

Introduction

Course Organization

Portable Assisted Study Sequence (PASS) courses are organized in five **Units** for each semester of study. In the English Language Arts subject area, each of the five units addresses a different **genre** or type of writing. Unit 1 focuses on **Short Stories**. Unit 2 addresses a **Play or Drama**, while Unit 3 guides your reading of a **Novel**. Unit 4 deals with **Poetry** and Unit 5 looks at **Nonfiction**. Each unit includes an overview with objectives to be met and a brief summary of the content and skills you will study. This particular unit, the “**Generic Novel**”, has been developed in order to provide an option for use in place of the Unit 3 novel included in each of the eight semesters of English Language Arts courses that have been developed by the National PASS Center.

Book Selection

It is important that the book chosen for use with this unit be one that the student finds engaging, relevant to his or her interests and is approved by the program through which the student is taking the course. It is advised that the novel be chosen from a school or state list of recommended readings although recent releases or less widely known publications that deal with migrant or cultural issues could be highly appropriate.

Materials

A statement of materials required is printed at the beginning of each lesson. A notebook will be needed for a writing journal. A highlighter would be very useful for reading comprehension. It is helpful if you own or can borrow or use a dictionary and a thesaurus.

Strategies

Each unit teaches the strategies for literary analysis or writing that are recommended in the new standards of many states. For example, a **story outline** is a **strategy**, a kind of **tool for solving a problem** or a **plan** which has steps. You follow the steps in the same order each time. Using the strategy of making a story outline gives you a way to remember this time but, more importantly, it gives you a method which can be applied the next time you need to remember what is being read.

The Journal / Making a Link Between Reader and Text

Most lessons start with a **journal** entry. A **journal is a notebook in which you write down your thoughts**. A student can learn about English by reading and can learn about writing by writing on a variety of topics, but research has shown that students who learn the most and have the easiest time learning are those who read and then write about what they are reading.

Good readers don't just read. They also do a lot of writing. Reading and writing go together like chips and salsa. You can eat them separately but they are better together. Good readers also think about their own lives as they read stories. They say to themselves, "How is this like something that happened to me?" or "What would I do in this situation?"

You will be asked to make a link between a story and your own life. The journal entry asks you to write about a topic for ten minutes or to write one page in response to a topic or a choice of questions. A journal entry for one lesson might tell you: Write for ten minutes about a time when your friends helped you achieve something you could not do alone. It might ask you to describe your best friend. In lessons which emphasize writing of essays or letters, there are no journal entries.

Fast Writing

In the journal you will do what is called **fast writing** - writing which is not corrected. When you fast write you **just sit down and write for ten minutes or until you cover a whole page**. You don't plan what you are going to write. You write whatever comes to your mind in relation to the topic. You don't stop to correct spelling or punctuation. Yes! English teachers are saying that you should write without correcting a mistake when you realize you have made one!

You should continue writing for the ten minutes so that you don't lose track of what you are thinking. Good writers are **fluent** writers. One of our goals is to help **you** become a fluent writer. This means that you will be able to write easily and quickly - to put a lot of ideas down on paper. You are already a fluent speaker. You can talk to a friend for a long time and don't stop to plan the conversation or to correct your grammar. If you kept stopping to make corrections, you would forget what you were saying!

Your journal becomes like a friend. Authors say this is how they write books. They keep a journal in which they write every day. Some authors say that they write things they

never expected to write. When they go back and re-read entries they find ideas they may use in a book.

Vocabulary Development

Expanding your vocabulary helps to improve your reading comprehension. In the vocabulary section you are introduced to words that the author uses that might be confusing or unknown to you. In the vocabulary sections of several lessons you are asked to choose words to add to your vocabulary. You will be told to select words from the story you are reading, look up their definitions, and write a sentence using the word in a way that makes the meaning clear.

For example:

Word	Definition	Example
eavesdropper	a person who is trying to overhear a conversation	The <i>eavesdropper</i> moved closer to hear what the two women were whispering about.

