

The Black Pearl



By

Scott O'Dell

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

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About the author: Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit novelstudies.org.

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Suggestions and Expectations

This 70 page curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two chapters of *The Black Pearl* and is comprised of four activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language and Extension Activities

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking.

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

Students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A **portfolio cover** is included as well as a **Student Checklist**.

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include the struggle between good and evil, courage, personal initiative, overcoming greed and selfishness; the maturation process (personal growth), overcoming difficulty.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying/creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *anagrams*
7. Identify *personification*
8. Use of singular / plural nouns
9. Listing compound words
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identification of root words
13. Identify/create *similes*
14. Identification of a *cliffhanger*

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Identify the climax of the novel
4. Five W's Chart

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Protagonists and antagonists
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Comparing two Characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Write a letter to a friend
4. Complete an Observation Chart
5. Conduct an interview
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete a KWS Chart

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Design an Information Card

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Synopsis

Ramon Salazar knows that someday he will become a partner with his father, pearling in the waters off Baja California. But at sixteen, he's more interested in pearling alone. Ramon wants to find the great pearl – the Pearl of Heaven – for with it comes untold riches.

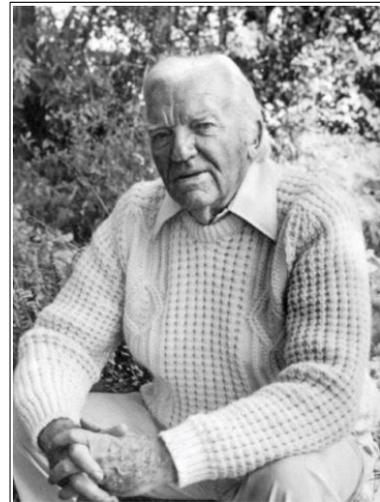
But what Ramon doesn't realize is that the pearl brings more than riches. It brings danger, jealousy, and even death.

Ramon must ask himself: How much is the pearl really worth? [The Publisher]

Author Biography

Scott O'Dell

Scott O`Dell (1898 – 1989), one of the most respected authors of historical fiction, received the Newbery Medal, three Newbery Honor Awards, and the Hans Christian Anderson Author Medal, the highest international recognition for a body of work by an author of books for young readers. His many books include ***Island of the Blue Dolphins; Black Star, Bright Dawn; Streams in the River, River to the Sea; and The Black Pearl.*** He was born O`Dell Gabriel Scott in Los Angeles, but when his name appeared incorrectly on a book, he decided to keep the name Scott O`Dell. He served in the air force during World War I. Before becoming a full-time writer he was a cameraman and technical director.



(Biography Adapted from the Publisher)

The Black Pearl



By Scott O'Dell

Name: _____

The Black Pearl

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Chapter 1 - 2



Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of **The Black Pearl** is a young boy, Ramón Salazar, who goes through a number of exciting adventures as the story unfolds. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. What do you think makes for an especially interesting **protagonist**?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

ambergris	recite	banished	monstrous	accuracy
consent	notation	flaw	benediction	lamentation

1. The scientist was troubled to see a serious _____ in his invention.
2. The crime was so _____ most people were astonished.
3. It was April’s responsibility to _____ the Gettysburg Address.
4. The new computer’s _____ was extremely high.
5. Professor Samuels made a _____ of my answer on the blackboard.
6. His eyes were the color of _____.
7. The kind priest offered a final _____ before seeing the soldiers off.
8. The family found the old woman’s _____ to be very moving.
9. Do you think Sally will receive her parents’ _____ to attend the party?
10. Napoleon was _____ to a remote island after losing the battle.

Questions



1. What is the setting of Chapter One?

2. How does Ramón describe the Manta Diablo?

Good to Know ~ The Manta Ray

An adult manta ray can typically reach a width of 23 feet (7 meters) and can weigh up to 3000 pounds (1350 kg). They have a distinctive body shape with triangular ‘wings’ and paddle-like lobes extending in front of their mouths. They are generally dark on the upper surfaces with pale undersides. They have a large mouth with 18 rows of teeth.



3. Why did Ramón think his grandfather was the most learned man in their town?

4. Describe the role that Father Linares played with regard to the Manta Diablo.

5. **Foreshadowing** is a literary device in which the author provides hints as to upcoming events. Give an example of foreshadowing from Chapter One.

