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Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

The Old Man and the Sea

by Ernest Hemingway

written by Paul Moliken

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The Old Man and the Sea

Terms and Definitions

Allusion - a reference to a person, place, poem, book, event, etc., which is not part of the story, that the author expects the reader will recognize. **Example:** In *The Glass Menagerie*, Tom speaks of “Chamberlain’s umbrella,” a reference to British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain.

Anthropomorphism - attributing human qualities, emotions, and behavior to animals. **Examples:** In the *Uncle Remus* stories, the bear is usually portrayed as slow and dumb. *Aesop’s Fables* also give animals emotions of jealousy, anger, revenge, etc., to illustrate a moral.

Conflict - the struggle that moves the action forward in a work of literature. There are three types of conflict, and most books include all three: *man versus man* (**Example:** a typical Western, in which the sheriff confronts the outlaw); *man versus nature* (**Example:** a story about someone surviving in a small boat on the ocean); *man versus himself* (**Example:** a character in a story fighting his or her own drug abuse). Some authorities consider *man versus society* a fourth category of conflict (**Example:** a character in a book fighting against the Nazis).

Dynamic Characters - people in the book that evolve, change, or surprise the reader. **Example:** Helen Keller in *The Miracle Worker*.

Flat or Static character - a one-dimensional character who lacks diversity and complexity; a character who is either all good or all bad and does not change. Because the character behaves in just one way, he or she is easy to comprehend. **Example:** Sherlock Holmes seems to be calm, deliberative, and in complete charge, regardless of the situation.

Foreshadowing - the use of hints or clues in a story to suggest what action is to come. Foreshadowing is frequently used to create interest and build suspense. **Example:** Two small and seemingly inconsequential car accidents predict and hint at the upcoming, important wreck in *The Great Gatsby*.

Imagery - the use of words to evoke impressions and meanings that are more than just the basic, accepted definitions of the words themselves. **Example:** The quotation, “Get thee to a nunnery,” from *Hamlet* implies that Ophelia must regain her purity and chastity and does not simply mean that she needs to go to a convent.

Irony - a perception of inconsistency, sometimes humorous, in which the significance and understanding of a statement or event is changed by its context. **Example:** The firehouse burned down.

- **Dramatic Irony** - the audience or reader knows more about a character's situation than the character does and knows that the character's understanding is incorrect. **Example:** In *Medea*, Creon asks, "What atrocities could she commit in one day?" The reader, however, knows Medea will destroy her family and Creon's by day's end.
- **Structural Irony** – the use of a naïve hero, whose incorrect perceptions differ from the reader's correct ones. **Example:** Huck Finn.
- **Verbal Irony** - a discrepancy between what is said and what is really meant; sarcasm. **Example:** A large man whose nickname is "Tiny."

Metaphor - a comparison of two things that are basically dissimilar in which one is described in terms of the other. **Example:** The moon, a haunting lantern, shone through the clouds.

Motif - a situation, incident, idea, or image that is repeated significantly in a literary work. **Examples:** In *Hamlet*, revenge is a frequently repeated idea. In *The Catcher in the Rye*, Holden continually comments on the phoniness of people he meets.

Narrator - the one who tells the story. The narrator must not be confused with "author," the one who writes the story. If the narrator is a character in the book, the proper term is "first-person narration." **Example:** *Moby Dick* is narrated by Ishmael, a crewmember. If the narrator is not a character in the book, the correct term is "third-person narration." **Example:** *Sense and Sensibility*.

Omniscient Narrator - third-person narration that allows the author to relate the thoughts and feelings of any of the characters in an all-knowing manner. **Examples:** *Johnny Tremain*, 1984.

Paradox - a statement that is self-contradictory on its surface, yet makes a point through the *juxtaposition* of the ideas and words within the paradox. **Examples:** "Noon finally dawned for the remaining, weary soldiers"; "He that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat..."—Isaiah 55:1

Personification - a figure of speech in which an object, abstract idea, or animal is given human characteristics. **Examples:** The wall did its best to keep out the invaders.
"Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me."
—Emily Dickinson

Plot - the pattern of events in a literary work; what happens.

Point of View - the position or vantage point, determined by the author, from which the story seems to come to the reader. The two most common points of view are First-person and Third-person. **Examples:** First-person point of view occurs in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; the reader receives all information through Huck's eyes. An example of third-person point of view is Dickens' *Hard Times*, in which the narrator is not a character in the book.

Protagonist - the central or main character in a story around whom the plot centers.

Examples: Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter*; David Copperfield in *David Copperfield*.

