Glass Castle

Independent Study

Ms Thomas

Spring 2013
Teacher____________________________

Part One, A Woman on the Street, Pages 3-5

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Fun Activities

Fun Activities include projects, games, critical thinking activities, brainstorming sessions, writing poems, drawing or sketching.

1. Crossword Puzzle

Make a crossword puzzle using characters and places from the book. Give specific clues that will not give away the answers to any other questions. Use at least 10 questions and answers. Include a separate answer key.

2. Glass Castle Trivia

Write 10 trivia questions on "The Glass Castle". The questions should be difficult, but not impossible to answer without referring to the book. Include an answer key with page numbers where the answer can be located in the text.

3. Movie Poster

Create a movie poster for a film version of "The Glass Castle". Consider who you would cast in each of the starring roles, as well as who you would choose to direct your film, and who would compose a musical score. Encourage students to be creative, using collage, photos, and original artwork.

4. Mapping Project

Make a list of the various places that the Walls family lived throughout the course of the book. Use a U.S. map to locate each of these places (using the internet and/or an atlas) and label them on the map.

5. Your Own Memoir

Write your own 5 page memoir, capturing a particular period of time in your life. The story should be something important to you, or a piece of your lifetime that you think has affected you deeply. This should be written in first person, and should be based on personal memory rather than a factual account of events.

6. What is a memoir?

Create a visual presentation to show the difference between a memoir, biography, and autobiography. You may use poster board, a flip chart, or any other original, visual way to present this information. You may choose to use charts, large words and pictures, collage, or any other means of conveying the characteristics, similarities, and differences between these three types of books.

7. Powerpoint Presentation

The book "The Glass Castle" explores many of society's problems, including homelessness, child neglect and poverty, alcoholism and domestic violence. Choose one of these topics to report on. Create a 5-7 minute Powerpoint
presentation. Include relevant statistics, causes, and possible solutions, as well as examining how the topic is related to your local area.

8. Another View

Choose a 2 page excerpt from "The Glass Castle" and re-write it from the viewpoint of one of the other characters. For example, you could choose to write the scene in which Jeannette takes her mother out to lunch in the city, but from the point of view of Rose Mary.

9. Angela's Ashes v. The Glass Castle

Read the first ten pages of "Angela's Ashes", a memoir by Frank McCourt. Write a 2 page essay comparing/contrasting the two books. How do they differ in style or tone? What are the similarities? How are the author's experiences similar and how are they different?

10. About the Author

Prepare a 2 page biographical report or a Powerpoint presentation about Jeannette Walls to present to the class. Students may wish to use internet resources, including taped interviews with the author (readily available on the internet.)

11. Book Suggestions

Using the library and internet resources, compile a list of 10 books that students may enjoy if they liked "The Glass Castle". They do not necessarily have to be memoirs. They can be fiction or non-fiction, including biographies. Write a brief (2-3 sentence) description of each book.

12. Artistic Rendering

What would the glass castle look like? Create a floor plan and drawings or a model of what your dream home would look like. Write a 1 page summary explaining your design choices and how they reflect your personality and values.

13. Homelessness Solutions

Research the problem of homelessness and/or lack of low-cost housing within your community. Write a 1 page fact sheet summarizing the problem, including vital statistics about the homeless population, and what services are available in your area to assist these people.

14. Word Search

Create a word search using locations and characters from "The Glass Castle". Use a minimum of 20 words, hidden backwards, forwards, and diagonally. Include a word list. Include an answer key for your word search.

15. Character Sketch
Choose 2 of the following characters to create a collage about: Rex, Rose Mary, Jeannette, Lori, Brian, Maureen
Your collage should reflect the characters' personality. You may use original art, photos from magazines and newspapers, scrapbook materials and more.

16. Dramatic Scene

Choose an excerpt (1-2 pages) from "The Glass Castle" that includes dialogue, and re-write it as a dramatic scene, including stage directions.

17. Book Review

Write a book review for "The Glass Castle". The review should not only give a brief description of what the book is about, but your opinion on the story, the writing, etc. Would you recommend this book? Why or why not? What did you like about it and what did you dislike?

