

The Old Man and the Sea



By
Ernest Hemingway

A Novel Study
by Nat and Joel Reed

The Old Man and the Sea

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Suggestions and Expectations

PLEASE NOTE

Because *The Old Man and the Sea* does not contain separate chapters, we have divided the study guide into seven fairly equal parts without disturbing the continuity of the novel too much. At the beginning of each chapter of the novel study we have therefore indicated the paragraph where that segment of the novel study ends. We refrained from using page numbers because of the varied editions of this classic novel.

Each chapter of the novel study is comprised of these distinct sections:

1. Before You Read
2. Vocabulary Building
3. Comprehension Questions
4. Language and Extension Activities

A **portfolio cover** (page 7) as well as a **Checklist** (page 6) are included so that students may track of their completed work.

Every activity need not be completed by all students.

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

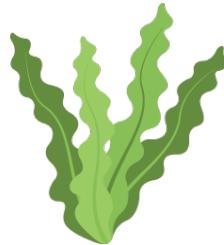
Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to:

- 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.

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include perseverance and resilience in the face of an overwhelming struggle, Cuba, fishermen and fishing, the relationship between man and nature, pride, honor and bravery.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying/creating *alliteration*
4. Identify *similes*
5. Identify *anagrams*
6. Listing compound words
7. Identifying parts of speech
8. Identify *personification*

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. Five W's H Chart .
4. Identify the climax of the novel

Character Activities

1. Determine perspectives
2. Identify the protagonist/antagonist
3. Relating personal experience

Creative and Critical Thinking

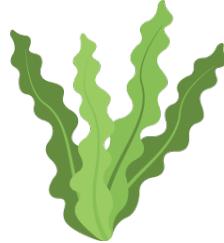
1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Write a description of personal feelings
6. Write a book review
7. Create a poem
8. Opinion writing

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a movie poster
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip

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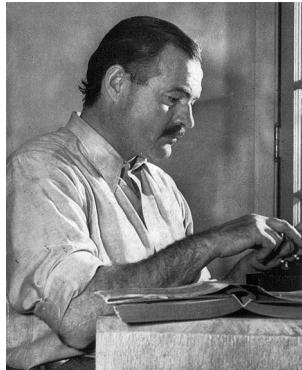
Synopsis

The last of his novels Ernest Hemingway saw published, *The Old Man and the Sea* has proved itself to be one of the most enduring works of American fiction. The story of a down-on-his-luck Cuban fisherman and his supreme ordeal—a relentless, agonizing battle with a giant marlin far out in the Gulf Stream—has been cherished by generations of readers.

Hemingway takes the timeless themes of courage in the face of adversity and personal triumph won from loss and transforms them into a magnificent twentieth-century classic. First published in 1952, this hugely popular tale confirmed his power and presence in the literary world and played a large part in his winning the 1954 Nobel Prize in Literature.
[Courtesy of the Publisher]

Author Biography Ernest Hemingway

Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961) was a celebrated American novelist and short-story writer known for his distinct, understated style and his adventurous life, which included serving as an ambulance driver in WWI and a reporter covering major conflicts like the Spanish Civil War. His influential works, such as *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms*, captured the spirit of the "Lost Generation" and explored themes of disillusionment and stoicism. Hemingway's literary output earned him the 1954 Nobel Prize in Literature, and his short, powerful stories and novels remain classics of 20th-century American literature.



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Student Checklist

Student Name

The Old Man and the Sea



By Ernest Hemingway

Name:

The Old Man and the Sea

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1. Up to and including the paragraph – *He was asleep in a short time and he dreamed of Africa...*



Before you read this section:

The protagonist of *The Old Man and the Sea* is Santiago, an old Cuban fisherman who as the novel opens has gone for 84 days without catching a fish. Santiago, it turns out, is not only the novel's protagonist, but for the most part is the novel's only character. What special challenges might this present for a novelist?



