

THE GLENCOE LITERATURE LIBRARY

Study Guide

for

The Pigman

by Paul Zindel



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To the Teacher

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- *Media Links*: annotated listings of audio, visual, electronic, and print resources related to the work
- *Teaching Options*: high-interest activities for introducing the work and individualizing instructions
- *Assessment Options*: alternative assessment activities for greater flexibility in evaluating students' understanding of the work
- *Options for Using Related Readings*: suggested approaches to the Related Readings included with the work
- *Answer Key* and *Assessment Rubrics*: detailed answers to all questions and reading activities and evaluations for alternative assessment activities

For the Student consists of these reproducible blackline masters:

- *Meet the Author*: a lively overview of the author's life
- *Introducing the Work*: background information that provides a meaningful context in which to read the work
- *Before You Read* and *Responding* pages: pre- and postreading questions and activities
- *Active Reading*: graphic organizers for students to complete as they read.
- *Test*: a comprehensive two-part test of the work.

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About the Work

THE PIGMAN BY PAUL ZINDEL

The Pigman has earned a special place among books for teenaged readers. In 1968, when *The Pigman* was first published, few novels addressed the problems that typically trouble adolescents. Paul Zindel broke new ground by portraying the loneliness, alienation, and confusion that many teenagers feel, in a voice that teenaged readers and critics alike recognized as authentic. For those reasons, the novel won the The New York Times Outstanding Book of the Year Award as well as the ALA Notable Children's Book of 1940–1970. The novel continues to win a wide audience among teenaged readers because it touches on universal themes: disillusionment, the desire to be recognized as an individual, and the search for a purpose in life.

Note that the novel addresses the sensitive subjects of school vandalism, drinking, smoking, swearing, and infidelity. Before assigning your class to read the novel, review it carefully to ensure that it is suitable for your students.

CHARACTER LIST

- **John Conlan**, a cocky sixteen-year-old high school student who feels alienated from his parents, enjoys staging elaborate pranks, and longs to be an actor
- **Lorraine Jensen**, a lonely sixteen-year-old high school student who feels alienated from her mother, loves reading about psychology, and longs to be a writer
- **Angelo Pignati**, a lonely, elderly widower whom John and Lorraine nickname “the Pigman.”

SYNOPSIS

The novel has dual narrators, best friends John Conlan and Lorraine Jensen, who take turns telling about their experiences with Mr. Angelo Pignati.

John and Lorraine meet “the Pigman” as a result of a prank telephone call. Posing as solicitors for a charity, they call Mr. Pignati and ask him for a donation. To their surprise, Mr. Pignati agrees to donate \$10 if they will come to his house to pick up the check. When John and Lorraine go to Mr. Pignati's house, they find a lonely, eccentric retiree. Mr. Pignati treats John and Lorraine with warmth and respect, and they accept his invitation to visit again.

Gradually, John and Lorraine begin spending most of their free time with Mr. Pignati. He entertains them with riddles, takes them shopping, buys them gifts, and invites them to the zoo to meet his “friend,” BoBo the baboon.

One day, while playing tag with John and Lorraine, Mr. Pignati has a heart attack. John calls an ambulance, and when the paramedics arrive, he and Lorraine pose as Mr. Pignati's children. The teenagers continue the ruse during visits to the hospital to see Mr. Pignati, who gives them free access to his home.

One night, John throws a large, noisy party at Mr. Pignati's house, and the neighbors call the police. Mr. Pignati returns home to find his house in shambles, and John and Lorraine are arrested. In an attempt to make amends, John and Lorraine invite Mr. Pignati to go to the zoo to see BoBo. When the three friends arrive, they discover that BoBo had died the week before. Mr. Pignati, distraught by the news, suffers a fatal heart attack. The novel ends with John and Lorraine pondering the part they played in Mr. Pignati's death.

THEMES IN THE NOVEL

The Pigman develops the following themes:

- how and why lonely people reach out to each other
- how and why family relationships become strained

- what it means to live life to its fullest
- what it means to take responsibility for one's actions

APPROACHES TO TEACHING THE NOVEL

The Pigman can be taught with a focus on:

- realistic fiction as a genre
- narrative technique and the use of a dual point of view
- narrative technique and the use of suspense

FURTHER READING FOR THE TEACHER

- *The Pigman and Me*, Paul Zindel, 1993
- *The Pigman's Legacy*, Random House Teacher's Guides, 1980

Media Links



Videos

The following videos may be used to introduce students to other works by Paul Zindel or to help students better understand the characters and themes developed in *The Pigman*:

- *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds* (a movie based on Paul Zindel's play; 1973, starring Joanne Woodward; 100 minutes)
- *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* (a movie about teenage angst and loneliness; 1968, starring Alan Arkin and Stacy Keach; 124 minutes)



Music

Students might enjoy listening to some of the following popular recordings from the 1960s and 1970s on the theme of friendship:

- “Bridge Over Troubled Water” by Simon & Garfunkel (Columbia)
- “Lean on Me” by Bill Withers (Columbia)
- “You’ve Got a Friend” by Carol King (Epic)



Internet Connection

The Internet can be a valuable research tool. Suggest that students visit this site to learn more about intergenerational relationships from another point of view.

http://www.gen.umn.edu/faculty_staff/yahnke/aging/film_age/detour2htm.

At the time this study guide went to press, the Web site was in operation. Before assigning students to visit the site, check to ensure that the site still exists.



Further Reading for the Student

- *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*, Paul Zindel, 1971, a play about an eccentric girl who blossoms despite being a member of a dysfunctional family
- *The Pigman and Me* by Paul Zindel, 1993

Be sure to preview all media links to determine whether the material is appropriate for your class.

Teaching Options

Options for Motivating Students

The “Problem Novel”

Prepare students for the novel’s focus on alienation and rejection.

- Point out that in the 1960s and 1970s, a type of realistic fiction that had not been published for young people before addressed the social problems that affect many teens. Give students examples of the problems, such as divided families, alcoholism, loneliness, and alienation.
- Divide the class into small groups. Have the groups think of as many problems that concern today’s teenagers as they can. Ask students whether they think that teenagers in the past coped with the same kinds of problems that teenagers face today. Ask students why such problems might not have been addressed in fiction before the 1960s.
- Prepare students to read *The Pigman* by explaining that it was one of the first novels to deal realistically with issues that concern teenagers and that was written in a frank manner in language that teenagers can understand. Tell students to be alert to the problems that the teenagers in the novel face and compare them with the problems that adolescents face today.

Acting Your Age

Discuss with students certain stereotypes associated with the behavior of the young and the old. (Interdisciplinary: Psychology, Social Studies)

- Explain to students that people have certain perceptions about what is appropriate behavior for young people and senior citizens. Ask them if they know people who do not act in an “age appropriate” way. Then ask them how they feel about such people.
- Organize the class into small groups. Have half of the groups brainstorm words that describe the behavior of teenagers and the other half brainstorm words that describe the behavior of senior citizens. Then have groups share their lists. Ask the class what their ideas suggest about the way that society says teenagers and senior citizens should behave.
- Prepare students to read *The Pigman* by explaining that some of the characters behave in ways that conflict with society’s expectations. Alert students to pay special attention to characters who behave in an unconventional way.

From Childhood to Adolescence

Introduce students to the coming-of-age novel.

- Define adolescence as the period between childhood and adulthood, a period addressed by coming-of-age novels in which teenagers experience rapid physical and emotional changes. Explain that adolescence is often marked by a need for independence and by a distrust of and disillusionment with authority figures.
- Ask students to write a journal entry describing a recent conflict that they have had with an adult authority figure, such as a parent or a teacher. What was the source of the conflict? How was it resolved?
- Ask students to be alert to instances in *The Pigman* in which the main characters experience conflicts with adults.

Meeting Individual Needs

The simple plotting, high-interest story line, and realistic dialogue of *The Pigman* make it suitable for less-proficient readers. The activities that follow will help you present the novel in ways that meet the needs and interests of all readers.

Less-Proficient Readers

Assist students in identifying the narrator of each chapter.

- Less-proficient readers may have difficulty determining who narrates each chapter. Before students read, explain that John narrates the odd-numbered chapters and Lorraine narrates the even-numbered chapters.

Discuss the importance of Sigmund Freud to psychology.

- Lorraine makes reference in the novel to Sigmund Freud and often uses terms related to the study of psychology. To prepare students for the reference to Freud, explain that he is known for founding a branch of psychology called psychoanalysis. Further explain that psychoanalysis is a method of treating people who have emotional disorders by having them talk freely about their early childhood and past experiences.
- You may wish to preteach the following terms related to psychology: *analysts, compulsive, paranoia, schizophrenia, depression, psychoanalysis, compensation syndrome, subconscious, guilt complex, cultural lag*

English-Language Learners

Help students cope with slang and other unfamiliar words.

