

READING  
ADDITIONAL  
TEXT  
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# *Reading* Fiction 1



Elements of Fiction

Novels

Short Stories

Narrative Poetry

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## PREVIEW

## ELEMENTS OF FICTION

**LESSON 1:** Characters: *Moby Dick*

**LESSON 2:** Setting: *Dracula*

**LESSON 3:** Plot: *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

**LESSON 4:** Dialogue: *The Count of Monte Cristo*

When you complete this unit, you will be able to answer questions like these:

- *In Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, what two forces are in conflict?*
- *What do we call the character who tells the story in his or her own words?*
- *In what three ways can dialogue be used to tell a story?*
- *How important is setting in the novel, Dracula?*

## PRETEST

Write **T** or **F** to show whether you think each statement is *true* or *false*.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ *Characters* are the fictional people who play a part in a novel.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ A novel's *setting* is the sequence of events that make up the story.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The words spoken by story characters are called *dialogue*.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ A novel's *plot* is the time and place the story events take place.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ The *narrator* of a novel tells the story from his or her own point of view.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ A story's *plot* always centers on a conflict between opposing characters or forces.

Pretest answers: 1. T 2. F 3. T 4. F 5. T 6. T

## CHARACTERS

## Before reading . . .

Authors describe their characters in several ways. Sometimes they *directly* describe characters' traits. At other times, they describe *indirectly* through the characters' thoughts, words, and actions. This lesson presents an adapted excerpt from *Moby Dick*, Herman Melville's greatest novel. It is the story of an obsessed man's pursuit of a great white whale. Notice the two ways that Melville describes Captain Ahab. First, Ahab is directly described by Ishmael, the novel's narrator. Then Ahab is described indirectly—through his own words and actions.



## MOBY DICK

It was one of those gray and gloomy days. As I mounted to the deck, foreboding shivers ran over me. There on the deck stood Captain Ahab. I saw no sign of bodily illness about him, nor of the recovery from any. His high, broad form seemed to be made of solid bronze. Running down one side of his tawny, scorched face and neck was a long white scar. It resembled the groove in the trunk of a great tree that has been struck by lightning. Had he been born with that mark? Or was the scar left by some wound? No one could say. None of the crew dared to speak of it.

Ahab's grim appearance affected me strongly. At first I hardly noticed its cause—the barbaric white leg upon which he partly stood. I had heard about this ivory leg. Some said it had been fashioned at sea from the polished bone of the sperm whale's jaw. Captain Ahab stood erect, looking straight out at the sea with a fixed and fearless gaze. Not a word did he speak, nor did his officers say anything to him. Moody Ahab stood his ground, in all the dignity of some mighty woe.

\* \* \*

One morning shortly after breakfast, Captain Ahab called the crew to the deck. As the men gathered, all eyes were on Ahab. To the crew, he looked like the weather horizon when a storm is coming up. “You’ve all heard me give orders about a white whale. Do you see this?” said Ahab, holding up a shiny gold coin. “Whoever spots the whale gets this sixteen-dollar gold piece! Skin your eyes for him, men. Look sharp for white water. If you see but a bubble, sing out!”

“Captain Ahab,” said Starbuck, the first mate. “I have heard of a white whale called Moby Dick. But was it not Moby Dick that took off your leg?”

“Who told you that?” cried Ahab. “Aye, Mr. Starbuck, it was Moby Dick that dismasted me. Yes, it was Moby Dick that brought me to this dead stump I stand on now. Aye, aye!” he shouted with a loud, animal sound. It was like the sob of a heart-stricken moose. Then, tossing both arms and cursing, he shouted out again, “Aye! And I’ll chase him ’round the Cape of Good Hope, and ’round the Horn. I’ll chase him to Norway and beyond to the land of flames before I give him up! And this is what you have shipped for, men! To chase that white whale on both sides of land, and over all sides of earth. There is to be no rest until he spouts black blood and rolls fin over. What say you, men—will you shake hands on it, now? I think you do look brave.”

“Aye, aye!” shouted the harpooners and seamen, running closer to the excited old man. “A sharp eye for the white whale! A sharp eye for Moby Dick!” they shouted.



**COMPREHENSION**

Write your answers on the lines.

1. What causes the “foreboding shivers” the narrator feels as he climbs to the deck of the ship? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the main thing the narrator notices about Captain Ahab’s grim appearance? \_\_\_\_\_
3. According to Ahab, what is to be the crew’s main goal?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How far is Ahab prepared to sail in pursuit of the whale?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Why is Captain Ahab so eager to go after the white whale?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What does Ahab plan to do to Moby Dick if and when he catches up with him? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How does Ahab motivate the crew to search for the whale?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. How does the crew respond to Ahab’s request for their support?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**CHARACTER STUDY**

The following sentences describe characters in the story. Put a checkmark (✓) next to each *true* statement.

1. \_\_\_\_ Captain Ahab seemed to be a pleasant, mild-mannered person.
2. \_\_\_\_ Starbuck, the first mate, liked to argue.



**VOCABULARY**

Study the **boldface** words from the reading. Then circle a letter to show the correct definition.

