

TUCK EVERLASTING

by Natalie Babbitt

Moderate 2

770L

Fiction

Book Overview

Introduce the book. Read the title of the book. Name the author of the book. Have students look at the front cover art. In a group discussion, consider the following questions:

- *What does it mean to be “everlasting”?*
- *What are the people doing in the illustration on the cover?*
- *What can you tell about the setting from the cover art?*

Materials Needed

- Prologue–Chapter 4 Close Reading Instruction, Lesson 1 (pages 1–2)
- Prologue–Chapter 4 Student Resources, pages 1–2
- Copy of the novel

Have students read the summary on the back cover. Ask:

- *Who are the main characters?*
- *Where do the main characters go during the story?*
- *What seems to be the main conflict?*

As needed, provide students with context: *Tuck Everlasting* takes place in nineteenth-century rural America. Though the town depicted in the story is fictitious, the relationships between parents and children and between families in an insular community accurately portray that time period. Students will gain a deeper understanding of the habits and attitudes of Americans during a simpler time in our history.

Note: *Tuck Everlasting* contains some suggestions of fairies and witchcraft, a criminal action that goes unpunished, and some violent events (e.g., Mae Tuck hits the man in the yellow suit with the butt of a shotgun—a blow that kills him).

Close Reading | Teacher-Led Instruction

Explain that you will read and discuss the Prologue of the book.

- Hand out page 1 of the Prologue–Chapter 4 Student Resources. Review the Words to Know.
- Review the directions for the Close Reading questions.

Read the Complete Text

- Use **Routine 4: Reading** to read the entire text of the Prologue aloud.
- Use **Routine 5: Summarize** to synthesize key ideas in the novel.

Model Close Reading

Discuss Close Reading questions to dig deeper into the language and ideas in the novel.

1. What is the author's tone when describing "dog days" on page 3? What words and phrases help you identify her tone? WORDS AND PHRASES IN CONTEXT

- Explain to students that an author's tone is his or her attitude towards a subject. Often, authors use descriptive words and phrases to convey tone.
- Have students review the sentence in which "dog days" appears. *How does the author describe "dog days"?* (The author describes them as "strange," "breathless," and "when people are led to do things they are sure to be sorry for...")
- Guide students to recognize that since these words and phrases are negative, the author's tone is negative as well.
- Inform students that the phrase "dog days" was used hundreds of years ago by the ancient Romans. During the hottest weeks of summer, from late July to late August, a bright star called Sirius ("Dog Star") would appear in the sky each day around sunrise. The ancient Romans believed that Sirius was responsible for the hot temperatures so they called these days the "dog days."

2. How does the author use foreshadowing to end the Prologue? LITERARY ANALYSIS

- Explain that foreshadowing is a literary device that authors use to give readers a clue about upcoming events in the book.
- Help students identify the last two sentences of the Prologue as examples of foreshadowing: "Fixed points they are, and best left undisturbed, for without them, nothing holds together. But sometimes people find this out too late," is an example of foreshadowing.
- *What is this sentence foreshadowing?* (The author is hinting that a "fixed point" will be disturbed at some point in the story, and something negative will happen as a result.)

Homework

- Have students read Chapters 1–4.
- Hand out pages 1–3 of the Prologue–Chapter 4 Student Resources.
- Ask students to think about the Close Reading questions as they read Chapters 1–4 of the novel. They will discuss the questions the next day.

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Close Reading | Teacher-Led Instruction

- Explain that you will discuss the Close Reading questions for Chapters 1–4.
- Explain that you will introduce the Writing Performance Task for the novel.

Materials Needed

- Prologue–Chapter 4 Close Reading Instruction, Lesson 2 (pages 3–5)
- Prologue–Chapter 4 Student
- Resources, pages 1–3
- Copy of the novel

Model Close Reading

Discuss Close Reading questions to dig deeper into the language and ideas in the novel.

1. How does the author describe the setting in Chapter 1? How does the author's description of the setting create suspense? LITERARY ANALYSIS (RL.6.4)

- Have students use **Routine 2: Idea Wave** to cite details in Chapter 1 that describe the setting (e.g., “the cottage has a touch-me-not appearance”; “the village doesn’t matter, except for the jailhouse and the gallows”; “something strange about the wood”; “the wood . . . made you want to speak in whispers”).
- Explain to students that suspense is a literary device that authors use to make readers anxious to know what will happen next.
- *How do the details about the setting create suspense?* (The descriptions make the setting seem eerie and do not offer a complete picture.)

2. The author waits until the end of Chapter 2 to reveal that the Tucks had looked the same for eighty–seven years. What effect does this information have on the story? TEXT STRUCTURE (RL.6.5)

- *How would you describe the contents of Chapter 2 without this added information?* (It would be a simple description of an ordinary elderly couple going through a morning routine.)
- Lead students to the understanding that this surprising information at the end of the chapter forces the reader to reconsider what they have already read—and alerts them to the fact that the story includes fantasy elements.

3. How does the author build suspense in the first paragraph of Chapter 3? TEXT

STRUCTURE (RL.6.4, RL 6.5)

- *What does Winnie say in the first paragraph of the chapter? (“I will, though. You’ll see . . .”) Does Winnie explain what she is planning to do in the next few sentences? (No.)*
- Guide students to understand that the author’s decision to not provide an immediate answer to Winnie’s question is intended to create suspense; readers will be anxious to learn what Winnie is talking about.
- Have students turn to page 15 and note that Winnie repeats her comments on that page, this time with more of an explanation.

4. What can you infer from the details on pages 14–15 about Winnie’s attitude towards her home life? KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS (RL.6.1)

- *What does Winnie say about her family life during her interaction with the toad? (“If I had a sister or brother, there’d be someone else for them to watch. But, as it is, there’s only me”)*
- *What do these comments suggest about Winnie? (Winnie’s comments suggest that she feels scrutinized by her family; she’s annoyed that too much attention is placed on her, and this keeps her from doing what she wants.)*

Writing Preparation

Tell students that as they read, they will collect text evidence. They will use the evidence to complete a short Writing Assignment for each section of the book, as well as for a longer Writing Performance Task, which they will complete at the end of the unit after they have read the entire novel.

- Tell students that they will complete the Writing Assignment for Chapters 1–4 (located at the bottom of page 2 of the Chapters 1–4 Student Resources the following day).
- Explain that you will introduce the Writing Performance Task so that students can gather evidence as they read each section of the book.

Introduce the Writing Performance Task

- Distribute page 3 (Gather Evidence) of the Student Resources. You may wish to keep extra copies of the Gather Evidence chart on hand; students will use the chart to record details from the entire novel.
- Read about the Writing Performance Task. Review that a Literary Analysis is a type of writing that explains ideas or features in a literary text and usually appears in academic journals or literary reviews in the media.
- Review the directions and the column heads in the Gather Evidence chart.
- Model how to collect evidence:
 - Action: *Winnie talks to the toad about possibly running away.*
 - Reason: *She is bored and feels trapped by her surroundings.*
 - Risk: *If her family is always watching her, she may get into trouble if she leaves.*
 - Page number: *13–15*

Have students work independently or in small groups to record details from Chapters 1–4 in their Gather Evidence charts.

Homework

- Have students continue recording evidence from Chapters 1–4 in their charts.