dish is a symbol for the broken relationship between Ethan and Zeena. Students may also say that the dish, which is red like a heart, might symbolize Zeena's love, which she keeps locked away and does not share.
2. A symbol is something that stands for both itself and something else. *Responses will vary. Possible responses are given.* In Ethan Frome, the idea of coasting might symbolize the relationship between Mattie and Ethan. Students should analyze specific conversations from the novel and should mention some of the following ideas. Mattie and Ethan seem to view coasting in the way they might view a relationship between them: it is dangerous, yet exciting; the very idea of it is "intoxicating." They both express fear toward coasting and put it off several times, waiting until the way is more clear. Ethan brags that he could easily maneuver around the elm at the bottom of the hill. Perhaps he feels he can maneuver around Zeena to have a relationship with Mattie. Near the end of the novel, Mattie and Ethan finally go coasting. Ethan boasts about his ability to steer, and Mattie says she is never scared with him. Her words affirm his masculine ability to protect her from harm, although ironically he is unable to protect her in real life and is sending her off to fend for herself. Ultimately the two realize they cannot be apart, and decide to go down the hill "so 't we'll never come up anymore." At this moment, the crash course their lives are taking merges with the literal crash course on the hill, and they careen towards their inevitable, devastating "smash-up." Their suicide ride is their hope for liberation from the inescapable circumstances of their lives. Ironically, it serves to imprison them for the rest of their lives.
3. According to Mrs. Hale, Ethan suffers the most from what has transpired. He loves Mattie. When Mattie and he realize they cannot be together, they wish to end their lives on the coast of the Corbury road. The result of their attempt leaves Ethan lame, Mattie an invalid, and Zeena her nursemaid and constant reminder of the prison from which neither he nor Mattie can escape. Thus Ethan's joy is gone. He has made the one he loves an invalid. For him suffering remains, the only indication that he is still alive. Had Mattie died on that hill, Ethan might have lived with the memory of her youth and beauty, believing that she was better off than he. This may have given him comfort.

Ethan's ongoing torment is seeing that his inaction and inability to escape from his circumstances has affected not only him, but Mattie and Zeena as well. He has crippled or reduced three lives, not just one, and done so in such a way that all of the town knows and is constantly reminded. Everything he's thought in secret, what little action he has taken and tried to hide, has all come to manifest itself for everyone to see.

Evaluation Forms

Evaluation Form

Writing Process

PREWRITING

In prewriting I used

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> freewriting | <input type="checkbox"/> imagining or role playing | <input type="checkbox"/> interviewing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> research | <input type="checkbox"/> graphic devices | <input type="checkbox"/> discussion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> asking questions | <input type="checkbox"/> observing and recalling | <input type="checkbox"/> other (explain) |

(comments) _____

The prewriting technique that was most successful for me was _____

Other prewriting techniques that I would like to try are _____

The prewriting technique that I would like to improve is _____

PLANNING

In planning I

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> made an outline | <input type="checkbox"/> decided on a specific audience | <input type="checkbox"/> decided on a specific purpose |
| <input type="checkbox"/> decided on a specific topic | <input type="checkbox"/> revised my initial writing plan | <input type="checkbox"/> decided on a mode of writing |

(comments) _____

The planning technique that was most successful for me was _____

Other planning techniques that I would like to try are _____

DRAFTING

In drafting I worked on

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> writing topic sentences | <input type="checkbox"/> writing a conclusion | <input type="checkbox"/> achieving unity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> writing a thesis statement | <input type="checkbox"/> writing transitions | <input type="checkbox"/> other (explain) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> writing an introduction | <input type="checkbox"/> using supporting details | |

(comments) _____

The drafting skill that was most successful for me was _____

Other drafting skills that I would like to try are _____

The drafting skill that I would like to improve is _____

EDITING

In editing my draft I worked on

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> writing or revising an introduction | <input type="checkbox"/> proofreading | <input type="checkbox"/> using vivid words and details |
| <input type="checkbox"/> writing or revising a conclusion | <input type="checkbox"/> revising for clarity | <input type="checkbox"/> other (explain) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> revising for coherence | <input type="checkbox"/> revising for unity | |

(comments) _____

The editing skill that was most successful for me was _____

Other editing skills that I would like to try are _____

The editing skill that I would like to improve is _____

Evaluation Form

Writing Plan

TOPIC **CIRCLE ONE**

The topic is clear and can be treated well in the available space. 1
 COMMENTS: _____ 2 $\times 5 = \underline{\quad}$
 _____ 3
 _____ 4

