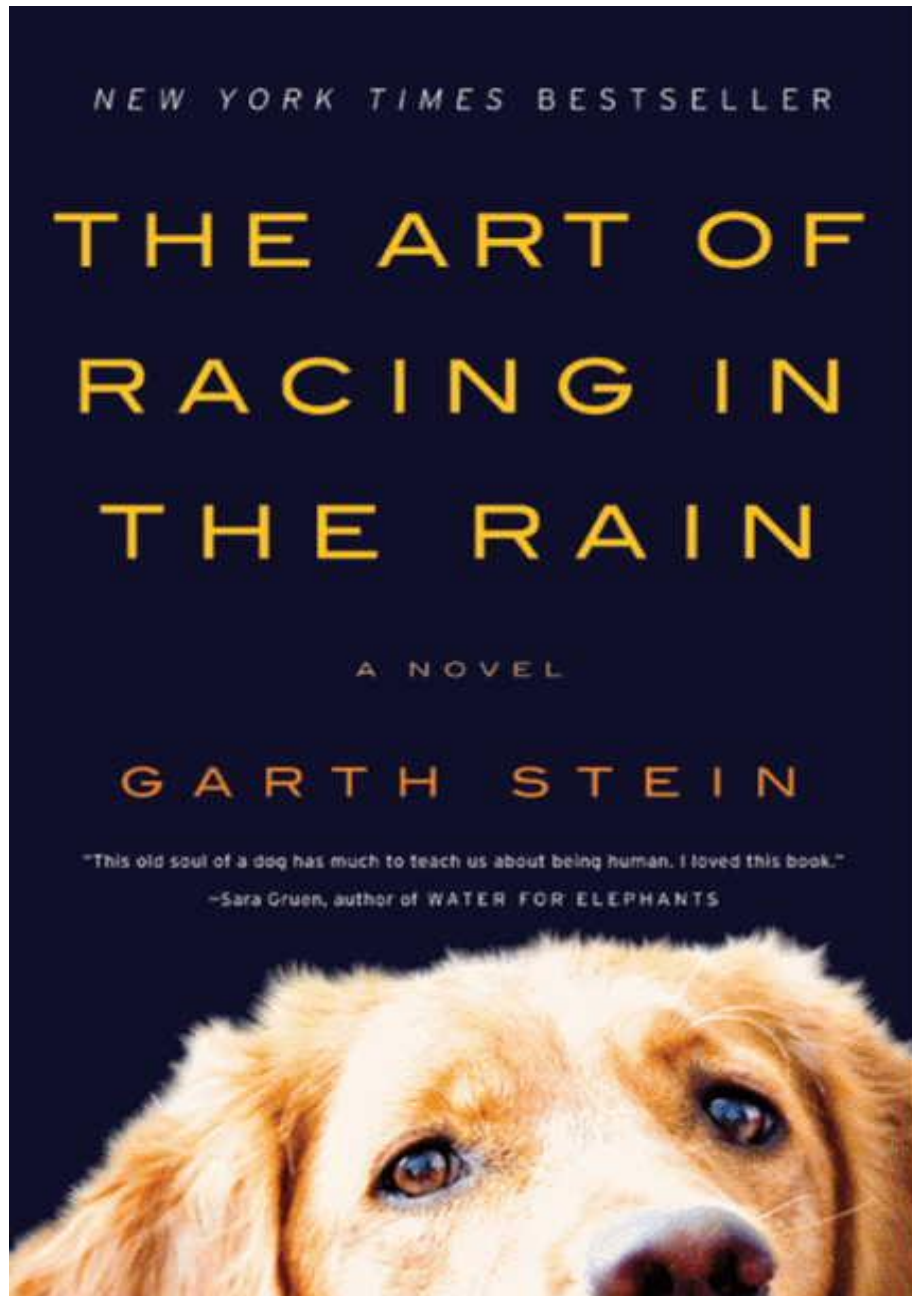


TEACHING MATERIALS FOR



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“*The Art of Racing in the Rain* has everything: love, tragedy, redemption, danger, and—most especially—the canine narrator Enzo. This old soul of a dog has much to teach us about being human.”
—Sara Gruen, author of *Water for Elephants*

A Note to Educators

As a community college adjunct professor, I chose *The Art of Racing in the Rain* as my supplemental novel for a couple of basic reading classes. I'd read the novel a year earlier and felt every student could relate to the novel on many levels.

