Reading Instruction: Pre- To Post- Reading Activities

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READING INSTRUCTION
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IDEAS FOR PREPARING THE READER FOR THE TEXT

I. **Getting in the mood** - This warm-up activity is an effective way to build familiarity with the setting of a story prior to reading and before texts are distributed. Students are told to relax, close their eyes and try to make a large empty space for their imagination to work in. Then the teacher gives them an imagination task based on a set of questions that he/she asks. The task is related to the setting or the theme of the story. After completing the imagination task, students compare their imaginary responses to the questions with a partner, and then one or two will share their ideas with the whole class for a whole group discussion.

II. **Visual prompts** - Photos or magazine pictures are often useful in eliciting the response of students to the central situation or theme. For example, before introducing the theme of a unit titled "*Los hijos,*" the teacher places three Norman Rockwell pictures on the board. For 5 - 10 minutes the students brainstorm to describe the pictures. They may give basic descriptions of the people and settings or go more in depth and tell "the story" of what they think is happening. The class discusses these ideas. Then the teacher tells the students to concentrate on the relationships between the parents and children in these illustrations. "How do they feel?" "What do they think?" "What do the three pictures have in common?" "How are the parents here similar?" "How are they different?" "What are the qualities needed to be a good parent?"

Then the teacher explains that in the unit they will be discussing children and their relationship with their parents. Although these three pictures were painted by an American illustrator, we should try to keep in mind the fact that some attitudes are universal, while others may be limited to our culture.

III. **Key words/sentences** - The teacher selects a small number of key words from the text. In groups, students brainstorm for possible narrative links between the words. When each group has decided on a preferred pattern of links, a story is built up orally or in writing. As a variation, key sentences are extracted from the text by the teacher, and the students use them to predict the personality traits of a central character in the story.

IV. **Choose the prediction** - Having read the first section of a text, students are asked to study a range of possible continuations of the story line. Then they choose the one they consider the author would have used.

V. **Sealing the time capsule** - After reading the opening section of the work together, each learner is given a small piece of card on which to record his or her predictions about likely events that will occur as the story unfolds. The teacher can prompt with questions if necessary, or individual writing can follow a general brainstorming session when as many possibilities as can be imagined are quickly reviewed. The cards are then collected, to be sealed in a "time capsule" envelope where they will remain until the class reaches the end of the story/book. At this time they are opened and a discussion follows on why students made their original predictions, and what happened to confirm or disprove them.

IDEAS FOR GUIDED INTERACTION AND COMPREHENSION CHECKS

GUIDED INTERACTION
When a story requires students to process difficult vocabulary, idiomatic expressions or syntax, an accompanying worksheet is designed to help readers make meaning of these difficult concepts or structures . In other cases, the teacher might wish to highlight a writer's metaphorical language, or ensure that particular concepts or structures encountered in the test are internalized and become part of a student's vocabulary. Below you will find a list of the various possibilities.

I. **Matching** - Synonyms, antonyms, definitions, or simplified sentences are created by the teacher in easier L2 and students find the matching concepts or structures withing the text and indicate these matches on the worksheet. (See example below from *Noticiario*. Note the use of the "Clave" as well.)

Clave

Derivado: vocablo- vocabulario
    imaginar- imagen- imaginación
    transportar- transporte-transportación
Sufijo: -ero = persona: pasar-pasaje-pasajero
    -aje = acto de: viajar- viaje- viajero
Expansión: o <-> ue: costar – cuesta
Sinómino: confortable = cómodo
Gramática: a + el = al

EL TREN
Transportación rápida y económica

El tren. Es una *palabra (1)* que *vale (2)* muchas imágenes. Es rápido, es confortable. Transporta más *viajeros (3)* y *mercancías (4)* que todos los otros *medios (5)* de transporte, y contamina menos, decididamente menos. Ocupa menos espacio y economiza energía. El tren es *cada día (6)* más moderno y necesario. Es transportación al servicio de la comunidad en los viajes de negocios y en las vacaciones. ¿Por qué no viaja su familia en tren con el resto del mundo?
Blanco y Negro

1. palabra
  a.expresión
  b.vocablo
  c.término
  d. a,b y c

2. vale
  a. termina
  b. finalize
  c. presenta
  d. concluye

3. viajeros
  a. coches
  b. pasajeros
  c. carros
  d. vehículos

4. mercancías
  a. productos
  b. elefantes
  c. gorilas
  d. rinocerontes

5. otros **medios** de transporte-por ejemplo…
  a. una serpiente
  b. un avión
  c. un tigre
  d. un cocodrilo