PURPOSE

The writer's purpose is clear, and the writer achieves his or her purpose. 1
 COMMENTS: _____ 2 $\times 5 = \underline{\quad}$
 _____ 3
 _____ 4

AUDIENCE

The language used and the complexity of the treatment of the subject are appropriate to the audience and occasion for which the writing was done. 1
 COMMENTS: _____ 2
 _____ 3 $\times 5 = \underline{\quad}$
 _____ 4

FORM

The form chosen is appropriate, and the writer has observed the conventions of the form chosen. 1
 COMMENTS: _____ 2
 _____ 3 $\times 5 = \underline{\quad}$
 _____ 4

MODE

The writing makes use of appropriate modes (narration, dialogue, description, and various kinds of exposition such as analysis or comparison and contrast), and the writer has handled these modes well. 1
 COMMENTS: _____ 2
 _____ 3 $\times 5 = \underline{\quad}$
 _____ 4

TOTAL

Key: 1 = needs substantial improvement 2 = needs improvement 3 = good 4 = outstanding

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE _____

PEER EVALUATOR'S SIGNATURE _____

TEACHER'S SIGNATURE _____

Evaluation Form

Writing Summary

Title _____

Purpose or aim of writing _____

I chose this topic because _____

The form of the writing is _____

I chose this form because _____

My thesis or theme is _____

My intended audience is _____

The principle of organization that I used is _____

The type of support or evidence that I used is _____

The type of introduction that I used is _____

The type of conclusion that I used is _____

Evaluation Form

Compositions/Reports

Assign a score from 1 to 10, 1 being the worst and 10 being the best.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	SCORE
A. The paper contains an introduction that grabs the attention of the reader.	
B. The paper contains an introduction that presents the main idea or thesis of the paper.	
C. The body of the paper contains paragraphs that support and develop the main idea.	
D. Each paragraph develops a single main idea or serves a single main function.	
E. The writer has used transitions effectively to connect the paragraphs of the paper.	
F. The writer has used transitions effectively to connect ideas within paragraphs.	
G. The paragraphs in the body of the paper are organized in a logical manner.	
H. The paper contains a conclusion that gives the reader a satisfactory sense of an ending by summarizing the main points of the paper or by some other means.	
I. Source materials used in the paper have been clearly documented to avoid plagiarism.	
J. The writer has prepared the paper using proper manuscript form.	
TOTAL	

Evaluation Form

Analytic Scale

CONTENT / UNITY		CIRCLE ONE
A. Develops a single main idea or creates a single dominant effect COMMENTS: _____ _____	1 2 3 4	× 4 = _____
B. Contains only necessary or relevant ideas or information COMMENTS: _____ _____	1 2 3 4	× 4 = _____
ORGANIZATION / COHERENCE		
C. Is organized in a logical or sensible manner COMMENTS: _____ _____	1 2 3 4	× 4 = _____
D. Uses transitions effectively to connect ideas COMMENTS: _____ _____	1 2 3 4	× 4 = _____
LANGUAGE / STYLE		
E. Uses language appropriate to the audience and occasion COMMENTS: _____ _____	1 2 3 4	× 2 = _____
F. Uses vivid, precise nouns, verbs, and modifiers COMMENTS: _____ _____	1 2 3 4	× 2 = _____
CONVENTIONS		
G. Avoids spelling errors COMMENTS: _____	1 2 3 4	× 1 = _____
H. Avoids grammar errors COMMENTS: _____	1 2 3 4	× 1 = _____
I. Avoids usage errors COMMENTS: _____	1 2 3 4	× 1 = _____
J. Avoids punctuation and capitalization errors COMMENTS: _____	1 2 3 4	× 1 = _____
K. Avoids errors in manuscript form COMMENTS: _____	1 2 3 4	× 1 = _____
		TOTAL <input type="text"/>

Key: 1 = needs substantial improvement 2 = needs improvement 3 = good 4 = outstanding