1. **foreboding**
  - a. fear that something bad is about to happen
  - b. fear of missing out on an opportunity
  - c. relief at having avoided trouble or danger
  - d. expectation of a reward
  
2. **tawny**
  - a. tough, thick
  - b. smooth, nearly flawless
  - c. brownish orange to light brown
  - d. tiny, nearly microscopic
  
3. **grim**

a. trim	c. gloomy
b. grimy	d. brief
  
4. **woe**

a. wow	c. sorrow
b. worry	d. wonder
  
5. **dismasted**

a. broke off a part	c. discovered
b. distrusted	d. disturbed

**NOTING DETAILS**

Circle a letter to show the correct answer.

1. The narrator compared the scar on Ahab's face and neck to which of the following?
 

a. a sperm whale's jaw	c. solid bronze
b. the groove in the trunk of a great tree struck by lightning	d. polished ivory
  
2. Which word did the narrator use to describe Ahab's white leg?
 

a. fixed	b. polished	c. dignified	d. barbaric
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3. What did Ahab promise to the crewman who first sighted the white whale?
  - a. gold dollar
  - b. silver dollar
  - c. \$16.00 gold piece
  - d. \$6.00 gold piece
  
4. To which of the following did the narrator compare Captain Ahab?
  - a. heart-stricken moose
  - b. white whale
  - c. sperm whale
  - d. Moby Dick

**PUZZLER**

Two or three words in each sentence are spelled backward. Find and circle these words. Then rewrite the sentences on the lines below, spelling the words correctly. The first one is done for you.

1. As I (detnuom) to the deck, (gnidoberof) shivers ran over me.

*As I mounted to the deck, foreboding shivers  
ran over me.*

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2. Moody Ahab stood his dnuorg, in all the ytingid of some ythgim woe.

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3. He looked like the rehtaew noziroh when a mrots is gnimoc up.

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4. One morning yltrohs after tsafkaerb, Ahab dellac the crew to the deck.

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## SETTING

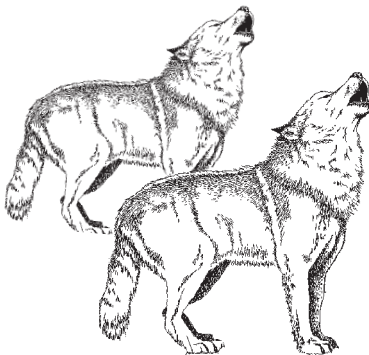
**Before reading . . .**

A story's *setting* is when and where it takes place. In some stories, setting serves mainly as a backdrop for the action. In others, the setting has an important impact on the characters and the events. This adapted excerpt is from the novel *Dracula*, Bram Stoker's famous tale of horror. Notice how the narrator is influenced by the setting.

**DRACULA**

The driver cracked his whip, called to his horses, and off they swept. As they sank into the darkness, I felt a strange chill, and a lonely feeling came over me. A cloak was thrown over my shoulders, and a rug across my knees. The driver said, "The night is chill, sir, and my master the Count asked me to take good care of you. There is a flask of plum brandy underneath the seat, if you should require it." His words did not reassure me. After a while I struck a match and looked at my watch. It was a few minutes before midnight.

Suddenly a dog howled in a farmhouse far down the road. It was a long, agonized wailing, as if from fear. The sound was taken up by another dog, and then another and another. Soon a wild howling seemed to come from all over the countryside through the gloom of the night. The horses began to strain and rear, but the driver quieted them down. Then, far off in the distance, from the mountains on each side of us, came a louder and sharper howling—that of wolves. Now we could hear the rising wind as well. It moaned and whistled through the rocks that rose on both sides of the road. The branches of the trees crashed together as we



swept along. It grew colder and colder still. Then a fine, powdery snow began to fall. Soon we and all around us were covered with a white blanket.

The baying of the wolves sounded nearer and nearer, as though they were closing around us from every side. I grew dreadfully afraid, and the horses shared my fear. The driver, however, was not in the least disturbed. He kept turning his head left and right, but I could not see anything through the darkness. Just then the moon, sailing through the black clouds, appeared behind the jagged crest of a beetling, pine-clad rock. By its light I saw around us a ring of wolves! I could see their white teeth, lolling red tongues, long sinewy limbs, and shaggy hair. We stopped, and the horses jumped about and reared in terror. The driver got down. I heard his voice raised in a tone of imperious command. Amazingly, the wolves fell back and then back farther still. At last the driver climbed back into the carriage and we were on our way again. Just then a heavy cloud passed across the face of the moon, so that we were again in darkness.

How had the driver caused the wolves to disappear? It seemed so strange and uncanny that a dreadful fear came upon me. I was afraid to speak or move. The journey seemed to last forever. As we swept on our way, we climbed higher and higher into the mountains. We traveled in almost complete darkness, for the rolling clouds obscured the moon. Finally, the driver pulled up the horses in the courtyard of a vast ruined castle. From the tall black windows came no ray of light. The castle's broken battlements showed a jagged line against the moonlit sky. My journey was over. I had arrived at the castle of Count Dracula.