Vocabulary:

Beside each word in Column A write the correct synonym or definition from Column B. Some words have Spanish meanings.

	COLUMN A	MEANING		COLUMN B
1.	gaff		a.	Kindhearted.
2.	furl		b.	Conquer.
3.	benevolent		c.	Decision; intention.
4.	erosion		d.	A small grocery store.
5.	subdue		e.	The gradual destruction or diminution of something.
6.	thwart		f.	Extremely unlucky.
7.	resolution		g.	A barbed spear.
8.	bodega		h.	A crosspiece forming a seat on a boat.
9.	salao		i.	A shallow, flat-bottomed boat.
10	skiff		j.	Roll or fold up and secure neatly.

Questions



1. What is the **setting** of the story at the beginning of this section?

2. Why did the villagers consider the old man to be very unlucky? Why do you think he was so unlucky?

3. Describe your impression of the boy. What personality characteristics did he possess?

4. Why did the boy's father forbid him from fishing with the old man? Why did he make this decision?

5. What does the old man mean when he said that *he brought the fish in too green*?

6. Why did the boy think it was amazing that the old man's eyesight was still good?

7. Give one proof of the old man's unselfish nature from this section.

8. What does the following mean: *The old man opened his eyes and for a moment he was coming back from a long way away?*

9. How does the following statement by the old man reflect part of his philosophy of life: *First you borrow. Then you beg?*

10. What missed opportunity does the old man mention that he regrets? What lesson can we learn from this?

Language Activities



A. A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. There are a number of similes in this novel. Here is one found in this section: *But none of these scars were fresh. They were as old as erosions in a fishless desert.* What is being compared in this example?

--

Invent your own **similes** comparing the following items with something from your own imagination:

a) a skiff in a rainstorm

b) your choice

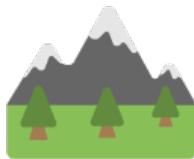
B. **Personification** is giving human qualities to something that is not human. Here is an example from this novel: *Everything about him was old except his eyes and they were the same color as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated.*

Explain what is being personified in this example of how the author portrays this item.

Write a sentence about a marlin including an example of personification.

C. Research ~ Cuba

The country of Cuba plays a significant role in the coming pages. Cuba is a most fascinating nation. Did you know that its nickname is “El Crocodilo” for its shape, or that it is famous for its classic cars and vibrant music? It is also the largest country in the Caribbean. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, research three additional facts about Cuba and record them below.



1	
2	
3	

D. The Good Old Indispensable Adverb!

An **adverb** is a part of speech defined as *a modifier (or helper) of a verb* (usually an action word). Often an adverb will end in the letters *ly* (i.e. *slowly*). Our novel features a good many creative adverbs.



1. *But they did not show it and they spoke politely about the current and the depths...*
→ In this sentence, which verb does ***politely*** modify? _____
2. *“In the American League it is the Yankees as I said,” the old man said happily.*
→ In this sentence, what verb does ***happily*** modify? _____
3. *“At least he carried lists of horses at all times in his pocket and frequently spoke the names of horses on the telephone.”*
→ In this sentence the adverb _____ modifies the verb _____

E. Anagrams

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word **WAS** can also form the word **SAW**. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:



- a) read the clue in the right-hand column.
- b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in this section of *The Old Man and the Sea*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
coast		On a Cuban menu.
great		Price once again.
wrong		Sprouted up.
lists		A long narrow cut.
lives		Wickedness.
later		Change
share		Perceives with the ear.