6. cada día
  a. un día sí, otro no
  b. algunos días
  c. todos los días
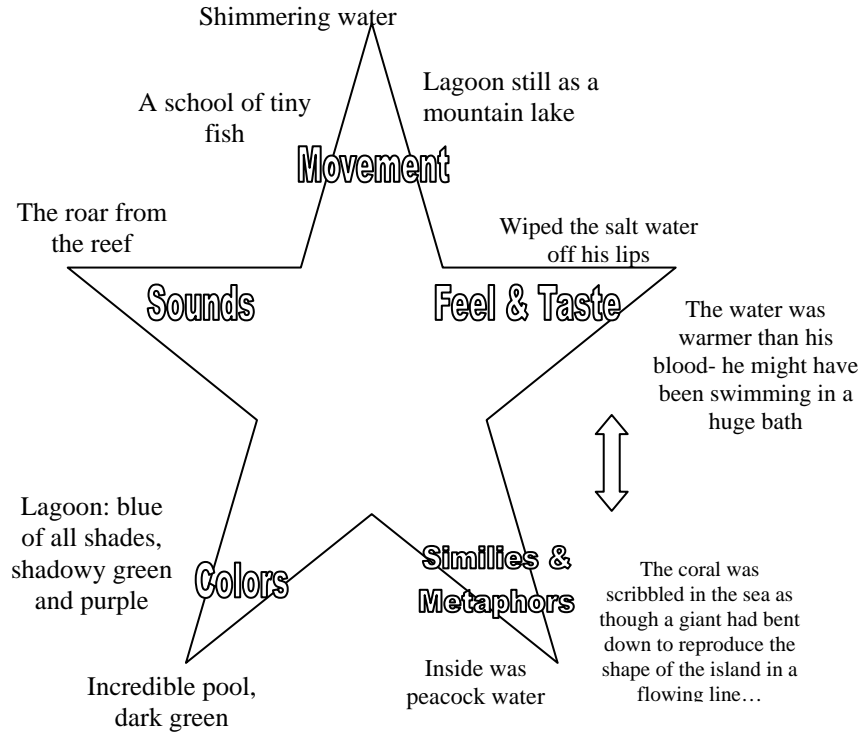 d. siete días

7. ¿Cúal es el tema de este anuncio?
  a. Visitas al zoológico.
  b. Viajar con calma.
  c. Remediar la polución.
  d. Un sitio para vacacionistas.

8. ¿Cúales son los beneficios del tren, según el artículo?
  a. Es eficiente y cómodo.
  b. Es contemporáneo y no cuesta mucho.
  c. Es fácil de usar.
  d. a, b y c

II. **Extracting and classifying vocabulary from the text** - a visual means of indicating different

categories of words is the star diagram given below. (Collie & Slater, p 102)

Shimmering water

A school of tiny fish

Lagoon still as a mountain lake

Movement

The roar from the reef

Wiped the salt water off his lips

Sounds

Feel & Taste

The water was warmer than his blood- he might have been swimming in a huge bath

Lagoon: blue of all shades, shadowy green and purple

Colors

Similies & Metaphors

The coral was scribbled in the sea as though a giant had bent down to reproduce the shape of the island in a flowing line…

Incredible pool, dark green

Inside was peacock water

III. **Words or expressions to characterize a text -** In order to enrich the student's vocabulary, give them a series of terms or expressions that must be assigned to specific features or characters in the story. See the example below. (Collie & Slater, p.96)

Read pages 7-18 of *Lord of the Flies*, then decide which of the characteristics in the box belongs more readily to which boy. List each one below the appropriate name. Use a dictionary if necessary.

Piggy

Ralph

athletic

friendly

courageous

fair

realistic

short-sighted

tall

reserved

fat

wise

pessimistic

reckless

orphaned

prudent

confident

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

IV. **Literal and metaphorical meaning** - Charts can be used to sensitize students to the metaphorical dimension of words in the story. (Collie & Slater, p. 179)

	Words/expressions	**Metaphors/ images**
The way Romeo refers to his new love.		
The way he talks of himself as a lover.		
What he says of love itself.		

Listen to Act I Scene 5 in which Romeo and Juliet first meet.
Make notes about the way Romeo expresses his new love, using the following headings.

V. **Simple grammar or structure work** - Verb tenses, prepositions, commands, etc. can be highlighted with charts or open-ended activities. Occasionally, especially in poetry or lyrics to songs there may be difficult expressions/structures that require L1 (free interpretations) to be matched with L2 expressions in the text. See example worksheet for *Si me comprendieras* worksheet below.) These activities are used after listening to the song and completing a cloze activity, an ordering activity etc.