Round Characters - characters that have many sides; they have both faults and virtues and, therefore, are able to surprise the reader. They are like real people. **Example:** Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* is arrogant, humble, proud, meek, angry, and submissive, and has many other qualities.

Setting - when and where the short story, play, or novel takes place. **Examples:** *Macbeth* takes place in the eleventh century in Scotland. *The Old Man and the Sea* has its main setting on the ocean outside Havana, Cuba, in an unspecified time in the middle-to-late 20th-century.

Simile - a comparison between two different things using either *like* or *as*. **Examples:** I am as hungry as a horse. The huge trees broke like twigs during the hurricane.

Theme - the central or dominant idea behind the story; the most important aspect that emerges from how the book treats its subject. Sometimes theme is easy to see, but, at other times, it may be more difficult. Theme is usually expressed indirectly, as an element the reader must figure out. It is a universal statement about humanity, rather than a simple statement dealing with plot or characters in the story. Themes are generally hinted at through different methods: a phrase or quotation that introduces the novel, a recurring element in the book, or an observation made that is reinforced through plot, dialogue, or characters. It must be emphasized that not all works of literature have themes in them. **Example:** In a story about a man who is diagnosed with cancer and, through medicine and will-power, returns to his former occupation, the theme might be: "Real courage is demonstrated through internal bravery and perseverance." In a poem about a flower that grows, blooms, and dies, the theme might be: "Youth fades, and death comes to all."

Tragedy - a serious work, usually a play, in which the main character experiences defeat, brought about by a tragic flaw. **Example:** *Hamlet*.

Tragic flaw - the main defect of the protagonist in a tragedy. **Example:** Hamlet's failure to act causes his death.

Tragic hero - the main character in a tragedy; in order to fit the definition, the hero must have a tragic flaw, which causes his or her downfall. **Examples:** Hamlet's main character weakness is his indecision; Lear's is his pride.

Verisimilitude - the use of realistic elements to make literature appear truthful or accurate. **Example:** The creature in *Frankenstein* meets and converses with a blind man.

The Old Man and the Sea

Objectives

By the end of the Unit, the student will be able to:

1. list the characteristics of the five plot elements: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution and relate them to this novella.
2. present an allegorical meaning for the story.
3. identify the symbolic nature of the marlin and the sharks.
4. recognize and discuss those points in the story that lead some critics to call Santiago a Christ-figure.
5. identify the setting.
6. identify and comment on at least two of Hemingway's major themes in this novella:
 - A. Man can be destroyed, but not defeated.
 - B. Pride is the source of greatness and determination.
 - C. A worthy opponent brings out the best in a warrior.
 - D. Luck plays a major role in one's life.
 - E. People should depend on themselves, not outside forces.
7. recognize that Manolin, although a very minor character, is an important one and undergoes a significant change in the course of the story.
8. identify and discuss the following motifs:
 - A. life from death
 - B. Joe DiMaggio
 - C. crucifixion imagery
 - D. lions on the beach
9. construct an interpretation of Santiago's dream about the lions on the beach.
10. consider the definition of a tragic hero and state the extent to which Santiago is a tragic hero.

11. define and cite instances of the following literary terms:
 - conflict
 - dynamic character
 - flat character
 - foreshadowing
 - genre
 - motif
 - parable
 - plot
 - protagonist
 - round character
 - simile
 - static character
 - theme
 - tragedy
 - tragic flaw
12. identify the main conflict, as implied in the title, as well as the secondary conflict of man vs. himself.
13. understand how an omniscient viewpoint works in *The Old Man and the Sea*.

The Old Man and the Sea

Questions for Discussion or Essay

1. What makes a tragic hero? To what extent is Santiago a traditional tragic hero?
2. Identify and comment on four points of similarity between Santiago and Christ that lead critics to label Santiago as a Christ-figure. If Santiago is a Christ-figure, what, if anything, will he redeem through his suffering?
3. There are repeated references to Joe DiMaggio in the story. What significance does this simple baseball player have in this story?
4. Discuss the character of Manolin. Why is he extremely loyal to Santiago? Why does he cry when Santiago returns? What change, if any, does he undergo?
5. Santiago is determined to kill the fish, yet he feels sorrow, admiration, and respect (along with other emotions) for it. Explain Santiago's feelings.
6. This story is sometimes said to be allegorical. What abstract ideas or moral qualities do the characters, setting, and actions represent?
7. Using comments and incidents from the book, explain the major themes of the novella.
8. *Understand the exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution in The Old Man and the Sea. Explain which incidents represent which terms.*
9. Characters are described as *static (flat)*, or *dynamic (round)*. Find examples in the story of how Hemingway develops his characters and identify which type the major characters are.
10. Find some similarities between Hemingway's life, his philosophy, and this novella.