6. Ramón's father's name was _____ .

7. How did Ramón's father earn a living?

8. As Chapter Two opens we find out that it is *the happiest day of Ramón's life*. Why was this the case?

9. Describe how Ramón's father tested him when he was grading the pearls.

10. Why do you think it was so important for Ramón to go fishing with his dad?

Language Activities



A. The Manta Diablo

Using your imagination and the description of the Manta Diablo in Chapter One, draw your own concept of this fearsome creature in the box below.



B. Choose ten words from this chapter with two or more **syllables**. Indicate the syllables by drawing a line between each syllable. **Example:** good / bye.

C. How's Your Spanish?

In the first few chapters of the novel we encounter a number of Spanish words. Match each Spanish word in the left column with the correct English translation on the right.

A	diablo
B	baja
C	paz
D	santa
E	siesta
F	espíritu
G	la
H	chubasco

1	peace
2	sleep
3	storm
4	spirit
5	devil
6	the
7	lower
8	saint

D. Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human. In Chapter Two the author writes, *Tomorrow it may stand on end under the lash of a chubasco*. In this sentence the chubasco (storm) **lashes**.

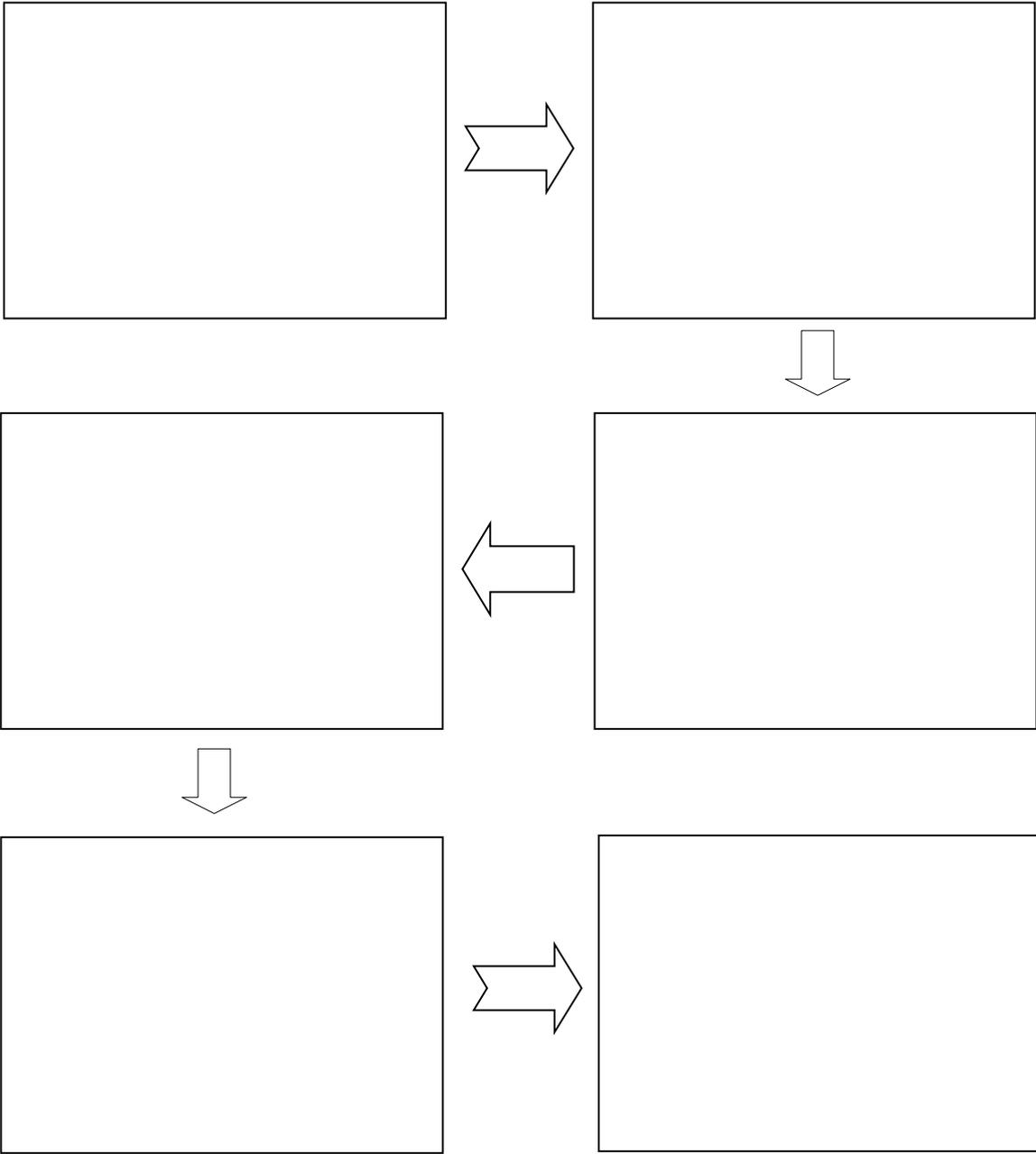
a) Why do you think personification is a literary device used by many authors?