SI ME COMPRENDIERAS
artista: Pablo Milanés
Trabajos prácticos

SI ME COMPRENDIERAS

Si me comprendieras, si me conocieras, que feliz sería.
Si me comprendieras, si me conocieras, jamás llorarías
Ya que estando lejos, tú no eres ajena porque vas conmigo.
Tus fieles reflejos alivian mis penas, la noche es testigo.
Si me comprendieras, si me conocieras, jamás dudarías.
Y mis condiciones serían las razones que tu aceptarías.
Si me comprendieras, tan siquiera un poco, todo cambiaría
porque así verías que por ti estoy loco.

ACTIVIDADES:

I. Leer otra vez la letra y encontrar en la canción las frases que tiene más o menos el significado a continuación.

1. Even when you are not here, I feel like you are close to me.

_____

_____

2. I'm always thinking of you, and that makes me feel better.

_____

_____

II. <u>Contestar empleando la información de la canción:</u>

     1. ¿Cómo sería él si ella lo comprendiera?

     _____

     2. ¿Qué nunca haría ella si lo conociera?

     (a) _____

     (b) _____

     3. ¿Qué pasaría si ella pudiera comprenderlo?

     _____

III. <u>Escribir las formas del condicional y del imperfecto de subjuntivo</u>: Poner en la columna A el imperfecto del subjuntivo y en la columna B el condicional:

A	B
_____	_____
_____	_____
	_____
	_____
	_____
	_____
	_____

¿De qué dependen todas las condiciones en columna B?

_____   _____

COMPREHENSION CHECKS

I. **Question-and-answer worksheets** - These may consist of open-ended questions, multiple choice

responses, or true/false questions. Some of the questions should be factual with right-or-wrong answers, while others should ask for interpretation and therefore, should be open to different answers. True/false statements usually provide help for students by paraphrasing difficult sentences. Students usually must correct all statements deemed to be false. It is always useful to allow some time for students to compare their answers with a partner before the general discussion begins.

II. **Summaries with gaps** - This kind of activity provides readers with an almost complete, and simply phrased, description of the main points of the reading selection. The gaps are usually key words or expressions, which only a reading of the appropriate passage can reveal. The example below is from a unit called *Images of Fall* in which EFL students read a full page selection concerning the different ways pumpkin can be prepared and eaten. The name of the reading is *Pumkins, Not Just Another Pretty Face* from *Creative Ideas for Living October,* 1985 Volume 16. No. 10, pp 36-38.

_____ is the season to enjoy pumpkins, both for their _____ beauty as well as their _____ flavor. A versatile member of the _____ squash family, pumpkins may be _____and eaten in a _____ of ways. Some recipes call for _____ cubed pumpkin. Even the seeds of pumpkins may be roasted and eaten as a zesty snack called _____. Remember that pumpkins may be steamed, baked or even parboiled and _____.

You may also find examples of story frames in your Meinbach text: *The Complete Guide to Thematic Units: Creating the Integrated Curriculum.*

III. **Jumbled events** - "Ordering" worksheets offer a great deal of support to students as they read, because they give most of the facts needed to make sense of the passage. All they have to do is find the right order or sequence. A few incorrect events can be included which must be spotted and discarded; or one or two key events may be left out, to be supplied by the reader. This type of activity should be written in simpler target language (L2). This is an appropriate activity if the language of the text is difficult for the readers.

IV. **Choosing a moral** - Giving a 'moral' for a short story is a traditional way of drawing out the ideas or values that are implicit, but where no moral is stated explicitly. Simply asking for the moral may have disappointing results with beginners. Instead give beginners several alternative morals for the short story and one alternative that simply asks for their own ideas. This will often generate a better discussion.