The Old Man and the Sea

TEST

Multiple Choice

1. The action in this story takes place in a period of
 - A. one day.
 - B. two days.
 - C. three days.
 - D. four days.
 - E. five days.
2. One could tell from the old man's eyes that he was
 - A. unsure of himself.
 - B. unlucky.
 - C. undefeated.
 - D. too old to fish.
 - E. Manolin's father.
3. The climax of the story occurs when
 - A. Santiago sails back to shore with the marlin.
 - B. Manolin decides to rejoin Santiago.
 - C. the marlin circles the skiff while Santiago reels him in.
 - D. the marlin is hooked and drags the boat out to sea.
 - E. Santiago fights off the shark attacks.
4. The old man was once called The Champion
 - A. as a joke because he was so unlucky.
 - B. because he played in the world series.
 - C. because he caught the biggest fish in the village.
 - D. because he won a boxing match.
 - E. because he won an arm wrestling contest.
5. While trying to land the fish, Santiago's most constant wish is
 - A. to return to Africa.
 - B. that the boy were there with him.
 - C. to play baseball with Joe DiMaggio.
 - D. that the fish not pull him to a "point of no return."
 - E. that the sharks would go away.

6. Since the reader knows what characters are thinking and feeling, the story is written in the
 - A. the omniscient viewpoint.
 - B. limited viewpoint.
 - C. first-person viewpoint.
 - D. universal viewpoint.
 - E. second-person viewpoint.
7. Santiago's wrestling with the fish is an example of the theme
 - A. that love conquers all.
 - B. that famine comes before feast.
 - C. that fish are our brothers.
 - D. that there is honor in struggle.
 - E. that friends are very important.
8. The old man basically thinks of fish as
 - A. much smarter than man.
 - B. less noble than man.
 - C. just food.
 - D. our brothers.
 - E. a prize.
9. When the old man asks himself, "What has beaten you?" he answers,
 - A. "the galanos."
 - B. "the cruel sea."
 - C. "life...life has beaten me."
 - D. "nothing. I went out too far."
 - E. "a lack of faith beat me."
10. When Santiago is trying to pull in the fish, his hands are raw and his back is covered with welts from the rope. This is an example of
 - A. courage that Santiago displays throughout the story.
 - B. the life of all fisherman.
 - C. the kind of champion he was all his life.
 - D. the use of similes.
 - E. crucifixion imagery.
11. The marlin symbolizes
 - A. the mass of humanity that needs Christ.
 - B. the opponent who brings out the worst in Santiago.
 - C. the opponent who brings out the best in a person.
 - D. the fact that the fish are ancient.
 - E. struggling and winning.

12. Hemingway uses the bone spur to symbolize
 - A. the bones Santiago will return from sea with.
 - B. the sparse number of relationships Santiago has.
 - C. a dinner of yellow rice.
 - D. a fish's head.
 - E. mental and physical challenges we all face in life.
13. The tourists at the end of this book represent
 - A. uncomprehending Americans.
 - B. all the good people of this world.
 - C. the rest of the world that is unaware of Santiago's struggle.
 - D. the rich capitalists who exploit the poor fishermen.
 - E. new disciples.
14. A tragic flaw is a quality that, though admirable, leads to the eventual downfall of the character. Santiago's tragic flaw is
 - A. greed.
 - B. pride.
 - C. gluttony.
 - D. lust.
 - E. envy.
15. The setting of the story is
 - A. in the 1940s near Africa.
 - B. in the 1960s near the Galapagos Islands.
 - C. in the 1940s near Mexico.
 - D. in the 1960s near Cuba.
 - E. in the 1940s near Havana.
16. Santiago suspects that he may have injured himself in his fight with the sharks because he
 - A. felt his leg snap.
 - B. felt a strange, coppery and sweet taste in his mouth.
 - C. felt great pains in his biceps.
 - D. fell down and was unable to get up without help.
 - E. could not open up his left eye.
17. Manolin's parents do not allow the boy to fish with the old man because they believe Santiago is salao. How does Hemingway translate this word?
 - A. filled with the worst form of pride
 - B. unskilled in his trade
 - C. self seeking
 - D. the worst form of unlucky
 - E. a good friend, but a poor teacher

18. What happens that causes Santiago to be frustrated with his own body?

- A. He gets seasick.
- B. He has diarrhea.
- C. His hand cramps.
- D. He needs to sleep.
- E. He fathered no children.