- *The Pigman* contains many slang words that may be unfamiliar to English-language learners (for example, *john, card, jazzy, fibbing, chickened out, mooching, and killjoy*).
- Remind students that they need not understand every word in the novel to understand the story as a whole. Encourage students to use contextual clues to determine the meanings of slang terms and other unfamiliar words.

- You might pair students who are less familiar with English with more proficient speakers and have them create a glossary of the slang in *The Pigman*.
- Review how to use contextual clues. On the board, write the following passage from chapter 6 of the novel, and ask students to define the underlined terms based on clues in the passage.

The third omen that this was going to be a bad day was when we went into the nocturnal room of the Mammal Building. The whole room is pretty dark so you can see these animals that only come out at night, like owls and pottos and cute little vampire bats.

- Evaluate students' definitions, and ask volunteers which words and phrases in the passage gave them clues to the meaning of the underlined words.

Gifted and Talented

Help students identify the characteristics of a particular genre.

- Point out that John and Lorraine refer to *The Pigman* as a "memorial epic." Define *epic* for students or have them look up the definition in a dictionary of literary terms. Then have students apply the definition to the novel to determine whether it truly is an epic. Ask students to present their conclusions in a brief oral report or persuasive essay.

Assessment Options

Writing

He Said, She Said

- Ask students to imagine what John and Lorraine might be like when they are twenty-one-years old. Would they still be friends? Would they still think about Mr. Pignati? Would they be pursuing their career ambitions?
- Have students write a two-page sequel to *The Pigman*, one page from John's point of view and the other page from Lorraine's.

Listening and Speaking

Remembering Mr. Pignati

- Have students pretend that they are John or Lorraine and write a eulogy to be read at Mr. Pignati's funeral. Students should express what Mr. Pignati's friendship meant to them using specific details from the novel.
- Ask students to rehearse their speeches and then perform them for the class.

Mr. Pigman on Trial

- Have students write and perform a trial scene in which Mr. Pignati is charged with contributing to the delinquency of minors. Have students choose roles (prosecuting attorney, defense attorney, Mr. Pignati, witnesses, jury members) and rehearse the scene. Remind the students to use their imaginations but to remain true to the characters as they are portrayed in the novel. Then have students perform the scene for the class.

Viewing and Representing

The Pigman Book Box

- Have students fill a box with items that represent key events and characters in the novel. For example, students might put a telephone book in the box to represent John and Lorraine's telephone call to Mr. Pignati and a figure or a picture of a pig to represent Mr. Pignati. Ask students to include at least six items and to attach a brief note to each item explaining its significance in the novel. Display students' book boxes in your classroom or the school library.

Interdisciplinary Connection

Seeking Out the Sixties

- Organize the class into small groups, and assign each group to research a different aspect of the 1960s (for example, major political events, major social movements, trends in fashion, trends in popular music, and so on.)
- Have each group present a brief oral report on their topic. Encourage students to use visual aids in their presentations.

Options for Using Related Readings

Related Readings	Making Connections to <i>The Pigman</i>
<p>Journey to Meet the Pigman by Paul Zindel (BLM page 32)</p>	<p>In this essay, Zindel describes the real-life inspirations for John, Lorraine, and Mr. and Mrs. Pignati in <i>The Pigman</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This essay would make an appropriate wrap-up activity for <i>The Pigman</i>. Have students read it after they have finished reading the novel. • Before students read the essay, you may wish to preteach the following terms and references: rhododendrons, Henrik Ibsen, homunculus, xenophobic, bubushkas, kielbasas. • As students read, ask them to look for similarities between the characters in the novel and the people described in the essay. • After students read, ask them to evaluate the personalities of Nonno Frankie and Angelo Pignati. Have them judge which of the two comes across as the most interesting and explain why.
<p>The Treasure of Lemon Brown by Walter Dean Myers (BLM page 33)</p>	<p>In this short story, a teenager who is upset with his father learns a valuable lesson about the importance of family.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This story would make an appropriate prereading activity for chapters 12–15. • Before students read the story, ask them to recall a time when they learned a lesson from an adult who was not their parent. Invite volunteers to share their experiences with the class. • Ask students whether they sometimes find it easier to take advice from adults who are not their parents and why. • After students read the story, ask them how Greg’s encounter with Lemon Brown might affect his relationship with his father. Then have students predict whether John and Lorraine’s friendship with Mr. Pignati will affect their relationships with their parents and why.
<p>The Rider by Naomi Shihab Nye (BLM page 34)</p>	<p>This poem describes how two people attempt to escape their loneliness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This poem would be an appropriate prereading activity for chapters 6–8. • Before students read the poem, ask them what they do when they feel lonely. • After students read and discuss the poem, ask them to be alert to how the characters in <i>The Pigman</i> cope with their loneliness. • You might follow up by having students write a brief poem about loneliness from the point of view of John, Lorraine, or Mr. Pignati.

Options for Using Related Readings

Related Readings	Making Connections to <i>The Pigman</i>
<p>How Well Do You Know Your Kid? by Barbara Kantrowitz, Pat Wingert, and Anne Underwood (BLM page 35)</p>	<p>This article describes the loneliness that teenagers feel and steps that parents can take to alleviate it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This article would make a good prereading or postreading activity for the novel. You may wish to use it to introduce the major themes of loneliness and alienation or to sum up how the characters feel and why. • Before students read the article, have them form small groups and ask each group to list the issues that most trouble teenagers today. • Have the groups compare their lists to determine the extent to which students agree. • After students read the article, ask them if it represents their feelings accurately, if they feel that the advice it gives to parents of teens is sound, and if they would add anything to it.
<p>What We Might Be, What We Are by X. J. Kennedy (BLM page 36)</p>	<p>This poem answers the question “Do opposites attract?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The poem would make a good prereading activity for the novel. Use it to introduce the unusual friendships in <i>The Pigman</i>. • Before students read the poem, ask them whether they believe that people who have very different personalities and interests can be friends and why. • After students read and discuss the poem, ask them to be alert to the friendships described in <i>The Pigman</i>.

Answer Key

ACTIVE READING

Chapters 1–5

John: is self-confident; swears, smokes, and drinks; lives in an affluent, two-parent household; envies his brother; wants to be an actor; enjoys playing pranks; sometimes lacks compassion. *Lorraine*: is unsure of herself; disapproves of swearing, smoking, and drinking; lives in a poor, single-parent household; is an only child; wants to be a writer; is compassionate. *Both John and Lorraine*: are sophomores; show no interest in school; are alienated; have few friends; are intelligent and imaginative.

Chapters 6–8

How She Looks: is pretty when she smiles; has varicose veins from standing long hours. *How She Treats Her Patients/Employers*: is verbally abusive; lacks empathy for the dying. *How She Treats Lorraine*: is verbally abusive; is physically abusive; implies that school is unimportant; expects Lorraine to do major household chores; doesn't want Lorraine to have male friends. *What She Thinks of Men*: believes that they think women are sex objects; thinks they cannot be trusted.

Chapters 9–11

Sample answers are underlined. When John was ten years old, his father gave him beer. As a result of this experience, John now likes to drink alcoholic beverages. When Mrs. Jensen was expecting Lorraine, Mr. Jensen was unfaithful. As a result, Mrs. Jensen now distrusts men. Mr. Pignati's wife has died. As a result, Mr. Pignati now feels lonely.

Chapters 12–15

Mr. Pignati finds his home in disarray. John and Lorraine get arrested. Both apologize to Mr. Pignati. The three go to the zoo to visit BoBo. Climax: Mr. Pignati has a fatal heart attack when he learns that Bobo died. Resolution: Lorraine blames John for Mr. Pignati's death. John realizes that what he makes of his life is up to him.

RESPONDING Chapters 1–5

Recall and Interpret

- John hates school. He planted firecracker bombs and organized "fruit rolls." Now he expresses his feelings verbally. He is trying to be more mature and less destructive.
- Mrs. Jensen thinks that Lorraine is unattractive. Lorraine shares her mother's opinion but also asserts that she is not the "monstrosity" that her mother makes her out to be.
- John and Lorraine call Mr. Pignati, pretending to represent a charity. John enjoys the prank; Lorraine does not. She seems to be more thoughtful and compassionate than John.
- Mr. Conlan installs a lock to prevent John from tying up the telephone line. John pours glue into the lock. Both are unable to communicate and have a poor relationship.
- Mr. Pignati is friendly, thoughtful, and generous. Students should see that he is lonely and in need of company.