IDEAS FOR ASSIMILATION ACTIVITIES

I. **Discussion groups** - Groups may have grids or worksheets to direct their discussions. They may

be asked to give personal responses, organize events in a story, give alternative solutions, change the point of view, or place main characters on a point along a continuum. See the continuum below.

callous --- kind
serious --- frivolous
forceful -- weak

II. **Discussions based on questionnaires** - Questionnaires are usually very helpful in sparking discussion. A simple kind lists statements with answer boxes to be ticked, such as: agree/disagree/not sure. These can be filled in at home, with follow-up in class; alternatively, they can be completed during class time. Students are then asked to discuss their choices with fellow students, either in pairs or in groups. The following worksheet is based on *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley. (Collie & Slater, p. 71)

| Tick the appropriate box.	*Agree*	*Disagree*	*Not Sure*
1. The Bokanovsky process is an acceptable alternative to natural childbirth because you grow up knowing where you are.	☐	☐	☐
2. Staying younger for longer is an attractive aspect of life in the Brave New World.	☐	☐	☐
3. The control of the individual emotions is an effective way of preventing time-wasting and loss of productive energy.	☐	☐	☐
4. Frequent, brief relationships are a realistic alternative to the pressures of married life.	☐	☐	☐
5. Sexual relationships are better in the Brave New World because they are simple and direct, and don't arouse guilt or anxiety	☐	☐	☐

III. **Graphic representations** - Students may use graphic representations to analyze characters, and outline the setting, characters, and events of a story. On pages 8 through 13, you will find several examples of visual representations of texts or characters.

Charcter Web

Good Actions…		How he/she looks…

Character's Name

Bad actions…		Character Traits…
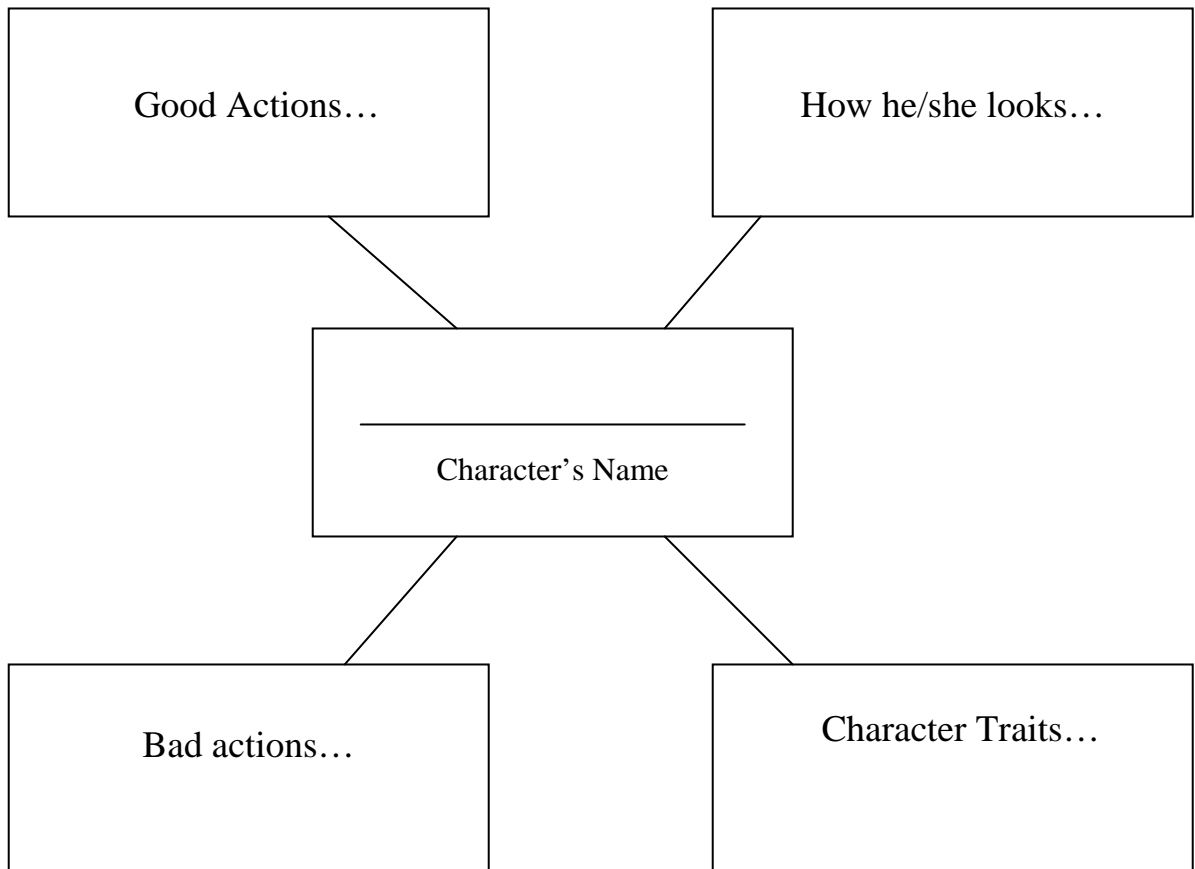
Do you like this character? Why? Why not?
Be specific. Use words from the web…
(use other side of the paper!)