Highlighting and Margin Notes

If the novel you select belongs to you, you should write in your book. If that is not possible, get a package of Post-it® notes and use them to mark words, the appearance of a new character or important developments as the story progresses. When you come to a word you don't know, **highlight**, underline or tag it. Continue reading and try to figure out what the word might mean. When you have finished that section or chapter of the story, go back and make a guess about what the word means; then look in the dictionary. You should keep a list with definitions in your Journal in addition to entering them as directed in the lessons of this Unit. As you read, you should write notes to yourself in the margins. If something in the story reminds you of another part of the story or seems to be a hint of what will occur later, you might highlight this or make a note in the margin. If something jogs a personal memory, you might write, "This reminds me of...." This is another way to make a personal link.

Comprehension Development

The major part of each text-based lesson will be reading and then thinking about what you have read. The directions tell you to divide your novel into five portions. These do not need to be an equal number of pages. You will want to stop at the end of a chapter or some other logical place. This is merely a suggestion. If your book is particularly long, feel free to

divide it into portions that you find manageable. Keep in mind the elements of plot and character development as you read, making entries on your summary sheet at the back of the unit each time a new character is introduced or as major events take place. Be an active reader, asking yourself questions a teacher might ask.

Comprehension Questions

After you have read each portion of the story, you will find **a set of comprehension questions**. Some questions ask who? what? where? how? The answers can be found in the text. Harder questions ask you to combine bits of information. There is an answer in the text, but you have to do more thinking to obtain the answer. Both of these types of questions have a correct answer. There will also be short answer questions which will require you to write one or two sentences. Short answer questions also will have a correct answer.

Comprehension Activities

In addition to the comprehension questions, there may be other activities to help your understanding. For example, you may be asked to make a drawing showing what the story meant to you. You may be asked to write a character summary, to make a plot diagram, to complete a chart, or to read a poem or story about a similar idea and compare it to the text. The comprehension questions and activities will let you know how well you understood the reading. Answers and suggested acceptable responses to activities are in your PASS Mentor's Answer Key.

Reader's Response

It is easier to remember something if you use it in some way. After you have read a literary work, you will have to think about the content and apply it by writing, drawing, or reading. These activities capitalize on a variety of learning styles. Some of the activities are open-ended and creative; others are structured. Some reinforce what has been read. Others bridge the next reading selection by asking you to make a prediction about what will be read next. These activities represent the kind of question or activity a teacher might use at the end of a class saying, "Think about this for tomorrow" or "Do this for homework."

Written Activities

Within each unit you are asked to develop original written pieces. These might be essays, four to five paragraph compositions written to answer a question. You will also be asked to write poetry, newspaper articles of various sorts and other creative pieces.

Speaking/Listening Activities

To increase your speaking and listening skills you will often be asked to read and discuss your work with a friend, family member or PASS mentor. You may also need to prepare speeches to share with a listener.

Unit Test

Your mentor has the final test for evaluating your work on this Unit. There will be short answer questions as well as an essay question. The essay question will ask you to combine information which you learned, to compare and contrast material, or to give an opinion which you support with examples. You will need to write a few paragraphs to answer the essay question. Your PASS Mentor will have a **scoring rubric** (a listing of characteristics necessary in a good answer) to evaluate your essay.

Style and Usage Guide

As a supplement to the PASS English courses we have produced a booklet containing information and exercises to help polish your writing skills. The Guide is separated into lessons. Each includes definitions of grammatical terms, clues for recognition and examples of use. Activities require you to use the grammar point that is being reviewed. Examples come from or refer to texts used for some PASS Units. Grammar is not tested on the Unit Test. However, it is helpful to do the style and usage exercises. People make judgments about you based on how well you write and speak. This may not be fair, but it is true. Use the Style and Usage Guide to polish your English writing and speaking. The Guide can be downloaded in PDF format off the National PASS Center web site at **www.migrant.net/pass** or ordered from any PASS Course Dissemination Centers distributing National PASS Center courses.