In the beginning, some students were dubious about reading a novel narrated by a dog—but almost immediately the class became emotionally connected with the novel. In my many years of teaching, I'd never had class embrace a novel like they did *The Art of Racing in the Rain*.

When I created this curriculum, it was for my classes only—but after such a positive response from students—I wanted to make it available to other instructors. Of course, it's just a starting point—and you'll take from it what works for you and your students.

Here's to experiencing the magic of having your students truly engage with a novel!

Billie Snow

THE ART OF RACING IN THE RAIN • GARTH STEIN

Teaching Materials Outline

- I. Discussion Questions
 - A. Comprehension: recall, main ideas, supporting details, context clues, drawing conclusions and purpose
 - 1. Chunked book for questions approximately every 30-40 pages
 - 2. Questions can be used for classroom discussions or assessment
 - 3. Ten different pages of questions representing whole book (one each week)

- II. Novel Assignments
 - A. Five elements of fiction: characters, plot, theme setting and conflict
 - 1. Four assignments (one every couple of weeks as skills progress)

- III. Response Paper
 - A. Address prompt, utilize information from novel, & compose response
 - 1. Final assignment

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Reading Schedule

- Week 1..... Read to page 37 (chapters 1-7)
- Week 2..... Read to page 67 (chapters 8-12)
- Week 3..... Read to page 97 (chapters 13-17)
- Week 4..... Read to page 131 (chapters 18-24)
- Week 5..... Read to page 162 (chapters 25-27)
- Week 6..... Read to page 194 (chapters 28-32)
- Week 7..... Read to page 224 (chapters 33-38)
- Week 8..... Read to page 254 (chapters 39-46)
- Week 9..... Read to page 286 (chapters 47-52)
- Week 10 Read to page 321 (chapter 53 to end)

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Discussion Questions

Chapters 1-7

1. Describe the health of Enzo at the beginning of the novel.
2. Why does Enzo envy people's tongue and thumbs?
3. How did Eve change Enzo and Denny's lives?
4. Who were Maxwell and Trish? Why did Enzo call them the Twins?
5. What were two negatives about Denny's big race in Daytona, Florida?
6. At the end of chapter 7, what discovery did Enzo make about Eve?

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Discussion Questions

Chapters 8-12

1. In chapter 8, Denny shows his racing tapes and gives examples of how to race in the rain. What simple concept did Enzo learn from these tapes?
2. What did Enzo mean when he said Eve was his rain?
3. Why was Enzo alone and locked in the house?
4. Describe the incident with the stuffed zebra. What does the zebra represent?
5. Why did Denny hit Enzo for the first time?
6. List at least three ways things have changed around the house due to Eve's illness.

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Discussion Questions

Chapters 13-17

1. What led to the hot dog/chicken nuggets situation? How did it end?
2. How does Maxwell feel about Denny? List three examples to support your answer.
3. Hiking and playing at Denny Creek started out as fun for the whole family, then what happened? What is your prediction for Eve?

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Discussion Questions

Chapters 18-24

1. What did Enzo learn happens to a dog in Mongolia when he dies?
2. What does Enzo have to say about humans and listening?
3. What was symbolic about Zoë and the Barbie doll in the backyard?
4. In chapter 23, the day Eve came home, share Enzo's involvement with
 - a. Zoë in the backyard
 - b. Denny when leaving for the night
 - c. Night nurse during the night
 - d. Eve's needs throughout the night
5. What was the reaction of the father at Zoë's school bus stop when Denny said his wife was recovering from brain cancer?

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Discussion Questions

Chapters 25-27

1. Who is Annika and what happened with her? How could Denny have handled her differently?
2. Describe Enzo's experience at Thunderhill. Use at least three specific events in your answer.
3. In Chapter 27, explain the following:
 - a. Zoë said, "Sometimes things change, and we have to change too."
 - b. Eve said to family, "Today is the first day I am not dead."
 - c. Eve talking to Enzo, "Everyone wants me to be the next Lance Armstrong."