Title

Setting

Characters

Plot

Theme

Place

Minor

Problem

Theme

Time

Major
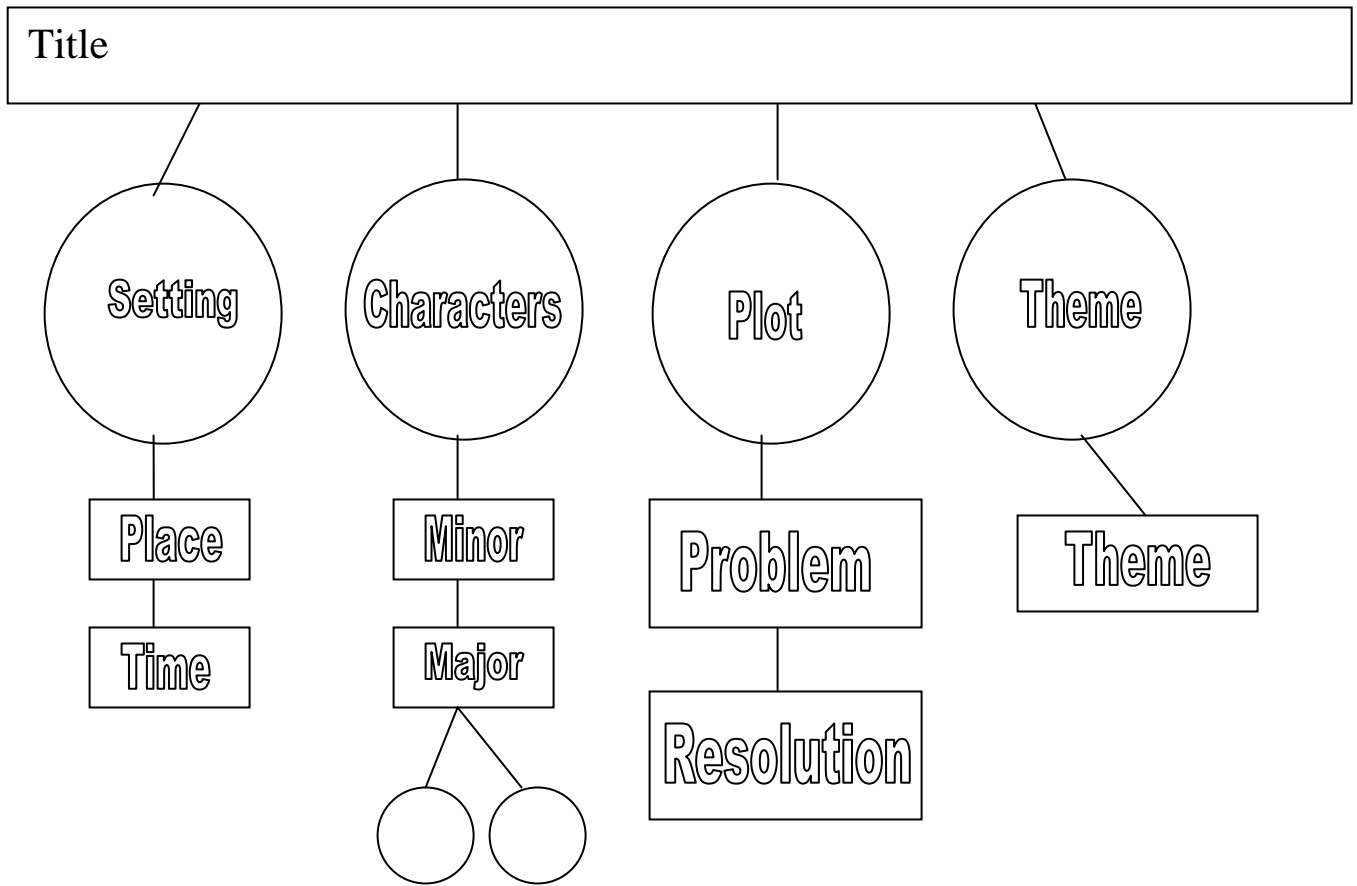
Resolution

Story Map

Title: _____

Setting:

Characters: _____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

Problem:

Event 1_____

Event 2_____

Event 3_____

Event 4_____

Event 5_____

Solution:

Le Schéma de l'histoire

Le titre: _____

L'endroit de l'histoire:

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                             │
│                                             │
│                                             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Les personages:

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

Le problème:

