

Focus ON READING

Vocabulary

READING
COMPREHENSION

The Cay

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ACTIVATE PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Reproducible Activities

Introduction/Classroom Management

WELCOME TO *FOCUS ON READING*

Focus on Reading literature study guides are designed to help all students comprehend and analyze their reading. Many teachers have grappled with the question of how to make quality literature accessible to all students. Students who are already avid readers of quality literature are motivated to read and are familiar with prereading and reading strategies. However, struggling readers frequently lack basic reading skills and are not equipped with the prior knowledge and reading strategies to thoroughly engage in the classroom literature experience.

Focus on Reading is designed to make teachers' and students' lives easier! How? By providing materials that allow all students to take part in reading quality literature. Each *Focus on Reading* study guide contains activities that focus on vocabulary and comprehension skills that students need to get the most from their reading. In addition, each section within the guide contains a before-reading **Focus Your Reading** page containing tools to ensure success: **Vocabulary Words to Know**, **Things to Know**, and **Questions to Think About**. These study aids will help students who may not have the prior knowledge they need to truly comprehend the reading.

USING *FOCUS ON READING*

Focus on Reading is designed to make it easy for you to meet the individual needs of students who require additional reading skills support. Each *Focus on Reading* study guide contains teacher and student support materials, reproducible student activity sheets, an end-of-book test, and an answer key.

- **Focus on the Book**, a convenient reference page for the teacher, provides a brief overview of the entire book including a synopsis, information about the setting, author data, and historical background.
- **Focus Your Knowledge**, a reference page for students, is a whole-book, prereading activity designed to activate prior knowledge and immerse students in the topic.

The study guide divides the novel into 6 manageable sections to make it easy to plan classroom time. Five activities are devoted to each section of the novel.

Before Reading

- **Focus Your Reading** consists of 3 prereading sections:

Vocabulary Words to Know lists and defines 10 vocabulary words students will encounter in their reading. Students will not have to interrupt their reading to look up, ask for, or spend a lot of time figuring out the meaning of unfamiliar words. These words are later studied in-depth within the lesson.

Things to Know identifies terms or concepts that are integral to the reading but that may not be familiar to today's students. This section is intended to "level the playing field" for those students who may not have much prior knowledge about the time period, culture, or theme of the book. It also gets students involved with the book, increasing interest before they begin reading.

Questions to Think About helps students focus on the main ideas and important details they should be looking for as they read. This activity helps give students a *purpose* for reading. The goal of these guiding questions is to build knowledge, confidence, and comfort with the topics in the reading.

During Reading

- **Build Your Vocabulary** presents the 10 unit focus words in the exact context of the book. Students are then asked to write their own definitions and sentences for the words.
- **Check Your Understanding: Multiple Choice** offers 10 multiple-choice, literal comprehension questions for each section.
- **Check Your Understanding: Short Answer** contains 10 short-answer questions based on the reading.

After Reading

- **Deepen Your Understanding** is a writing activity that extends appreciation and analysis of the book. This activity focuses on critical-thinking skills and literary analysis.
- **End-of-Book Test** contains 20 multiple-choice items covering the book. These items ask questions that require students to synthesize the information in the book and make inferences in their answers.

Focus Your Reading

Vocabulary Words to Know

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

schooners—two-masted sailing ships

massive—impressively large

sorrowful—full of sadness

shimmered—shone with a fitful light;
glimmered

defying—challenging authority

alabaster—very white and smooth

ebony—black

flimsy—unsubstantial; not strong

parch—to dry or shrivel

remote—distant; isolated

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

A **refinery** is an industrial plant that purifies crude oil into fuel oil and gasoline.

Blackout curtains were used during World War II to keep light from escaping through windows at night and thus providing a target for enemy aircraft.

The **Nazis** were brought to power in Germany under the leadership of Adolf Hitler in 1933. The Allied nations, primarily the United States, Great Britain, and Russia, fought them in World War II.

The **V-for-Victory** sign was made by forming a “V” with the first two fingers of the hand. It was used by people during World War II as a way of showing their belief in and support of an allied victory.

Calypso refers to a type of music long popular in the Caribbean, particularly in the West Indies. It is upbeat in tone and relies heavily on the use of steel drums.

Flying fish are so called because their unusually large fins allow them to sustain brief periods of gliding flight over the water.

Build Your Vocabulary

Read the sentences below. On the line, write your definition of the word in bold type. Then, on another sheet of paper, use that word in a new sentence of your own.

1. “Even the native **schooners** were quiet against the docks inside the channel.”
schooners: _____
2. “But I couldn’t see the usual parade of ships coming toward the harbor; the stubby ones or the **massive** ones with flags of many nations that steamed slowly up the bay to the Schottegat to load gas and oil.”
massive: _____
3. “I listened to the **sorrowful** sound of his voice until my mother’s hand switched it to off.”
sorrowful: _____
4. “The fumes **shimmered** in the air, and one by one, they ‘topped’ her tanks, loading them right to the brim and securing them for sea.”
shimmered: _____
5. “The ships had begun to sail again, **defying** the submarines.”
defying: _____
6. “His face couldn’t have been blacker, or his teeth whiter. They made an **alabaster** trench in his mouth, and his pink-purple lips peeled back over them like the meat of a conch shell.”
alabaster: _____
7. “I looked closer at the black man. . . . Muscles rippled over the **ebony** of his arms and around his shoulders.”
ebony: _____
8. “He stripped off his shirt and his pants. . . . But soon, we had a **flimsy** shelter from the burning sun.”
flimsy: _____
9. “I asked him for a drink of water. He nodded agreeably, saying, ‘D’sun do **parch**.’”
parch: _____
10. “He scanned the barren sea and then looked back at me, his old eyes growing **remote**.”
remote: _____