19. Santiago is a tragic hero because

- A. he did not bring back the marlin.
- B. his desire and pride made him go out too far.
- C. he had eighty four consecutive days with no fish.
- D. of the pain he endures.
- E. no one recognizes his accomplishment except the boy.

20. Santiago thinks of the sea

- A. as his best friend.
- B. as a beautiful but elusive woman.
- C. as a great enemy.
- D. as a means of life.
- E. as a reminder that life must go on.

II. Essays (Choose any two).

1. Prove that the statement "Man can be destroyed, but not defeated" is a major theme in this story. In your answer be sure to cite incidents and/or comments from the novel to support your opinion.
2. If *The Old Man and the Sea* is an allegory, then the characters, the setting, and the action of the story represent abstract ideas or moral qualities. Identify these symbols in the story and identify the symbolic level of meaning in this allegory.
3. Santiago has been called a Christ-figure by some critics. Identify and develop at least four points in Santiago's life that are parallel to similar points in Christ's life.
4. The dream of the lions on the beach occurs several times throughout the story. What might be the significance of this dream?

The Old Man and the Sea

Test Answer Key

1. E	6. A	11. C	16. B
2. C	7. D	12. E	17. D
3. C	8. D	13. C	18. C
4. E	9. D	14. B	19. B
5. B	10. E	15. E	20. B

The Old Man and the Sea

Teacher's Copy Study Guide

Vocabulary

Day 1

salao – “the worst form of unlucky”
skiff - a light rowing boat
bodega - a cellar or shop selling wine and food
gaff - a stick with an iron hook for landing large fish
bow - the front end of a boat or ship
stern - the rear part of a boat or ship
resolution - boldness and firmness of purpose

Day 2

furled - rolled up and secured
thole pin - a pin in the side of a boat; the place for an oar
gunwale - the upper edge of the side of a boat
fathom - a measure of six feet of water
carapaced - hidden within the shell; covered
grippes - the influenza virus
taut - tight, not slack
annulled - to make invalid
thwart - a seat in a small boat
scythe - a harvesting tool with a long curved blade

Day 3

coagulated - changed from a fluid to a semi-solid
hoist – to raise by means of ropes and pulleys
rigor mortis – a stiffening of the body after death
improvise - to construct a plan without preparation
undulation - a wavy motion
dorado - a type of fish; also called dolphin

Day 4

astern - to the rear
maw - the stomach of an animal
sustenance - nourishment or food
ceding - giving up possession
placid - mild, calm
interminable – without an end
malignancy - feeling or showing intense ill-will
mutilated – ruined, cut up

Day 5

unstepped - took down
tempered - made metal harder

1. What do the old man's eyes tell about his personality?

Though Santiago has gone eighty-four days without catching a fish and everything about him is old and weathered, his eyes tell a different story. Hemingway says that Santiago's eyes "were the same color as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated." (Pg. 10)

2. Locate and explain a simile on page 10.

Santiago's scars are "as old as erosions in a fishless desert." This simile is part of a complex use of imagery because deserts are generally thought of as being without fish, Santiago is constantly on the ocean, the opposite of a desert, and any erosion in a desert shifts due to the wind. Hemingway here is basically making the comparison to indicate and emphasize Santiago's age, hard life, and lack of luck in fishing.

3. In the context of the story, what does the narrator mean when he says: "He [the old man] was too simple to wonder when he had attained humility. But he knew he had attained it and he knew it was not disgraceful and it carried no loss of true pride"? (Pgs. 13-14)

The boy wanted to help the old man get some fresh bait; and, in part, the man accepted the boy's offering. A proud person of Santiago's temperament and achievements might have refused all offers of help, and at one time Santiago might have been too proud to accept help. But at some point, quite unbeknownst to himself, he had attained humility and was able to accept help in a graceful manner.

4. To what extent is the old man alone in life?

His wife is dead and if he has any children we do not know of them; therefore, in terms of close relatives, he is alone.

5. How does the boy feel about Santiago? Why?

Manolin feels great respect and love toward Santiago, probably because Santiago treats him with respect and love. He sees Santiago as a good person, one to emulate.

6. How does the other fisherman's treatment of the boy contrast with the way Santiago treats him?

The other fisherman treats him as a child, not trusting him with the equipment. As a result of this, the boy does not even like to be awakened by the other fisherman. He says, "I do not like for him to waken me. It is though I were inferior." (Pg. 24)

7. When he was younger, what did Santiago dream about? What does he dream about now? What significance would you attach to this dream?