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                             │
│                                             │
│                                             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

L'événement 1_____
L'événement 2_____
L'événement 3_____
L'événement 4_____
L'événement 5_____

La solution:

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                             │
│                                             │
│                                             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

EL MAPA DE LA HISTORIA

Titulo: _____

Escena:

Personajes: _____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

Problema:

Acontecimiento 1: _____
_____
Acontecimiento 2: _____
_____
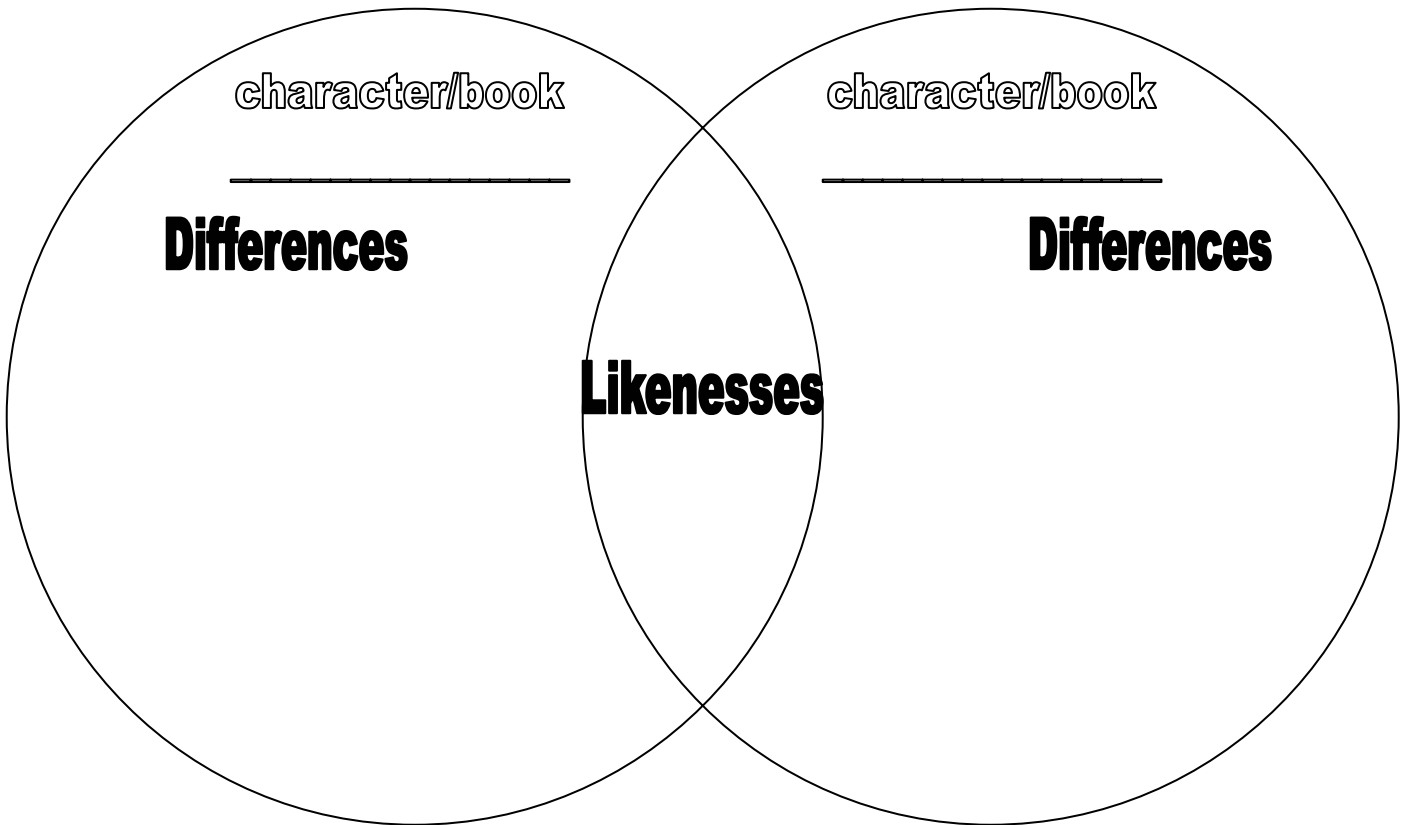Acontecimiento 3: _____
_____
Acontecimiento 4: _____
_____
Acontecimiento 5: _____
_____
Acontecimiento 6: _____
_____

Solución:

_____Venn Diagram

Write the name of the characters or books you are comparing on the lines and list their differences in the appropriate sections. In the center, list the likenesses.

character/book   character/book

_____   _____

Differences   Differences

Likenesses

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IV. **Discussion Web** - This graphic aid teaches students to look at both sides of an issue and to stimulate critical thinking. The students work in pairs to respond with both yes and no responses. Then regroup pairs into sets of four. They compare their answers and try to come to a group consensus. The spokesperson for the group writes one reason which best supports the group consensus. Then the whole class shares groups' conclusions.

