

Name _____

The Scarlet Ibis

Unit Activity Packet

“Pride is a wonderful, terrible thing, a seed that bears two vines, life and death” (172).

Plot:

Record the main events of the story here.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Setting:

Give the correct information for the setting.

Geographical place	
Physical place, house	
Physical place, area	
Atmosphere/details	
World events	

Extending the setting:

The narrator describes a place full of life: plants, flowers, insects, birds, and warm, sunny weather. There are several passages where he creates strong imagery. Find several and try to complete the following table with as many examples of the life he describes.

Plants/flowers	Insects & small animals	Birds	Weather

Point of View:

What point of view is this story narrated in? _____

How old is the narrator when he tells this story (in general) _____

Tone:

The *tone is the emotional aspect of the literature*. The author creates a specific feeling right in the first paragraph. After we read this paragraph in class, complete this activity.

What is the feeling you get from the first paragraph? _____

Give five examples (phrases taken directly from the first paragraph) that reinforce the tone. Put quotation marks around each phrase to show that you have taken them from the text.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Imagery:

Images are pictures that the author creates to define setting, to reveal character, to reinforce theme, to reinforce tone, or for many other reasons. Images can be visual (sight), auditory (hearing), olfactory (smell), gustatory (taste), tactile (touch), and even kinesthetic (movement).

Death imagery: Find as many examples of death images in the story as you can. Give the page number following the example. Also, use quotation marks to show that you have taken the example from the story.

Example	Page number, column

Character:

There are really only two characters in this story—the narrator, whose name we never learn, and his brother, Doodle (William Armstrong).

Answer the following questions related to character. Give reasons or prove your answer with examples from the story. Put a page reference in parentheses.

How old was the narrator when Doodle was born?	
What is wrong with Doodle?	
Describe Doodle's appearance as a baby.	
What is the narrator's reaction to his new brother?	
What kind of a brother does the narrator want?	
Record Doodle's reaction to seeing Old Woman Swamp for the first time. What does his reaction say about him?	

How long does it take to teach Doodle to walk? What does that show about each brother?	
Why does the narrator cry when everyone congratulates him for teaching Doodle how to walk?	
The narrator says that sometimes he is cruel to his brother: give two examples to show that this is true.	
The narrator says that Doodle is really good at telling lies. What are these lies? (173)	
What is the theme of most of the lies and what does this tell us about what is important to Doodle?	
How does Doodle imagine his perfect future will be? (173)	

A developing (or dynamic) character is *one who changes by the end of the story*. He is one who learns something important that changes him, makes him more mature or gives him insight into himself or others. **Is the narrator a developing/dynamic character?** You must also say how you think he changed or what it is he learned. Support your answer with evidence from the story.

Similes/metaphors:

Hurst uses some great similes and metaphors that help the reader see exactly what he’s describing. Find three of them and record them in the table below. Show what is being compared—both the literal term (the thing being compared) and the figurative term (the thing being compared to). After recording the simile or metaphor, include the page number in ().

Simile/metaphor	Literal term	Figurative term

Symbols:

A symbol is a thing or idea that stands for something else. Authors use symbols to enhance the theme or to give readers a greater understanding of a key idea in the story. The main symbol is the scarlet ibis itself. The author implies that the bird is like Doodle, and at the end of the story, the narrator tells us himself that his brother looks just like the sad, lifeless bird.

To get us ready for this symbol, the author “paints” his story red. Skim through the story and find as many things, images, ideas that are red and record them here. Follow the example given for you. Use quotation marks to show you have taken this information directly from the text.

Example	Page number, column
“bleeding tree”	p. 169, col. 1

What emotions is the color red generally associated with?

What things in ordinary life are red?

The scarlet ibis and Doodle: Consider this: in captivity, a scarlet ibis will fade to pink.

Where does it come from?	
What does it look like?	
How does Doodle respond to the scarlet ibis and its death? What does this say about him?	
Describe how Doodle appears to be like the scarlet ibis at the end of the story (physically; how he looks).	

Theme:

A theme is an idea or a truth that the author reveals to the reader in a story. This idea or truth get us to understand ourselves as human beings who are connected to all other human being in the world, across all spaces, cultures and across all time. The theme is the important thing for us to learn about others, but especially about ourselves. Themes are often related to life, death, love, friendship, family, courage, etc. Stories may not always present people in their best light, but by reading their stories, we can understand a better way for all people to live and behave towards each other.

To come up with a theme sentence for this story, think about the important idea or truth we can learn from the narrator’s struggle to get a brother he could be proud of and the price he paid for that struggle.

What did the narrator want?	
What did Doodle want?	
How did Doodle die?	
Why did Doodle die?	
How was Doodle like the scarlet ibis (not how he looked, but in other ways)? <i>Remember what happens to these birds in captivity. Also, remember that this bird was far away from his home.</i>	
How should the narrator have treated his brother?	

Think of two different ways to state a theme idea for this story in addition to the first one that is done for you as an example. They can be about different ideas. Make your statement a complete sentence that reveals a truth about human behavior.

1. Too much pride can make us treat those we love in cruel ways.
2. _____
3. _____

Reader Response:

Write a well-developed paragraph telling your reaction to any of the following: Doodle’s love for his brother, the narrator’s treatment of his brother, Doodle’s courage, or come up with your own idea. Support your ideas with examples from the story.