Evaluate and Connect

- Some may believe that Mr. Pignati is too gullible or too generous to be believable. Others may believe that he is eccentric but believable.
- John would probably say that Lorraine is his best friend. He might value her admiration of him, her honest feedback, and her willingness to join in his pranks. Lorraine might say that John is her best friend. She might value his good looks and his companionship. Students should connect their experiences with those of the characters.

RESPONDING Chapters 6–8

Recall and Interpret

- Lorraine believes that the keepers at Baron Park Zoo are

unintelligent and unimaginative. Her life is similar to that of the zoo animals in that: she feels caged; she longs to play; she hates the unimaginative and unappealing dinners she has at home; she lacks mental stimulation.

- The first omen is the antagonistic peanut seller, the second is the peacock attack, and the third is the smirk on the face of the little boy. All three draw attention to Lorraine.
- Mr. Pignati's best friend is a baboon. Mr. Pignati's affection for the animal shows how lonely and childlike he is.
- Mr. Conlan wants John to work on Wall Street as a broker for the coffee exchange. John hates the idea and wants to be an actor because he feels that acting will allow him to use his imagination.
- He says that his wife is visiting his sister in California. He lies because he finds his wife's death too painful to discuss or because he has not yet come to terms with it.
- He smiles and does not correct her. He feels affection for Lorraine and may wish that she were his daughter.

Evaluate and Connect

- Students who agree that the dialogues are realistic may point to the characters' use of plain language and incomplete sentences. Students who disagree may argue that John and Lorraine sometimes use overly sophisticated language and have insights that only adults could have.
- John has long hair, wears disguises, sometimes dons a funny pin, forms odd friendships, refuses to follow school rules, and rebels against his parents. John might express his individuality through tattoos, body piercings, and so on.

RESPONDING Chapters 9–11

Recall and Interpret

- Norton wants to know if Mr. Pignati has any possessions worth stealing. John "feels like socking [Norton] right in the face." John likes Mr. Pignati and wants to protect him.
- John's mother is indifferent. Some may feel that John is right to blame his parents: his father encouraged him to drink and his mother does not try to stop him from drinking or smoking. Others may feel that he is old enough to take responsibility for his bad habits.
- John and Lorraine confess that they are high school students; Mr. Pignati confesses that his wife is dead. The three seek to develop a relationship built on trust.
- Mr. Pignati has a heart attack. Lorraine is so overcome with emotion that she is faint. John quickly realizes what has happened and calls an ambulance. Students should see that both John's and Lorraine's responses are consistent with their characters.
- John and Lorraine pretend to be Mr. Pignati's children when the police question them and when they visit Mr. Pignati at the hospital. Most students will agree that John and Lorraine would like to be Mr. Pignati's children because he has all the qualities that the characters' parents lack.

Evaluate and Connect

- Students may say that the realia make the story more realistic, more vivid, easier to understand, or more fun to read and would miss the realia if they were omitted.
- They apologize because they feel guilty about deceiving him. Students will probably say that apologizing eases their guilty consciences. Answers should show an awareness of the characters' situation and feelings.

RESPONDING Chapters 12–15

Recall and Interpret

- John wants to impress Lorraine. He is falling love.
- The "something beautiful" is a loving relationship with a man.

Answer Key *(continued from previous page)*

- Lorraine dreams that Mr. Pignati's porcelain pigs are resting on a coffin. The dream foreshadows Mr. Pignati's death.
- John is upset because the pigs are dear to Mr. Pignati. They symbolize his loving relationship with his wife.
- They held a noisy, unauthorized party at Mr. Pignati's house. Lorraine's mother slaps her. John's father suggests he see a psychiatrist.

Evaluate and Connect

- John associates Mr. Pignati's face with Mr. Conlan's and is reminded that Mr. Conlan also will die someday.
- John would probably consider love and friendship to be very important. Lorraine would probably consider love, friendship, and being a good parent to be very important.

RELATED READINGS

The Journey to Meet the Pigman

- Zindel took out a newspaper ad in which he offered to house-sit. The owner of a vacant castle asked him to occupy it. Zindel thinks that the castle's magnificent view, fanciful dome, and beautiful grounds would inspire a storyteller.
- A teenaged boy and an old man. The boy inspired John; the old man helped inspire Mr. Pignati.
- A photograph that Zindel found at his sister's country house. It brought chills because it brought to the surface memories that he had repressed.
- Nonno Frankie was Connie's father. Students may say that Nonno Frankie helped Zindel forget his troubled home life, develop a sense of confidence, and be proud of his individuality. Nonno Frankie also helped to inspire Mr. Pignati.
- Nonno Frankie and Mr. Pignati are Italian, tell corny jokes, like Italian delicacies, and enjoy being with young people. Nonno Frankie had children; Mr. Pignati was childless.

The Treasure of Lemon Brown

- Greg feels dejected. He is doing poorly in school, and his father is angry with him.
- Greg won't believe that Lemon Brown has a treasure because the old man lives in an abandoned building and wears ragged clothes. Greg thinks of gold coins.
- Lemon Brown's treasure is a battered harmonica and a file of old newspaper clippings about his days as a blues musician. Lemon Brown values these items because his son carried them with him when he went to war.
- Greg prevents Lemon Brown from being robbed and beaten. Brown helps Greg appreciate Greg's father's concern.
- Both Mr. Pignati and Lemon Brown befriend young people to help fill a void left by the death of a loved one. Both confide in young people and change their lives for the better.

The Rider

- The boy roller-skates; the speaker rides her bicycle.
- Lines 3 and 10. Students might say that the personification helps readers picture the attempt to escape loneliness.
- The escape from loneliness is compared to floating in a cloud of pink azalea petals. Students' opinions may vary but should be supported by sound reasons.
- The three reach out to others. Students will probably agree that it is better to reach out than to run away.

How Well Do You Know Your Kid?

- According to the article, loneliness is the most troubling problem. The article states that most teenagers live in broken homes or households in which both parents work.
- Some students might respond that it is not a contradiction to need both privacy and attention because both are necessary to healthful emotional development. Others might say that parents should respect teenagers' need for privacy but make themselves available when teens need them.

- Some may respond that cliques and peer groups fill a useful need by making teenagers feel less lonely. Others may respond that they are a poor substitute for a family.
- Teenagers are learning to be independent, an independence that takes many parents by surprise. The article advises parents to try to understand their teenagers. Students may respond that teenagers should try to understand their parents, communicate openly and honestly with them, and trust their judgment.
- Students may say that Mr. and Mrs. Conlan and Mrs. Jensen would most benefit from reading the article. Mr. Conlan tries to force his values on John, and Mrs. Conlan does not pay enough attention to him. Mrs. Jensen berates Lorraine and does try to understand her.

What We Might Be, What We Are

- Lines 1–12 describe what the two people might be. Lines 13–16 describe what they are.
- A scoop of ice-cream and an ice-cream cone; a fishhook and a bucket of worms; a plate of spaghetti and spaghetti sauce. All the comparisons are between things that go together. The comparisons suggest that the two people are not yet close or affectionate.
- He compares himself to a New Jersey mosquito and the person to whom he is talking to a Balinese goat. This suggests that the future of their relationship is bleak.
- The speaker would probably say that he looks for friends whose personalities and interests are similar to his.
- Students may say that Mr. Pignati overcomes the greatest differences because he lacked close human contact after his wife's death, he had to overcome social pressures against friendships with younger people, and he was more vulnerable to being hurt than were John and Lorraine.

TEST

Recall and Interpret

Part A

1. e 2. b 3. c 4. d 5. a

Part B

- Lorraine meets John when he sits next to her on a bus.
- They call him "the Pigman" because his last name has the word *pig* in it and his wife had a collection of porcelain pigs.
- BoBo, the baboon, means a lot to Mr. Pignati because he is lonely and the baboon responds to him.
- Mr. Conlan suggests that John see a psychiatrist.
- Mr. Pignati dies of a heart attack.

Evaluate and Connect (any 2)

- John is criticizing society's concern for things that don't matter. The "wrong things" might include his mother's obsession with cleanliness and his father's with money.
- Some may say that John and Lorraine indirectly caused Mr. Pignati's death by abusing their friendship. Others may say that the two had nothing to do with his death because they did not cause his heart condition or kill BoBo.
- If the novel were told only from John's point of view, readers would not be privy to Lorraine's insights into his personality and motivations. If it were told from only Lorraine's point of view, readers would not be privy to John's impressions of Lorraine and to his private thoughts.
- Students who agree that the parents are irresponsible may cite Mrs. Jensen's cruelty and Mr. and Mrs. Conlan's indifference. Students who disagree might respond that the author sufficiently develops the characters.
- Students may say that it means that we fail to live life to the fullest because we are preoccupied with our own interests and because we fail to reach out to others.