Check Your Understanding

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

1. How does Phillip feel the morning after the submarines attacked?
 - a. frightened
 - b. anxious
 - c. excited
2. How old are Phillip and Henrik?
 - a. ten
 - b. eleven
 - c. twelve
3. Why do Phillip and his parents live in Curaçao?
 - a. His father was born there.
 - b. His father works there.
 - c. His mother was born there.
4. What nationality are the Enrights?
 - a. American
 - b. Dutch
 - c. British
5. Where does Phillip's mother want to take him?
 - a. to Aruba
 - b. to England
 - c. to Virginia
6. What is the *S. S. Hato*?
 - a. a British tanker
 - b. a Dutch freighter
 - c. a German U-Boat
7. What happens to the *Hato* after it leaves Panama?
 - a. It is torpedoed and sinks.
 - b. It hits an iceberg and sinks.
 - c. It is captured by pirates.
8. What happens to Phillip in the lifeboat?
 - a. He is knocked unconscious by a blow to the head.
 - b. He is comforted by his mother.
 - c. He is taken prisoner by the Germans.
9. Where is Timothy's home?
 - a. Curaçao
 - b. Jamaica
 - c. the West Indies
10. Who is Stew?
 - a. the *Hato*'s cook
 - b. the cook's cat
 - c. Timothy's friend

Deepen Your Understanding

Characterization refers to the author's description of a character. In *The Cay*, Timothy is first introduced to us through the eyes of Phillip. How does Phillip describe Timothy? What does this tell you about Timothy? What does this tell you about Phillip? Use specific details and examples to explain your answers.

Focus Your Reading

Vocabulary Words to Know

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

blotted—darkened or hid

horny—very rough and hard

scorch—to burn with intense heat

haze—a blurry or partially opaque atmosphere

drone—a dull, humming sound

sizzle—a hissing sound

harass—to disturb or irritate

disheartened—discouraged

treading—beating with the feet

rage—violent anger

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

The **Virgin Islands** are West Indian islands located east of Puerto Rico in the Caribbean Sea. Their governance is divided between Great Britain and the United States. The capital city for the American Virgin Islands is Charlotte Amalie, located on the island of St. Thomas.

Barbados, located in the Caribbean, is the easternmost island of the British West Indies.

A **petrel** is a variety of small seabird.

A **booby** is a type of large, tropical seabird.

Build Your Vocabulary

Read the sentences below. On the line, write your definition of the word in bold type. Then, on another sheet of paper, use that word in a new sentence of your own.

1. “Total darkness **blotted** out the sea, and it became cold and damp.”
blotted: _____
2. “Once, sometime during the early night I felt his **horny** hand on my forehead.”
horny: _____
3. “The wind had died and already the sun was beginning to **scorch**.”
scorch: _____
4. “I just kept looking at him. It seemed there was a film, a **haze**, separating us.”
haze: _____
5. “The faint **drone** of the aircraft seemed closer now.”
drone: _____
6. “After a moment of silence, I heard the **sizzle** of the water as Timothy doused the torch.”
sizzle: _____
7. “‘Tis a good ting not to **harass** d’soul ovah dis.”
harass: _____
8. “Do not be **dishearten**, young bahss. Today we will be foun’, to be true.”
disheartened: _____
9. “I knew how to swim, but didn’t know which way to go. So I was **treading** water.”
treading: _____
10. “I knew Timothy was in a **rage**. I could hear his heavy breathing and knew he was staring at me.”
rage: _____

Check Your Understanding

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

- Where did Phillip live before his family moved to Curaçao?
 - Florida
 - Virginia
 - North Carolina
- What is Timothy's citizenship?
 - Danish
 - Dutch
 - American
- What happens after Phillip's headache goes away?
 - He discovers he is blind.
 - He discovers he is very thirsty.
 - He discovers he is very hungry.
- How many days pass before Timothy and Phillip hear a motor?
 - two
 - three
 - four
- According to Timothy, what on their raft is not good luck?
 - the torch
 - the key
 - the cat
- What makes Phillip laugh for the first time since his blindness?
 - the booby's name
 - Timothy's knock-knock joke
 - Stew cat's ticklish tail
- What threaten to attack Phillip when he falls overboard?
 - flying fish
 - sharks
 - moray eels
- How does Timothy describe the island?
 - It is very large and lovely.
 - It is very small and low.
 - It is very mountainous and green.
- Why does Timothy want to go ashore?
 - He thinks they will be safe there.
 - He loves to eat sea grapes.
 - He wants to be off the sea.
- How far away is the island when Timothy spots it?
 - about one mile
 - about two miles
 - about three miles

Deepen Your Understanding

Dialogue is what the characters in a story say. Author Theodore Taylor has chosen to write Timothy's dialogue just the way it sounds, in dialect, or regional language. Think about what this does to bring Timothy to life. Then write your own short dialogue in which your character (real or imagined) speaks as a typical student in your school would speak. Remember to focus on how the words sound rather than on how they are correctly spelled.