(Source: Alverman, D.E. (1991). the discussion web: A graphic aid for learning across the curriculum. *The Reading Teacher*, *45*, 92-99)

DISCUSSION WEB
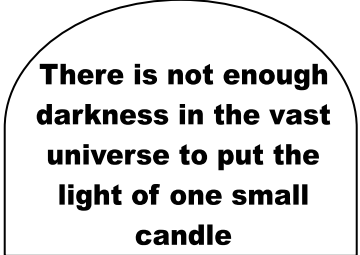
The people should obey the king because.....
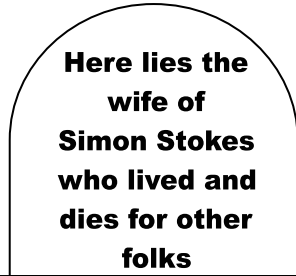
Yes	No
1	
2	
3	

Consensus
Best reason why:

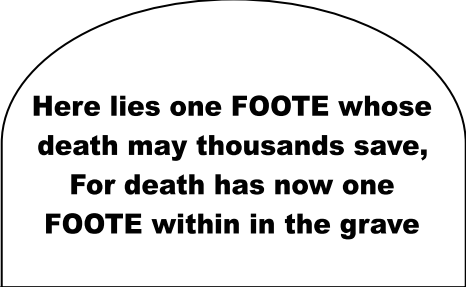# INTEGRATIVE ACTIVITIES FOR EXPLOITING THE HIGHLIGHTS

I. **Epitaphs** - Students write a lapidary comment on a deceased character. See the example provided below. This is an excellent pretext for a very brief appreciation of a character.
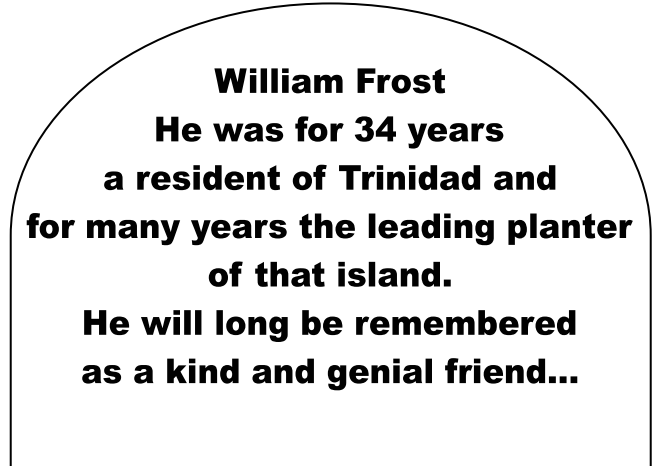
There is not enough darkness in the vast universe to put the light of one small candle

Here lies the wife of Simon Stokes who lived and dies for other folks

Here lies one FOOTE whose death may thousands save, For death has now one FOOTE within in the grave

William Frost He was for 34 years a resident of Trinidad and for many years the leading planter of that island. He will long be remembered as a kind and genial friend...

Source: Collie, J. & Slater, S. (1987) *Literature in the language classroom: A resource book of ideas and activities.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (p. 64)

II. **Missing poster** - This is a format which is applicable to many literary works. Students are

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shown an example of such a poster, then asked to write one for a character who is missing, for example:

--Simon, in *Lord of the Flies*
--Liza, before her father catches up with her at Professor Higgins' home, in *Pygmalion.*
--The victim in *The Collector*

MISSING

Have you seen this girl?
Nikki, aged 14, was last seen on 12 January in Tooting, South London. She is 5ft 1in tall, has short, brown hair.
At the time she went missing she was wearing a blue and white sweat suit.