Assessment Rubrics

Use these criteria as guidelines for evaluating students' performance on Assessment Options activities presented in this study guide.

Writing

He Said, She Said *Students' sequels should:*

- explain whether John and Lorraine are still friends when they are twenty-one
- explain whether John and Lorraine still think of Mr. Pignati
- describe what John and Lorraine are doing with their lives
- be written from both John's and Lorraine's point of view
- show an understanding of John's and Lorraine's personalities as they are portrayed in the novel

Listening and Speaking

Remembering Mr. Pignati *Students' eulogies should:*

- express what Angelo Pignati's friendship means to John or Lorraine
- be based on details in the novel
- be delivered in a manner that is appropriate to the occasion for speaking

Mr. Pignati on Trial *Student "attorneys" should:*

- rely on facts from the novel to support the charges
- present clear and persuasive arguments
- stay in character

Students who are called to the stand should:

- answer questions clearly and completely
- remain true to the facts in the novel
- stay in character

Student "jury members" should:

- evaluate the arguments of each "attorney"
- reach a consensus and render a verdict
- explain and justify their verdict

Viewing and Representing

Box The Pigman Book *Students' boxes should:*

- contain at least six items that represent key events and characters in the novel
- contain notes that explain the significance of each item
- show a clear understanding of the novel

Interdisciplinary Connection

Seeking Out the Sixties *Students' reports should:*

- be focused
- present accurate information
- include appropriate visual aids

Meet Paul Zindel



. . . *The Pigman* probably is successful now because it triggers discussions with kids about problems that are very important to them. I think that's just the way that books work and what's behind all authors writing books, whether they know it or not.

—Paul Zindel, *A Message from the Author*

Paul Zindel, the author of *The Pigman*, had a difficult childhood. He grew up without his father, he had a stormy relationship with his mother, and he had very little self-esteem.

Zindel was born in 1936 on Staten Island, New York. He was raised by his mother after his father abandoned the family when Zindel was only two years old. In search of work, his mother moved the family fifteen times during his childhood and adolescence. For this reason, he didn't form many close relationships with other children. Instead, he withdrew inward, observing the world around him from a distance. "All of my novels begin with real, specific moments from my own life," he says. In fact, everywhere in his work, readers can find reflections of Zindel's childhood and adolescence. In his autobiography, *The Pigman and Me*, Zindel writes:

Eight hundred and fifty-three horrifying things had happened to me by the time I was a teenager. . . . If you haven't croaked before finishing [The Pigman], then you'd understand how I survived being a teenager.

Zindel Becomes a Writer After Zindel was graduated from Wagner College, Staten Island, he taught high school chemistry for ten years. He quit his job as a teacher to begin writing. His first play, *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*, is about a student from a troubled home who prepares an experiment about marigolds for her school's science fair. The play won a Pulitzer Prize as well as the New York Drama Desk Critic's Circle Award. Encouraged by an editor who had seen the play, Zindel wrote the novel *The Pigman*, a book that became a favorite of generations of teenaged readers and their teachers.

Zindel Breaks New Ground Most reviewers of young adult literature credit *The Pigman*, along with several other novels published during the 1960s, with establishing a new category of literature, the young adult (YA) novel. Since the novel was first published, in 1968, Zindel has written twelve other young adult books, as well as plays, a children's book, a series of books for middle school readers, and screenplays.

Zindel's ability to write about adolescents with honesty and humor has won him a wide audience and made him one of today's most well-known and respected writers of books for young people. *New York Newsday* recently wrote that Zindel is "the rare specimen of a grown-up who seems to have total recall of that emotional roller coaster ride."

Zindel is married and has two children. He says that he likes storytelling. "We all have an active thing that we do that gives us self-esteem, that makes us proud," he says. "It is necessary. I have to write stories because that's the way the wiring went in." Today, Zindel lives in Manhattan, where he continues to write.

Introducing the Novel

“This is a shocker of a book, written in a contemporary idiom. It is a haunting story. The book is startling and truthful and vivid.”

—*Young Readers’ Review*

A MODERN CLASSIC

In 1968, the year that *The Pigman* was published, few novels addressed the pressures that teenagers face in the language that teenagers themselves use. *The Pigman* does just that. A major reason for the book’s success is that it reveals teenagers’ thoughts, feelings, and longings accurately and honestly. The novel opened the door for other realistic fiction for young adults. Although *The Pigman* is more than thirty years old, it continues to speak to the needs and interest of teenagers.

The main characters in *The Pigman* are high school sophomores John Conlan and Lorraine Jensen. John wants to be accepted as the individual he is and has dreams of becoming an actor.

Lorraine has few friends, loves to read about psychology, and wants to be a writer. The lives of these two characters change dramatically when a middle-aged widower, Angelo (“The Pigman”) Pignati reaches out to them and becomes their friend. The lessons that they learn through their experiences with Mr. Pignati change the way they see themselves and the world around them.

THE TIME AND PLACE

The story takes place in Staten Island, New York, in the late 1960s. During this period, public protests against racial discrimination and the war in Vietnam helped create a climate of rebelliousness against authority. Some teenagers openly rebelled by engaging in bad habits such as smoking, drinking alcoholic beverages, and using profanity. Teenagers held marches and sit-ins against the draft, demanded that their schools give them a voice in what they studied, and struggled to gain greater political power.

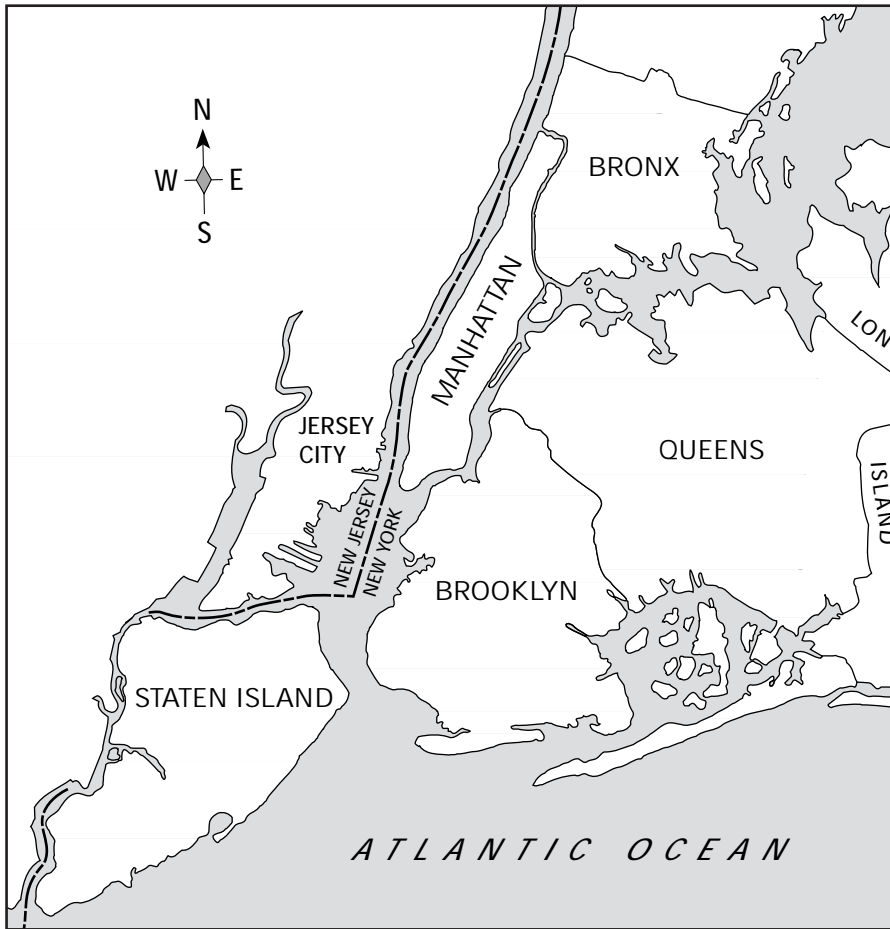
Did You Know?

Staten Island, the setting of *The Pigman*, is the smallest of five boroughs that make up New York City, the largest city in the United States. A borough is a political division unique to New York City. The other four boroughs, in order of size from largest to smallest, are Brooklyn (which until the 1890s was a separate city), Queens, Manhattan, and the Bronx. In total,

these boroughs make up a city of over 7 million people.