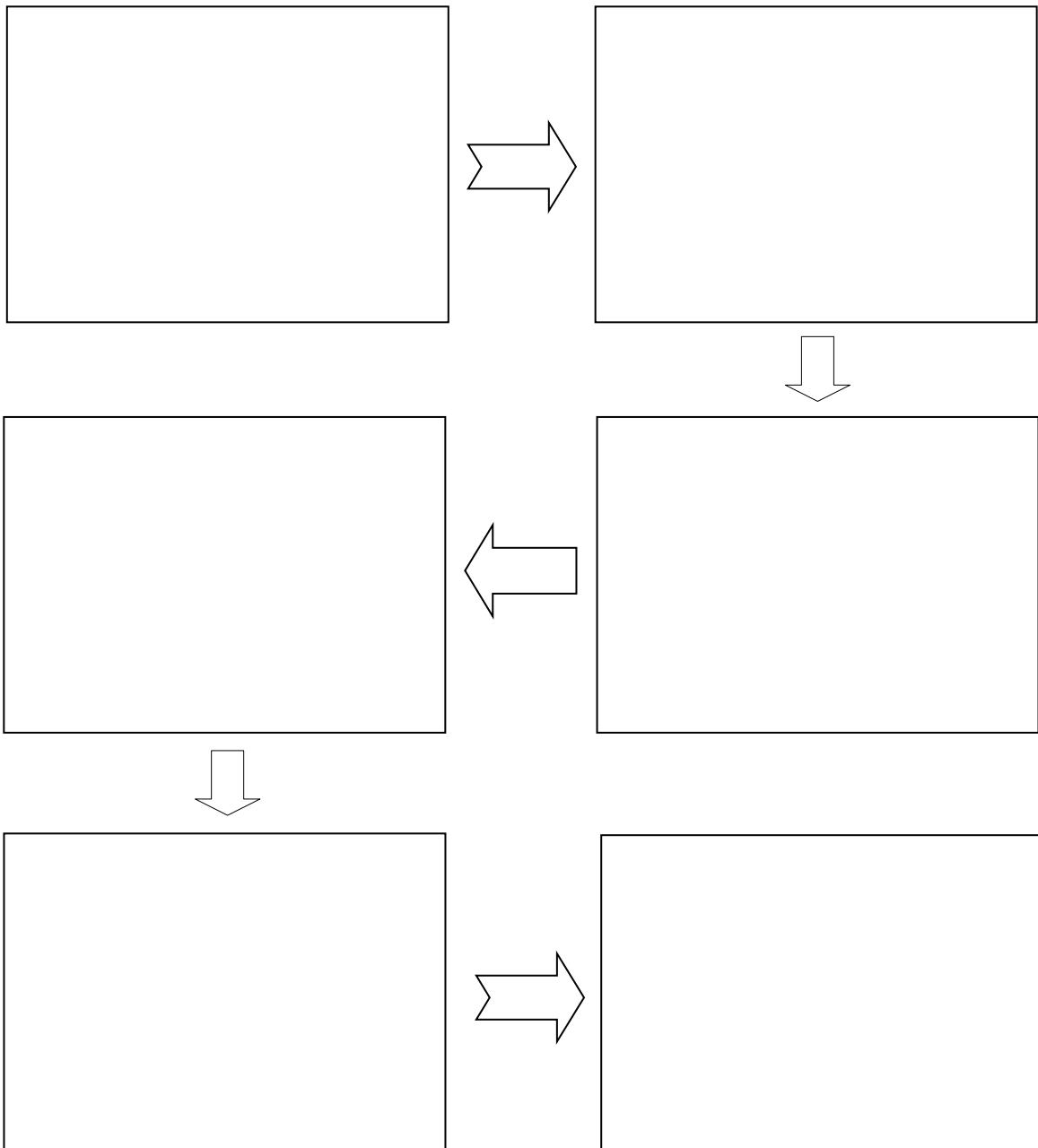
F. Assemble the word parts below into ten compound words found in this section.

out	thing	paper	photo	fisher
not	lapping	news	can	your
men	graph	self	stand	base
every	ball	with	over	under

1		6	
2		7	
3		8	
4		9	
5		10	

G. Sequence Chart

Choose what you consider to be the six most important events in this section. 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.



Extension Activity



A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words



Use the three boxes to describe and illustrate the beginning, middle and end of this section.