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Discussion Questions

Chapters 28-32

1. What was Enzo's reaction to Denny learning about Eve's death? Why?
2. Why did Maxwell and Trish think they should have custody of Zoë? List three reasons.
3. Who is Mark? What is his job? His mannerisms? Your opinion of him?
4. Describe the situation at the garage with the policeman. Give three details.

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Discussion Questions

Chapters 33-38

For each chapter, find topic, central idea, supporting ideas—major and minor.

Chapter 33: custody suit, criminal charges. Three years-why?

Chapter 34: Denny alone at police department. Mark's (capital B) reaction

Chapter 35: Denny's hands, friends' concerns, drinking, Enzo's reaction to video

Chapter 36: walk in drizzle, cemetery, treatment from Eve's family, Denny's reaction after everyone left

Chapter 37: Enzo's body problems, like Eve about doctors, why?

Chapter 38: class will do together

Topic

Central Idea

Major Detail
minor details

Major Detail
minor details

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Discussion Questions

Chapters 39-46

1. Enzo spent a weekend with Zoë, a variety of incidences took place-explain:
 - a. Zebra
 - b. Twin's conversation
 - c. Zoë's dinner
 - d. The devil's candy
2. What happened with the go-Karts?
3. There is a switch of lawyers. What happened?
4. Who is King Karma and what does he do?
5. What happened on a snowy night in Seattle? Who was involved?

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Discussion Questions

Chapters 47-52

1. Ayrton Senna has been a hero in this novel. What was the controversy of his last race?
2. What was Denny's reaction to the situation of paying the emergency fee? Give three details
3. The zebra makes another appearance. Describe its appearance and the steps to the end of the chapter when Denny and Enzo are watching a videotape of Senna. Give five steps.
4. What was the result of "Denny's audition" on the racetrack?
5. How did the meeting between Denny and Annika take place? What happened?

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Discussion Questions

Chapters 53 to the end

1. When Denny's parents came, there were several moving situations before they left. Describe two major ones.
2. What was the outcome on the third day of court? Denny's reaction?
3. The last sentence in chapter 57, after the phone call with Luca, Denny says, "Sometimes I really do believe." What was said in the phone conversation that caused Denny to say that?
4. Share Enzo's reflections in chapter 58.
5. Explain why Enzo resurfaces.

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Assignment 1: Characters

To complete this writing assignment, make sure you have carefully read the first seven chapters of *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, as assigned on your reading schedule before you begin this assignment.

You can refer to your novel to complete this assignment's three parts.

Part A: Describe each of the characters listed below with at least three important details about each.

Enzo:

Denny:

Zoë:

Eve:

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Assignment 1: Characters

Part B: Complete the character chart below. Choose one character and concentrate on the details about that character that helped you understand him or her. Use this chart to record the details about the main character that made an impression on you.

Character Name:

What character says and does:	What other characters think about this character:
How this character looks and feels:	How I feel about this character:

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Assignment 1: Characters

Part C: Select a moment or incident in the novel so far where you strongly agreed or disagreed with the way your chosen character reacted or handled the situation.

Choose at least one quotation from the book to support your answer. Your response should be at least 100 words. If you have more to say, you may write more, but less than the 100 words will affect your score.

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Assignment 2: Plot

To complete this writing assignment, make sure you have carefully read to page 97 of *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, as assigned on your reading schedule.

This assignment has two parts. Be sure to discuss what your thoughts and ideas are in some detail. Remember to use at least one direct quote from the novel to support your answer.

You may refer to your novel and lecture notes to complete this assignment.

Part A: Complete the story string on the opposite side of this page. Concentrate on plot details that were *pivotal*, the ones that seemed to change the directions of the events of the story. Use this tool to record the important details about the progress of events so far.

Part B: Select *one event* you recorded on your story string. Write a short essay that answers the following:

- How did the character's choices at that moment influence what came after it?
- What would have happened if the character had made a different choice?
- If you could give your main character advice about what to do next at that point, what would it be?
- Why would you give your character that advice?

Choose *at least one quotation* from the book to support your answer. Your response should be approximately 100 words. If you find you have more to say, you may write more, but less than 100 words will affect your score.

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Assignment 2: Plot

Part A: Create a story string. Record the major elements of the plot as they have unfolded so far. Remember, you will need page references.