When most Americans speak of New York City, they generally mean Manhattan, the home of Wall Street, the nation’s financial capital, and Broadway, the nation’s chief theater district. Staten Island residents are able to reach Manhattan by ferry.

NEW YORK CITY'S FIVE BOROUGHS



CRITIC'S CORNER

"[John and Lorraine's] 'epic' makes a very funny book on one level because Mr. Zindel catches the bright, hyperbolic sheen of teen-age language accurately and with humor."

—John Weston, *New York Times*

"[The Pigman] is a somber and chastening story that gets better and better as it goes on."

—David Rees, *The Marble in the Water*

"Few books that have been written for young people are as . . . truthful about the human condition."

—Diane Farrell, *Horn Book Magazine*

Before You Read

The Pigman Chapters 1–5

FOCUS ACTIVITY

Who is your best friend? Why is this person's friendship important to you?

Journal

In your journal, describe your friend and explain why you value his or her friendship.

Setting a Purpose

Read to find out how and why two teenagers become best friends.

BACKGROUND

Did You Know?

Some novels begin with a prologue, or short introduction. *The Pigman*, for example, begins with a prologue titled "The Oath." The purpose of a prologue is to give background information about the story that follows. As you read "The Oath," notice that it tells you what kind of story *The Pigman* will be and when, where, and how it will be told.

Who Is Talking?

The Pigman has two first-person narrators, John and Lorraine. They are the main characters in the novel as well as the "voices" that tell the story. John and Lorraine take turns explaining what happened, so that readers see events from John's point of view in one chapter and Lorraine's point of view in the next. Pay special attention to the comments that John and Lorraine make about each other. Like real-life best friends, they often have insights into each other's personality.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

avocation [av ə kā' shən] *n.* hobby (p. 1)

compassion [kəm pash' ən] *n.* sympathy for other people; pity (p. 5)

distort [di stôrt'] *v.* to twist the truth; to give a false impression (p. 5)

mortified [môr' ti fīd] *adj.* extremely embarrassed or ashamed (p. 7)

patron [pā' trən] *n.* person who provides financial support to artists or writers (p. 16)

philanthropy [fi lan' thrə pē] *n.* act of charity intended to help a person or a group of people (p. 12)

prevarications [pri var' i kā shənz] *n.* lies (p. 14)

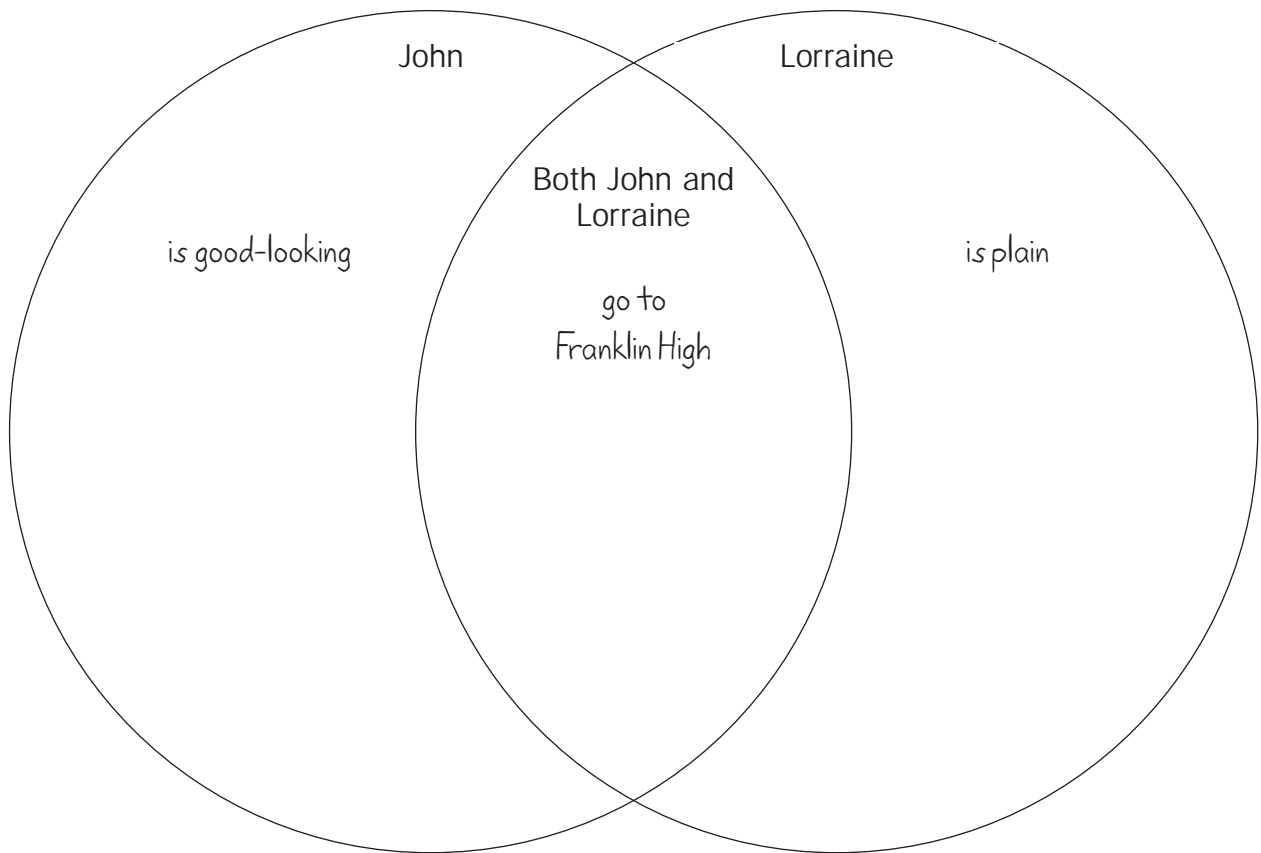
subliminally [sub lim' ə nəl lē] *adj.* unconsciously (p. 4)

subsidize [sub' si dīz'] *v.* to provide financial aid (p. 16)

Active Reading

The Pigman Chapters 1–5

Friends are usually alike in some ways and different in others. For example, friends may be the same age and go to the same school, yet have very different opinions and personalities. So it is with John and Lorraine. As you read the first five chapters of *The Pigman*, fill in the Venn diagram below with the ways in which John and Lorraine are similar and different. Use the sample answers as models.



Responding

The Pigman Chapters 1–5

Personal Response

What are your impressions of John? of Lorraine?

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. How does John feel about school? How did he act on his feelings when he was a freshman? How does he act on them now? What does this change in his behavior tell you about him?

2. What does Mrs. Jensen think of Lorraine? Does Lorraine share her opinion? Explain.

3. Describe the telephone prank that John and Lorraine play on Mr. Pignati. How does John feel during the prank? How does Lorraine? What do their feelings suggest about each of them?

4. Why does Mr. Conlan install a lock on the family telephone? How does John respond? What do their actions suggest about their relationship?

5. How does Mr. Pignati treat John and Lorraine during their first visit? Why does he treat them this way?

Responding

The Pigman Chapters 1–5

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

6. Do you think that Mr. Pignati is a believable character? Why or why not?

7. How might John answer the **Focus Activity** question on page 16? How might Lorraine? Are their ideas about friendship similar to yours? Why or why not?

Literature and Writing

Analyzing a Relationship

In a paragraph or two, analyze John's relationship with his parents. What does Lorraine think is the cause of the problems between them? Do you think Lorraine is right? What other factors might be involved? What might the family do to get along better?

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

In chapter 4, Lorraine says that Norton is a social outcast. With a group of classmates, discuss what she means. Together, decide which other characters in the novel might be called outcasts and why. Share your group's conclusions with other groups in your class.

Performing

With a small group of classmates, choose a scene from *The Pigman* that could be performed as a play. Appropriate scenes include John and Lorraine's conversation on the bus, Lorraine's phone call to Mr. Pignati, and John and Lorraine's first visit with Mr. Pignati. Discuss how the characters should sound and act in the scene. Choose roles and rehearse the scene. Then perform the scene for your class.



Save your work for your portfolio.

Before You Read

The Pigman Chapters 6–8

FOCUS ACTIVITY

How do you express your individuality? Do you wear unusual clothes? Style your hair a certain way? Listen to certain kinds of music?

Quickwrite

Jot down a few of the ways that you express who you are.

Setting a Purpose

Read to find out how John and Lorraine express their individuality.

BACKGROUND

Did You Know?

In the mid-1960s, British rock musician John Lennon started a fad when he began wearing eyeglasses that looked like those that Benjamin Franklin had worn. Soon, teenagers everywhere were sporting “Ben Franklin glasses”—small, square eyeglasses with thin wire frames. Franklin not only wore glasses, he also experimented with different types of lenses. Among his many inventions are bifocals—eyeglasses that contain corrective lenses for both far-sightedness and near-sightedness.