In the past, he dreamed of storms, women, great occurrences, great fish, fights, contests of strength, and his wife. Now he dreams only of the coast of Africa and the young lions playing on the beach. Because this dream appears three times in the story, critics attach significance to it, but there is little agreement on what it actually does signify. On the surface, however, it seems safe to assume that the dream is a pleasant one for the old man. The lions seem to represent the circular nature of life. They are fierce predators, but in the dreams they are always playing. Perhaps they reflect a harmony between opposing forces: life and death, love and hate, destruction and regeneration. The fact that they “played like young cats” is indicative of Santiago’s past, his memory, and his youth, which are all part of him, but not of his present life, as he cannot be young any longer.

8. What does Santiago think about the sea as he rows out? Why is he rowing out so far?

Santiago thinks of the sea as a woman, kind and beautiful, one that gives or withholds great favors. He rows out far because that is where the big fish, the marlin, are caught.

9. What reason is there for all the explanations and details Hemingway supplies as Santiago prepares the lines and the bait for the day?

Answers will vary. Example: Hemingway details most of Santiago’s preparations to give readers a sense of verisimilitude, as if they are in the boat with Santiago. Another possibility is that these small details show Santiago’s character—he will do what is necessary, “what a man must do,” despite the eighty-four days of bad luck. (Pg. 26)

10. Explain the seeming paradox at the top of page 39.

Hitting the tuna “on the head for kindness” certainly seems cruel, but, in reality, it kills the fish quickly rather than allowing it to suffer further.

11. Santiago begins to talk to the fish and even plead with it to take the bait. What can you infer about him during this sequence?

Answer will vary. Example: Santiago is feeling every small tug, every tentative nibble on the line; he realizes that the marlin must be huge and, even though the fish moves Santiago’s line only imperceptibly, the fisherman understands all the signs he is receiving through the line many fathoms down. All these signs indicate Santiago’s intimate knowledge of fish.

12. What does the big fish do after he takes the bait? Why does Santiago keep the line across his shoulder rather than tie it to the boat?

The marlin begins towing the skiff further out to sea. With the line across his shoulders, there is some give in it, but if he were to tie the line to the boat, a sharp pull could snap the string.

13. Why does Santiago talk to himself in the boat? What does he repeat many times?

He talks to himself because no one is there to be bothered by it; and, apparently, it helps to pass the time for him. Several times Santiago makes a statement such as, "I wish the boy was here" or "I wish I had the boy." (Pgs 50, 51) He had also expressed the same sentiments earlier, on page 45.

14. Hemingway begins to equate Santiago to the marlin. Explain how this is accomplished.

Santiago begins to realize that the fish is the one that will severely test him and wants to see the fish in order to know "what I have against me." (Pg. 46) He knows for certain that he will be engaged in an epic battle, based on the time he has spent hooked with the fish already. Santiago also thinks that he has no cramps yet and is still strong, the fish must be tired and weak because it is the one who "has the hook in his mouth." (Pg.46) On the next page, Santiago voices the initial thought that they are equal and connected: "I can do nothing with him and he can do nothing with me."

This line of reasoning continues, beginning on page 48, when Santiago pities the "great fish"; he uses the same word, "strange," as he had used earlier to describe himself; he equates the age of the marlin with his own; and he is positive the fish is a male, who "has no panic," another reference that would apply to man and fish. Santiago, on page 50, says, "Now we are joined together."

Students will be able to locate many more connections and similarities between the two as the story progresses.

15. Why does Santiago keep wishing that the boy were with him?

He wants Manolin not only to help with the fish, certainly, but also to share the experience with him. He desires the boy's companionship. Santiago thinks, "No one should be alone in their old age." (Pg. 48)

16. To what does Santiago talk while fighting the fish?

Santiago talks to himself, to the boy, to the fish (and other fish, like dolphins and flying fish), to a bird that lands on the fishing line, to God, and to his cut and cramped hand. Later in the book, he will also talk to the sharks.

17. Santiago "knew no man was ever alone on the sea." (Pg. 61) How does this thought fit the context of the story?

In this particular instance, a flight of wild ducks gives rise to the thought, but throughout the novel, he refers to the marlin as a friend and to fish as brothers. Santiago obviously finds the ocean and all it represents a source of comfort and companionship.

18. Why is it so difficult for Santiago to fight this fish? With what words of praise does he speak of these big fish?

The fish is two feet larger than his boat and must weigh a great deal. He says of these fish: "They are not as intelligent as we who kill them; although they are more noble and more able." (Pg. 63)

19. What simile does Hemingway use to describe Santiago's left hand after it cramps?

Hemingway says that Santiago's "left hand was still as tight as the gripped claw of an eagle." (Pg. 63) This simile has the implication not only of crippling his hand, but also of the strength and grasping power of an eagle's talon.