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE _____

PEER EVALUATOR'S SIGNATURE _____

TEACHER'S SIGNATURE _____

Evaluation Form

Holistic Response

CONTENT AND COHERENCE		
<p>The writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not develop a single main idea or create a single dominant effect • contains irrelevant ideas • is not organized logically • does not use transitions effectively • uses language inappropriate for the audience and occasion • does not use vivid, precise nouns, verbs, and modifiers 	<p>(Circle one.)</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>× 7 = _____</p>	<p>The writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develops a single main idea or creates a single dominant effect • contains only relevant ideas • is organized logically • uses transitions effectively • uses language appropriate to the audience and occasion • uses vivid, precise nouns, verbs, and modifiers
CONVENTIONS		
<p>The writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes errors in spelling • makes errors in grammar • makes errors in usage • makes errors in punctuation • does not follow proper manuscript form 	<p>(Circle one.)</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>× 3 = _____</p>	<p>The writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses proper spelling • uses good grammar • avoids errors in usage • uses proper punctuation and capitalization • follows proper manuscript form
<p>CONTENT AND COHERENCE <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p>	<p>+ CONVENTIONS <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p>	<p>= TOTAL <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p>

What I like most about this work is

What I like least about this work is

What I would do to improve this work is

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE _____
PEER EVALUATOR'S SIGNATURE _____
TEACHER'S SIGNATURE _____

Evaluation Form

Writing: Revising and Proofreading Checklists

REVISION CHECKLIST: CONTENT AND UNITY

1. Does the writing achieve its purpose?
2. Are the main ideas related to the thesis statement?
3. Are the main ideas clearly stated and supported by details?

REVISION CHECKLIST: ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE

1. Are the ideas arranged in a logical order?
2. Do transitions connect ideas to one another both within and between paragraphs?

REVISION CHECKLIST: VOICE AND STYLE

1. Is the voice—the tone, word choice, and perspective of the writing—authentic? Is it consistent?
2. Is the level of language appropriate to the audience and purpose?
3. Is the mood appropriate to the purpose and form of the writing?

PROOFREADING CHECKLIST

Spelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all words, including names, spelled correctly?
Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does each verb agree in number with its subject? • Are verb tenses consistent and correct? • Are irregular verbs formed correctly? • Is the referent of each pronoun clear? • Does every pronoun agree with its antecedent? • Are subject and object forms of pronouns used correctly? • Are there any sentence fragments or run-ons? • Have double negatives been avoided?
Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have frequently confused words, such as <i>affect</i> and <i>effect</i>, been used correctly?
Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does every sentence end with an end mark? • Are commas, semicolons, hyphens, and dashes used correctly? • Do all proper nouns and proper adjectives begin with capital letters? • Has proper manuscript form been used?

Evaluation Form

Discussion

PARTICIPATION				
As a participant, the student...	nearly always	often	sometimes	rarely
shares personal experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
contributes relevant ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
supports statements with evidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
responds to others respectfully	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
tries to understand others' views	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
shows willingness to change views when appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
shows willingness to clarify and defend views	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
allows others to speak	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
maintains focus on discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The student's participation has been valuable to the group in the following ways:				

The student's participation could be more valuable if she or he would				

LEADERSHIP				
As leader, the student...	nearly always	often	sometimes	rarely
helps the group keep on track	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
helps ensure that everyone gets a chance to speak	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
helps the group reach closure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The student's leadership has been valuable to the group in the following ways:				

The student's leadership could be more valuable if she or he would				

RECORD KEEPING				
As record keeper, the student...	nearly always	often	sometimes	rarely
keeps accurate records of the discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(comments) _____				

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Evaluation Form

Project

1. Describe the goal of the project. _____

Was the goal met satisfactorily? (Rate the overall success of the project on a scale from 1 to 5.)

1 2 3 4 5
not met satisfactorily met satisfactorily

2. Was the project an individual or a group effort? _____ individual _____ group
(If the project was a group effort, rate the effectiveness of the group in each of the following areas on a scale from 1 to 5.)

- a. Cooperation among group members 1 2 3 4 5
not at all cooperative very cooperative
- b. Leadership 1 2 3 4 5
not effective very effective
- c. Division of tasks 1 2 3 4 5
unfair fair
- d. Project organization 1 2 3 4 5
unorganized organized

(If the project was an individual effort, rate the effectiveness of the effort in each of the following areas on a scale from 1 to 5.)

- a. Effort 1 2 3 4 5
very little effort shown much effort shown
- b. Creativity 1 2 3 4 5
very little creativity shown much creativity shown
- c. Attention to goals 1 2 3 4 5
little attention to goals much attention to goals

3. Rate the overall group or individual performance on a scale of 1 to 5 with regard to the criteria given above.

1 2 3 4 5
very poor performance outstanding performance

(comments) _____