Two Kinds of Conflict

Every story contains some kind of conflict, or struggle. Because novels are longer than short stories, they often contain several conflicts. Conflicts can be external or internal. An external conflict is a struggle between characters who have different needs, goals, or personalities. An internal conflict is a psychological struggle arising from a personal problem or a difficult decision. As you read the next three chapters of *The Pigman*, look for both kinds of conflicts.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

antagonistic [an tag' ə nis' tik] *adj.* hostile; given to arguing or fighting (p. 29)

anxiety [ang zī' i tē] *n.* fearful concern or nervousness (p. 29)

eerie [ē' r' ē] *adj.* strange and frightening (p. 34)

ingrate [in' grāt] *n.* ungrateful person (p. 37)

nocturnal [nok tû' r' nal] *adj.* of the night; active at night (p. 30)

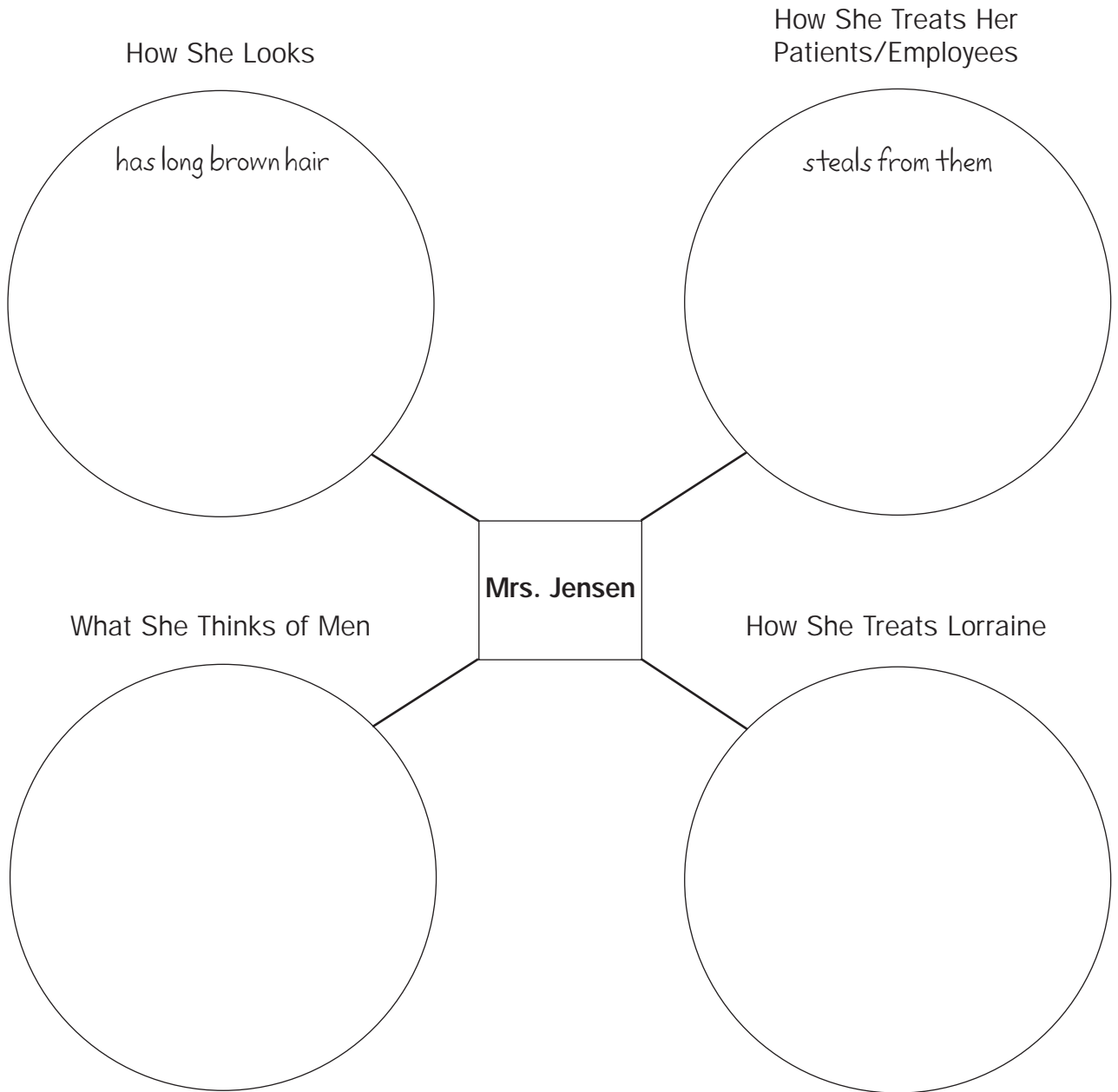
omens [ō mənz] *n.* clues as to what will happen in the future (p. 29)

ritual [rich' ō ə l] *n.* customary series of acts (p. 35)

Active Reading

The Pigman Chapters 6–8

In chapters 6 and 8, Lorraine shares many details about her mother. As you read these chapters, take notes about Mrs. Jensen in the blank circles on the character map below. Use the sample answers as models.



Responding

The Pigman Chapters 6–8

Personal Response

How did you react to John's news about Mrs. Pignati? Why?

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. Why does Lorraine dislike the Baron Park Zoo? In what ways is her life similar to that of the zoo animals?

2. Briefly describe the three omens that Lorraine refers to in chapter 6. What do the omens have in common?

3. What is so unusual about Mr. Pignati's best friend? What does Mr. Pignati's choice of friend suggest about his life?

4. What does Mr. Conlan want John to do for a living? How does John feel about the career choice? Why?

5. What lie does Mr. Pignati tell about his wife? In your opinion, why does he lie? Support your opinion with evidence from the novel.

Responding

The Pigman Chapters 6–8

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

6. How does Mr. Pignati react when the salesclerk thinks that Lorraine is his daughter? What does the reaction tell you about Mr. Pignati's feelings for Lorraine?

Evaluate and Connect

7. Book reviewers have praised the realism of the dialogues in *The Pigman*. Do you agree with the reviewers? Do the dialogues, or conversations, seem real to you? Why or why not?

8. Review your response to the **Focus Activity** on page 20. What are the some of the ways that John expresses his individuality? If John were a student today, what forms of self-expression might he use?

Literature and Writing

Analyzing a Friendship

In a paragraph or two, analyze why John and Lorraine become friends with Mr. Pignati. What do you think Mr. Pignati adds to their lives?

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

With a group of classmates, list the conflicts, or struggles, that the major characters in *The Pigman* experience. Label each conflict “internal” or “external.” Then predict how each conflict might turn out. Share your lists and predictions with other groups in your class.

Science Connection

Use the snake quiz in chapter 6 as a model to write a quiz of your own. Research “fun facts” about one of the animals that Lorraine and John visit at the zoo. You might look in an encyclopedia about animals or search the Internet for appropriate sites. Write a short list of true-false questions based on the information that you find. Then quiz your classmates.



Save your work for your portfolio.

Before You Read

The Pigman Chapters 9–11

FOCUS ACTIVITY

Recall a time when you apologized to a friend. How did you feel before the apology? How did you feel afterward?

Journal

In your journal, briefly describe why you felt that you owed your friend an apology and how the apology made you feel.

Setting a Purpose

Read to find out why John and Lorraine apologize to Mr. Pignati.

BACKGROUND

Did You Know?

People in the United States usually think of insects as disgusting pests. In some countries, however, people think of insects as delicious snacks. Actually, over a lifetime each of us unknowingly eats as much as a pound of insect parts, because insects often infest the granaries where flour is milled. Rather than harming us, insect parts add much-needed protein to our diets. Insect parts can appear in breads as little dark specks, but more often they are invisible to the eye.

Suspense and Foreshadowing

One of the ways that authors keep readers interested in stories is to create a sense of suspense. Suspense is a feeling of curiosity, uncertainty, or dread about what will happen next. Foreshadowing—hints or clues about what will happen—increases the level of suspense. As you read *The Pigman*, look for clues that hint at what might happen, and think about the suspense that these clues help build.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

assassin [ə sas' in] *n.* murderer; killer (p. 61)

berserk [bər sŭrk'] *adj.* crazy; insane (p. 51)

interrogating [in tər' ə gāt' ing] *n.* questioning (p. 56)

mull [mə] *v.* to think about; to ponder (p. 56)

mundane [mun dān'] *adj.* ordinary; commonplace (p. 63)

predicament [pri dik' ə mənt] *n.* difficult situation or problem (p. 61)

putrid [pyŭō' trid] *adj.* rotten (p. 52)

Active Reading

The Pigman Chapters 9–11

In chapters 9 through 11, you will learn a little more about several of the characters. Like real people, their experiences affect their behavior, attitudes, and feelings. As you read, fill in the cause-effect chart below to better understand what causes the characters to act, think, and feel as they do.