20. On page 64, the narrator says, "He [Santiago]....took his suffering as it came." How long had the battle been going on, and why did Santiago not just cut the line and put an end to the suffering and hardship?

He hooked the fish at noon the day before. Cutting the line does not seem to be anything that Santiago would even consider. He is a fisherman. His role is to catch fish, even if it were to mean he died doing it.

21. The religious element of the book begins with Santiago reciting the Catholic "Hail Mary prayer." He adds a prayer that Mary kill the fish. Why do you think this is unusual?

Answers will vary. Example: Asking a religious icon to kill something is somewhat blasphemous, even though Santiago adds, "Wonderful though he[the fish] is." (Pg. 65) The reader is left wondering why Santiago, who claims that he is not religious, would make a request like this. Additionally, if he is not religious, he, nonetheless, knows the prayer well. Perceptive students may notice that the previous quotation about Santiago's acceptance of suffering while being "against the wood" can be interpreted as a slight allusion to Christ's time on the cross. More allusions to the Crucifixion will occur at various points in the book.

22. Why does Santiago admire Joe DiMaggio?

While we are not told directly, Santiago does offer some answers: DiMaggio played baseball, Santiago's favorite sport, extremely well, and he played it despite the pain of a bone spur; in addition, his father was a fisherman and would understand Santiago. DiMaggio is a member of the Yankees, perennial World Champions, and Santiago had been known as the Champion after winning the arm-wrestling contest.

23. How does the story about the contest in the Casablanca bar add to the credibility of the main plot?

That contest demonstrates that, even as a young man, Santiago had a great deal of physical strength and endurance; the contest lasted a full day. Because he was the strongest man and the best arm wrestler in the area, he came to be called The Champion ["El Campeón"]. This memory makes his strength and endurance as an old man more believable.

24. On page 75, Santiago is as determined as ever to kill the fish, but he also has some mixed feelings. What are the other feelings he is having towards the fish?

Santiago is feeling sorry for the great fish that he considers his brother. He is concerned that the fish may be hungry, but he is confident in his abilities to outlast the marlin. The people who would eventually eat the marlin are most likely not "worthy" of eating the fish based on "the manner of his behaviour and his great dignity," which Santiago seems to compare to the sun and the stars. (Pg.75)

25. "...that he is up against something that he does not comprehend is everything." What literary term is used in the quotation above from page 76?

It would be considered an instance of anthropomorphism because the fish cannot "comprehend" or think. On page 90, Santiago says of the fish, uncomprehendingly, "He can't be that big." The quote also once again reinforces the connection between the fish and Santiago because the old man has never seen a fish so large, powerful, or worthy of such respect as this one.

26. On page 94, the narrator expresses a paradox. Locate it.

Hemingway writes, "Then the fish came alive, with his death in him..."

27. On page 97, the motif of Joe DiMaggio and a bone spur comes up again. What might bone spurs be symbolic of?

Answers will vary. Example: The recurrence of the bone spur seems to suggest that it could be a symbol for any physical handicap people have to endure and overcome when involved in a challenge.

28. Santiago again expresses his concept of oneness with the fish, after he has killed it, lashed it to the skiff, and is heading toward land. What does the old man think?

Santiago wonders whether he is actually bringing the fish in or if the fish is "bringing me in." Either way, however, is fine with Santiago because, while the fish will bring him a lot of money, it never meant the old man any harm, and he says, "I am only better than him through trickery..." (Pg. 99)

29. In what way does the shark attack come as a shock to the reader?

Shortly after Santiago ties the fish to the boat, without warning the narrator says, "It was an hour before the first shark hit him." (Pg. 100) The simplicity and abruptness with which it is presented makes the reader take notice.

30. What does Santiago feel about the shark attack?

Seeing the shark approach, Santiago is determined to try to save the fish; but he is a realist. This shark is certain to get some part of his fish; and being so far from shore, he probably does not believe this will be the only shark he sees.. He hates the sharks, but accepts that they are part of the sea; Santiago knows that he will not be able to bring the fish in to shore intact. While he fights against this turn of fate, he understands and accepts it: "He hit it [the shark] without hope but with resolution and complete malignancy." (Pg. 102)

31. Santiago repeats that it was too good to last, and he wishes it had been a dream. He concludes: "But man is not made for defeat.... A man can be destroyed but not defeated." (Pg. 103) Explain what this quote means in terms of life and this story.

Answers will vary. Example: Defeat appears to be something that can happen only if one gives up. He also says, "...take it when it comes."