18. Book Club Discussion Questions

If you were going to write a guide for book clubs reading this book, what would you write? What are some of the most interesting aspects of the book? Write 10 questions that would facilitate discussion about the book. They should be open-ended questions that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no. Questions can center on characters, plot, tone or style of writing, relationships within the book, the author, or any other subject that you feel is important.

19. Questions for the Author

Write a list of 10 questions that you would like to ask the author if you were able to interview her regarding this book. What would you like to know about her, her childhood, or her book?

20. What Next?

Write a 2 page epilogue to the book. What do you think happens to the characters? What do the children go on to do? Does Maureen ever come back to the family? What happens to Rose Mary?
Assignments

1. Assignment: Compare and contrast Jeannette's and her mother's views of homelessness in a 1 page paper. Consider these questions when writing: What does each of them think about being homeless? What values create these differences?

2. Assignment: For each of the two characters introduced in this chapter (Rose Mary and Jeannette) list 5 character traits that define them. These can be adjectives or short sentences. Cite a quote or example from the book to support each trait that you list.

3. Assignment: List 5 values that you think are most important to Jeannette and 5 that are most important to her mother. For each value, write a 2 sentence explanation, citing examples from the book.

4. Assignment: Write a 1 page essay on the importance of tone in "The Glass Castle". How does the author's tone affect the way we understand her story? What is her tone? How does she convey it through writing conventions? Give examples from the book.

5. Assignment: List the biographical account of the events in Part 1 of "The Glass Castle".

6. Assignment: Write a 2 page persuasive essay addressing one of the following topics:
   a) Because love and security are more important than material things, Rex and Rose Mary should not be considered neglectful.
   b) Rex and Rose Mary did not uphold their moral responsibility to care for the children's basic needs.

7. Assignment: Draw a line down the center of a sheet of notebook paper. Label one side 'positive' and one side 'negative'. On each side of the paper list one of Rex's personality traits or an action. (For example- 'negative': removed Jeannette from the hospital against doctor's orders'). Use specific references from the book to support your conclusions.

8. Assignment: Write a one page essay where you give your impressions/reaction to Jeannette’s childhood so far.

9. Assignment: Write a 2 page compare/contrast essay on what you consider to be the best philosophy for parenting with that of the Walls parents. Do you agree or disagree with their thoughts regarding what children need? Use specific examples from the book to demonstrate how they parent.

10. Assignment: Write a 1 page essay on Jeannette's response to adversity
as a small child. Do you think that she takes things in stride simply because she doesn't know anything else? Is it due to her personality, or is there another reason that she is able to handle things so well?

11. Assignment: Write a paragraph in which you describe the relationship between Rex and his children. Use examples from the book to illustrate your points.

12. Assignment: Write a 1 page essay on the role of setting in "The Glass Castle". How would the story be different if the family stayed in one place? How do the different locations affect the lives of the children and the family dynamics?

13. Assignment: One of the areas of disagreement within the family concerns the roles of the family members. Answer the following questions in 1 paragraph each. What does Rex consider his role, and what does he think Rose Mary's role is? Do you think that Rex lives up to his role (according to him?) What do the parents expect of each other? How are Rose Mary and Rex most alike, and how are they different?

14. Assignment: List what you consider to be the major events in the book so far. Choose at least 5 events. In 1-2 sentences for each, explain why you believe that this event is central to the plot of the book.

15. Assignment: Codependency is a big problem among the families of people with alcoholism. The Walls family is no exception, in that for the most part they simply choose to ignore his problem. Write a 1 page essay discussing the role of Rex's alcoholism in the lives of one of the following people: Rose Mary, Jeannette, Lori, or Brian. Your essay should discuss how his drinking influences the way that they act, and their relationship with him. Do they, too, engage in behavior that they otherwise wouldn't if it weren't for Rex's drinking problem?

16. Assignment: Use the internet to put together a short fact sheet on the geographic area of Welch, WV and its vicinity. Find statistics on employment rates, demographics, ethnic makeup, primary occupations, and average salaries of residents.