Cause

Effect

When Norton was a child, other children made fun of him because . . .
he liked to play with dolls

As a result of this experience, Norton now . . .
is a tough guy

When John was ten years old, his father gave him . . .

As a result of this experience, John now . . .

When Mrs. Jensen was expecting Lorraine, Mr. Jensen . . .

As a result of this experience, Mrs. Jensen now . . .

Mr. Pignati's wife has . . .

As a result of this experience, Mr. Pignati now . . .

Responding

The Pigman Chapters 9–11

Personal Response

Do you think that John and Lorraine are falling in love? Explain.

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. Why is Norton so curious about Mr. Pignati? How does John react to Norton's questions? Why?

2. How does Mrs. Conlan feel about John's drinking and smoking? Do you think John is right to blame his parents for his bad habits? Is John at all to blame? Explain.

3. What do John and Lorraine confess to Mr. Pignati? What does he confess to them? What does their willingness to confess to each other suggest about their relationship?

4. What happens to Mr. Pignati while he is roller-skating? How does Lorraine react to the incident? How does John react? Are their reactions what you expected? Explain.

5. When and why do John and Lorraine pretend to be Mr. Pignati's children? Do you think that they would actually like to be his children? Why or why not?

Responding

The Pigman Chapters 9–11

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

6. In your opinion, what do the news clippings, pictures, and handwritten notes add to the novel? Would you miss them if they were not there? Explain.

7. Why do John and Lorraine apologize to Mr. Pignati? How do you think the apology makes them feel? Are there similarities between John and Lorraine's situation and the one you described in the **Focus Activity** on page 24? Explain.

Literature and Writing

Making Predictions

What do you think will happen to John and Lorraine? to Mr. Pignati? In a paragraph or two, predict how the novel will end. Be sure to base your predictions on clues in the novel.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

"A house is not a home" is an old saying. With a group of classmates, define the difference between *house* and *home*. Then discuss the places that John, Lorraine, and Mr. Pignati live. Which would you call houses? Which would you call homes? Why? Share your group's conclusions with other groups in your class.

Health Connection

John and Lorraine mistakenly call Mr. Conlan's illness "sclerosis of the liver." The actual name of the disease is "cirrhosis," and it is one of many serious health problems caused by alcohol abuse. Use the Internet or library resources to find out how drinking alcoholic beverages can harm a person's health. Then create an informational poster or booklet about the dangers of alcohol abuse.



Save your work for your portfolio.

Before You Read

The Pigman Chapters 12–15

FOCUS ACTIVITY

What do you think the future holds for you? What do you most want out of life?

Questionnaire

Explore your beliefs by rating the importance of each of the following goals.

Very Important	Somewhat Important	Unimportant	
			1. Making a lot of money.
			2. Finding love.
			3. Holding a high-level job.
			4. Having close friends.
			5. Being a good parent.

Setting a Purpose

Read to discover what John thinks the future holds.

BACKGROUND

Did You Know?

Experts on aging sometimes advise lonely elderly people to get pets. Pets provide companionship, make the elderly feel needed, and add meaning to their elderly owners' lives. Dog owners who walk their pets get an additional benefit: exercise.

Climax and Resolution

In a novel or short story, the climax is the moment when the central conflict comes to a head. The resolution is the point at which the central conflict is settled, or resolved. As in real life, resolutions are not always happy or complete. Everyone does not necessarily live happily ever after, and all conflicts may not be completely resolved. As you read the final chapters of *The Pigman*, look for the climax and think about the resolution.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

hors d'oeuvres [ôr dûrvz'] *n.* foods served as appetizers (p. 75)

hovel [huv'əl] *n.* small, often dirty house; shack (p. 73)

incongruous [in kong'grôo'əs] *adj.* dissimilar; not belonging together (p. 81)

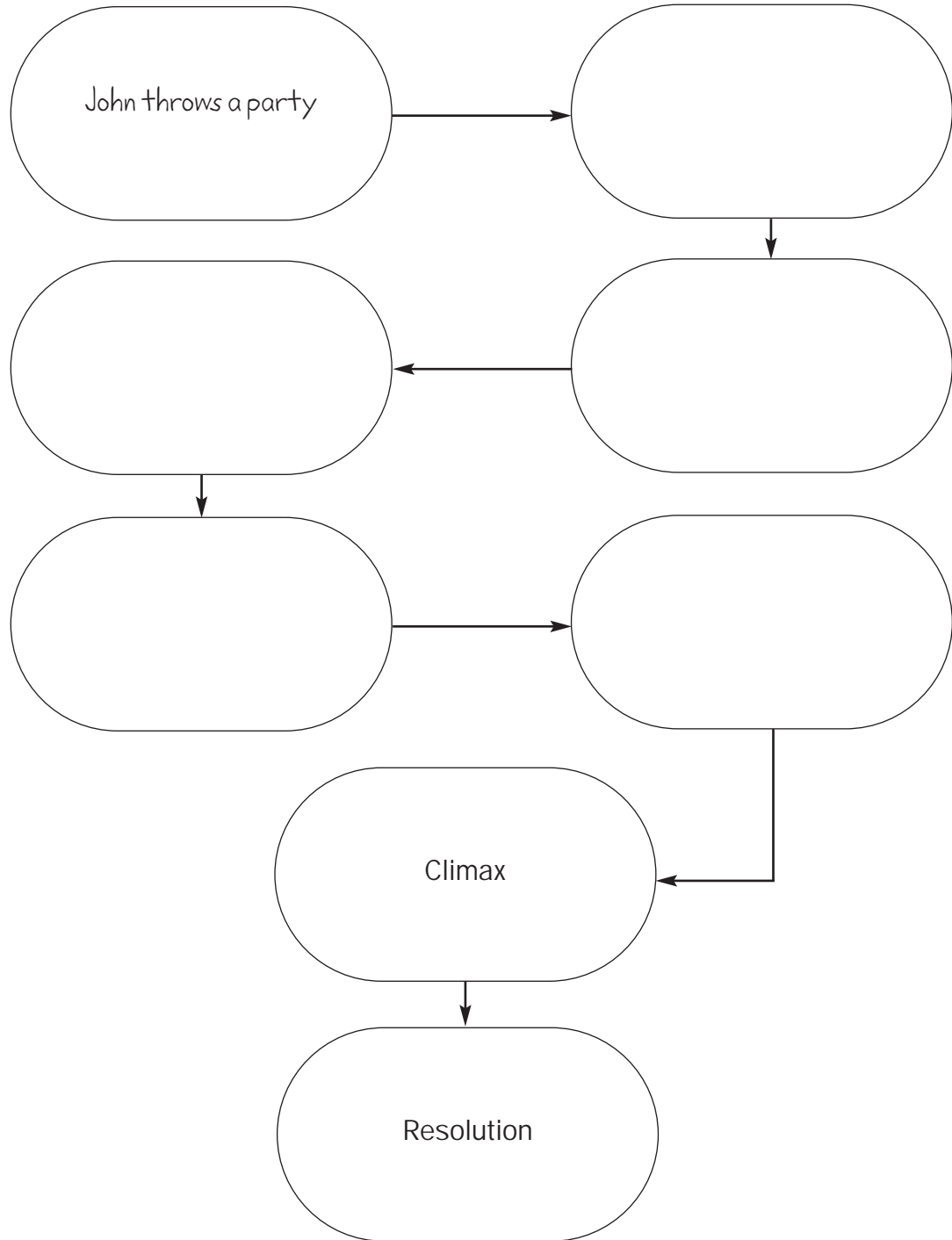
infantile [in'fan tīl] *adj.* childish (p. 72)

proficiency [prə fish'ən sē'] *n.* skill (p. 86)

Active Reading

The Pigman Chapters 12-15

As you read chapters 12 through 15, use the ovals below to take notes about the events that lead up to the climax. Then sum up the climax and the resolution. You may add ovals if you wish.



Responding

The Pigman Chapters 12–15

Personal Response

What did you think of the conclusion of *The Pigman*? Why?

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. In chapter 12, John starts to care about how his hair and clothes look. Whom does he want to impress? Why?

2. When Lorraine recalls her candlelight dinner with John, she says, “it was as if I was being told about . . . something beautiful waiting just for me.” What do you think that “something beautiful” is?