32. On page 107, what further comment is suggestive of Santiago as a Christ-figure?

"Ay,...it is just a noise such as a man might make, involuntarily feeling the nail go through his hands and into the wood." This is an allusion to Christ's being nailed to the cross. Note that Hemingway does not refer to Christ, nor to Jesus as God, but to "a person" who is being crucified.

33. On page 110, 115 and 116, Santiago refers to the distance he sailed to catch the fish as being "too far." Is this a sign of pride?

Answers will vary. Example: Santiago does not seem to be a man who takes violating the tradition of staying close to the waters around Cuba lightly, however, he knew that he would need to take drastic measures to change his luck. He was willing to risk it even if it would be viewed as prideful. He is a worthy man and a good fisherman; but by going out too far, he displays arrogance. Santiago also expresses sorrow and an acknowledgement that both he and the dead marlin will suffer because of his own strong desire to break his unlucky streak. On page 116, however, Santiago doubts that going out too far is the cause of his present problems: "Don't be silly.... You may have much luck yet."

34. Identify the simile on page 119 and explain its meaning.

“In the night sharks hit the carcass as someone might pick up crumbs from the table.” The simile indicates how insignificant the sharks’ feeding has become, now that the marlin has been reduced to nothing but a head and skeleton.

35. Santiago carries the mast up the hill after landing in the village. Explain the allusion in the way Hemingway describes the old man’s difficulties in doing this.

The mast of a boat has a top piece across it, so this part of the skiff would resemble a cross; this would indicate another allusion to Christ, this time referring to the time just before the Crucifixion, when Jesus falls while carrying the cross. Some students may notice that when Santiago arrives in his shack, he falls face down with his arms out straight and his palms up, much like the position of Christ on the cross.

36. Throughout the last part, the boy cries several times. Why?

Manolin cries for several reasons. First, he is overcome with relief that his friend has returned. He feels great sympathy for the pain and the suffering that the old man has encountered. He also makes the biggest decision of his life: he will ride in the skiff with Santiago regardless of his parent’s objections. Interestingly enough, it is almost as though Manolin is a convert or a disciple, adding to the motif of Santiago as a Christ-figure.

37. What is the point of having the tourists on the terrace believe the skeleton of Santiago’s fish is a shark?

Answers will vary. Example: While the fight to land the fish and bring it to shore was at the center of Santiago’s life for three days, his courageous struggle means little to the world at large. The irony of their believing the remains of this great fish are those of the animals that destroyed the marlin should also be understood, especially after the owner of the bodega says, agreeing with Santiago’s opinion, “There has never been such a fish.” (Pg. 123)

38. Santiago’s one character flaw is being too prideful or “hubris.” In what sense is Santiago a tragic hero?

The traditional tragic hero is the god-man who suffers a serious setback or death because of a fatal flaw in his character. At this point, it appears that Santiago will lose that which he struggled so hard to get, the fish.

39. What changes in Manolin show that he is a dynamic character?

One of changes that helps to reveal that Manolin is a dynamic character is the decision that he makes to rejoin Santiago on his skiff, regardless of what his parents may say.

40. Relate the characteristics of the five plot elements: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution, to the story.

The exposition begins with the setting of the story and the introducing of the characters. After the 84 successive days without catching a fish, Santiago promises Manolin that he will go “far out” into the ocean. During the rising action, Santiago loads his skiff and heads out to sea. The marlin takes the bait, but Santiago cannot reel him in. Next, the three-day struggle between the fisherman and the fish plays out. The climax is reached as the marlin circles the skiff and Santiago, who is completely exhausted, finally is able to kill it. The trip back to shore and the episodes with the sharks constitute the falling action. The resolution takes place as Santiago returns to his home, and Manolin makes the decision to sail with him once again.

41. Hemingway uses the marlin and the shovel-nosed sharks as symbols. What do the sharks symbolize?

Hemingway uses the marlin and the shovel-nosed sharks as symbols representing one’s opponents. The marlin symbolizes the ideal opponent. He is magnificent and mighty and brings out the best in Santiago. The shovel-nosed sharks are ugly and mindless. They symbolize the destructive laws of the universe, and Santiago wins no glory from battling them.

42. From what viewpoint is the story told?

This story is told in third-person omniscient viewpoint.