1	2
3	4
5	6
7	8

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Assignment 3: Setting

Setting consists of many things, including the place and time of the story, sights, sounds, smells, tastes, objects, and weather. Even minor characters, when they are just hovering in the background, can be thought about as part of the setting.

Setting works hand in hand with the other elements of a story. Characters are shaped by their surroundings. Plots spring naturally out of a certain setting and move forward as scenes change. Important ideas are reinforced by the settings. And last but not least, feelings-yours and the characters' are influenced by the many details of an author's carefully prepared setting.

Make a list of the details that show the setting *The Art of Racing in the Rain*. Include the following:

Time: What's the time of the day or year, past or present?

Place: Where does the story take place? Is there more than one place?

Sight, Sounds, Smells: What is the scene surrounding the houses or dwellings?

Use the details you've listed to help you answer the following questions.

How does the setting shape the characters in the book?

How does the setting influence the way the characters feel in the book?

Add anything extra that deals with the setting.

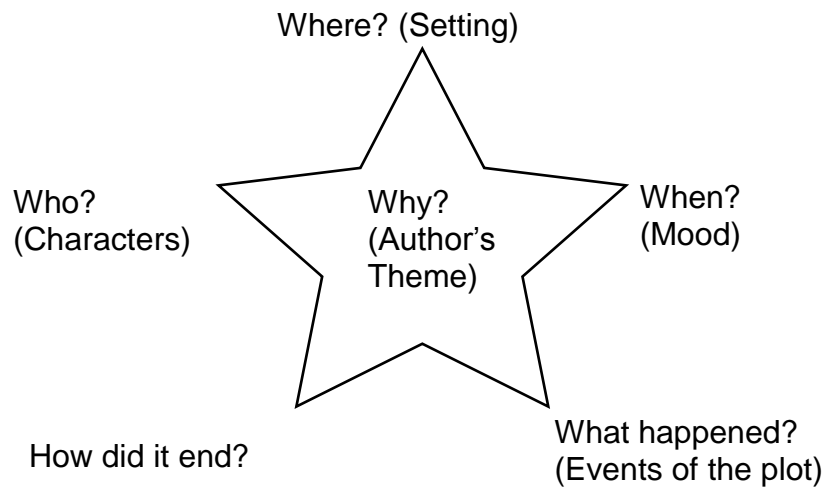
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Assignment 4: Story Mapping

Stories are a timeless method of sharing ideas and insights. A well-told story can illustrate a truth, prompt reflection and introspection, challenge our preconceptions, stimulate discussion, inspire us to action, or change the way we understand ourselves and our world. Since stories are also predominately an indirect method of delivering messages as readers, it is often up to readers to figure out just what a story is saying.

Story Maps feature graphic representations of key story elements to build a framework for understanding and remembering a story.

Common elements of narrative structure are in this Story Star.



A story features some sort of conflict and how that conflict gets resolved is what makes a story interesting. The basic kinds of conflict inherent in fictional literature are:

- Within a person
- Between people
- Between people and nature.

Significant questions should relate to the setting, character development, events of the plot, the conflict and its resolution and the author's possible themes.

Using the outline on the next page as your framework, create a story map for *The Art of Racing in the Rain*.

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Assignment 4: Story Mapping

Story Map

Title _____

Major Characters _____

Minor Characters _____

Setting: _____

Events: Rising Action

Falling Action

1.

11.

2.

12.

3.

13.

4.

14.

5.

Conflict: _____

6.

7.

Resolution: _____

8.

9.

Author's Theme: _____

10.

Climax: _____

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Response Paper

This paper should be typed, double-spaced, and at least 300 words long.

One of the best ways we can comprehend what we read is by writing about it!

The following questions should be addressed in your paper .

1. Why did Garth Stein choose the book's title?
2. What does the title communicate to you?
3. What captured your attention about the book? Why?
4. What bothered or bored you about the book? Why?
5. What did you like or dislike about a character? Why?
6. What did you personally learn from reading this book?
7. What was your favorite quote in the book? Why?
8. Would you recommend this book to someone else? Why or why not?

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Additional Resources

- [Garth Stein's Website](#)
- Author Interview: [Garth Stein on *The Art of Racing in the Rain*](#)
- [Reading Group Guide to *The Art of Racing in the Rain*](#)
- [Start Reading *The Art of Racing in the Rain* Now!](#)

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