b) Create your own example of personification.

c) When you come across another example of personification later in the novel, return to this question and record it below.

E. Sequence Chart

Choose what you consider to be the six most important events in these chapters. In each of the six boxes below list the six events that you have chosen, describing what happened and telling why you consider this to be an essential part of the story.

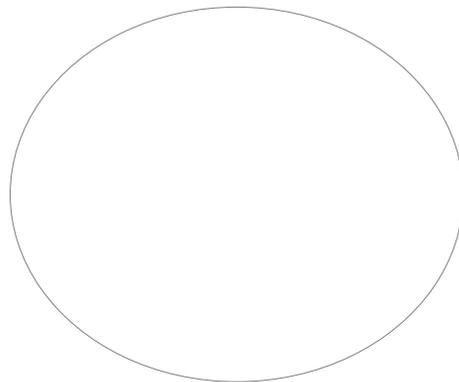


F. 5 Ws and an H.

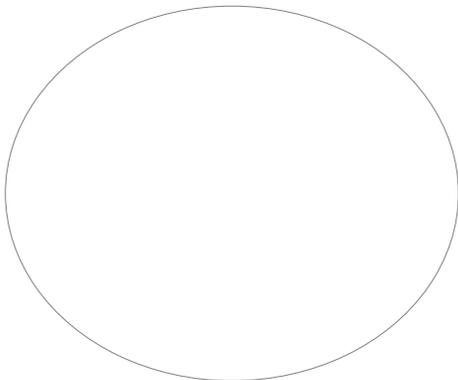
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



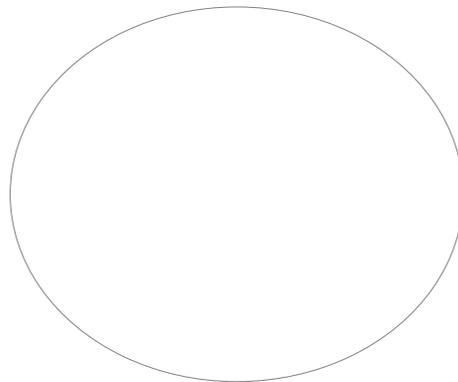
WHO?



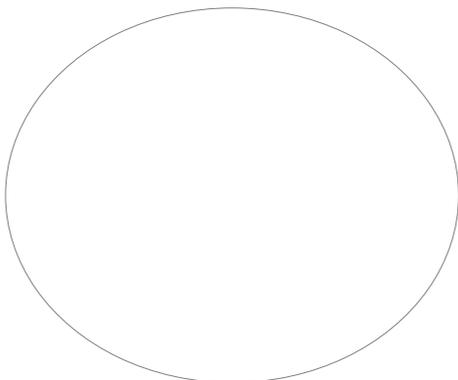
WHAT?



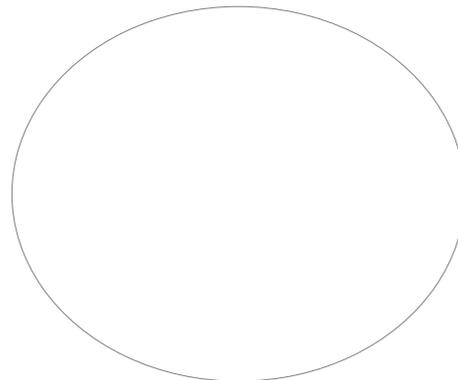
WHEN?



WHERE?



WHY?



HOW?

Extension Activity



Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A storyboard can tell the story of only one scene - or the entire novel.



Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first two chapters of *The Black Pearl*. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6