3. Briefly describe Lorraine’s nightmare about Mr. Pignati’s “pig room.” What incident does the dream foreshadow?

4. Why is John so upset when Norton breaks Mr. Pignati’s porcelain pigs? What do the pigs represent, or symbolize, to Mr. Pignati?

5. Why are John and Lorraine arrested? How do their parents react?

Responding

The Pigman Chapters 12–15

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

6. Why does John think about his father when Mr. Pignati dies?

7. How might John answer the questionnaire in the **Focus Activity** on page 28? How might Lorraine? Explain.

Literature and Writing

A Letter to Mr. Pignati

Imagine that you are either John or Lorraine. Then write a letter of apology to Mr. Pignati in which you explain why you are sorry and how much he meant to you. Be sure to use specific details from the novel to write your letter.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

Lorraine blames John for what happens to Mr. Pignati. John seems to blame Mr. Pignati himself. Who, if anyone, is to blame? With a group of classmates, carefully review chapters 14 through 15. Try to come to an agreement of opinion. Then share your opinion with others groups in your class.

Learning for Life

Imagine that you have the opportunity to interview Paul Zindel, the author of *The Pigman*. With a partner, write a list of questions that you would like to ask him about the characters and his reasons for writing the book.



Save your work for your portfolio.

Paul Zindel

Journey to Meet the Pigman

Before You Read

Focus Question

Who has had the greatest influence on you? Why?

Background

Like many novelists, Paul Zindel sometimes bases his fictional characters on real-life people who have had an influence on him. In "Journey to Meet the Pigman," Zindel describes the people on whom he based the major characters in *The Pigman*.

Responding to the Reading

1. How did Paul Zindel manage to live rent-free in a castle? Why does he think that the castle was a good place for a storyteller to live?

2. Whom did Zindel meet while he was living in the castle? What fictional characters did these people help inspire?

3. What made Zindel recall his mother's former roommate, Connie? Why did the recollection give him chills?

4. Who was Nonno Frankie? In your opinion, what was Nonno Frankie's greatest contribution to Zindel's life?

5. **Making Connections** Compare and contrast Nonno Frankie with Mr. Pignati. In what ways are they alike? Different?

Personal Writing

In a few paragraphs, describe the person who has had the greatest influence on you. Make your description vivid by using specific details and quoting a few of the person's favorite sayings.

Walter Dean
Myers

The Treasure of Lemon Brown

Before You Read

Focus Question

What is your most treasured possession? Why do you value it?

Background

Walter Dean Myers began writing stories and poems when he was only ten years old. Today, some fifty years later, he is an award-winning author of fiction for young adults. “The Treasure of Lemon Brown” is one of his most popular short stories.

Responding to the Reading

1. How does Greg feel at the beginning of the story? Why?

2. Why won't Greg believe that Lemon Brown has treasure? What kind of treasure comes to Greg's mind?

3. What is Lemon Brown's treasure? Why does Lemon Brown place so much value on these items?

4. In what important ways do Greg and Lemon Brown help each other?

5. **Making Connections** In what ways is Mr. Pignati's friendship with John and Lorraine similar to Lemon Brown's friendship with Greg?

Learning for Life

Interview a parent or other older family member to find out what family possessions he or she treasures and why. Together, create a list of items that you might place in a “memory box” for future family members to enjoy.

Naomi Shihab
Nye

The Rider

Before You Read

Focus Question

What do you do when you feel lonely?

Background

Naomi Shihab Nye is an award-winning poet who often bases her poems on her experiences. She has said that she values poetry because it “makes us slow down and listen carefully to the few things we have really heard, deep inside.”

Responding to the Reading

1. What does the boy in the poem do to escape loneliness? What does the speaker in the poem do?

2. In what lines of the poem is loneliness personified, or given human traits? What does the personification add to the poem?

3. To what is the escape from loneliness compared? In your opinion, is the comparison effective? Why or why not?

4. **Making Connections** In *The Pigman*, how do John, Lorraine, and Mr. Pignati cope with their loneliness? In your opinion, are their ways of coping better or worse than those described in the poem? Explain.

Art Connection

Create a poetry poster for “The Rider.” Copy the poem on a large piece of paper or posterboard, and make an illustration to accompany the poem. You might draw a picture or create a collage of magazine clippings. Bring your poster to class and share it with your classmates.

Barbara
Kantrowitz,
Pat Wingert,
Anne
Underwood

How Well Do You Know Your Kid?

Before You Read

Focus Question

What problems do today's teenagers face?

Background

"How Well Do You Know Your Kid?" first appeared in the May 10, 1999, issue of *Newsweek*. The popular newsmagazine contains articles on current events, trends, and issues.

Responding to the Reading

1. According to the article, what is the most troubling issue that teenagers face? What are some of the causes of the problem?

2. In your opinion, is it a contradiction for teenagers to say that they want privacy yet crave their parents' attention at the same time? Explain.

3. Do you think that cliques and other peer groups fill a useful role in a teenager's life? Why or why not?

4. According to the article, why do parents find it so difficult to get along with their teenagers? What does the article advise parents to do? What do you think teenagers might do to improve their relationship with their parents?

5. **Making Connections** In your opinion, which character or characters in *The Pigman* would most benefit from reading "How Well Do You Know Your Kid?" Why?

Learning for Life

With a small group of students, take an informal survey of teenagers at your school. Ask at least ten other students in your grade or class what issue most troubles teenagers today. Jot down the students' responses. Then tabulate the responses and report your findings to your class.

X. J. Kennedy

What We Might Be, What We Are

Before You Read

Focus Question

What qualities do you look for in a friend?

Background

X. J. Kennedy is as well known for his textbooks as he is for his poetry. The prize-winning poet taught college-level English classes for many years, and he has written a number of books about writing and literature. In his books and poems, Kennedy often uses humor to get his points across.

Responding to the Reading

1. Which lines of the poem describe what the two people might be? what they are?

2. List the comparisons that are made in lines 1–7. What do the comparisons have in common? What do they suggest about the speaker’s relationship with the “you” in the poem?

3. In lines 13–15, to what does the speaker compare himself? To what does he compare the person to whom he is talking? What does the comparison suggest about the future of their relationship?

4. How do you think the speaker in the poem might answer the **Focus Question**? Why do you say so?

5. **Making Connections** Which characters overcome the greatest differences to make friends in *The Pigman*? Explain your answer.

Geography Connection

The poem refers to a Balinese goat. Use a globe or an atlas to locate the island of Bali. Then calculate the distance between Bali and New Jersey. How does this knowledge add to your understanding of the poem?

TEST: *The Pigman*

Recall and Interpret (40 points total; 4 points each)

A. Matching Next to each character's name, write the letter of the detail that describes the character.

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|----------------------|--|
| _____ 1. John | a. This character loves his wife with all his heart. |
| _____ 2. Lorraine | b. This character wants to be a writer |
| _____ 3. Mr. Conlan | c. This character works on Wall Street. |
| _____ 4. Mrs. Jensen | d. This character distrusts men. |
| _____ 5. Mr. Pignati | e. This character wants to be an actor. |

B. Write a short answer for each question below.

1. How does Lorraine first meet John?

2. Why do Lorraine and John call Mr. Pignati "the Pigman"?

3. Who is Bobo, and why does he mean so much to Mr. Pignati?

4. What does John's father suggest that John do after the disturbance at Mr. Pignati's?

5. How does Mr. Pignati die?

TEST: *The Pigman*

Evaluate and Connect (60 points total; 30 points each)

Answer two of the following essay questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. What criticism is John making about society in the following statement? About whom is he mainly talking? To what “wrong things” is he referring? Give examples from the novel to support your answer.

Maybe we were all baboons for that matter—big blabbing baboons—smiling away and not really caring what was going on as long as there were enough peanuts bouncing around to think about. . . . baffled baboons concentrating on all the wrong things.

2. In your opinion, are John and Lorraine responsible for Mr. Pignati’s death? Support your opinion with details from the novel.
3. John and Lorraine take turns narrating the story of their experiences with Mr. Pignati. How would the novel change if it were told only from John’s point of view? from only Lorraine’s point of view?
4. Some book reviewers have complained that the parents in *The Pigman* are too irresponsible to be believable. Do you agree? Support your opinion with evidence from the novel.
5. What do you think Paul Zindel means in the following quotation? To what cages is he referring?

*We write stories that are going to solve a problem, and what a wonderful job it is to assign characters elements that bother us in our own lives and then to live through a story where they go conflict against conflict, and reach an epiphany and insight and some answer to the problem. And I think that’s where the final lines of *The Pigman* come in. We build our own cages, which is what the kids finally realize in the end. . . .*