17. Assignment: Identify and list 5 or more character traits for Erma. Explain why you chose those traits. Write a 1 page essay describing Erma and her role within the family, using the 5 or more character traits as the basis. Consider the following: How does she differ from the character of Grandma Smith? Why does the author say that she better understands why her father is the way he is after meeting her? What, if any, characteristics do Rex and Erma share? How are they different? Do you think that they have similar values? What role, if any, do you think that Erma's character plays in Rex's problems as an adult?

18. Assignment: Compare and contrast Brian with one of the other major characters in the book (Rex, Lori, Jeannette, Rose Mary, Erma). Draw a line
down a sheet of notebook paper, listing one character on each side. List traits and actions for the character (at least 5 for each). After the list, answer the following questions: How do these two characters differ? Do you feel more sympathy for one than the other? Which one and why? What do these two characters have in common?

19. Assignment: When Jeannette gets a ride home and the driver insults her father by calling him a drunk, Jeannette is outraged and hurt. Yet she is also painfully aware of her father’s alcohol problem and his poor behavior. Write a fictional 1 to 2 page letter from Jeannette to her father, telling him how she feels about his actions. Explain how Jeannette feels and what she would like for him to do to improve the relationship. Be sure to cite specific incidents from the book.

20. Assignment: Write a 1 page essay on Jeannette’s attempts to exert control over her life. Why do you think she decides to try to make her house prettier from the outside? Why does she cling to the dream of the glass castle? What do these actions or hopes give her?

21. Assignment: Write a 1 paragraph introductory essay from the viewpoint of one of the four Walls children. Describe yourself, your family, your likes and dislikes, etc. as if you are speaking to a new teacher who has never met you.

22. Assignment: Jeannette handles adversity well, but she also has means of escaping, or even ignoring, her circumstances. What is it that she uses as a means of avoiding her home life, or at least keeping her mind off of it? Is she able to avoid her problems? Write a 1 page response to this question.

23. Assignment: Answer the following questions regarding Jeannette. Find a specific quote to back up each of your answers. How does Jeannette feel about her mother (when she is middle school/high school age)? How does Jeannette feel about her father (during the same period)? What are her plans for the future? How does she feel about her impoverished circumstances, and does she fault her parents?

24. Assignment: Lori and Jeannette are probably the two siblings with the closest relationship within the Walls household. Write a 1 page essay discussing their friendship. What is their relationship like? What role does each of them play? Are they equal or does one act more as the caregiver?

25. Assignment: List 5 specific incidents of conflict in Part 3 of the book. These can be between the family and outsiders or within the family itself. For each one, write a 2 sentence response. How does the Walls family deal with conflict? Are things resolved, or is any sort of change instituted in the aftermath of conflict or disagreement?

26. Assignment: Write a 1 page essay analyzing Jeannette’s quest to find happiness as an adult. Where did she think that she would find it, as opposed to where she ultimately did find it? What did Jeannette think that she wanted in life?
Did she get what she had hoped for and missed as a child/teenager? Do you think that the author will find, or has found, lasting happiness?

27. Assignment: Write a 1 page character sketch of Maureen as a young adult. Write about her as if you are introducing her to someone who knows nothing about her. What is she like?

28. Assignment: Choose two of the Walls children and compare/contrast how they ended up as adults. Write a minimum of 2 paragraphs about each of the characters. What are the similarities in their lives? What are the differences?

29. Assignment: Write a 1 page essay on the importance of the theme of forgiveness in "The Glass Castle". Why do you think that the author is able to be so giving towards her parents in her adulthood? Do you think that her upbringing actually helped her to develop this quality and if so, how? Who else, besides Jeannette, gives or receives forgiveness?

30. Assignment: Write a 1 page essay describing Jeannette's memories of her father. What, in the final analysis, does she think of his life? What does she think of his job as a father? What do you think her strongest memories of their relationship will be?

31. Assignment: Write at least a one page response. How does Jeannette respond to the loss of her father? Do you find her response surprising?