Anyone knowing the whereabouts of this girl should get in touch with the Tooting police:
Telephone: (01) 630 1121

Source: Collie, J. & Slater, S. (1987) *Literature in the language classroom: A resource book of ideas and activities.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (p. 65)

III. **Cover designs** - Ask students to provide a design for a cover for the story. This activity helps students to crystallize their overall responses to the work. This can be done individually or in very small groups. If students feel unsure of their artistic abilities, they may use magazine pictures to create a collage, or they may create a design from geometrical shapes in different sizes and colors. The example below is from Collie & Slater, p. 80.
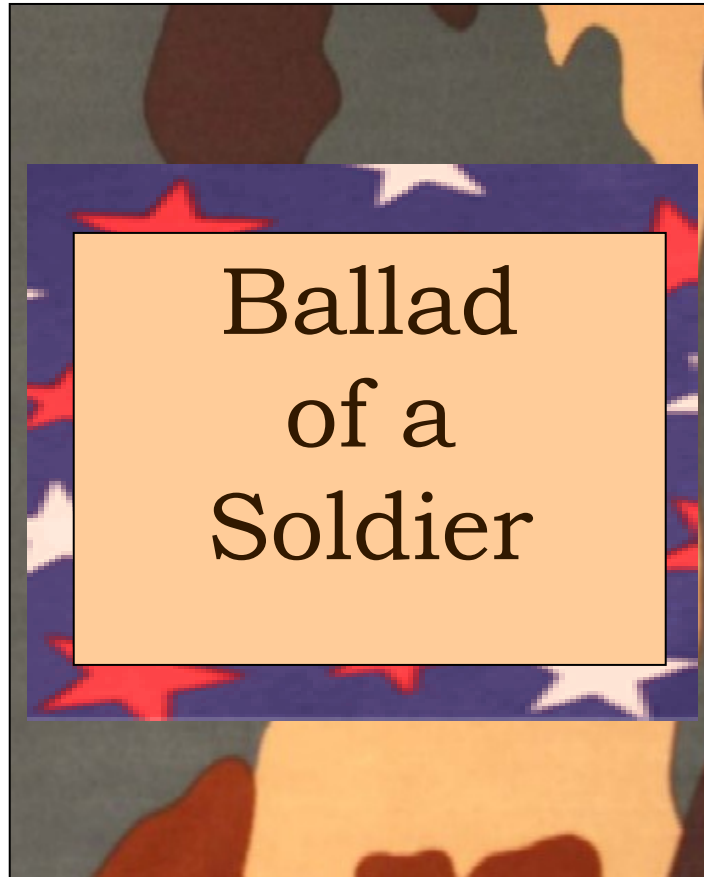
IV. **What if...?** - This is a discussion activity in which students imagine the moment before the 'point of no return'. For example, what if the circumstances had been different?   What alternative choice could the characters have made? Since this activity requires past conditionals, this is an excellent activity for focused grammar production.

V. **Letters** - One character writes to different people. Students are asked to write the letter that one of the main characters sends after the end of the story to explain what happened, and how it came to happen as it did. Different registers are practiced by varying the people to whom the letters are to be sent.

VI. **From telegrams to newspaper reports -** This is a four-part writing/role-play activity especially suitable for books that contain a lot of action and a dramatic ending. Parts may be used independently if time constraints prevent a fuller treatment. The class is divided into four or eight groups.

Part I. The task for each group is to write a telegram (an appropriate word limit is set) giving the gist of what has happened in the book read as though from a foreign correspondent to his newspaper. This is more interesting if the special conventions of telegram writing have been examined beforehand.

Part II. Each group hands its telegram to the next group. Telegrams are read and discussed. Then, *on the basis of the telegram in hand*, the groups write a newspaper report of the events. Students might be encouraged to decide the kind of newspaper for which they are going to write their article: for example a scandal sheet, or a more sober "quality" newspaper, etc. It is usually best for the teacher to specify the length of the article, and also the time available for the writing task. We have found that group writing tasks of this kind can provide valuable help and support for students whose oral facility outstrips their ability to express themselves in writing To allow students to contribute fully, however, it is often best to keep groups relatively small.

Part III. Groups pass on to the next group their report, together with the originating telegram and the title or description of the newspaper for which it was written. Groups now become an editorial panel; they read the articles submitted to them suggest corrections, note omissions or overstatements, discuss the "newsworthiness" of the presentation.

Part IV. When groups are satisfied that the corrected article is in a reasonable state (or at the end of the specified time) they once again hand it on to the next group. One thing remains to be done: supply a striking headline for the article. Groups read the article submitted, then try to encapsulate its essential facts in an eye-catching-or even sensational-formula.

An important follow-up to this activity is the posting-up of all four articles, complete with original telegrams and headlines, so that students can see the entire process.

(Collie, J. & Slater, S. (1987). *Literature in the Language Classroom: A resource book of ideas and activities.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 88-89)