The Old Man and the Sea

Student Copy Study Guide

Vocabulary

Day 1

salao – “the worst form of unlucky”
skiff - a light rowing boat
bodega - a cellar or shop selling wine and food
gaff - a stick with an iron hook for landing large fish
bow - the front end of a boat or ship
stern - the rear part of a boat or ship
resolution - boldness and firmness of purpose

Day 2

furled - rolled up and secured
thole pin - a pin in the side of a boat; the place for an oar
gunwale - the upper edge of the side of a boat
fathom - a measure of six feet of water
carapaced - hidden within the shell; covered
grippes - the influenza virus
taut - tight, not slack
annulled - to make invalid
thwart - a seat in a small boat
scythe - a harvesting tool with a long curved blade

Day 3

coagulated - changed from a fluid to a semi-solid
hoist – to raise by means of ropes and pulleys
rigor mortis – a stiffening of the body after death
improvise - to construct a plan without preparation
undulation - a wavy motion
dorado - a type of fish; also called dolphin

Day 4

astern - to the rear
maw - the stomach of an animal
sustenance - nourishment or food
ceding - giving up possession
placid - mild, calm
interminable – without an end
malignancy - feeling or showing intense ill-will
mutilated – ruined, cut up

Day 5

unstepped - took down
tempered - made metal harder

1. What do the old man's eyes tell about his personality?
2. Locate and explain a simile on page 10.
3. In the context of the story, what does the narrator mean when he says: "He [the old man] was too simple to wonder when he had attained humility. But he knew he had attained it and he knew it was not disgraceful and it carried no loss of true pride"? (Pgs. 13-14)
4. To what extent is the old man alone in life?
5. How does the boy feel about Santiago? Why?
6. How does the other fisherman's treatment of the boy contrast with the way Santiago treats him?
7. When he was younger, what did Santiago dream about? What does he dream about now? What significance would you attach to this dream?
8. What does Santiago think about the sea as he rows out? Why is he rowing out so far?

9. What reason is there for all the explanations and details Hemingway supplies as Santiago prepares the lines and the bait for the day?
10. Explain the seeming paradox at the top of page 39.
11. Santiago begins to talk to the fish and even plead with it to take the bait. What can you infer about him during this sequence?
12. What does the big fish do after he takes the bait? Why does Santiago keep the line across his shoulder rather than tie it to the boat?
13. Why does Santiago talk to himself in the boat? What does he repeat many times?
14. Hemingway begins to equate Santiago to the marlin. Explain how this is accomplished.
15. Why does Santiago keep wishing that the boy were with him?
16. To what does Santiago talk while fighting the fish?

17. Santiago “knew no man was ever alone on the sea.” (Pg. 61) How does this thought fit the context of the story?
18. Why is it so difficult for Santiago to fight this fish? With what words of praise does he speak of these big fish?
19. What simile does Hemingway use to describe Santiago’s left hand after it cramps?
20. On page 64, the narrator says, “He [Santiago]....took his suffering as it came.” How long had the battle been going on, and why did Santiago not just cut the line and put an end to the suffering and hardship?
21. The religious element of the book begins with Santiago reciting the Catholic “Hail Mary prayer.” He adds a prayer that Mary kill the fish. Why do you think this is unusual?
22. Why does Santiago admire Joe DiMaggio?
23. How does the story about the contest in the Casablanca bar add to the credibility of the main plot?

24. On page 75, Santiago is as determined as ever to kill the fish, but he also has some mixed feelings. What are the other feelings he is having towards the fish?
25. "...that he is up against something that he does not comprehend is everything." What literary term is used in the quotation above from page 76?
26. On page 94, the narrator expresses a paradox. Locate it.
27. On page 97, the motif of Joe DiMaggio and a bone spur comes up again. What might bone spurs be symbolic of?
28. Santiago again expresses his concept of oneness with the fish, after he has killed it, lashed it to the skiff, and is heading toward land. What does the old man think?
29. In what way does the shark attack come as a shock to the reader?
30. What does Santiago feel about the shark attack?
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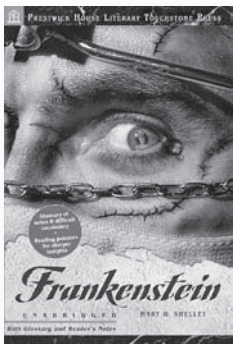
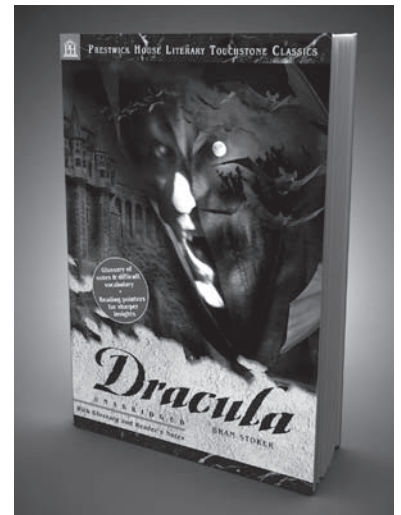
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